

FAT TAILER FRONT ROW

HERE'S
LOOKING AT...

Rachel Trevor-Morgan

Our head of state's hatmaker

Rachel Trevor-Morgan has made HM 60 hats: some ornate, some plain, some laden with bowers of flowers. What remains constant is the size of the brim: 'It's small because the Queen is small and she must be seen,' explains Rachel. And the colour? 'Always bright. The Queen likes to stand out.' Want to know her hat size too? Well, you can't – it's a secret. After six years designing for the Queen, Rachel now knows Her Majesty quite well. But for the milliner there has always been something familiar about her. 'She's the same height and stature as my mother,' Rachel says, 'I have to keep reminding myself who she is.' Rachel visits Buckingham Palace to fit each hat atop that crown-bearing head. To keep it in place, she reveals, HM has a secret weapon: 'Hat pins. You never see the Queen holding on to her hat like other people.' For practical reasons (getting in and out of cars, carriages and planes), HM's headwear can never be tall (think Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie at Prince William's wedding). And besides, Rachel, who prefers tiaras to crowns – 'more dainty' – thinks that bigger is not necessarily better. Her royal career started with a telephone call from the Queen's dresser, Angela Kelly. The fantastic Freddie Fox was retiring and the Queen was looking for a new British milliner. At the Palace, things get done – and fast. Just 20 minutes after Rachel replied 'Yes please', Angela was standing before her, asking her to submit three sketches for royal approval. It may have been 'utterly terrifying' for a woman who started out wanting to make professional clown outfits, but what she produced scored – as you might call it in this business – a hat-trick. *Violet Henderson*



Photographed by NEIL GAVIN