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50th
issue

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bancroftphotography.co.uk

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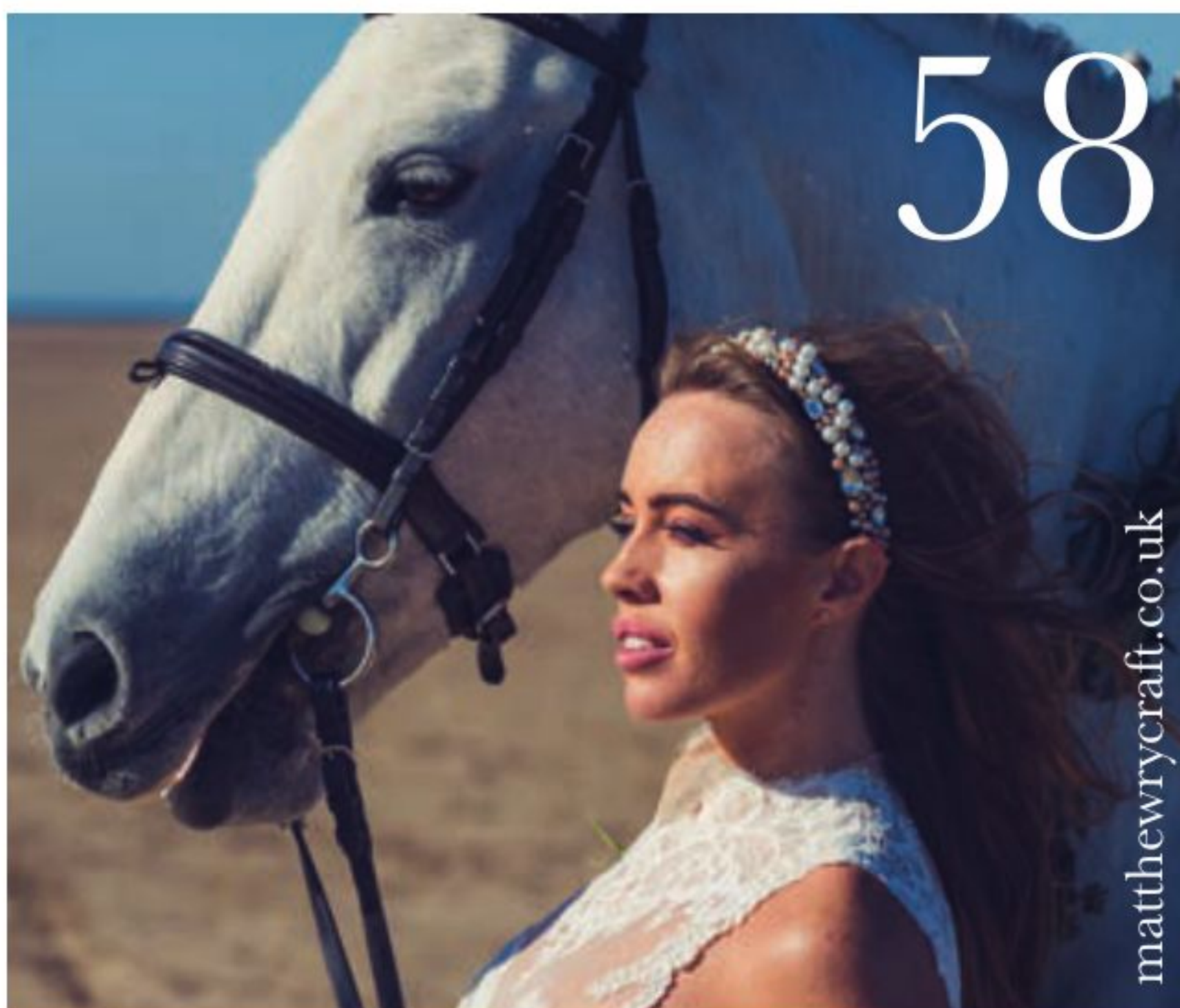
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matthewwrycraft.co.uk

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Golden years



Welcome to our very special 50th anniversary celebration issue! I'm feeling super-proud to be the editor of this milestone edition, and we've put together some exciting content with the help of the region's marvellous wedding suppliers, which we hope you'll love.

The magazine launched as *Your Merseyside Wedding* magazine in 2012, as part of County Wedding Magazines' ever-growing stable of hugely popular regional wedding titles, and in the summer of 2016, its beautiful neighbouring county was welcomed into the fold, to become *Your Cheshire & Merseyside Wedding*. I couldn't have been happier to take over the helm in March 2019, so it's actually a bit of anniversary for me also, as I celebrate my first year with you all. To commemorate our eight years and 50 issues of bringing you all things wedding from around the region, for these pages I've scoured the archives to find some favourite products and pics that we've featured, past and present. Also, don't miss our gold inspired page (p43).

Although we're getting on a bit now, we're not as aged as the incredible historical venues we've rounded up on page 19 for you. Plus, there're no less than three local shoots to be found in this issue, one of which features our lovely real bride, Ashleigh, from issue 48, and her horse, Riley (p58).

If you're wondering how to incorporate your chosen palette into your big day, certainly the most visually impressive place to start is with your flowers. So, we asked the region's florists for inspiration based-on the most popular colour schemes, which you can find on page 53. And, if your W-day is on the horizon you might be looking for those all-important finishing touches, to complete your look. So, check out page 61 for our top tips on accessorising with sparkle and shine. Happy planning one and all!

Kelly x

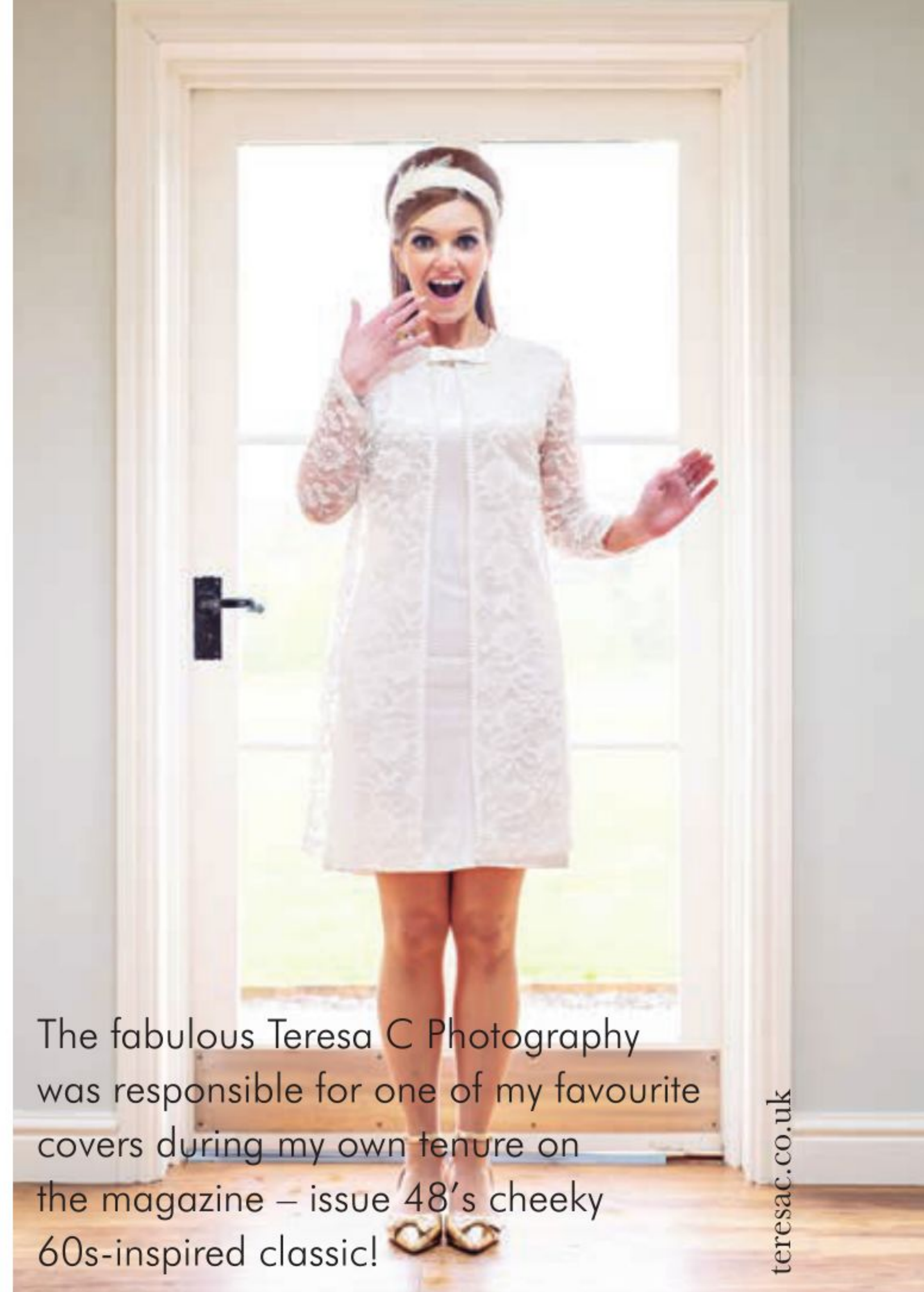
Kelly Andrews, editor

Psst! If you've loved feeling inspired by our real wedding couples, and are keen to do the same for future readers, visit yourcheshiremerseyside.wedding/get-involved-real-wedding to find out how.

My first issue as editor! I'm essentially a nosey type, so I adore finding out about our real couples' wedding days. I covered Jodie and Daniel's big day, and their personality-filled group shots set in the grand Knowsley Hall, stayed in my memory.



katemccarthyphotography.co.uk



The fabulous Teresa C Photography was responsible for one of my favourite covers during my own tenure on the magazine – issue 48's cheeky 60s-inspired classic!

teresac.co.uk



joannarosephotography.co.uk

One of the things I'm most fond of featuring in the magazine is flowers, and the lovely bookerflowersandgifts.co.uk, who brought this gorgeous creation into being, have helped us out with some terrific advice over the years.



amyfaithphotography.com

As I combed through the archives, this breathtaking image by amyfaithphotography.com leapt out at me, and I knew I had to share it with you. After all, you can never have too much of a good thing!

Boho Lane Photography

Boho is huge in the wedding world at the moment and we can trace that back at least to 2016, when we featured this dream of a styled shoot featuring accessories by lunaandwild.com. This was also our first issue as *Your Cheshire & Merseyside Wedding*.

hervephotography.co.uk

In 2016 Liverpool's rocksforrocks.co.uk told us, "Vines are so versatile, they can be draped, wrapped and woven into hairstyles to create a bespoke look for each bride." Check out some of it's current pieces in our jewellery and accessories feature over on page 61.

I love this super-cute shot of Charlotte and Austin, by teresac.co.uk, from our issue 12 cover. They tied the knot at Southport Town Hall, followed by celebrations at the town's Prince of Wales Hotel, on 5th October, 2012.

We've loved working with fabulous Merseyside-based photographer, Matthew Rycraft, over the years. He captured the beautiful shot of bride Lucy that appeared on the cover of last issue, as well as this stunning sunset image from our photography feature way back in issue six.

matthewrycraft.co.uk

teresac.co.uk



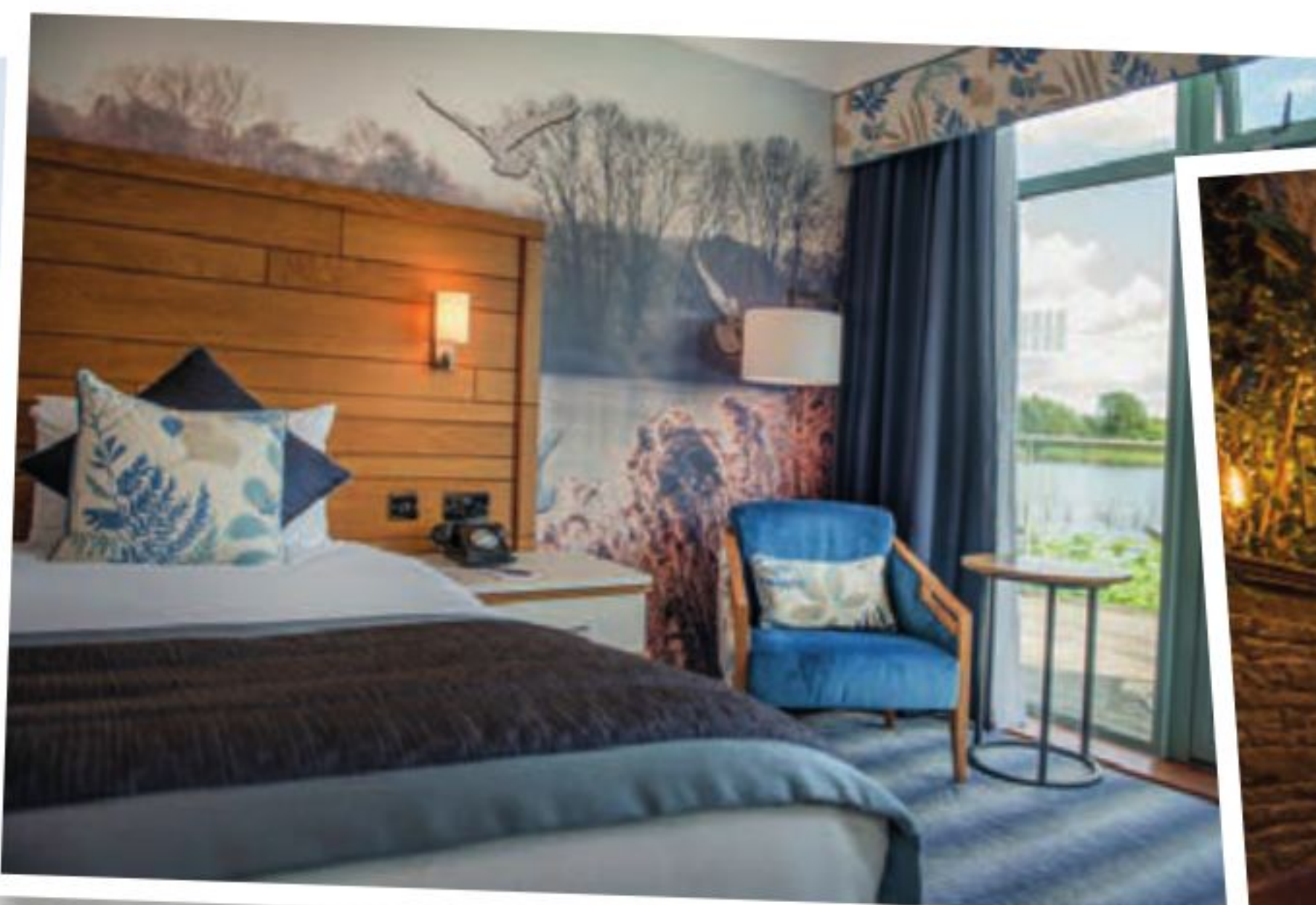
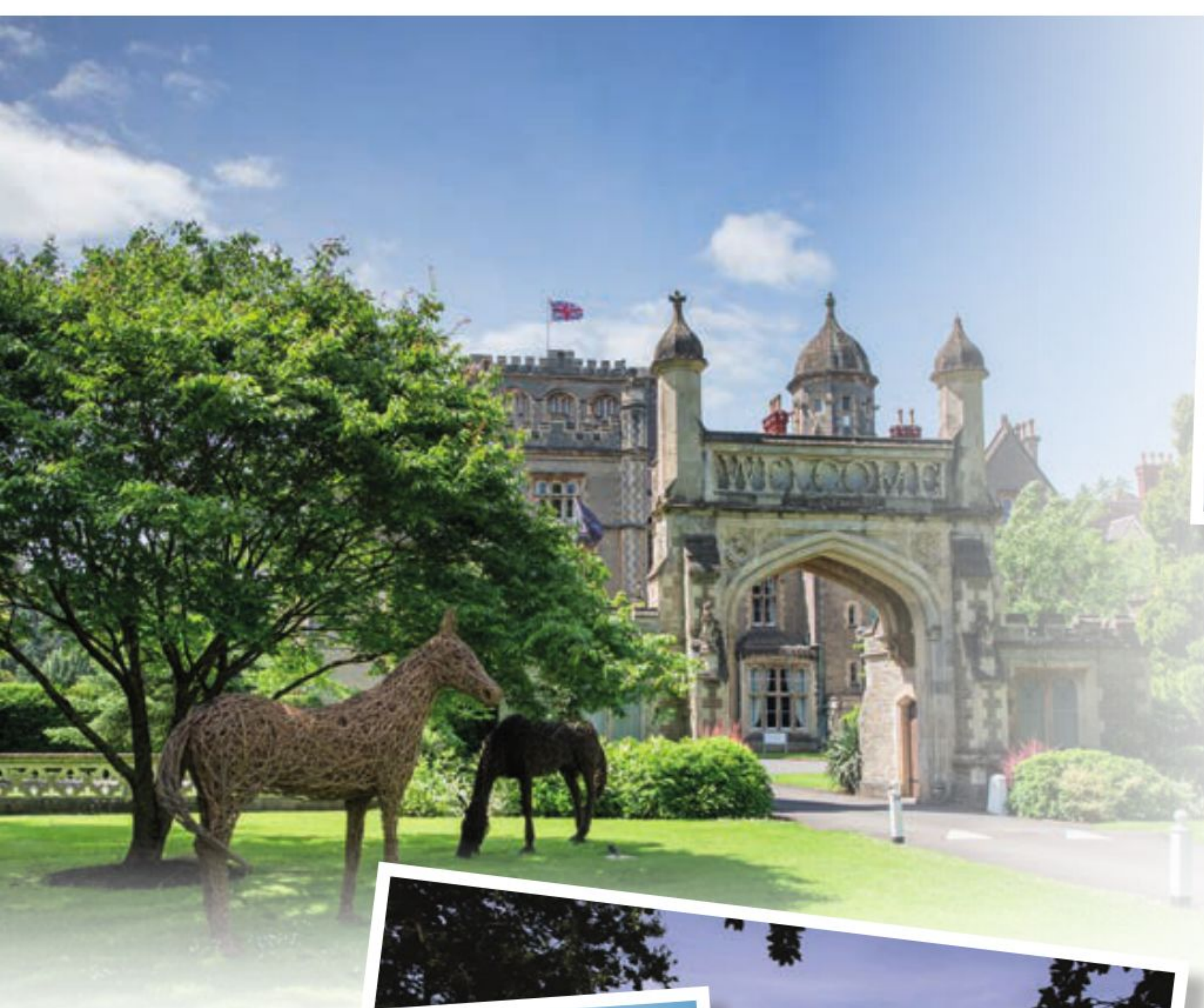
#ENTERTAINMENTGOALS

ChampFoos makes your special day memorable for all the right reasons – all your guests from the age of eight to 80 can join in, and bond over a game of foosball. The ice-breaker competition, where players are paired in doubles teams at random, mixes up both sides of the family so everyone can get to know each other before they end up sitting face-to-face across the wedding breakfast table. What's more, for an extra-special touch of class ChampFoos offers an exclusive wedding table, with hand-painted bride and groom players, in a white cabinet with gold trim.

We've teamed up with ChampFoos to bring you a very special offer! Hire the fab Brides and Grooms Foosball Table from just £249 plus delivery, that's a £50 saving on the standard price. Simply quote YCMW3420 when booking. To find out more head over to champfoos.co.uk

Freebies & OFFERS

Take advantage of these gorgeous giveaways and fab offers



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From the finest London venues like the lavish De Vere Grand Connaught Rooms, to historic 18th-century mansion houses such as De Vere Beaumont Estate, just south of Windsor, there's ample choices no matter your preference; be it a pre-wedding break with your loved one, or a group get-together to celebrate your nuptials, there's a host of properties with facilities

such as spas and golf courses to enjoy a relaxing stay.

County Wedding Magazines has teamed up with De Vere Hotels to offer our chosen winner an overnight stay with breakfast at any De Vere hotel in the UK. What's more, for those unlucky in winning this lovely prize, our CWM readers can save 10% when you book direct with De Vere by joining its loyalty scheme, Applause, devere.co.uk/applause/

For your chance to win, enter via our websites. Terms and conditions apply.



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Closing date is 5th June, 2020, unless stated otherwise.



IN SAFE HANDS

Oddfellows Hotels has appointed Oana Morcan as Events Co-ordinator of their design-led boutique hotel in Chester. Oana has worked in hospitality for over ten years, moving to Oddfellows from her previous role at Peckforton Castle, so your wedding day will be in good hands. She says, “When I saw the position had become available, I jumped at the chance. I’ve always loved the fun personality of the décor, and the team there. There’s a real sense of occasion and the events always have individuality and flair.”

Oana has wasted no time in making her mark and is already bringing new ideas to weddings at Oddfellows. She explains, “I have a very personal approach, and believe every wedding day should be a testament to a couple’s personality. I start with getting to know the couple and then together we design the day to suit their dreams.”

For more information on hosting your big day at Oddfellows Chester, see oddfellowschester.com

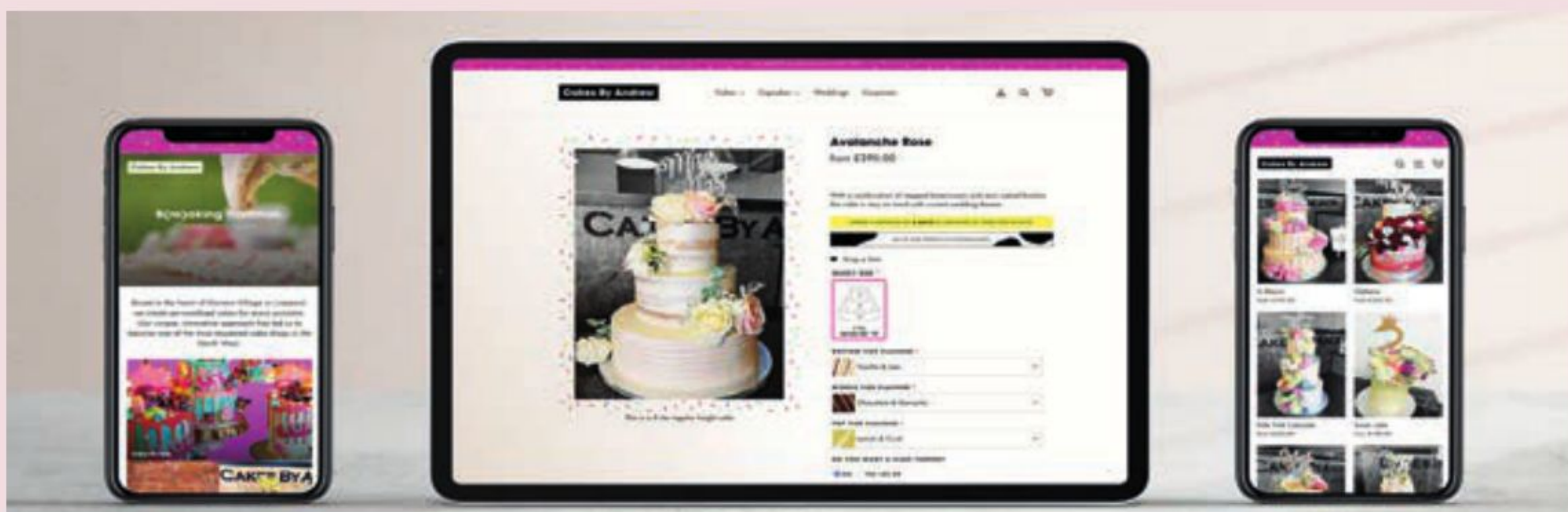


BAKE-BUILDER

Cakes by Andrew, a local family-run independent cake shop, specialising in creating bespoke bakes, has rebranded with a new-look website, complete with cake builder. This tool allows you to order custom wedding cakes quickly and simply online.

Available to use on sponge cakes baked in-store, this handy online gadget allows you to pick from a variety of tier and flavour combinations from a wide range of creative wedding designs. It also gives you further customisable options such as adding personalised cake toppers, and matching cupcakes, as well as being able to select dietary requirements – gluten- and nut-free options, for example. Simply complete your order by selecting a date for collection from the Garston-based shop, and pay in any number of ways including Apple Pay and PayPal Express.

Head over to cakesbyandrew.co.uk to check it out.



Nearlywed NEWS

Catch up on
the latest from
around the region

LOCAL LOVELIES

Gone are the days of picking up a trusty toaster or microwave for the newlyweds. Nowadays when it comes to gifts for the your big day, people are opting for a more personalised approach. MerseyMade, located on Paradise Street in Liverpool, is a haven for gifts to treasure for a lifetime. It houses 10 open artists’ studios alongside a retail space, selling locally made and sourced goods, all from within a 50-mile radius of the city. With everything from prints to jewellery, bespoke artwork to greetings cards and crafts, you can even see the artists themselves working as you browse.

This forward-thinking approach to consumerism supports local designers, makers, artists and business, so you can feel like you’re giving something back to the community as you make your gift list selections, or shop for some extra special big-day touches. Perhaps you have a favourite local landmark you’d like captured on canvas; or if you’re into gin, you might like something special from a local distiller to gift as wedding favours. Whatever takes your fancy MerseyMade has something to suit.

For further information, head over to merseymade.uk



ON THE MOVE

Wirral-based wedding stationer Dragonfly Couture has moved into a new studio in Hoylake. Owner, Ling Warlow says, "It's a much bigger, and brighter space – it's absolutely gorgeous! There's loads of room to make lovely stationery and explore my new passion for paper flowers."

Dragonfly Couture specialises in designing and creating bespoke, beautifully hand finished stationery and invitations. With over 15 years' experience, Ling draws on an impressive array of boards, papers and a wealth of other materials, along with her expertise in printing and finishing techniques, combined with 21st-century technology, to create the perfect stationery worthy of your big day.

Check out dragonflycouturestationery.com and book an appointment to pop into the studio for a consultation at 3, Wood Street, Hoylake, Wirral CH47 2DU.



In with the new

Boutique hotel The Townhouse, Chester, has announced the appointment of Louis McDermott, new head chef at the on-site restaurant, 1699 Bar and Brasserie. Having worked under one of Heston Blumenthal and Dominic Champman's influential sous chefs at the two-rossette and Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant, The White Oak in Berkshire, Louis brings a huge wealth of experience. He brings a flare to affordable dining at The Townhouse and hopes to push the venue into the culinary limelight of the Chester and Merseyside area.

The boutique hotel is a hidden gem, located within the bounds of Chester's historic Roman walls. It's also launched a new menu, and recently completed a major refurbishment. So, if you're looking for a new date-night spot, it's well worth checking out The Townhouse.

See chestertownhouse.com



HOT TO TROT

This spring, Matthew O'Brien is launching his first ready-to-wear bridal collection. The Cheshire-based award-winning designer is introducing the new range to complement the existing offering at his flagship store at 16 Eastgate Street in Chester.

Matthew says, "Up until now, my bridalwear has been exclusively bespoke, so I'm massively excited to be extending the offering to clients who want to look and feel sensational within a faster timeframe. The range, which includes 60 designs, blends traditional with contemporary, paying fierce attention to detail and utilising exceptional quality British materials. I've always believed in making the unimaginable fashionable so expect to see some surprises along the way. A black wedding dress? A fifty-foot veil? Anything is possible."

To find out more visit matthewobrien.co.uk or pop into Chester's flagship store.



SAVE THE DATES

Cheshire estate, Carden Park, has announced its planned programme of wedding fair and show rounds, as well its annual August Wedding Evening on the lawn.

The first wedding fair will take place on the 8th March, which will be the perfect opportunity to see the estate's Shooting Suite, magnificently dressed for the occasion. Plus, Carden Park has teamed up with Bouquet & Bells to give couples the chance to visit up to 50 reputable suppliers who can help bring your big day to life.

If you're dreaming of a summer wedding, the annual Wedding Evening on the Lawn event will showcase the beautiful outdoor Carden Gazebo along with a tour of the grounds, which span 1000 acres.

Check out cardenpark.co.uk



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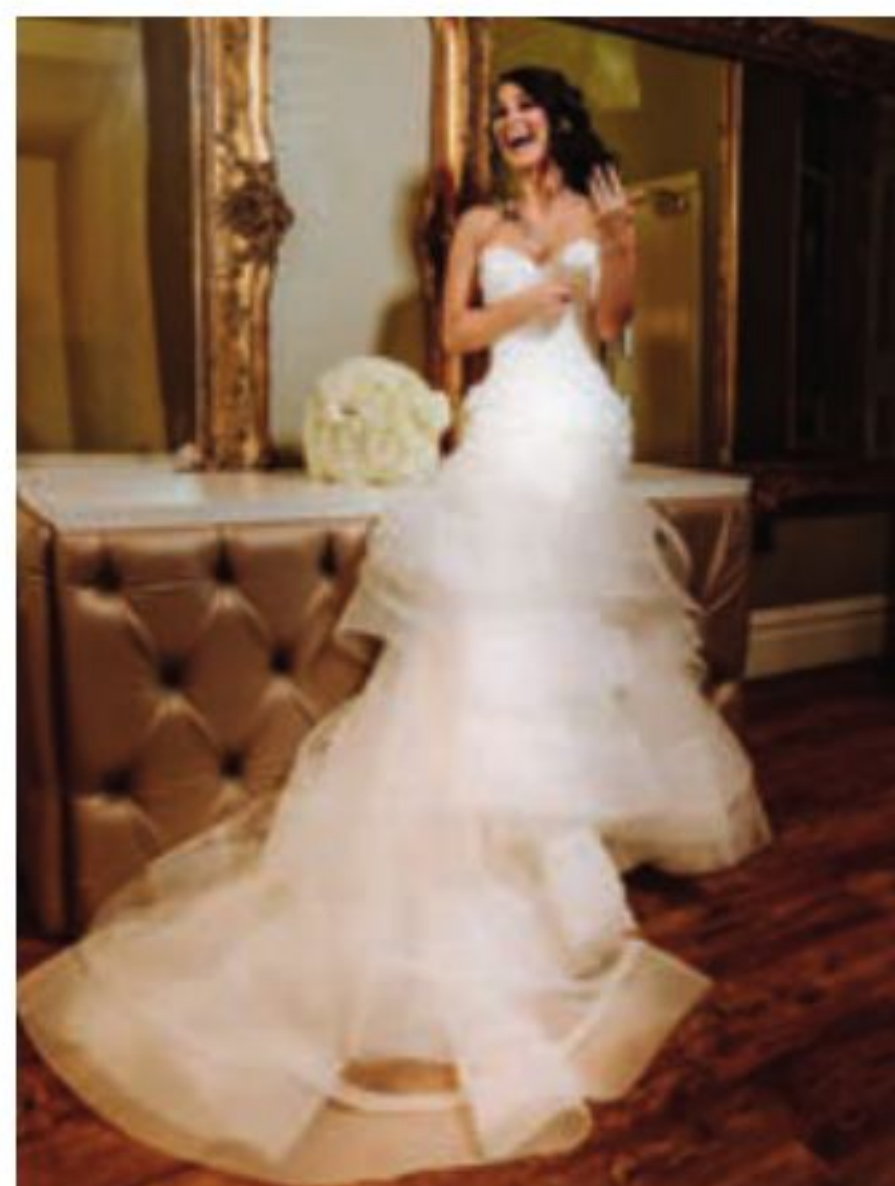
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Spotlight on...

WIRRAL

Tie the knot in a local hotspot

LEVERHULME HOTEL

0151 644 6655 | leverhulmehotel.co.uk

Set in the picturesque village of Port Sunlight, only a short distance from Chester and Liverpool, Leverhulme is a true gem overflowing with historical architecture and spectacular photo opportunities. Once the model village's cottage hospital, having originally opened its doors in 1907, the exterior is in keeping with its quaint surroundings, and has received critical acclaim following its high-standard 2008 restoration.

Now a Grade II listed boutique hotel this venue offers the ultimate in luxury, sophistication and style. The Art Deco accents offer an air

of elegance and flair, bound to impress your guests.

The most popular location for ceremonies is the stunning Ballroom. It can be adapted and dressed to suit any theme. For more intimate celebrations, the fabulously appointed Ballroom Bar or relaxed Conservatory areas are perfect. Finally, it would be a shame not to take advantage of the fine summer weather by saying "I do" in the garden pagoda. The Leverhulme can host 240 for the ceremony, and 250 for the wedding breakfast and evening celebrations.

What's more, you'll also have the opportunity to take advantage of the hotel group's fleet of cars including Rolls Royce Phantoms and Bentleys.





THE KINGS GAP BY WILDES, HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS HOYLAKE

0151 632 2073 | kingsgap.co.uk/weddings

The Kings Gap by Wildes can be found just a short stroll from the beach in Hoylake. Attached to the Holiday Inn Express, it's an ultra-modern venue blessed with oodles of natural daylight, and offering all the facilities you could wish for from such a contemporary space. The venue boasts a beautiful garden with patio area, great for al fresco "I dos." What's more you and your loved ones can even enjoy the great outdoors inside, as the bi-folding the doors in the reception space open up wide to let the outside in.

The Kings Gap has its own private entrance, and a reception area with two large rooms with a bar, the Garden Room and the Kings Gap Room, which are used for licensed ceremonies and celebrations. Both spaces are available to you for exclusive-use should you wish. They can seat 100 for the meal and then accommodate a further 50 for the evening celebrations. Plus, there's garden furniture on the patio, so that guests can be comfortable while they chill, enjoying a reception drink and a mingle.

As the newlyweds, you'll be treated to a complimentary bedroom on the night of the wedding. What's more, the venue offers menu tastings, as well as wedding showcases and fairs, allowing you to see how the space can be dressed, and assisting with your supplier search.

LEASOWE CASTLE

0151 606 9191 | leasowecastle.com

Overlooking the idyllic Wirral coastline this historic property, offers ample opportunity for some stunning wedding photographs. The venue's grounds also offer a luxurious setting with impressive sea views, and the beach just five minutes away.

The fairytale 16th-century castle itself boasts grand furnishings alongside authentic, historical charm. It's ideal if you're looking to tie the knot in a picturesque location. Leasowe Castle is home to five different venues, including the Keep, Star Chamber and Castle Suite. The venue also boasts an in-house restaurant, Brasserie 1593, as well as Wreckers Bar, which serves a variety of

signature cocktails.

There are three suites licensed to hold civil ceremonies, including the romantic chapel setting, the Keep, located in the heart of the historic castle. Flooded with natural light, it has a solid oak floor, and can host 110 to witness your "I dos." The Turret Suite accommodates 70 for your wedding breakfast and 110 for the evening. Finally, the larger Castle Suite has space for up to 200 diners and 240 revellers.

For a truly magical experience, Leasowe Castle allows couples to book the entire venue with its exclusive-use package. Your guests can also opt to spend the night in the hotel's bedrooms having benefitted from a 20 per cent discount off of the best available rate at time of booking.



Wedding 2020 Package Offers*

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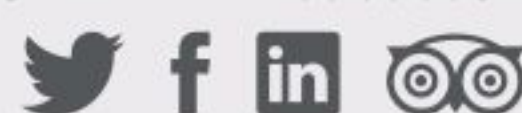
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www.towerhillbarns.co.uk

Tower Hill Barns
LUXURY WEDDING VENUE



THE LITTLE FOX

0151 353 2924 | brunningandprice.co.uk/littlefox

The Little Fox is a tastefully decorated modern venue hung with a delightfully eclectic group of paintings. Located in the heart of Thornton Hough Village, it's nestled alongside The Red Fox pub. With its private garden and courtyard, it really does have that charming countryside feel.

The beautiful courtyard terrace boasts comfortable seating, and romantic lighting, creating a wonderful ambience. Plus, the garden

has recently been extended enabling you and your loved ones to enjoy some sunshine thanks to its south-facing aspect, and when the sun goes down you'll have the warmth of the patio heaters to comfort you.

There are two rooms with sliding doors that open out to make one big space, and when you walk through, you're greeted by a fully-stocked bar, wooden flooring covered with rugs, beautiful furniture and an open fire. Drinks receptions take place in the bar or in the garden if the weather is favourable. Your wedding breakfast will be served in the main room, which can seat up to 90, and for the evening celebrations, capacity is around 150.



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Photography by: Herve Gillet, Jeff Langhorne, Matthew Rycraft



Timeless ROMANCE

Our roundup of the region's historical venues



matthewwrycraft.co.uk

KNOWSLEY HALL

0151 489 4827 | knowsleyhallvenue.co.uk

Knowsley Hall is a venue steeped in history with original features that date back to the 14th century. From the moment you drive into the private estate, which is home to The Earl and Countess of Derby, you'll find yourselves captivated. The Hall provides a magical backdrop for your big day having welcomed royalty and distinguished guests since it opened its doors in 1495. Despite its grandeur, Knowsley Hall offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere facilitated by the dedicated staff who will ensure you have a big day full of memories to last a lifetime.

The venue is set on 2,500 acres of private parkland and boasts breathtaking views of the manicured gardens. The terrace overlooks

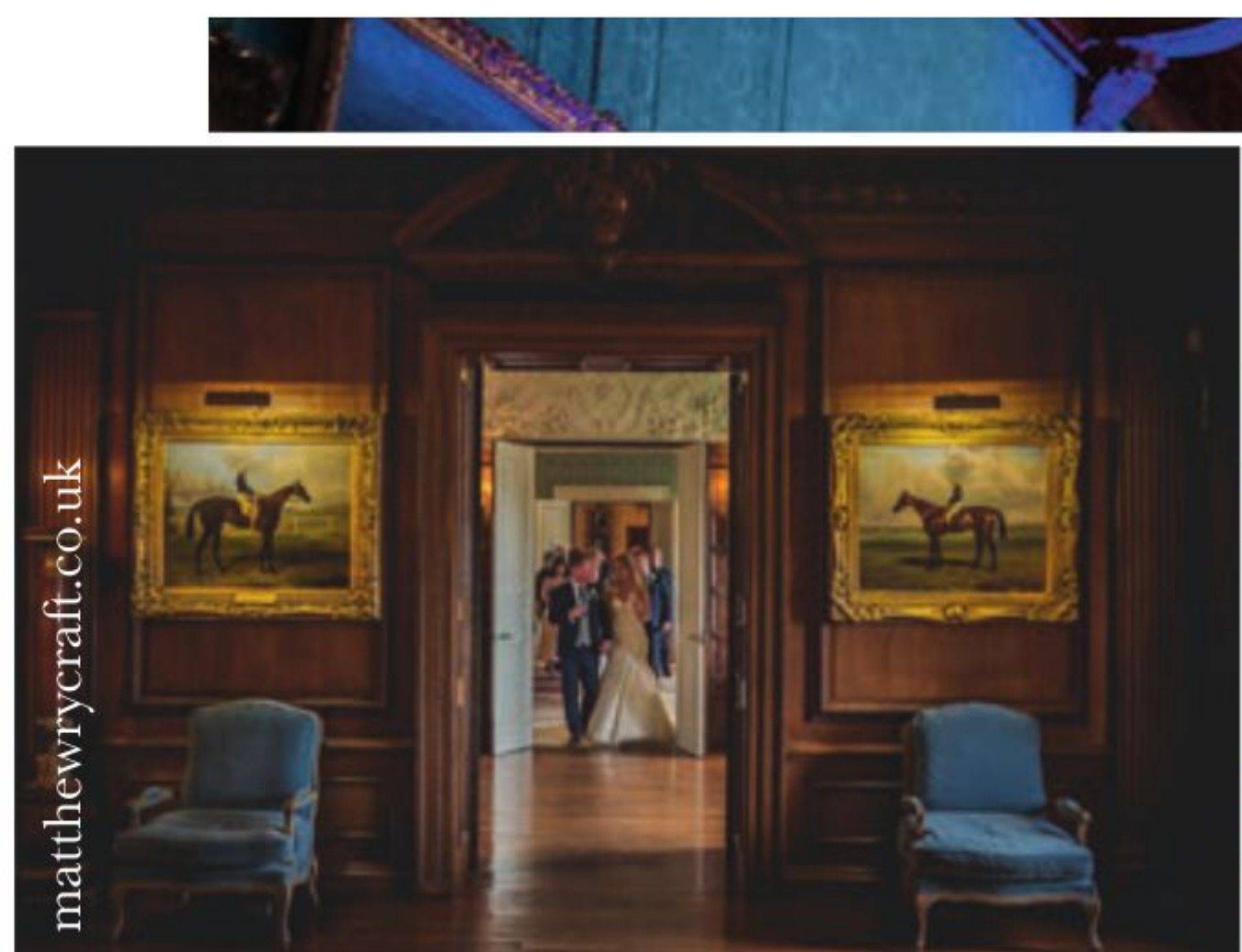
a gorgeous lake, and the fountain and walled garden area offer impressive settings for your photos.

The romantic Stucco Ballroom with its beautiful gold-encrusted detail on the ceiling has welcomed Queen Elizabeth II for lunch, and can also host your ceremony and reception. The magnificent State Dining Room, where you can enjoy your wedding breakfast with your nearest and dearest, is full of family portraits and is home to an impressive antique gold chandelier. The cosy and intimate Walnut Drawing Room is an idyllic space to relax in, especially during the winter months, when you can enjoy the roaring fire. You can say "I do" here, and enjoy reception drinks afterwards.

Complimentary menu tastings are available as is a luxury honeymoon suite on the night of the wedding.

GUEST LIST

132 ceremony,
132 dining,
200 reception guests



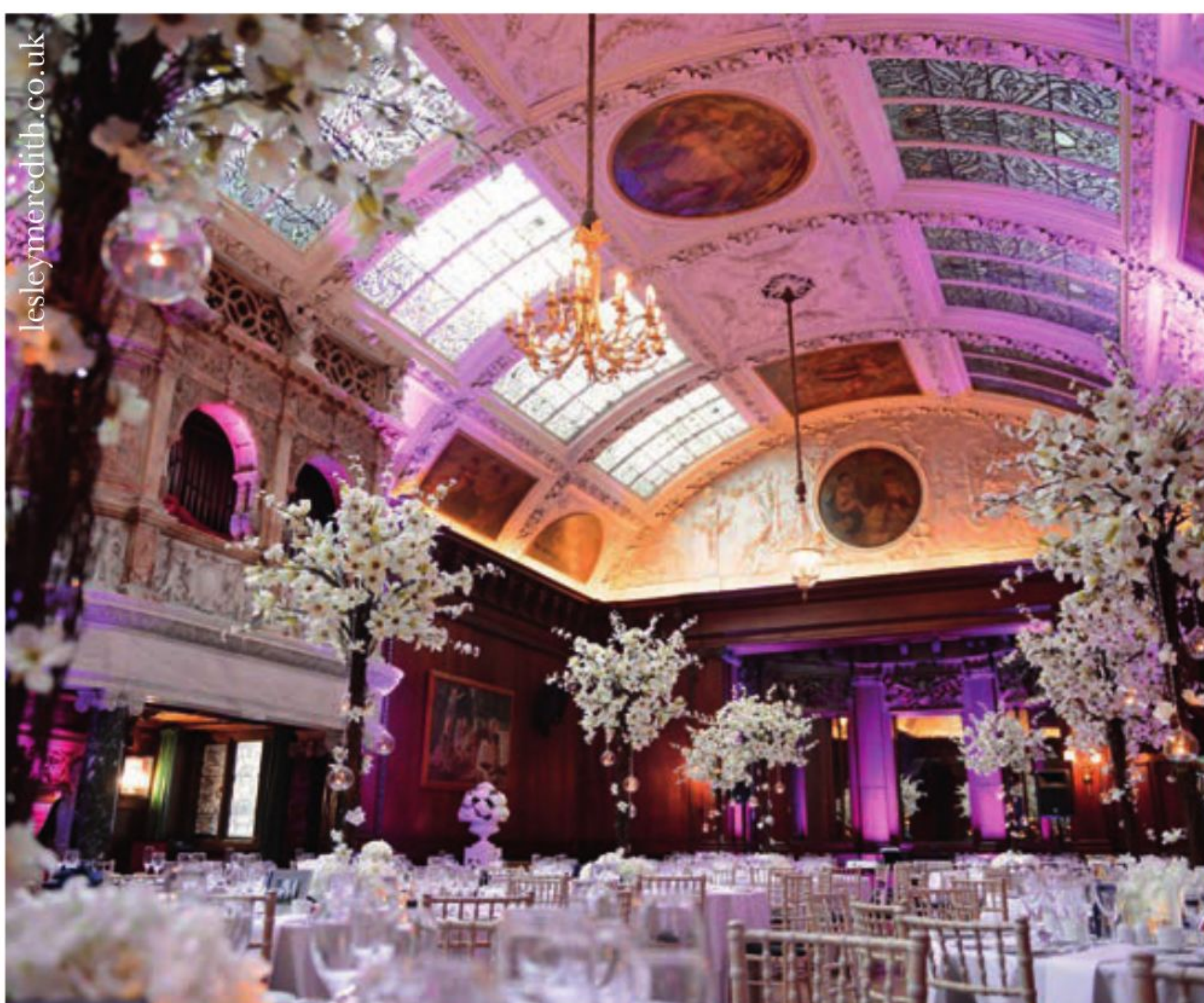
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GUEST LIST

200 dining
and reception
guests



THORNTON MANOR ESTATE & GARDENS

0151 353 1155 | thorntonmanor.co.uk

Thornton Manor is a Grade II listed Elizabethan-style manor house built in the middle of the 19th century. Located in the village of Thornton Hough, the historic estate is set amongst an oasis of rural calm and beautifully presented countryside, with gardens designed by Thomas Mawson. Originally built for Charles William Potts, and occupied by the late Lord Leverhulme, this grand venue exudes enchantment and charm.

The 120 acres of glorious parkland and landscaped gardens

are bursting with features including lakes, meadows, woodland dells and a hand carved bridge, which make for truly stunning backdrops for the all-important photographs.

There are three fabulous locations where you can exchange your vows, as well as a choice of ornate rooms and outdoor settings for entertaining your guests. The early Georgian-inspired Dining Room, overlooking the lime tree avenue is a romantic spot for your "I dos," as is the stunning Music Room, adorned with spectacular wall panelling, elaborate plasterwork and period paintings by Giovanni Cipriani. What's more, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy the Lady Lever bedroom complimentary on the night of the wedding.



GUEST LIST

150 dining, 200
evening guests

TATTON PARK OLD HALL

01625 374 456/57 | tattonpark.org.uk

Tatton Park's Medieval Old Hall survives as its oldest building and is Grade II listed. Built at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, the single storey great hall, lit by tallow candle and flickering firelight still retains the mysterious atmosphere of the Medieval and Tudor periods – a fabulous backdrop for photos.

This hidden gem stands tall within its own walled grounds, amongst a quiet wooded area with a rustic thatched barn, and ample space for dancing the night away in a tipi or marquee. The site itself is a scheduled ancient monument, considered an area of significant historical and archaeological importance in the North West.

The Great Hall, which boasts Medieval tapestries, is an atmospheric spot to exchange your vows. The venue is expected to be licensed for ceremonies by the spring.



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GUEST LIST

160 ceremony,
160 dining, 180
evening guests

**CAPESTHORPE HALL**

01625 861 221 | capesthorpe.com

Capesthorpe Hall is a beautiful, family-owned Jacobean stately home, set in the heart of the Cheshire countryside. The glorious grounds surrounding the Hall include formal gardens, lakes, woodland and parkland, providing an amazing backdrop for wedding photographs. The sumptuous interior boasts a wealth of period features including chandeliers, fireplaces, and ornate Italian paintings and sculptures.

The gorgeous lakeside gazebo provides a stunning spot for al fresco vows, with the tree-lined avenue leading up to it creating a natural aisle. Alternatively, there's further opportunity for open-air

"I dos" in the Courtyard. The intimate family chapel, set within the grounds, can also be used for blessings. The Hall itself is licensed to hold ceremonies in the magnificent Drawing Room, the Queen Anne Room, and the Lakeside Wing.

Drinks receptions are held in the Saloon, which offer views over the West Lawn to the woodland beyond. If the weather is kind, you and your loved ones can wander onto the terrace, which runs along the back of the Main Hall. Evening revelries take place in the Lakeside Wing, with elevated views over the formal gardens and lake.

The venue's caterers offer free menu tasting sessions and it also offers reduced rates on accommodation for you and your wedding party.

GUEST LIST

100 ceremony,
100 dining guests

**ARLEY HALL & GARDENS**

01565 777 353 | arleyhallandgardens.com

Arley is a beautiful and romantic venue whether you're looking for somewhere for a grand wedding or a small and intimate celebration. It's bursting with enormous character, charm and interest, and those who visit are often struck by the warm atmosphere of a family home.

The gardens, thought to be amongst the finest in Britain, are outstanding for their vitality, variety and historical significance,

being particularly celebrated for the magnificent double herbaceous border. Plus, the impressive Quercus Ilex columns, avenue of pleached lime trees, and the furlong walk, fill these amazing gardens with great interest. They've been lovingly created over the last 250 years by successive generations of the same family and offer a blend of traditional design with modern ideas and additions.

Ceremonies can be held in the Hall, the gardens and in the Cruck Barn. The Hall can also play host your reception celebrations, as can the Olympia Building.

Love NATURALLY

Amy and John's wedding theme was rooted in nature

Images courtesy of Jackie King Photographer





The modern world of online dating brought Amy and John together in the first instance. They soon found themselves delighted by each other's general "geekiness," and the more they got to know each other the more mutual loves they discovered, including music, animals, and the countryside to name but a few. "Based on past experience, we were both wary of something coming out of the woodwork, as it all seemed too good to be true, but the moment never came," Amy remembers.

Given Amy's passion for Christmas, John chose December 25th as the day to pop the question. In a bid to surprise his bride-to-be, he wrapped the ring and put it alongside her other presents, which would have been a great plan if Amy hadn't been wise to it. She'd already worked out what was inside the little box and wanted to save the best for last, making it very difficult for poor John to keep his cool. All's well that ends well though: of course, she said "yes," and the venue search was on.

Ness Botanical Gardens was a natural choice for the couple. Amy had been to a wedding there several years before and had fallen in love with it. "The gardens are beautiful, and the wedding set-up feels private and intimate. It's peaceful and relaxed, and the entrance for the bride is incredible. What more could we ask?"

Choosing The Little Fox for the reception was the simplest decision they made throughout the planning process. Amy explains, "It was the place we had our second date and many more after that. It's one of our favourite spots due to its beautiful countryside surroundings, great food, and relaxed atmosphere."

The date was set for 21st September 2019, and we caught up with the bride to find out more about the day...

SETTING THE SCENE

Nature served as the inspiration for the venue's styling, with a colour palette of navy and teal. The centrepieces featured log slices with jam jars full of flowers sat atop, surrounded by little log tea light holders. Amy adores flowers and Vivid Floral Design did an incredible job of including all of her favourites – roses, scented stocks, freesias, wax flowers, and veronica in shades of cream and purple. As you can imagine, not only did they look beautiful, they smelled divine.

The mother-of-the-bride is to thank for many of the lovely little touches. She suggested the navy tablecloths to make the flowers stand out and give the room an air of elegance. She also found the little wood-effect favour boxes, which she filled with Lindor chocolates, as well as the seed packets, which were gifted to guests to continue the nature theme.

The cake topper was one of Amy's favourite styling elements. She says, "It featured an adorable pair of peg dolls, painted to look like us. The suit, dress, hair, and flowers were all personalised to match our wedding. It was too cute for words!"

Amy's mum ran with the natural theme and crafted the seating plan from wallpaper samples, a foam board, string, and printed cards. "She's a clever lady who's watched a lot of Blue Peter," Amy laughs.

LOOKING THE PART

The bride wore a Stella York gown. It was simple and elegant, but Amy



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“Don’t get too bogged down with things. People are there to celebrate with you, not to judge you.”

says, “It was at the back where the drama happened, with a stunning sheer lace boned-corset, satin-covered buttons that went all the way down to the bottom, and lace cut-outs around the edge of the train.”

Wanting to embrace the simplicity of the dress, Amy accessorised with freshwater pearl drop earrings and necklace. She also wore Ruby Shoo shoes and carried a matching handbag for all of those wedding-day essentials.

The groom was dressed in a navy suit, white shirt, grey and blue tweed waistcoat, and tan shoes. His buttonhole varied from the groomsmen, but otherwise, all of the gents matched. They accessorised with teal ties and handkerchiefs.

The couple were keen that their two bridesmaids should both feel happy and confident in what they were wearing, so they chose a different dress for each. Amy says, “They fitted the colour scheme, as well as the personality and shape of each bridesmaid, and they both looked stunning.”

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

What stood out for Amy was her big brother’s reaction to seeing her as a bride for the first time: “He burst out crying when he walked into the room, as did I, then our photographer, Jackie, joined in for good measure!”

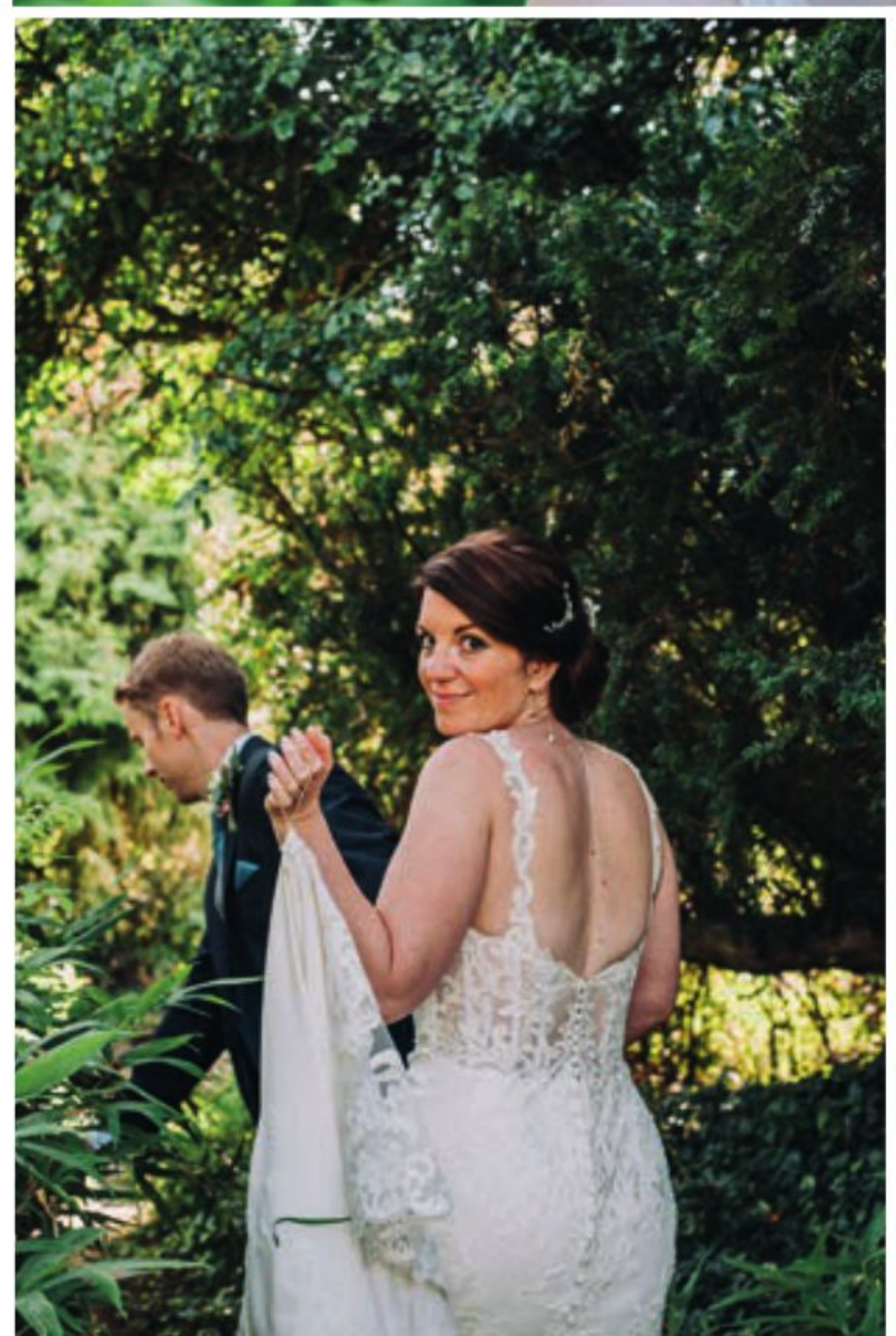
As the bride and her brother set off down the aisle to meet their dad halfway, Amy could see the look of pride on his face as she approached, which is something, she told us, that would stay with her forever. Finally, as she reached her destination beside John, she was met with a look of love and pride, and they couldn’t take their eyes off of each other.

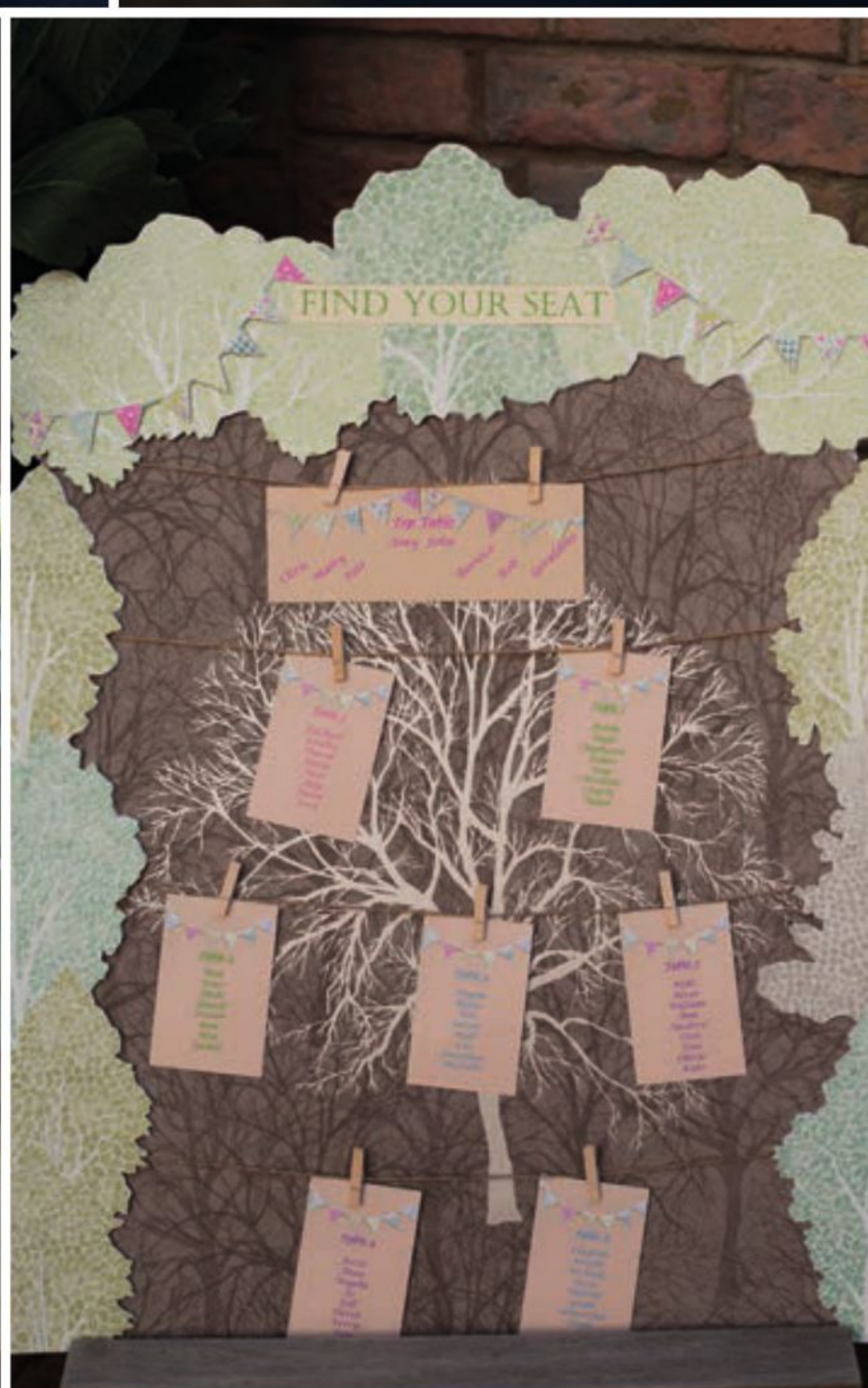
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The couple decided on canapés and drinks at Ness Botanical Gardens, opting for a mix of vegetarian, and meat options. Guests were offered a selection of prosecco, beer or elderflower fizz. The newlyweds selected a three-course menu for the wedding breakfast. Amy recalls, “The food at The Little Fox was incredible. We had amongst our guests vegetarians, vegans, allergies, and fussy eaters, but nothing was too much trouble for the venue, and everyone raved about the food.” A hot buffet was served in the evening, and despite being stuffed from the meal, no one could resist the delicious delicacies on offer.

TIME TO CELEBRATE

The talented Jordan Price played *Fairytale* by Ludovico Einaudi on piano for the bride’s entrance and walk down the aisle, which is one of the couple’s favourite pieces. The pair had worked on background playlists featuring some of their best-loved tracks, to set the atmosphere as guests gathered before the ceremony and later, while they sat down to eat. Family friend and DJ Adam Wakeman got the party started in the evening.





AMY AND JOHN'S LITTLE WHITE BOOK

Ceremony venue and catering, Ness Botanical Gardens, liverpool.ac.uk/ness-gardens

Reception venue and catering, The Little Fox, brunningandprice.co.uk/redfox

Photographer, Jackie King Photographer, jackieking.com

Bride's dress, Cherish The Bride, cherishthebride.co.uk

Hair stylist, Chle Shea Hairdressers, facebook.com/ChleSheaHairdressing

Groom's suit, Peter Posh, peterposh.co.uk

Cake, Marks and Spencer, marksandspencer.co.uk

Cake topper, Crafting Bird UK, etsy.com/uk/shop/Craftingbirduk

Flowers, Vivid Floral Design, vividfloraldesign.co.uk

Stationery, Optimal Print, optimalprint.co.uk

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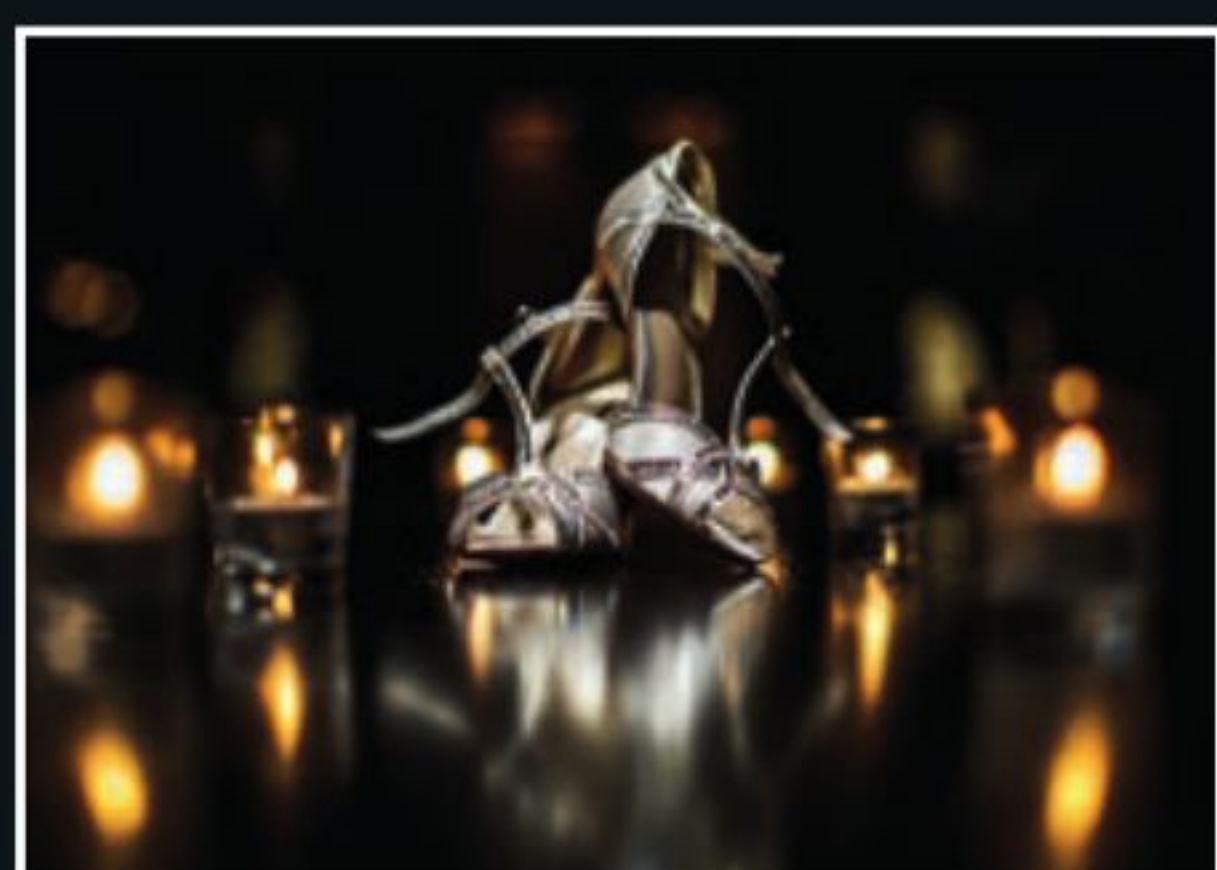
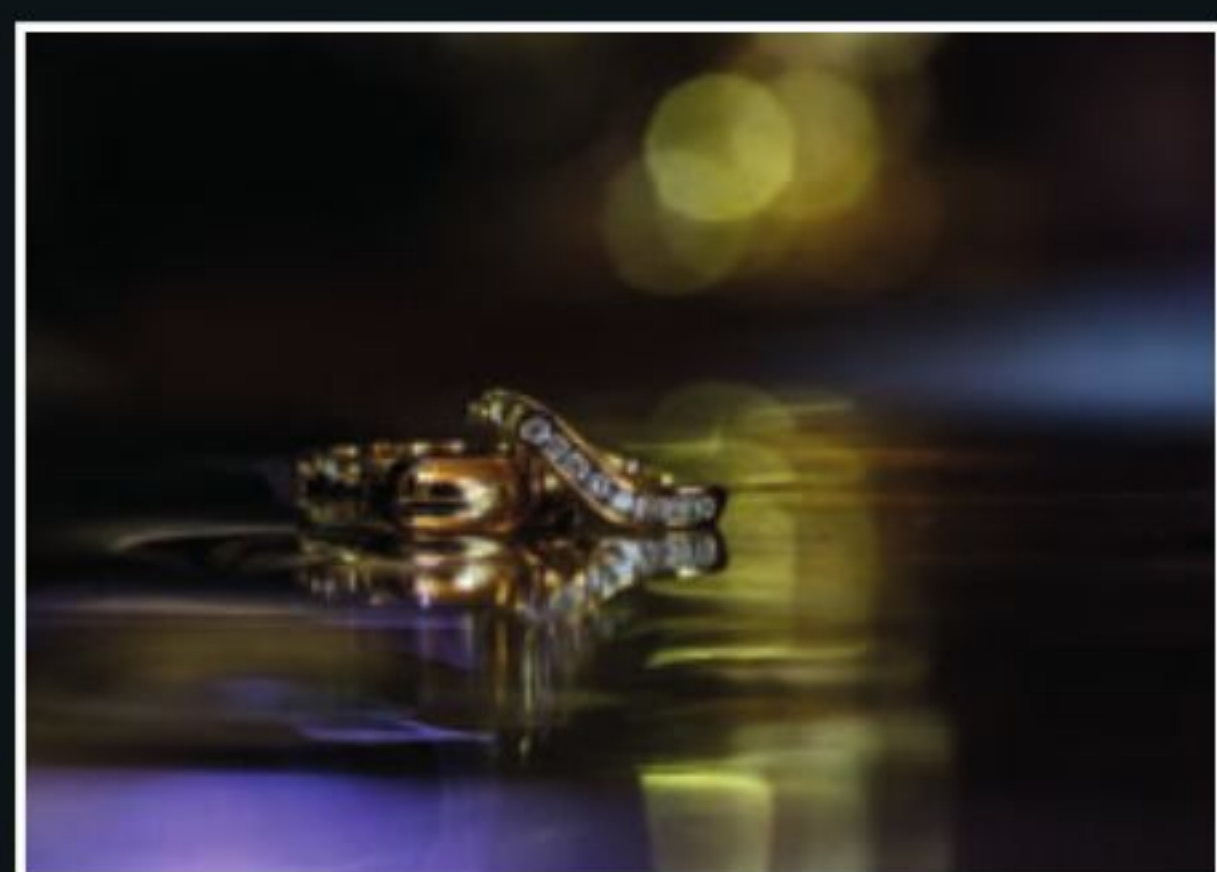
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YOU'LL NEVER *walk alone*

Family was vitally important to Justine and Ian on their personality-filled wedding day
Images courtesy of Bancroft Photography

Justine was out celebrating the festive period with her staff, aka "The Princesses," when she spotted Ian across a crowded room. "He looked really handsome and had a cheeky smile," she remembers. He came over to introduce himself, and they hit it off right away. Justine continues, "We're both very career orientated and run our own businesses." They made plans to meet up the following week for their first date, when Justine made a rookie error in ordering spaghetti bolognese – "I spent the rest of the date with pasta sauce on my chin," she laughs. After that the pair became inseparable.

Ian proposed in New York on a horse and carriage in Central Park. There they were, holding hands, and Justine was admiring the scenery, thinking how beautiful it was, when she felt Ian let go of her hand. She turned around to see why, and found him on one knee with a red velvet ring box, holding the diamond. "Will you marry me, babe?" he asked. "I was just lost for words! It was a complete surprise, and I was in so much shock that I didn't even say 'yes' at first!" Justine recalls. Of course, once she'd managed to catch her breath she gleefully accepted, and they later set the date for 8th August, 2019.

Read on as the bride shares her account of the wonderful wedding day...





*I wore **Riley** by Allure Bridals. It was completely different to what I initially wanted, but when I tried it on, I knew it was the one for me. It was classy, timeless, and sexy. I wore my mother's veil and carried a horseshoe that my Nana Rosie gave to her on her wedding day.*



Ian was dressed in a tails suit. He accessorised with a pink cravat, and waistcoat. The groomsmen wore the same colour tailored suits with grey waistcoats, as did the pageboys.



The bridesmaids wore 1950s-style dresses by British Retro, which were customised by a friend, Monica Welsh, who added tulle for more volume in the circle-skirts. My mum's designer friend, Mark Melia, who made her amazing dress, also added a belt detail.



There were hundreds of roses in our flower arrangements. They looked incredible and the venue staff commented that it was the best they'd ever seen it dressed.



The table plan by Stationery Queen was a beautiful floral mirror with blush glitter. The tables were named after some of our favourite places, including Alma de Cuba (the restaurant where we met), and Le Blanc Spa Resort in Mexico (where we took our first holiday together).



We had flower-filled martini glasses on each table, as well as decorated candelabras fit for a princess, which added to the fairytale theme. These were created by my own team at R'Marnies Party World.



The cake was a gift from my Uncle Alan and his wife, Lesley. He used to be Lord Derby's chef and has cooked for Princess Diana. It had three tiers of fluffy sponge and was beautifully decorated with roses and diamantes. My mum made the cake stand and added the flowers, with help from Debbie, her best friend of over 20 years.



We enjoyed wild boar terrine for starters, followed by roast chicken with potato gratin and seasoned vegetables for main course. We finished with a delicious chocolate torte for dessert. Plus, in the evening there was still room for mini-burgers, and fish 'n' chips. The quality of the food was great – the empty plates were the best compliment.



Our photo shoot with our photographer, Lisa Bancroft, and videographer, Everwood Films, was so much fun. We walked along the docks with cars beeping as they drove past, and tourists wanting pictures.



An amazing violinist, Kate O'Brien, entertained guests prior to the ceremony and played A Thousand Years by Christina Perri as I made my entrance. She also played during the cocktail and canapé reception creating the perfect ambience. She was a dream.



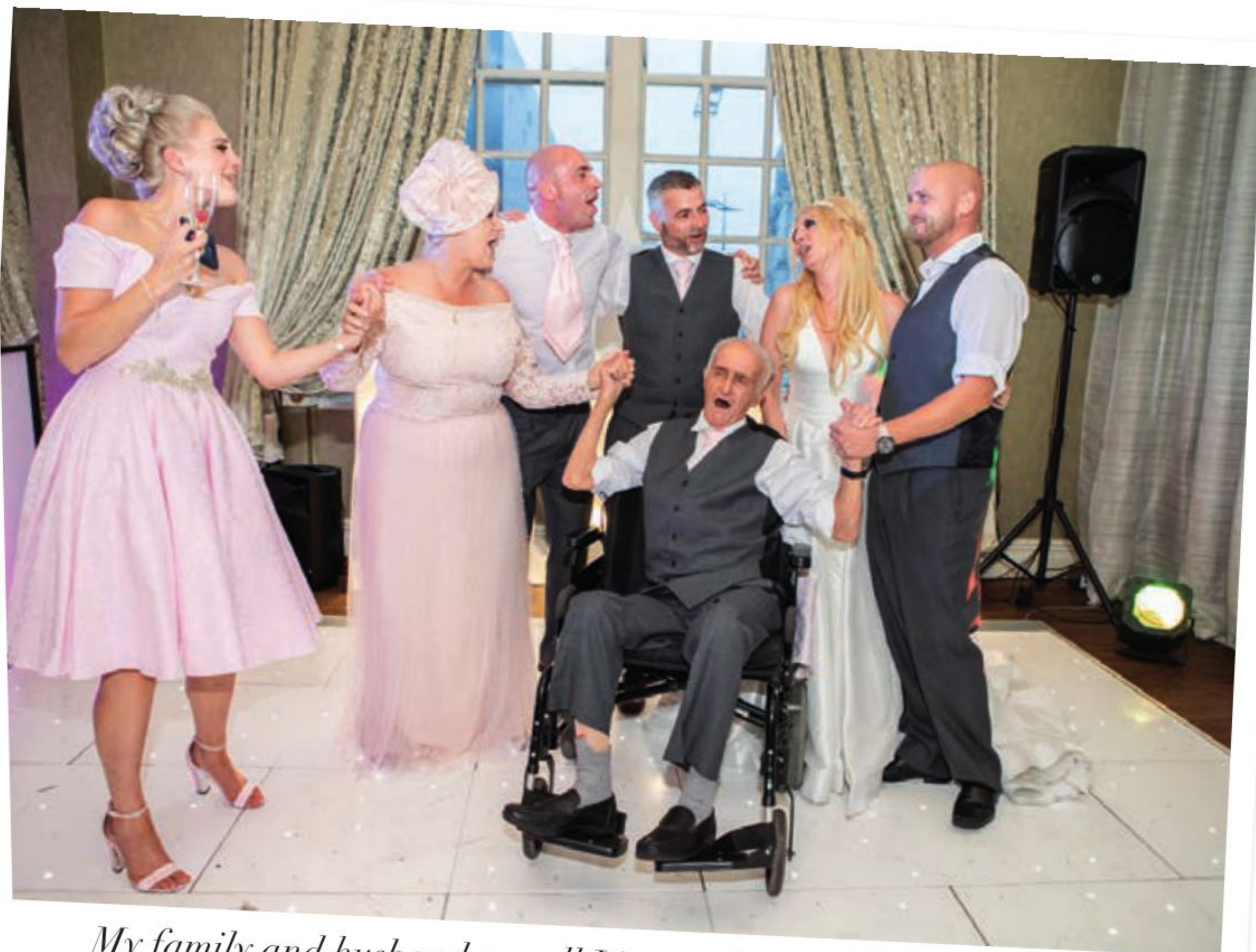
Ian and I performed a comedy dance routine that we'd choreographed in our living room. It began with Best Part Of Me by Ed Sheeran, and then went into Sexy And I Know It by LMFAO, at which point the groom strutted his stuff, and did some Superman press-ups...



...We then went into You're The One I Want from Grease, before finishing with Love Is An Open Door from Frozen, as Elsa is the princess I most often dress as for my party company. It was one of our favourite memories of the day.



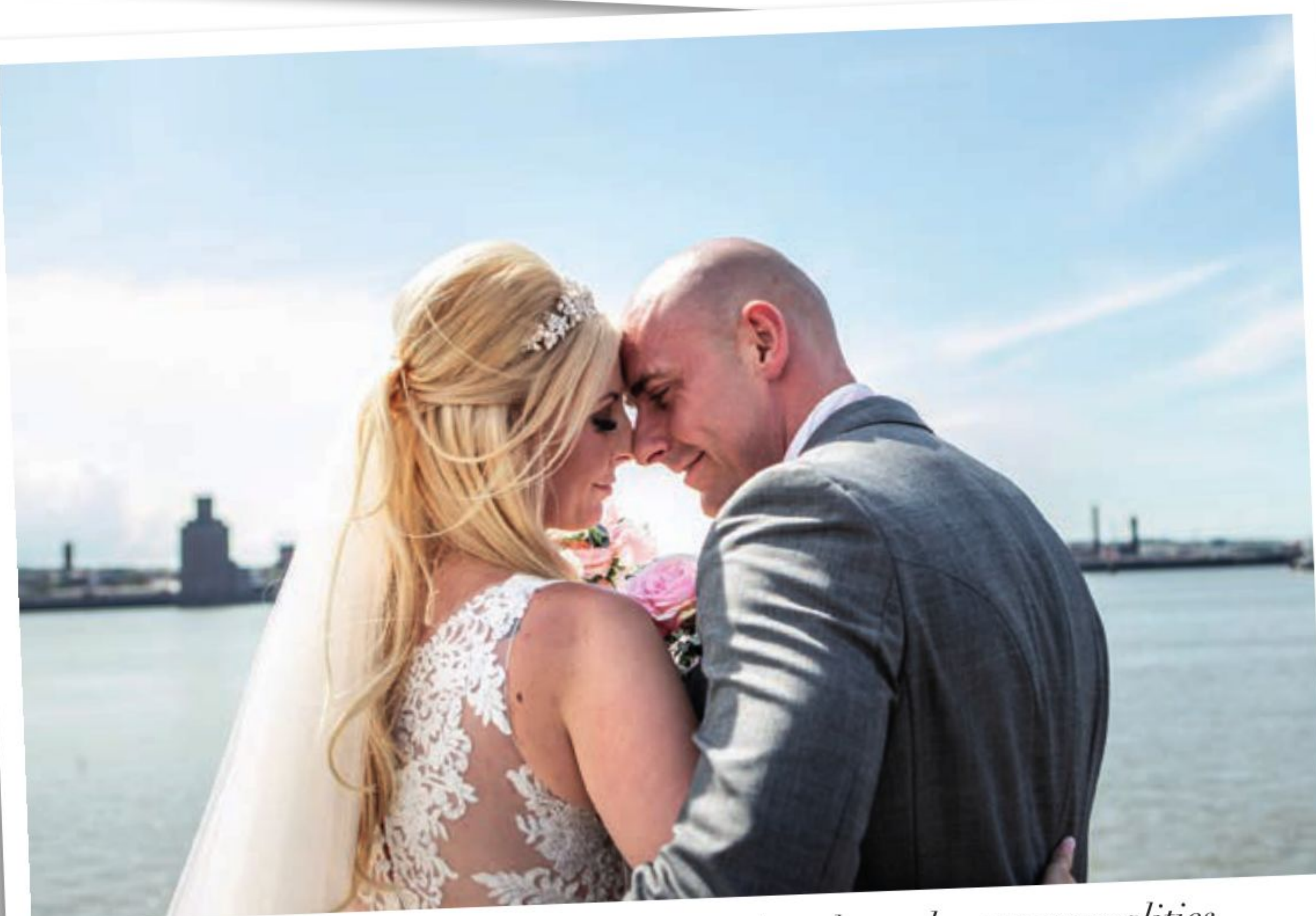
*It was a complete surprise for my husband and guests when I sang **Make You Feel My Love** during the speeches. The toastmaster introduced me and it was the scariest moment of my life, but I'm so glad I went through with it. It was my way of showing Ian how much he means to me.*



*My family and husband are all Liverpool fans, so I had the DJ play **You'll Never Walk Alone** for them as a surprise tribute. My granddad had been poorly so we were incredibly thankful that he was able to make it on the day. He joined us on the dancefloor in his wheelchair to join in the singing, and there wasn't a dry eye in the house!*



The DJ, Lee, was included in the venue's wedding package and was fabulous. He created a playlist based on requests made by our guests prior to the day and the dancefloor was forever full.



It was important to us to have moments that showed our personalities. So, think about what's important to you. Family always comes first for Ian, and myself, so including them in the fun was our main objective.



JUSTINE AND IAN'S LITTLE WHITE BOOK

Venue and catering, 30 James Street, rmstitanichotel.co.uk | **Photographer**, Bancroft Photography, bancroftphotography.co.uk | **Bride's dress**, The Bridal Room, thebridalroomhoyle.com | **Hair stylist**, Leigh Jordan Hairdressing, facebook.com/leighjordanhairdressing | **Make-up artist**, Cathryn Kerwin-Rawlinson, madeupbycathryn.co.uk | **Bridesmaids' dresses**, British Retro, britishretro.co.uk | **Groom's suit**, Slater Menswear, slaters.co.uk | **Flowers and venue styling**, R'Marnies Party World, rmarniespartyworld.co.uk | **Stationery**, Stationery Queen, thestationeryqueen.co.uk | **Entertainment**, Kate O'Brien Violinist, 07889 478 003

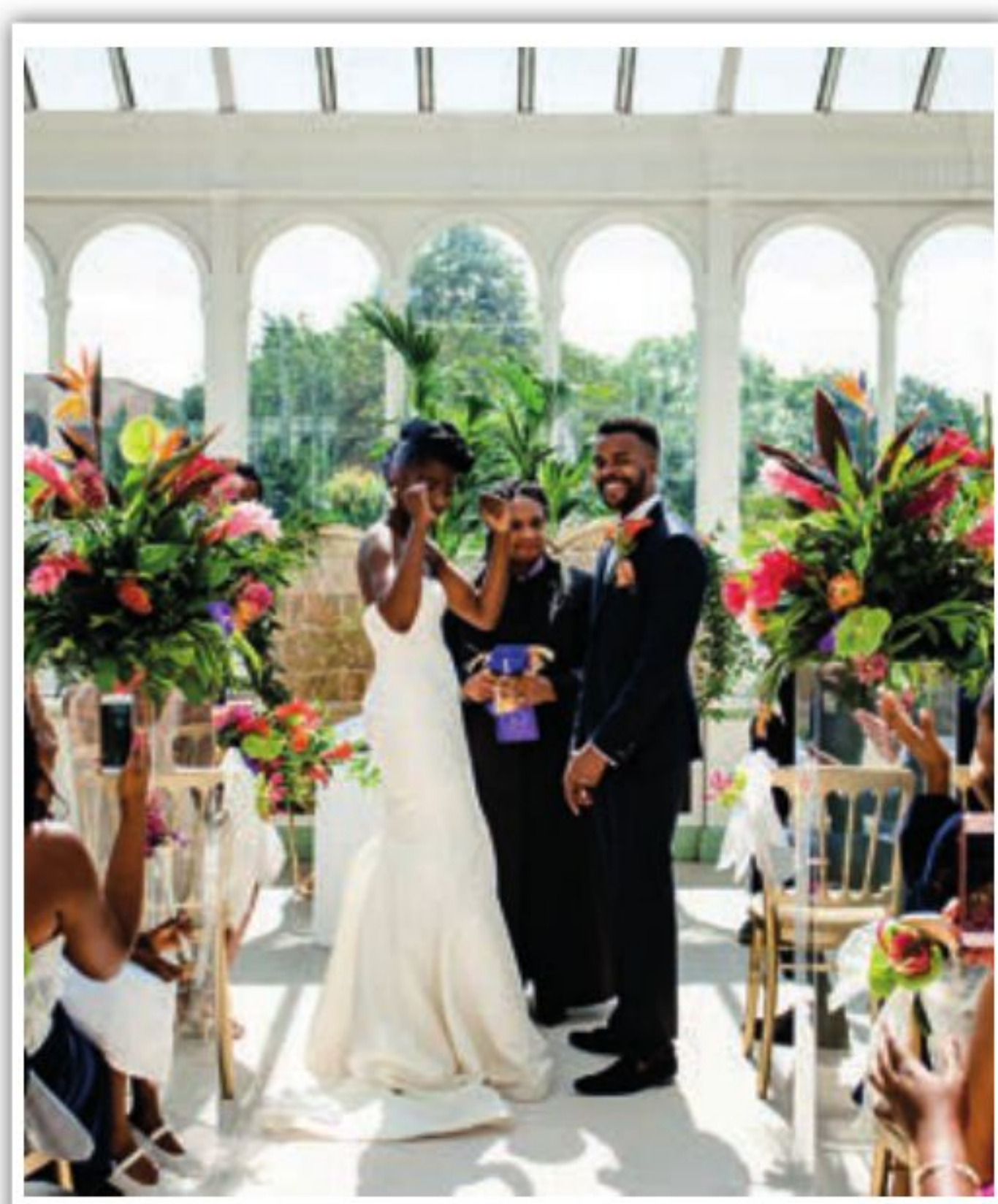
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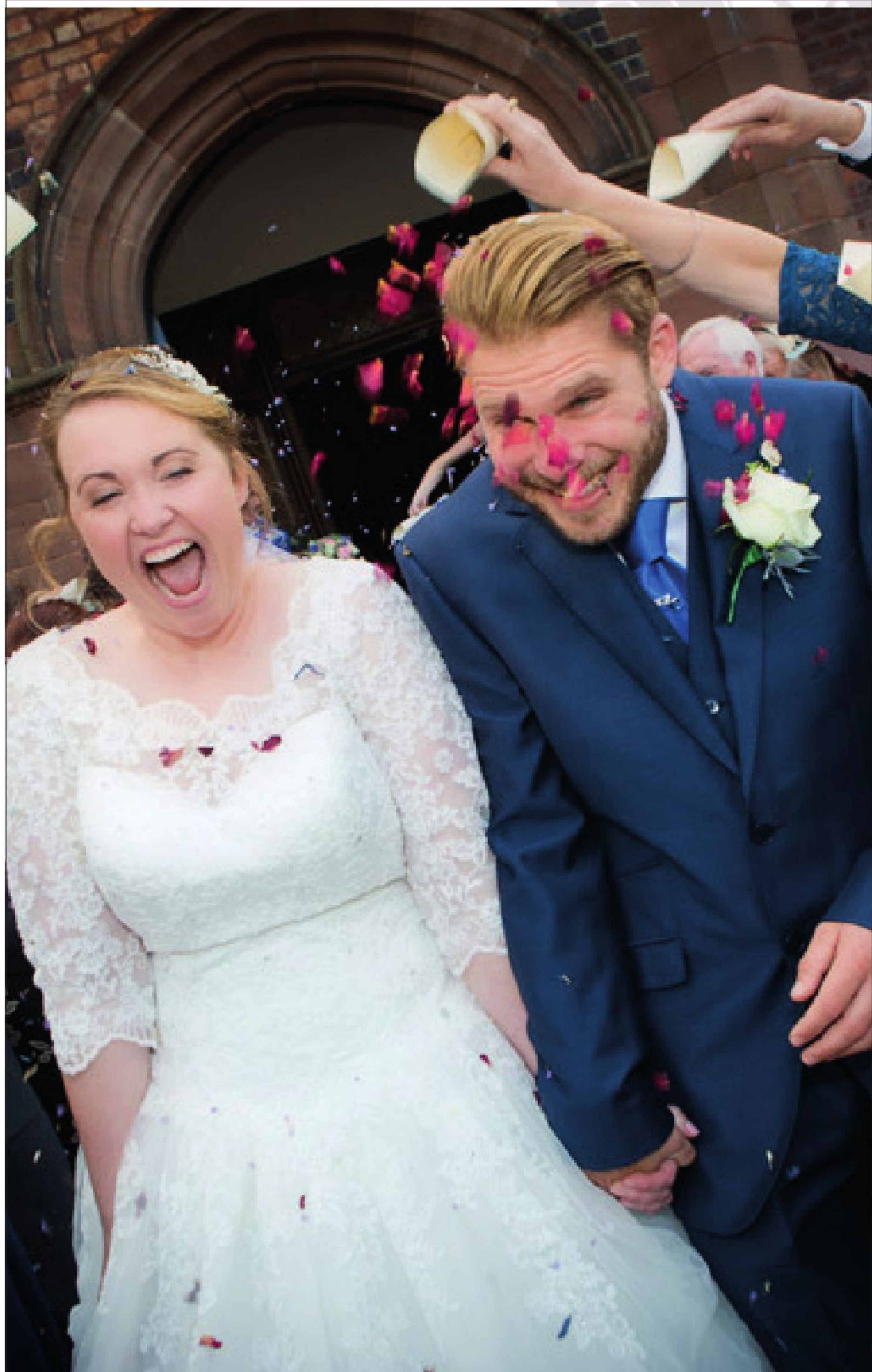
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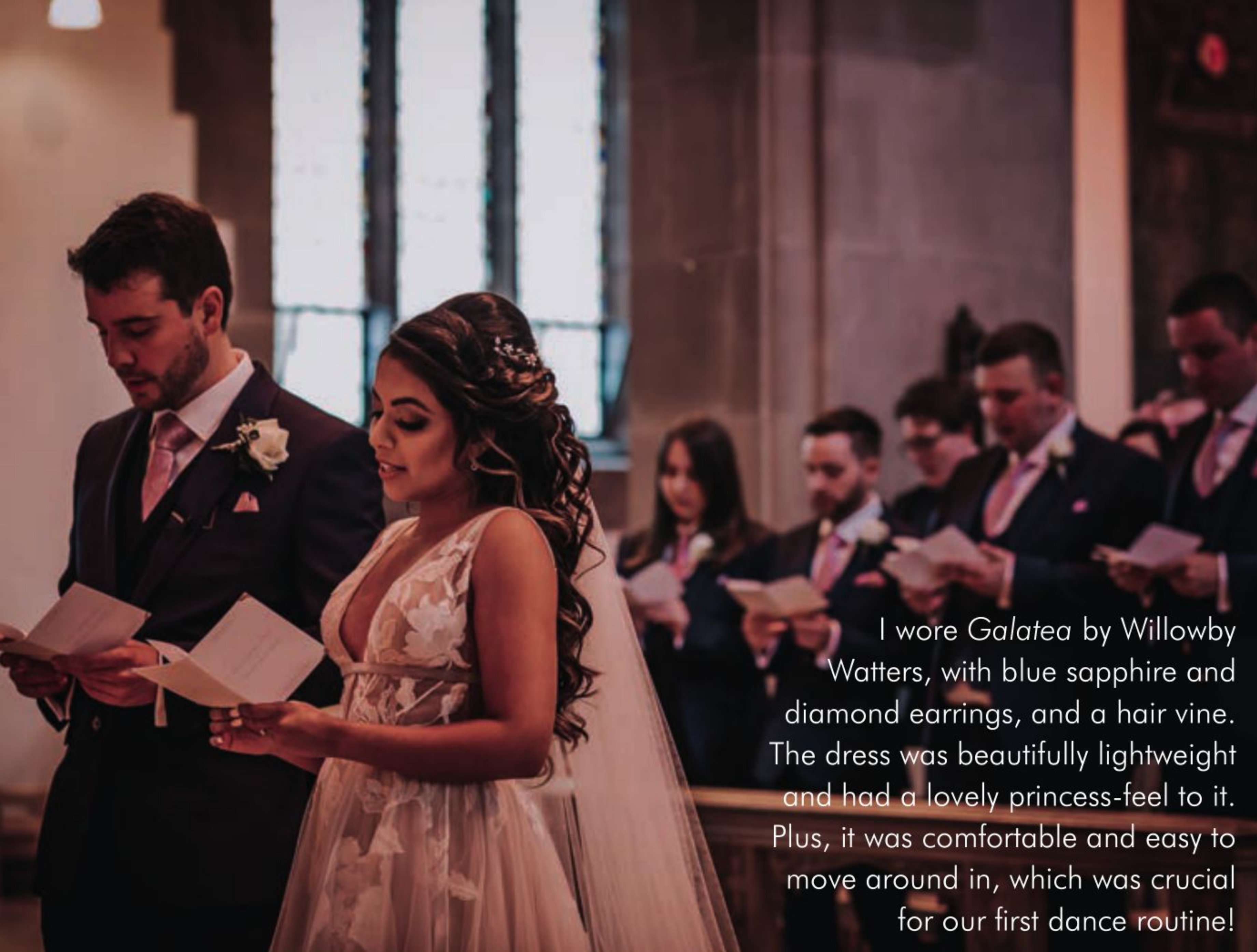
Kiendra and Will tied the knot in the heart of Liverpool on 6th July, 2019

*Images courtesy of
Soulcase Wedding Photography*

When Kiendra moved to the UK from Trinidad and started boarding school in York, she and Will quickly became firm friends. "He was a good-looking troublemaker, who had a thing for geeky Caribbean girls," Kiendra remembers. Although the pair didn't actually start dating until she began attending university in Leeds.

Barcelona is a city that means a great deal to the couple and they try to visit every year. So, it was fitting that Will chose this favourite holiday destination, at the Magic Fountain of Montjuïc, to propose to the love of his life. Kiendra says, "It was a complete surprise, I was blown away!"

Read on as the bride shares her account of the beautiful ceremony at the Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas, and reception at Liverpool's ultra-stylish, Oh Me Oh My...



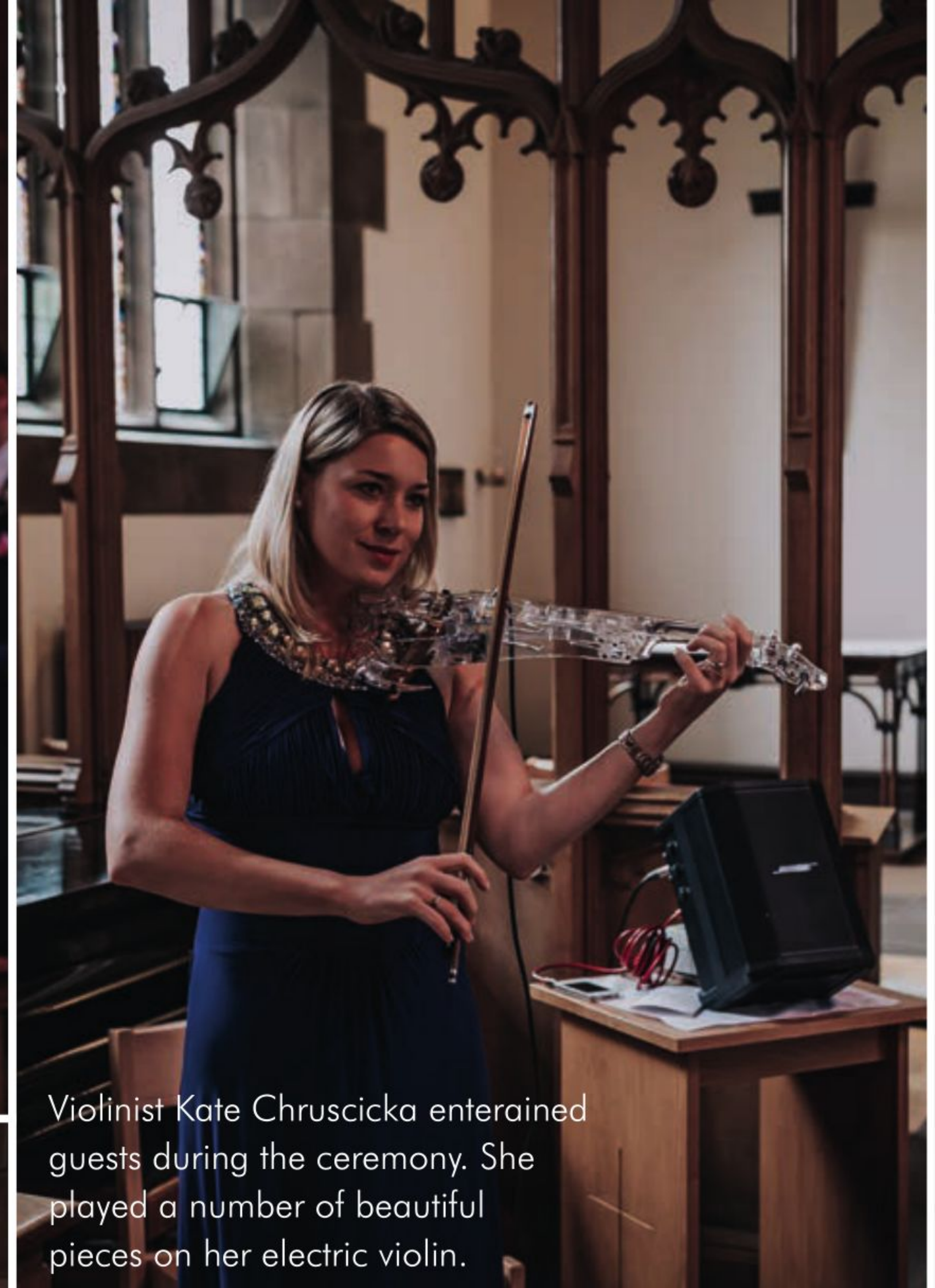
I wore *Galatea* by Willowby Watters, with blue sapphire and diamond earrings, and a hair vine. The dress was beautifully lightweight and had a lovely princess-feel to it. Plus, it was comfortable and easy to move around in, which was crucial for our first dance routine!



We chose dusky blue floor-length gowns for the bridesmaids. They had a lace top and sheer upper back, with a simple silk blue ribbon around the waist.



Will was dressed in a smart three-piece suit. It was dark blue and complemented by a patterned fuchsia-coloured tie. He paired with a double-breasted waistcoat in a slightly darker shade of blue.



Violinist Kate Chruscicka entertained guests during the ceremony. She played a number of beautiful pieces on her electric violin.



Oh Me Oh My was the perfect location for our wedding, as its doors open onto the docks, with a great view of the Liver Building from the rooftop terrace. It's in close proximity to hotels, restaurants and barns, which was an important consideration for us with guests coming over from the Caribbean and other parts of the world.





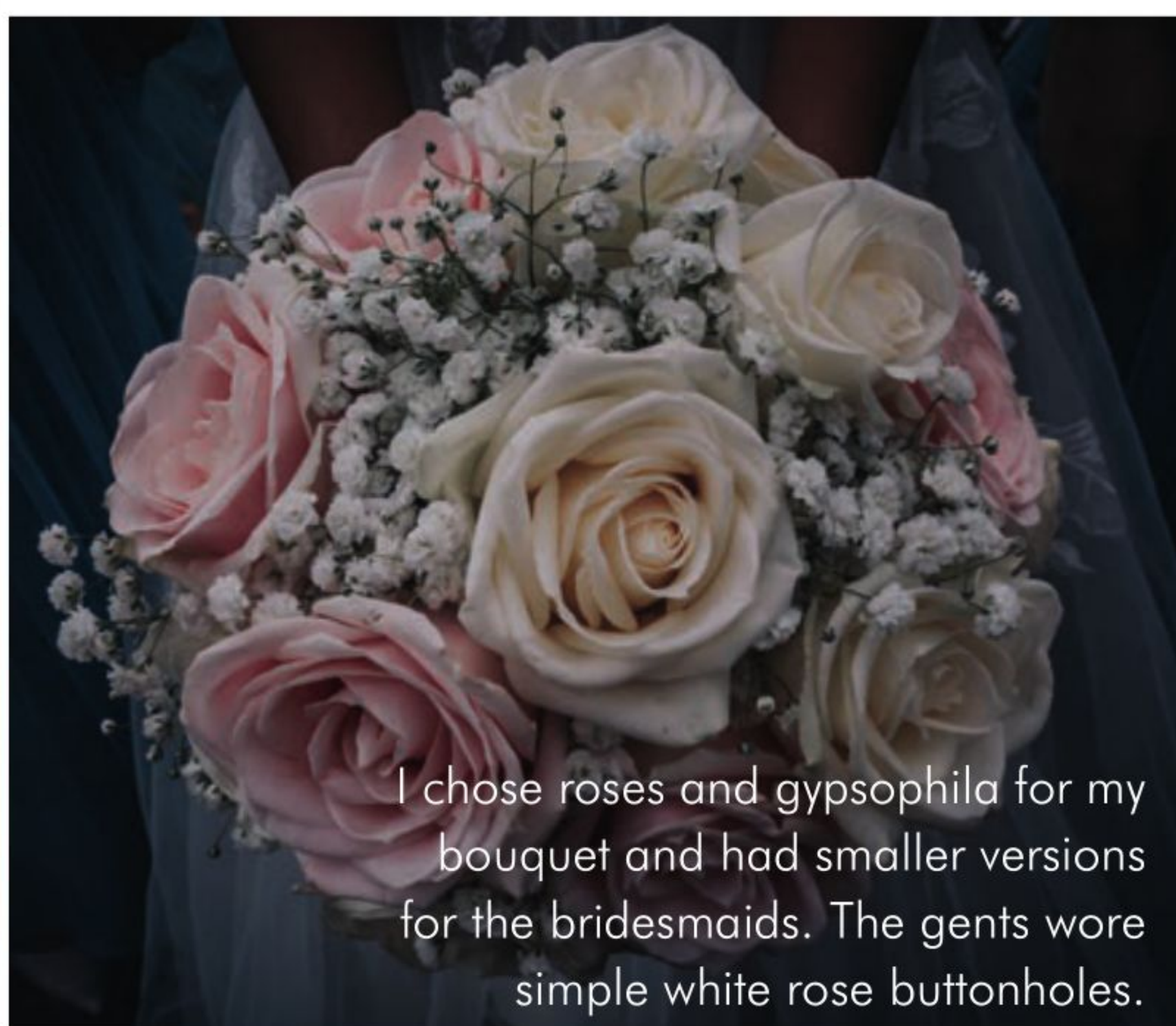
Willow & Fig provided our table plan, which was a large wooden chalkboard – brilliantly in keeping with the rest of the rustic décor.



The centrepieces were large log slices, topped with glass vases, adorned with simple greenery and containing floating tea lights. Our favours were traditional Indian sweets, which we ordered from Ambala sweet shop in Manchester, and presented in small boxes.



The place names were decorated in gold leaf as a nod to our rustic theme, with a touch of opulence. We purchased a set of wine cork holders from Etsy for the table numbers.



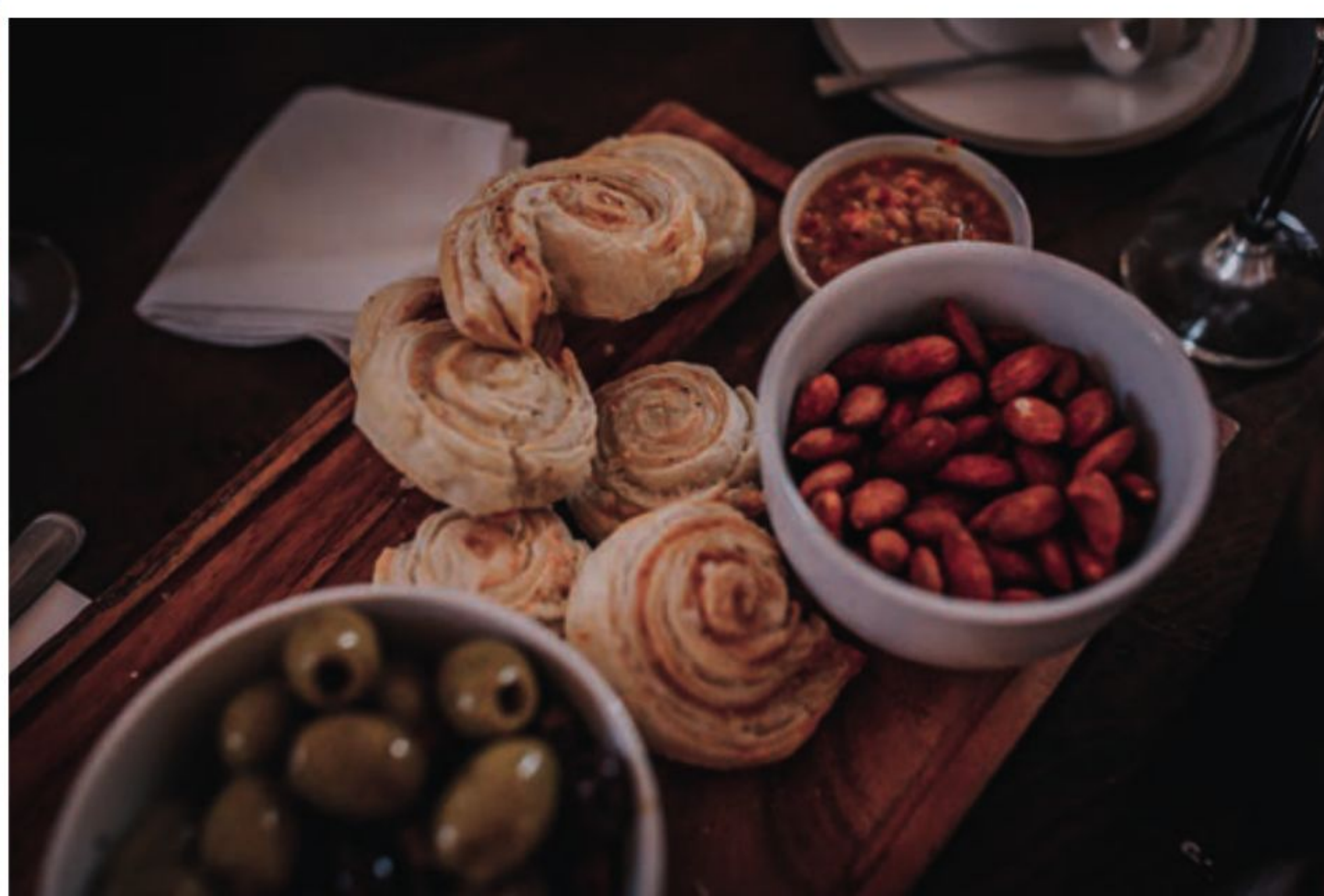
I chose roses and gypsophila for my bouquet and had smaller versions for the bridesmaids. The gents wore simple white rose buttonholes.



Our three-tier cake was flavoured with red velvet, coconut, and white chocolate.



We bought a doughnut wall from eBay and hired a candy cart, light up LOVE letters, fairy lights, suitcases for the cards, flip flop baskets, and bathroom toiletries from Willow & Fig



We love the food at Oh Me Oh My – it's always been a great place to eat in Liverpool. So, the venue provided our daytime catering and we treated guests to midnight snacks from Turtle Bay restaurant in Liverpool for an added Caribbean twist.



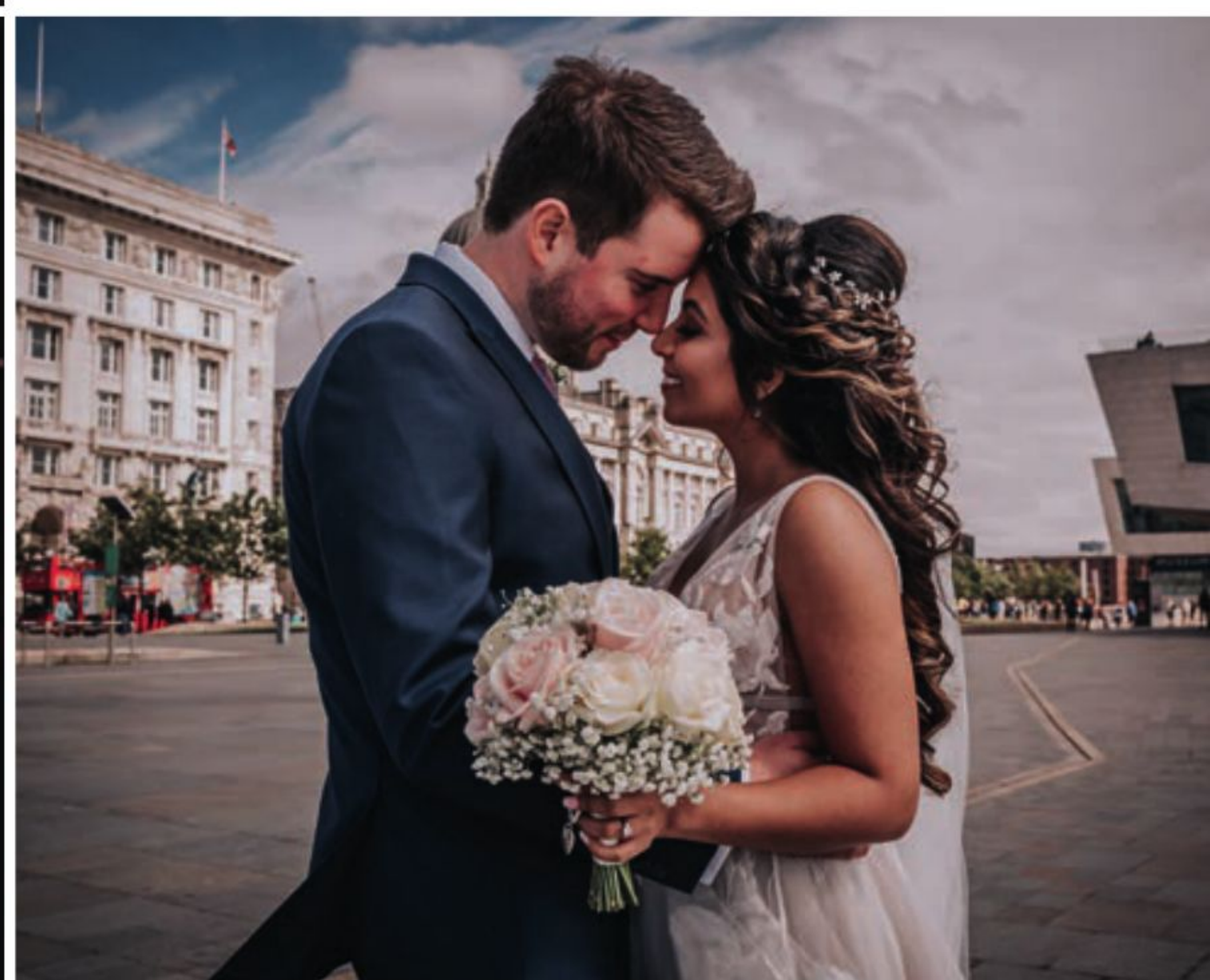
We hired a DJ for the evening celebrations, and provided him with a list of songs to choose from, asking him to improvise as he saw fit. Our friends and family had a great time on the dancefloor. The selfie mirror was also a huge hit with everyone.



We loved the private time we had being driven around the docks post-ceremony, pausing for some scenic photos along the waterfront. We felt like celebrities, as complete strangers kept stopping to take pictures with us.



I think the best part of the day for us was our first dance. We were both terrified, but we'd gotten a few pointers from SugaGill's Dance Classes and it all came together well.



We took a mini-moon to the South of France and Monaco for four days after the wedding, which was all planned by Will. Our official honeymoon was the following November, when we went to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos for three weeks.

KIENDRA AND WILL'S LITTLE WHITE BOOK

Venue, Oh Me Oh My, ohmeohmyliverpool.co.uk | **Photographer**, Soulcase Wedding Photography, thesoulcase.com
Bride's dress, White Closet Studios, whiteclosetstudios.co.uk | **Bride's accessories**, Rocks For Frocks, rocksforfrocks.co.uk
Hair and make-up, Bridal Hair & Makeup of Cheshire, themakeupcheshire.com | **Bridesmaids' dresses**, The Bridal Path, thebridalpath.wedding | **Groom's suit**, Slater Menswear, slaters.co.uk | **Cake**, Vanilla Nova, vanillanovacakes.com
Flowers and prop hire, Willow & Fig, willowandfig.co.uk | **Transport**, Heritage Motors Ltd, liverpoolweddingcarhire.co.uk
Stationery, Sophie Mitchell, etsy.com/shop/sophieklmitchell | **Entertainment**, Kate Chruscicka The Violinist, kateviolin.co.uk | Jay Russell via Jonny Ross Music, jonnyrossmusic.com | **Catering**, Turtle Bay, turtlebay.co.uk | **Videographer**, Julian Voigt Wedding Films, julianvoigtweddingfilms.co.uk | **Selfie mirror**, Liverpool Selfie Mirror, liverpoolselfiemirror.co.uk | **Dance classes**, SugaGill's Dance Classes, facebook.com/sugagillclasses

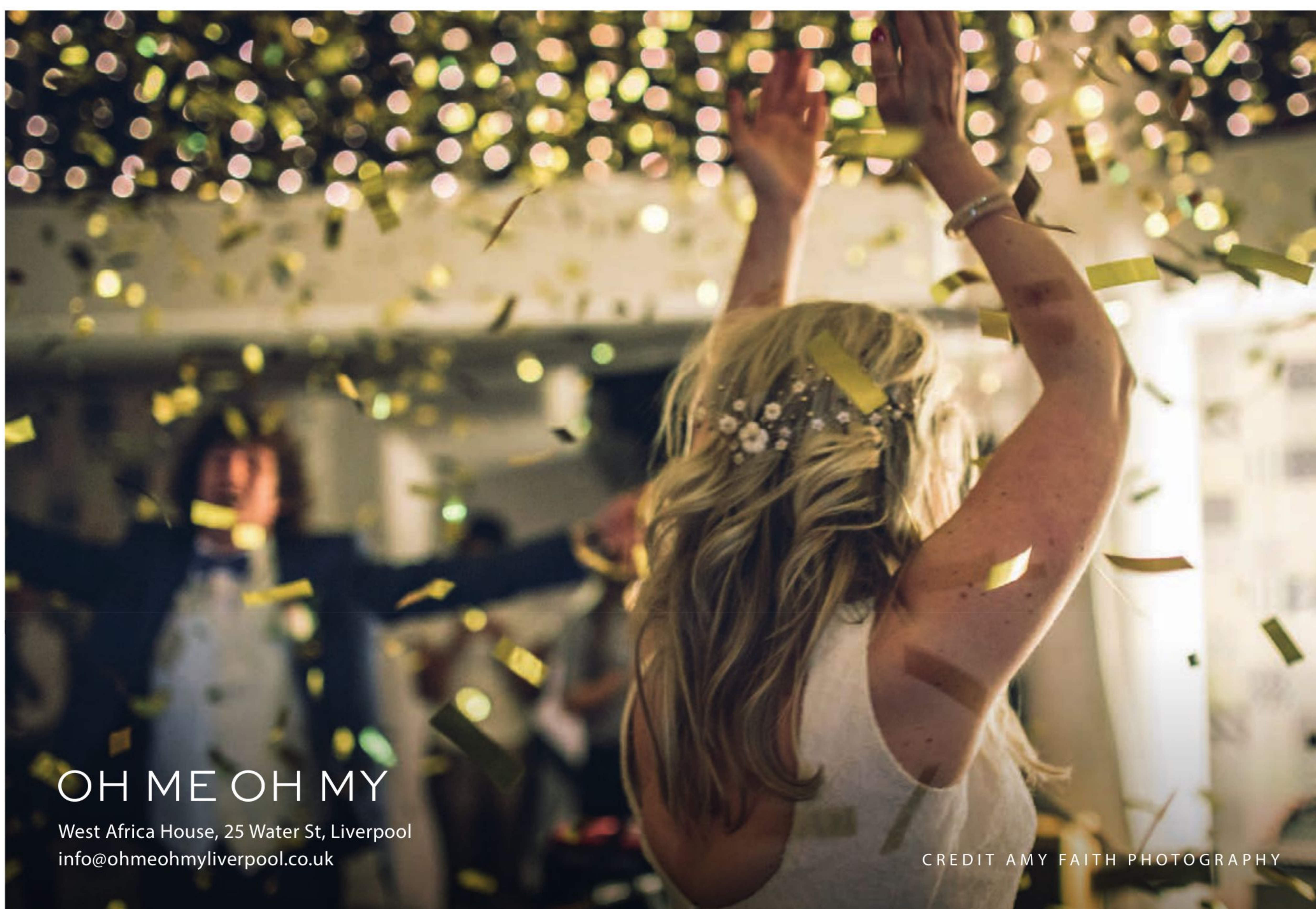


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Images provided by Matthew Rycraft and Sarah Glynn Photography



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Contact: Sue Clement-Evans

GOING FOR gold

To celebrate our 50th issue, we asked some of the region's suppliers to show us their favourite gold-inspired products

peterwynnephoto.com

You'll look every inch the golden goddess in this stunning

headpiece from rocksforrocks.com



Gold-based wedding palettes are best suited to the autumn and winter, featuring heavily in the popular Art Deco theme.

Gold and glitter: what more could you wish for in your elegant handmade wedding stationery?

Check out thestationeryqueen.co.uk

Gone are the days of only finding balloons at children's parties! They're a great way to tie in a colour palette, make for fun table centres, and can be stylishly sculpted into an entrance archway or backdrop.



peterhughesphotography.com

Metallics are still huge this year. Adding gold foil to your wedding stationery instantly adds a touch of opulence. Check out this classy invitation set by dragonflycouturestationery.com

This dainty tiara from thebridallounge.co.uk, which features in our cover shoot, is inspired by nature, featuring delicate butterflies and flowers.

sarahhortonphotography

Glam-up your best gals with these super-chic Hayley Paige bridesmaids' dresses from bellissima-brides.co.uk

Did you know? Gold represents lavishness, luxury, warmth and tradition.

BATHED IN *blooms*

Not so long ago, Susan Simcock of Cheshire-based Florist By Nature, was a lawyer. However, her career path took a completely new direction, off into the wonderful world of wedding and event floristry, when she attended several workshops on the subject during her maternity leave. "I was aware that I'd need to prove what I could do, so I didn't hesitate in gathering together a group of fellow Cheshire girls to work on this exciting photoshoot project at Delamere Manor," she explains.

Sue's floristry style is wild and natural with an emphasis on homegrown and foraged flowers, both for their aesthetic appeal and importantly for their environmentally conscious benefits. She told us: "I love working with locally and naturally-grown materials, and strive to include them in my work as much as possible. In doing so I'm able to bring an organic-feel to my work, as well as reducing my carbon footprint." We're delighted to bring you this blooming lovely celebration of wedding flowers.

Create your own floral
fantasy the
eco-friendly way
*Images courtesy of Sarah
Horton Photography*





THE DREAM TEAM

Venue, Delamere Manor, delameremanor.co.uk | **Photographer**, Sarah Horton Photography, sarahhortonphotography.co.uk | **Flowers and shoot coordination**, Florist By Nature, floristbynature.co.uk | **Dresses and accessories**, The Bridal Lounge, thebridallounge.co.uk | **Hair stylist**, Vicky M Hair, vickymhair.co.uk | **Make-up artist**, Daniella Robinson Ltd, daniellarobinsonmua.com

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CHESHIRE *chic*

We're crazy in love with this local shoot

Images courtesy of Peter Hughes Photography with Arran Cheetham



Oh-so chic and ultra-modern this gorgeous styled shoot exudes 2020 style. Colony HQ's urban vibe contrasts beautifully with its countryside setting, bringing the best of both worlds to any wedding day it hosts.

We fell in love with the bridal looks these wedding aficionados have put together. Indeed, why not change up your look for the evening and slip into something slinkier for the dancefloor? What's more, the model groom's big-day look is totally on trend in tweed with an up-to-date edge.

Bring on the bubbly, we're about ready to raise a toast to a job well done by this fabulous local team.





THE TALENTED SUPPLIERS

Venue, The Colony HQ, thecolonygroup.co.uk

Photographer, Peter Hughes Photography, peterhughesphotography.com

Dresses, The White Closet, thewhitecloset.co.uk

Accessories, Flourish by Victoria Percival, flourishvp.com

Hair stylist, Charlotte Medford Bridal, charlottemedfordbridal.com

Make-up artist, Made Up By Ellé, facebook.com/MadeUpByElle

Suits, Whitfield & Ward, whitfieldandward.co.uk

Cake, Little Button Bakery, littlebuttonbakery.co.uk

Flowers, Springbank, springbankflowers.co.uk

Stationery, Knock Knock Penny Studio, knockknockpennystudio.com

Entertainment, DFC Lancashire, dfclancashire.co.uk

Jewellery, Wongs Jewellers, wongsjewellers.co.uk

Videography, Love Bug Films, lovebugfilms.co.uk

Bespoke signs and decorations, Love Lights The Way, lovelightstheaway.co.uk

Chairs and tables, The Chairman Hire, chairmanhire.com

Models, Gerry Rhodes, India Thomson



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hand to help brides-to-be with
all their planning problems:

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the hunt for a local venue or simply
looking for ideas and advice
- Find local suppliers
- Top planning tips from the pros
- Tell us about your big day for your
chance to appear in the magazine
- Special subscription offers
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FLOREAL fiesta

We quizzed the region's florists on blooms to suit some of the top wedding colour palettes



lisahowardphotography.co.uk

▲ Bright colours bring a fittingly joyous atmosphere to a wedding. "The large head and strong colours of these sunflowers give the top table a strong and striking look," says Gemma Wakerley of Booker Flowers & Gifts (bookerflowersandgifts.co.uk)

▼ This opulent jewel-toned bouquet features stunning fuchsia pink roses, and vibrant plum-hued dahlias. Pair with plenty of eucalyptus, or other grey-green foliage to soften.



labcaufleurs.co.uk, couple.ie



FLOWERS

▲ This riot of colour uses contrasting hue harmonies, working together to create an eye-catching bouquet.

kevinbrownphotography.co.uk.
Flowers by fantasyweddings.biz



Bold and beautiful



▲ Use bold and vibrant blooms in your centrepieces to brighten and bring a neutrally decorated space to life.

rachelclarkweddingphotography.co.uk.
Flowers by karenashop.co.uk





blueskyjunction.co.uk



stevefanstone.com

▲ This palette of pale pink, dusky blue and lilac used by Rachel at La Beau Fleurs (labeaufleurs.co.uk) complemented the bridesmaids' dresses beautifully.

▲ Creating this beautiful bouquet was a labour of love for Gemma of Booker Flowers and Gifts (bookerflowersandgifts.co.uk). "The pastel colours mixed with papery delicate wild flowers go so well together," she says.

▼ The soft florals and greenery used in this bouquet give it an antique charm and character. "The use of pastel-hued roses and varied eucalyptus adds depth to the design," says Susan Simcock of Florist by Nature (floristbynature.co.uk), it's creator. "The foliage gives variances of green and grey in order to keep the look simple and elegant, with an organic feel," she adds.

Pale and interesting

Peonies are an all time favourite with brides. Thanks to their soft romantic petals and subtle hue. These fabulous flowers are said to bring good luck and prosperity to newlyweds, so it's no wonder they're so popular. But take note, they have a very short season, from April through June. So, you may want to have a back-up plan in case they're not available – English garden roses are a great alternative.



▼ What better way to reflect romance than with soft pinks and white? You could also consider incorporating flowers that have a special meaning to you both, and make sure love is truly in the air with highly scented varieties such as roses, sweet peas and freesias.

sarahhortonphotography.co.uk



tanyadaviesphotography.com for
labeaufleurs.co.uk





martisan.co.uk



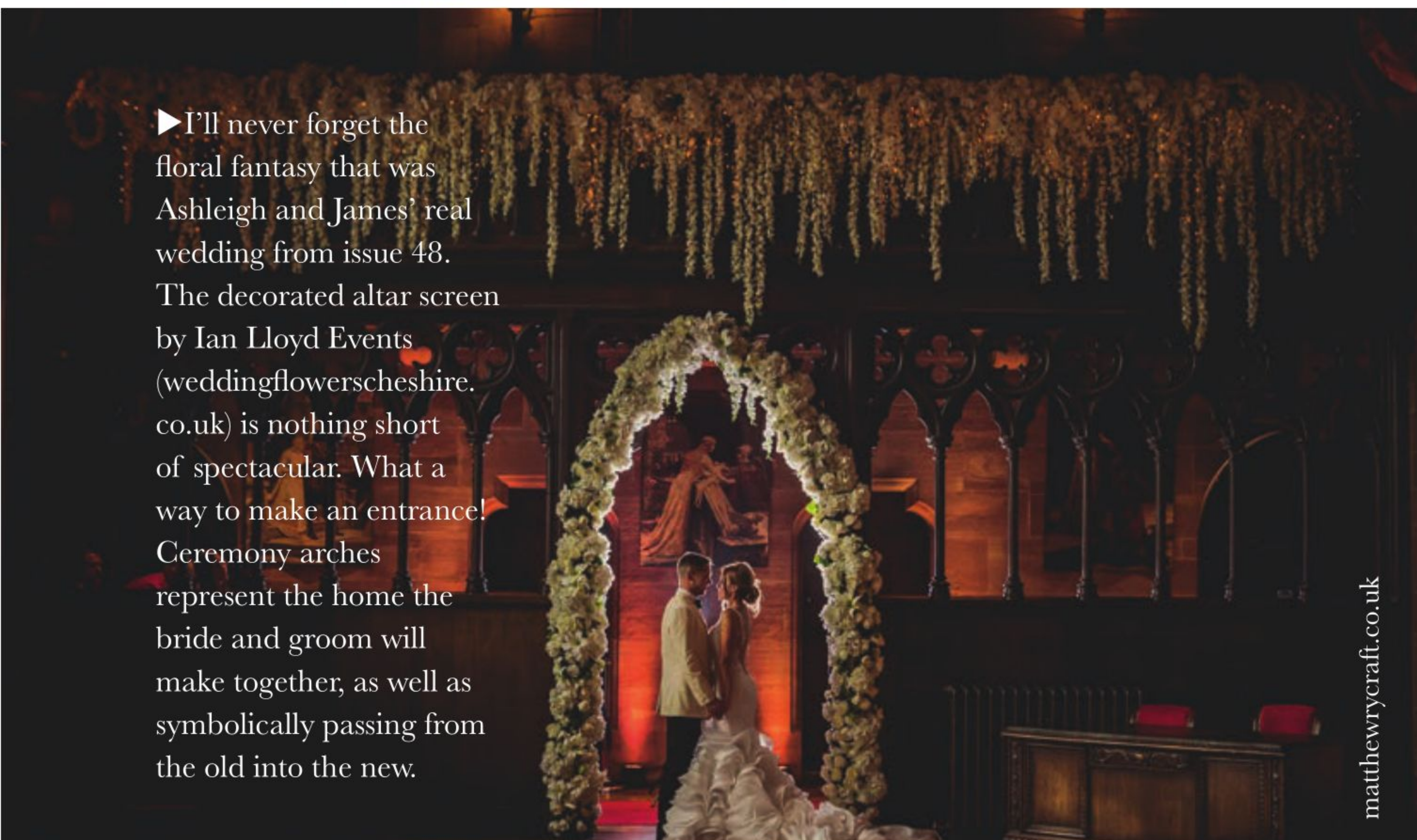
rachelryanphotography.co.uk

Stay neutral

◀ This bouquet, carefully crafted by Booker Flowers and Gifts (bookerflowersandgifts.co.uk), shows how the current popularity of all white floral designs can be brought to life with the addition of greenery and different textures, to give a lovely modern feel, even with a traditional shape.



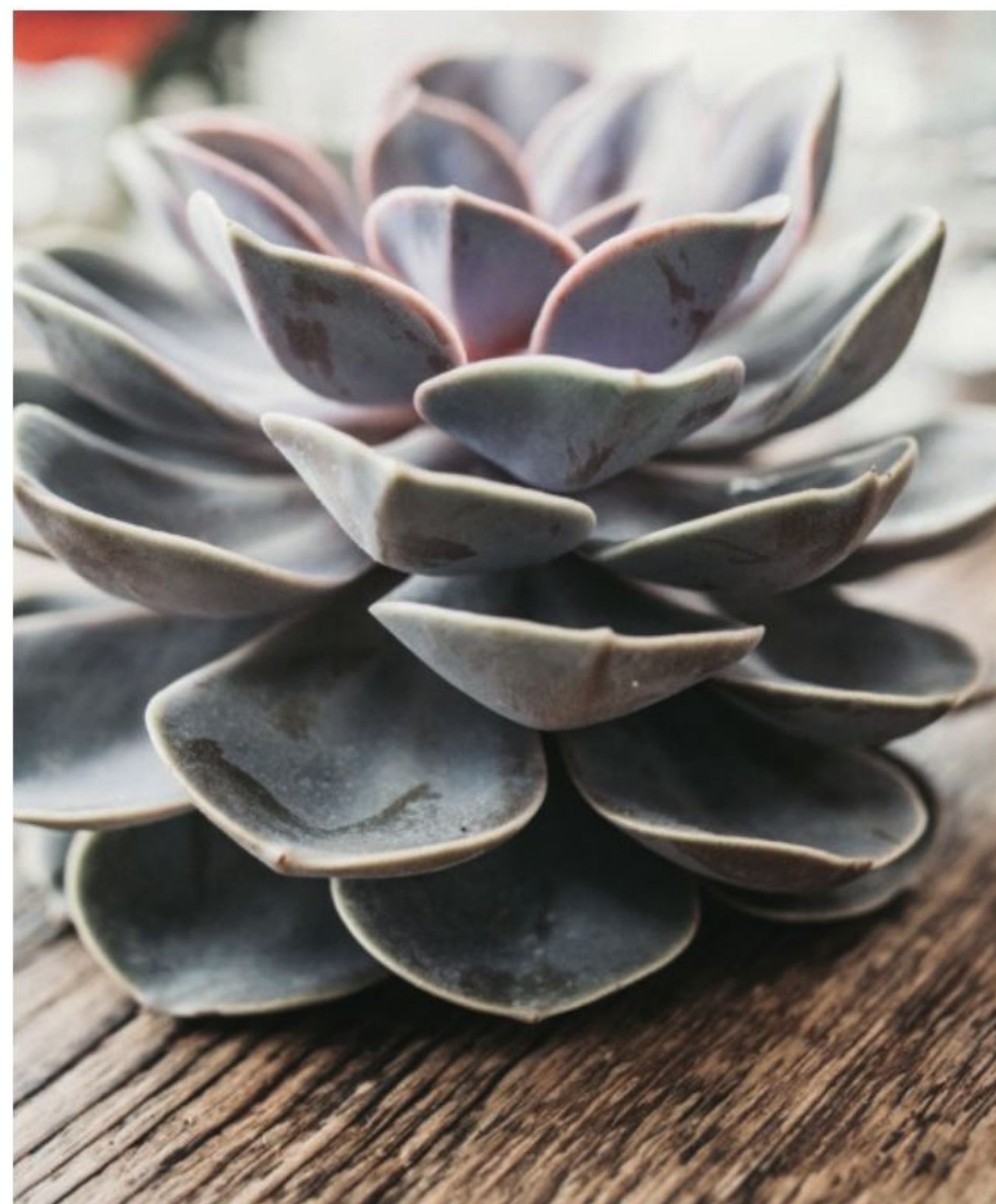
sarahhortonphotography.co.uk



matthewrycraft.co.uk

▶ I'll never forget the floral fantasy that was Ashleigh and James' real wedding from issue 48. The decorated altar screen by Ian Lloyd Events (weddingflowerscheshire.co.uk) is nothing short of spectacular. What a way to make an entrance! Ceremony arches represent the home the bride and groom will make together, as well as symbolically passing from the old into the new.

Succulents are hot property in the wedding world, in part because they're evergreen and available all year round. A little potted succulent makes for a lovely wedding favour for your guests, and they suit a multitude of palettes. We adore them as part of a wintry white and grey arrangement. Gorgeous! ▶



rachelclarkweddingphotography.co.uk for labeaufleurs.co.uk



sarahhortonphotography.co.uk. Flowers
floristbynature.co.uk

▼ Bride Michaela, who featured in issue 47, carried this simple and oh-so cute gypsophila bouquet. These are also great as bridesmaids' posies, the perfect complement to a bridal bouquet that contains sprigs of the delicate little flower. They also work well as rustic-chic centrepieces when placed in jam jars.



chelseashoesmith.co.uk. Flowers: Precious Things
Event Styling



LET'S celebrate!

Jane Barbeary, Member of the Associations of Independent Celebrants, shares what's new in this increasingly popular service

You've named the date, booked the venue, and decided what to call your twitter hashtag for the big day... but the important bit, the actual promises you make to the love of your life, are pretty much the same words used by every other couple getting hitched.

There's not a lot of wriggle room for clergy or registrars to really personalise a ceremony to reflect you, as a couple. The laws that govern marriage date back to 1836, and the language used in ceremonies remain in line with those traditions.

There's something comforting about familiar wording and ceremony and, if that's what you prefer, then that's a great choice. But if the words don't feel personal and relevant to you, there is an alternative. Modern celebrants write and deliver bespoke ceremonies that tell your story as a couple. We can't legally marry you – yet – the Law Commission is currently looking into that – but what we can do is give you a truly unique and personal ceremony that you, and your family and friends, will remember and cherish for many years to come. We can also write and deliver civil partnership ceremonies, wedding vow renewals and baby naming ceremonies, to your specifications.

It's worth knowing that the Law Commission has decided that the

marriage laws are not keeping pace with modern Britain, and need to change. They're looking at making the system simpler, fairer and cheaper. As it stands you can only marry in a church, register office or approved venue. The commission says this can be restrictive and expensive, and it's looking to remove some of the red tape to give couples more choice, whilst still maintaining the dignity of marriage. If the changes go ahead, you could get married on water, in a field or in your own back garden!

They're also considering changing the rules to allow humanists and independent celebrants to conduct legally binding ceremonies in England and Wales. That's hopefully to come but right now, once you've done the legal bit which can be inexpensive at a register office midweek, you can go ahead with your ceremony your way! It's also not a requirement to exchange rings when you complete the legal formalities, so that can also be done with your celebrant.

Your ceremony can be as simple or as extravagant as you'd like it to be. If you're stuck for inspiration, celebrants have lots of it. You can have guests giving readings, live music or favourite songs played. You might want to include children, pets or join the latest

trend of hiring in alpacas as ring bearers!

We will write your entire ceremony, including your vows or promises to each other, once you've told us all about your story. Some couples prefer to write their own vows, but would like the celebrant to read them aloud. It's entirely up to you, there are no hard and fast rules. We can deliver a ceremony anywhere that's special to you both. It could be a forest glade, a stately home or the pub garden.

There are many 'symbolic actions' you can include in your ceremony, if that's what you'd like. These are becoming increasingly popular and are a great way of getting your guests involved too. Here are just a few examples you might want to ponder over...

JUMPING THE BROOM

This is an ancient tradition used in many cultures in past centuries, when couples literally jumped over a broomstick together to marry. The 'leap of faith' symbolises how much you love each other, as you jump into your future together. Two guests can hold the broom a few inches off the ground. The couple close their eyes, everyone counts to three, and the guests lower the broom to the ground as the couple jump over it.

SAND CEREMONY

This symbolises the coming together of two individuals to make one loving couple. Two glass vases of coloured sand are poured into a third vessel to symbolise the blending of your lives together. Just as the coloured grains can no longer now be separated, so your lives are now as one.

HANDBASTING

This is a traditional Celtic ritual and it's the origin of the expression to 'tie the knot'. You hold hands, usually at the pulse points, and the celebrant ties them together, loosely, with ribbons or braids. This signifies the binding

of your lives together. The type of braid used can be very personal, so for example if you met at school, you might want to use an old school tie, or particular colours that have significance to you. This can be a good point in the ceremony to make promises or vows to one another.

LOVE LETTERS

You put your feelings for each other on paper. You then read it aloud or give it to your partner or celebrant to read. Alternatively, you could put them in a memory box, seal it, and open it on your first anniversary. A lovely way to remember your special day.

RING WARMING

Before rings are exchanged they can be passed around your guests on a small cushion or in a box. Each guest holds them for a few seconds and makes a silent wish for the couple. When the rings are returned, they hold all the love and hopes for the future from family and friends.

STONE CEREMONY

In past centuries couples couldn't always afford wedding rings, so they cast a stone into a nearby river or ocean to symbolise staying together as the water ebbed and flowed throughout their lives.

In the absence of any handy water nearby, you can toss stones with your names etched on them into a bowl of water. They can be retrieved later and taken on honeymoon where hopefully you'll find some water!.

UNITY CANDLES

Candles represent light and hope, and lighting one together symbolises your union, and hopes for the future.

So it really is all up to you. Working together with a trained celebrant can make your day unique, personal, fun and best of all a memory to live with you, your family and friends forever. The Association of Independent Celebrants list celebrants across the UK. Most will be happy to talk through your ideas free of charge before you make your decision. Let's do it..... let's celebrate!

Belle OF THE BEACH

Feel the wind in your hair and sun on your back as you enjoy these images captured at Crosby Beach, Ainsdale

Images courtesy of Matthew Rycraft Photography

We were delighted when the opportunity came along to feature our beautiful real wedding bride Ashleigh, from issue 48, once again. She's pictured here with her beloved grey Irish sports horse, Riley – we're told the pair have been practically inseparable for the last 10 years.

Photographer, Matthew Rycraft says, "Ash and I spoke about doing a shoot with Riley even before she booked me for her wedding. For a long time I've had visions of a magical horse and bride shoot set on a beach. Being a wedding photographer, the only way I'd ever want to photograph a scene would be bridal." So, a local boutique stepped in to lend a hand with a gorgeous gown, and Matt called upon friend and fellow wedding supplier, Laurie, to create a garland for Riley.





REGIONAL SHOOT |



SHOOT CONTRIBUTORS

Photographer, Matthew Rycraft Photography, matthewrycraft.co.uk | **Dress**, Boutique Brides, boutiquebrides.co.uk
Flowers, Flowerstyle by Laurie, flowerstylebylaurie.co.uk | **Headbands**, The Style Cove Moy, facebook.com/thestylecovemoy |
Model, Ashleigh Morgan

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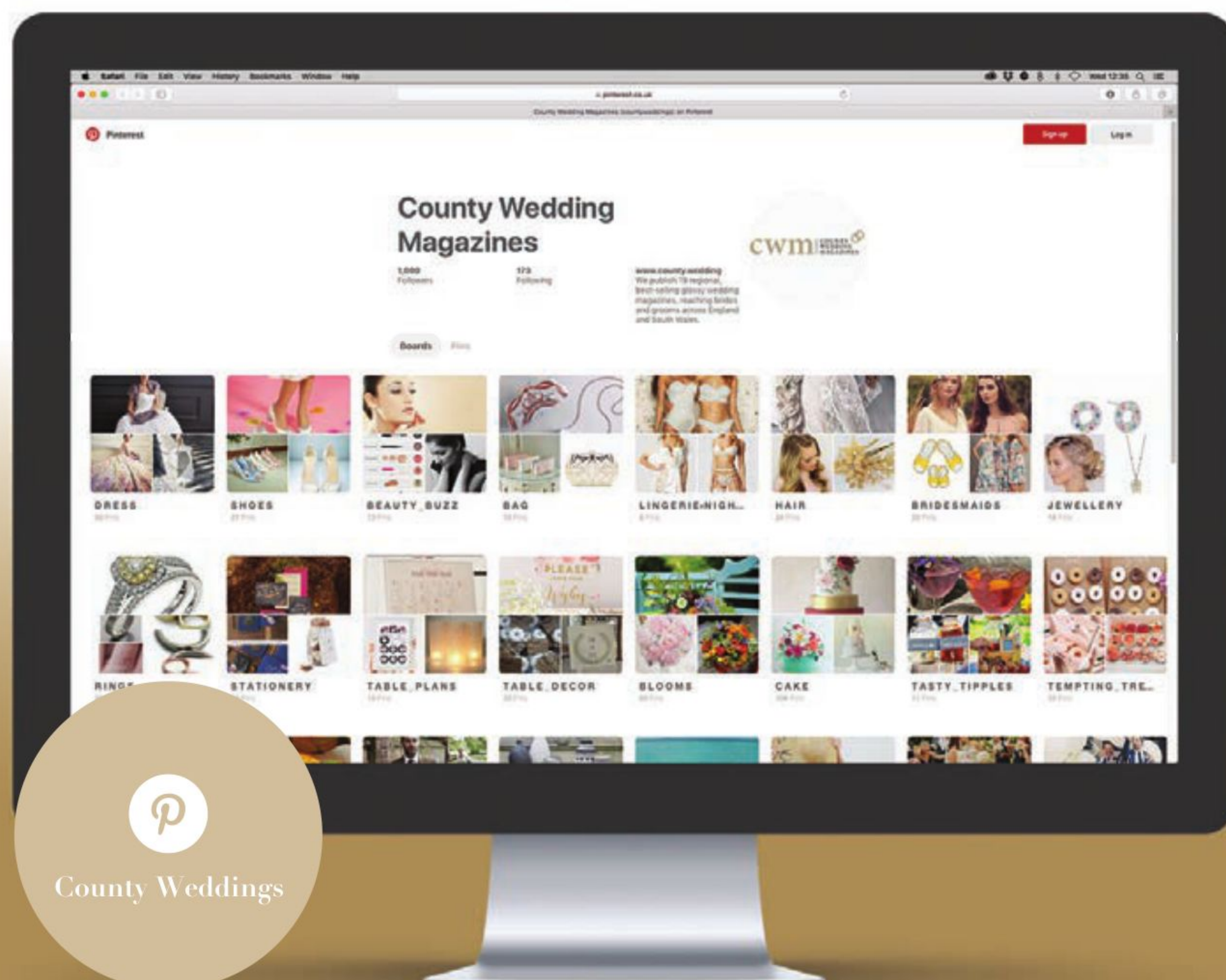
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- Top planning tips from the pros
- Tell us about your big day for your chance to appear in the magazine
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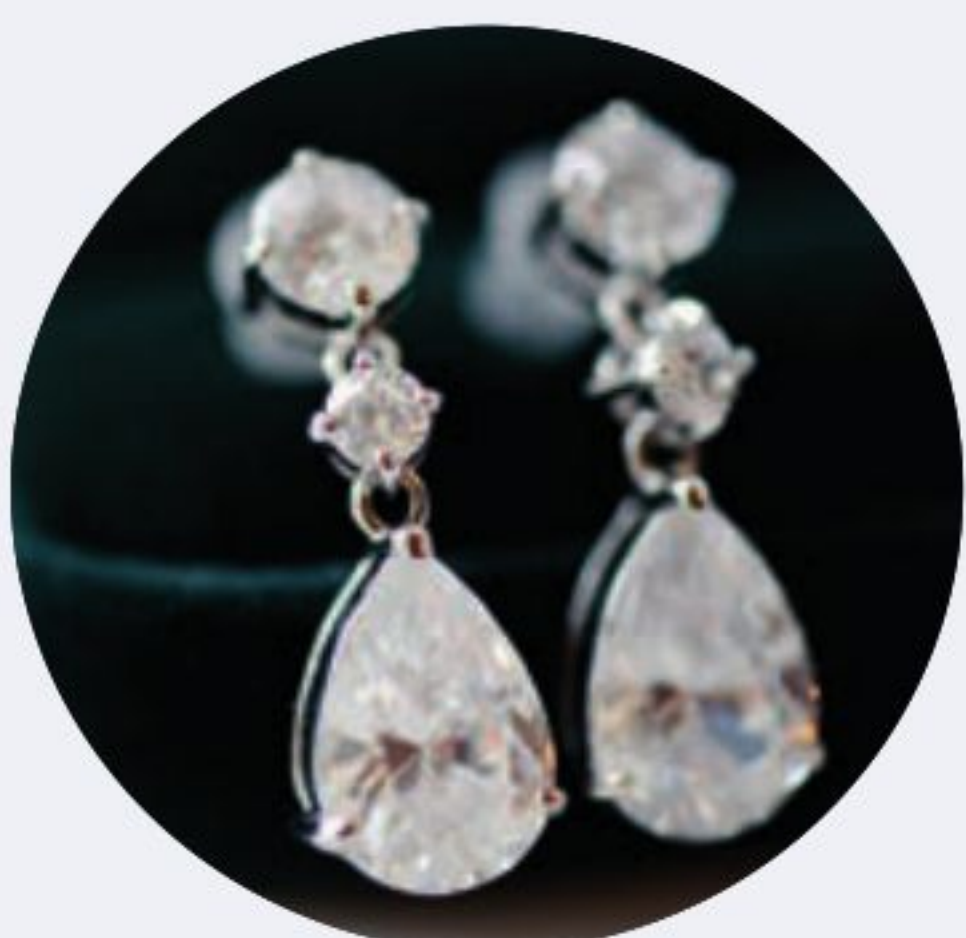
RING-A-DING-BLING

Our top tips on selecting the perfect jewellery to complement your look

Jewellery and accessories can make or break an outfit. This is just as true for one of the biggest looks you'll ever have to put together: your bridal style. No pressure! We love a bit of bling and adore the stories we hear about the pieces brides chose for their big days. But balancing the dress, the hair, the make-up, the shoes and the accessories can be more tricky than anticipated. Read on for our top tips on getting your final look right on the money.

LESS IS MORE

Your dress is the star of the show when it comes to the overall look, so don't upstage it with too many overstated or clashing bold accessories. Jewellery should complement, not overwhelm. Stick to simple, delicate, clean lines to accompany a gown with lots of detail or just one statement piece coupled with a simple dress.

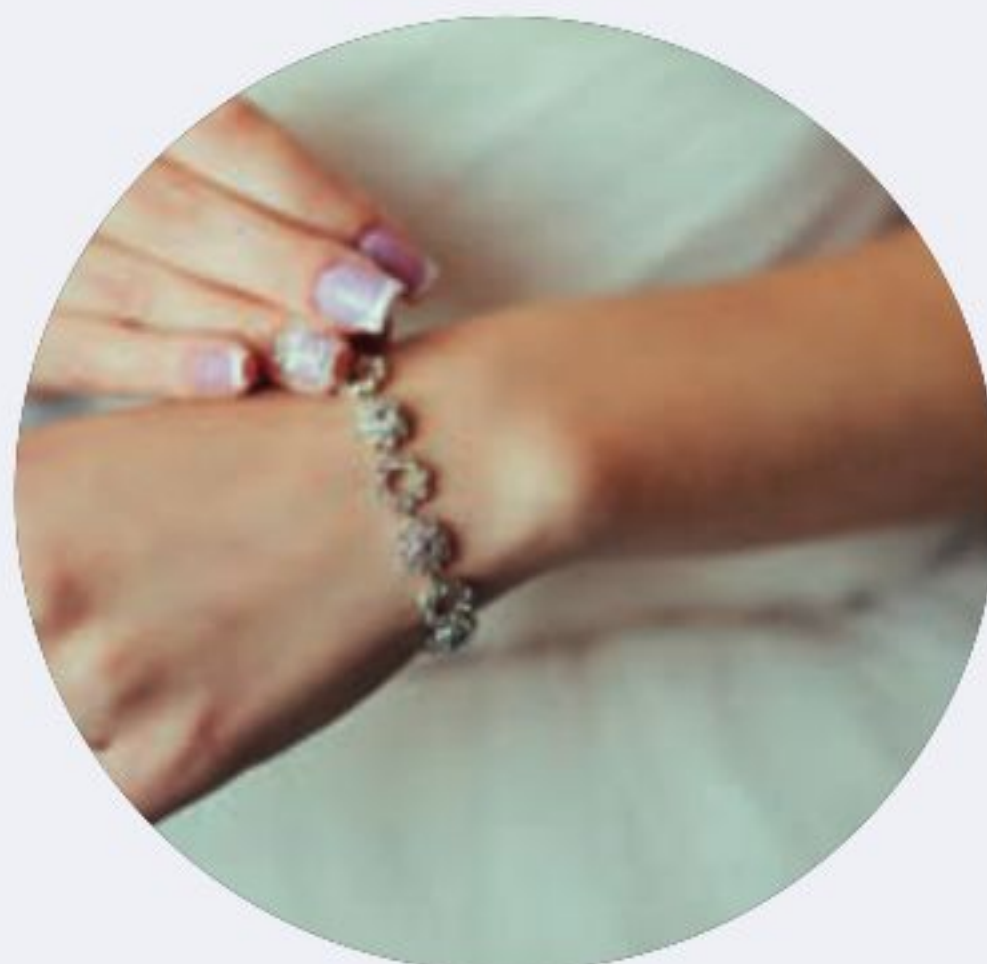


SWEETHEART

Show off this soft curvaceous neckline with a delicate, short necklace and studs or drops.

V-NECK

The focus is on the shape this neckline creates, so avoid detracting from that with a necklace. Instead pair it with some pretty drop earrings and a bracelet.

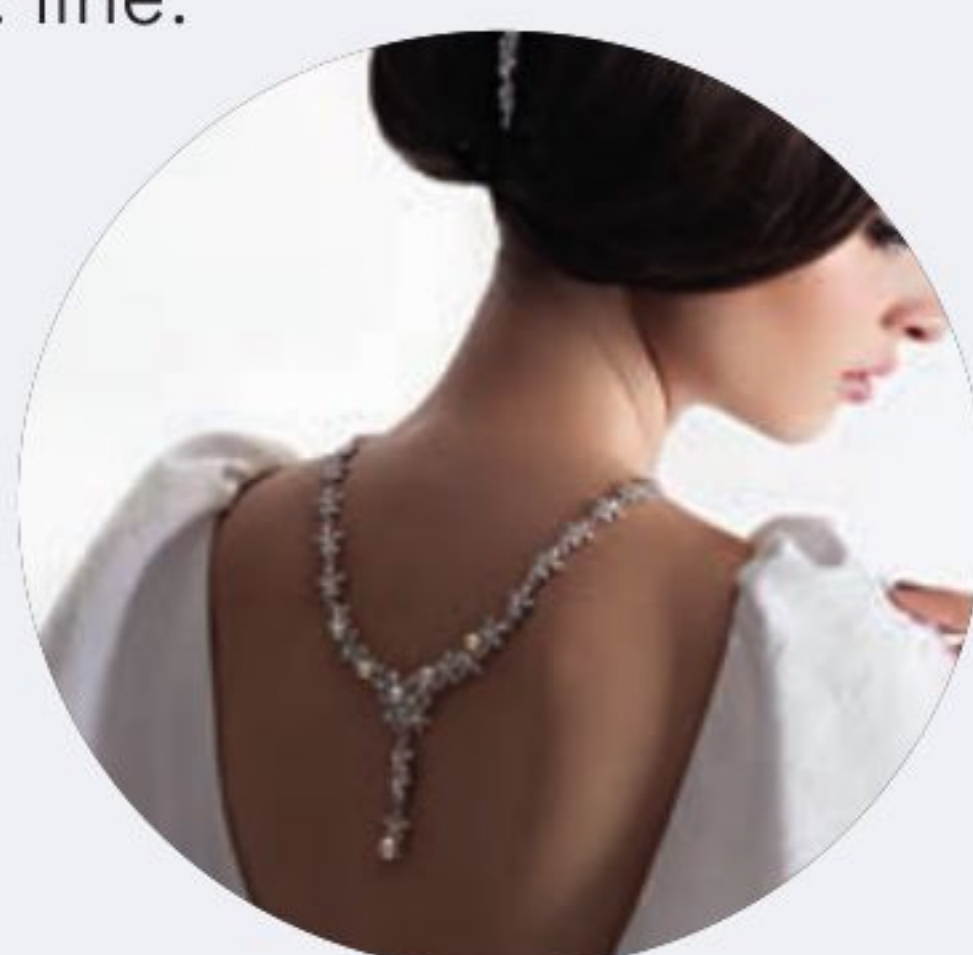


PLUNGE

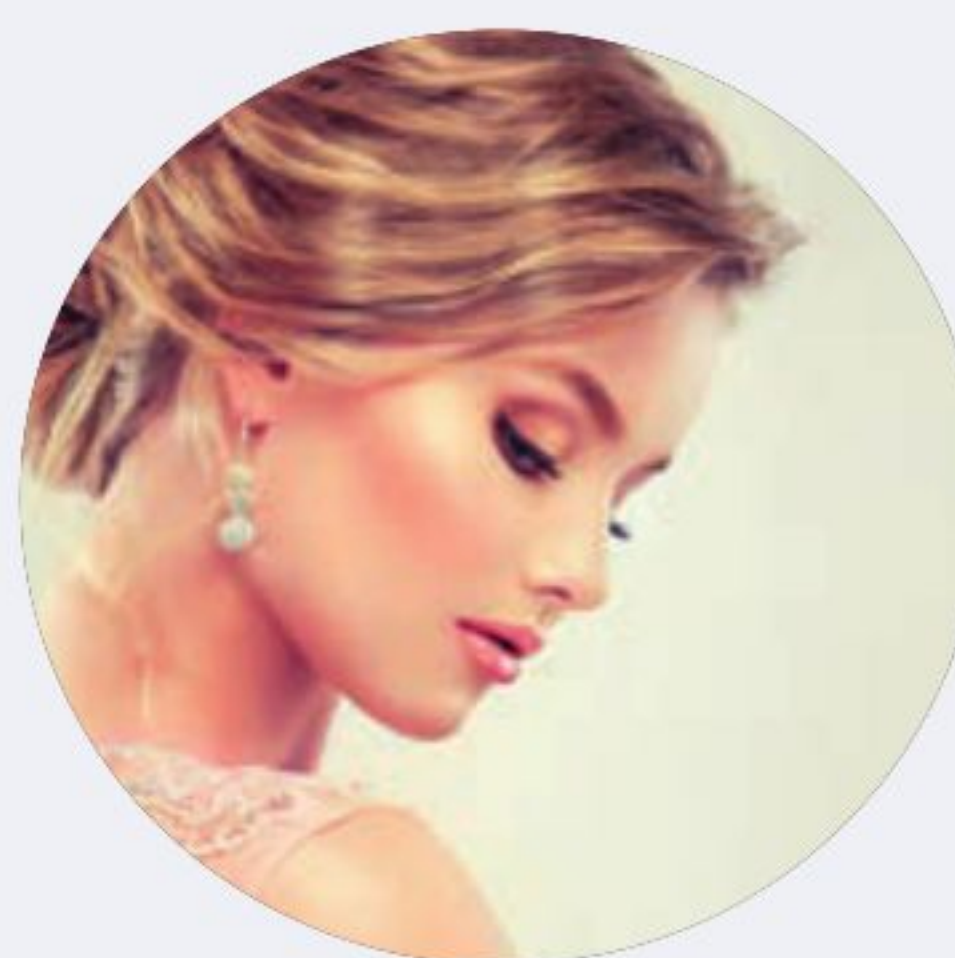
Lariat necklaces are gorgeous and bring a boho vibe to this dramatic line.

LOW BACK

We suggest a back necklace to highlight the feature.



CONSIDER THE NECKLINE

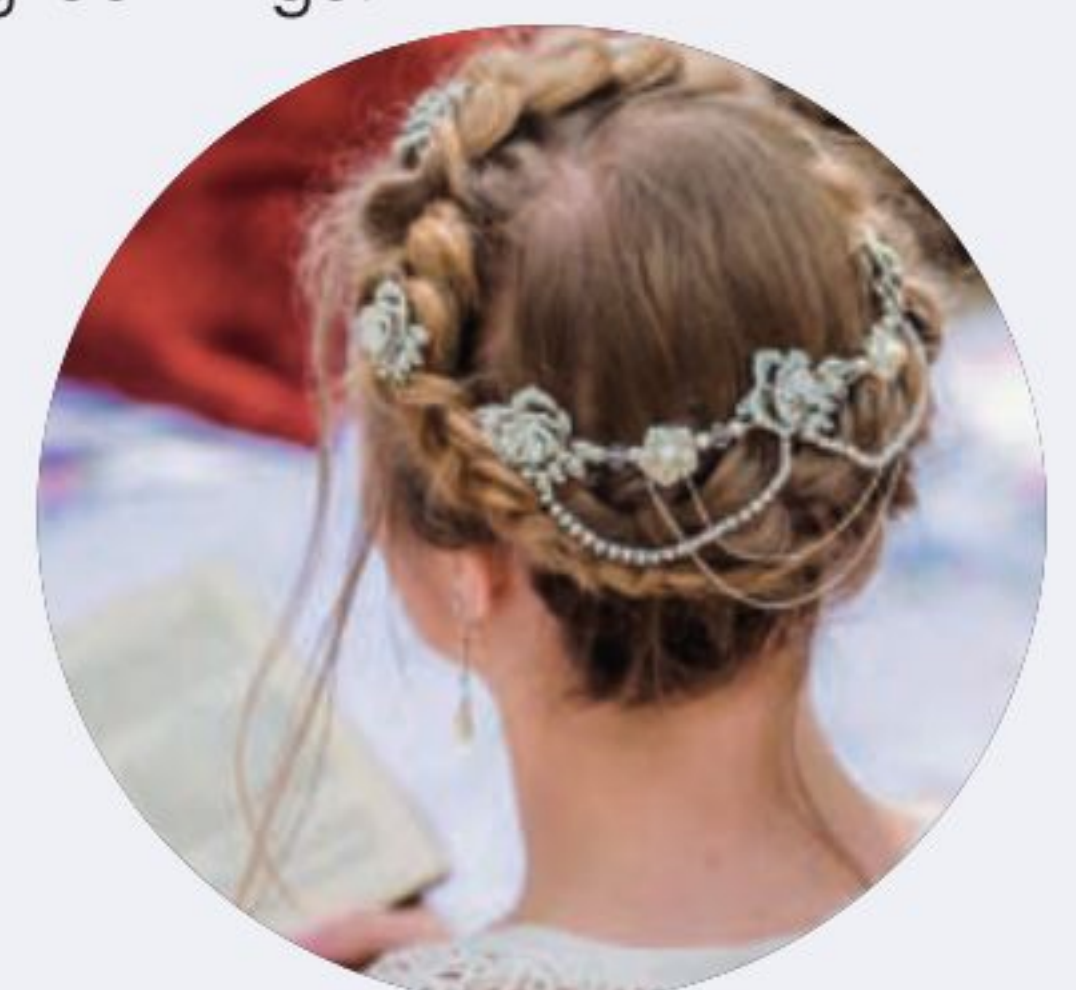


ILUSION NECKLINE

Avoid a necklace that could snag the delicate fabric. Instead, opt for a pair of long earrings.

HIGH OR HALTER NECK

A necklace will be off the table, so flatter with a pair of dazzling statement earrings or a hair accessory.



STRAPLESS

Wearing a strapless dress can leave you feeling a little exposed. Try a statement necklace to adorn your décolleté with style making you feel more covered.





carolinewhitephotography.co.uk

BE YOURSELF

Our number one piece of wedding advice will always be to do things your way. When choosing your wedding jewels, stick with what you know suits you. If you're in a shop considering a piece you know you'd never normally wear, then it's wrong for your big day. Be comfortable and confident, and you'll naturally shine. If you don't usually wear a lot of jewellery, now's not the time to start! Opt for more subtle pieces, such as a delicate pendant and stud earrings, for a finishing touch with an element of sparkle.

Worth a thought as well is whether you'll wear it again. If you're really splashing out and investing in a truly special piece, you want to be sure that it's versatile and can make regular reappearances – look for something that's truly timeless.



peterwynnephotohraphy.co.uk for rocksforrocks.co.uk



peterwynnephotohraphy.co.uk for rocksforrocks.co.uk

HAIR AND THERE

Decide how you want to wear your hair. Also, consider whether you want to rock a veil, as this will help deliberations over a barrette, hair vine or tiara, and whether the statement will be here or in the bling.

Check out these beautiful examples from rocksforrocks.co.uk



rocksforrocks.co.uk

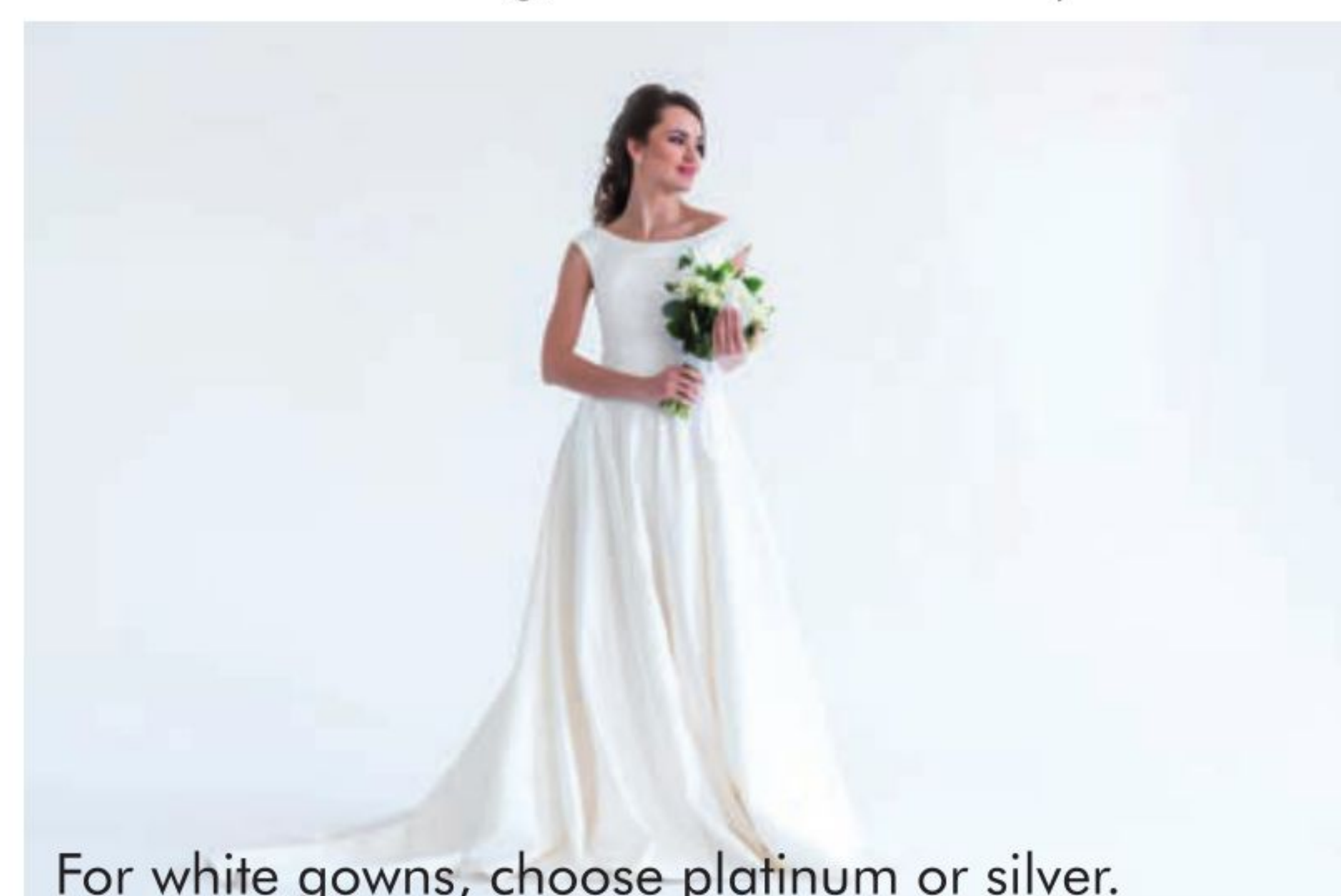
SAY YES TO THE DRESS

Top of your bridal styling shopping list should be the gown. Trust us, once you start dress shopping, chances are you'll end up plumping for a completely different silhouette from the one you'd always envisioned yourself in. So, it's important to accessorise for a frock you have rather than one you think you want. This will save you a lot of heartache and cash.

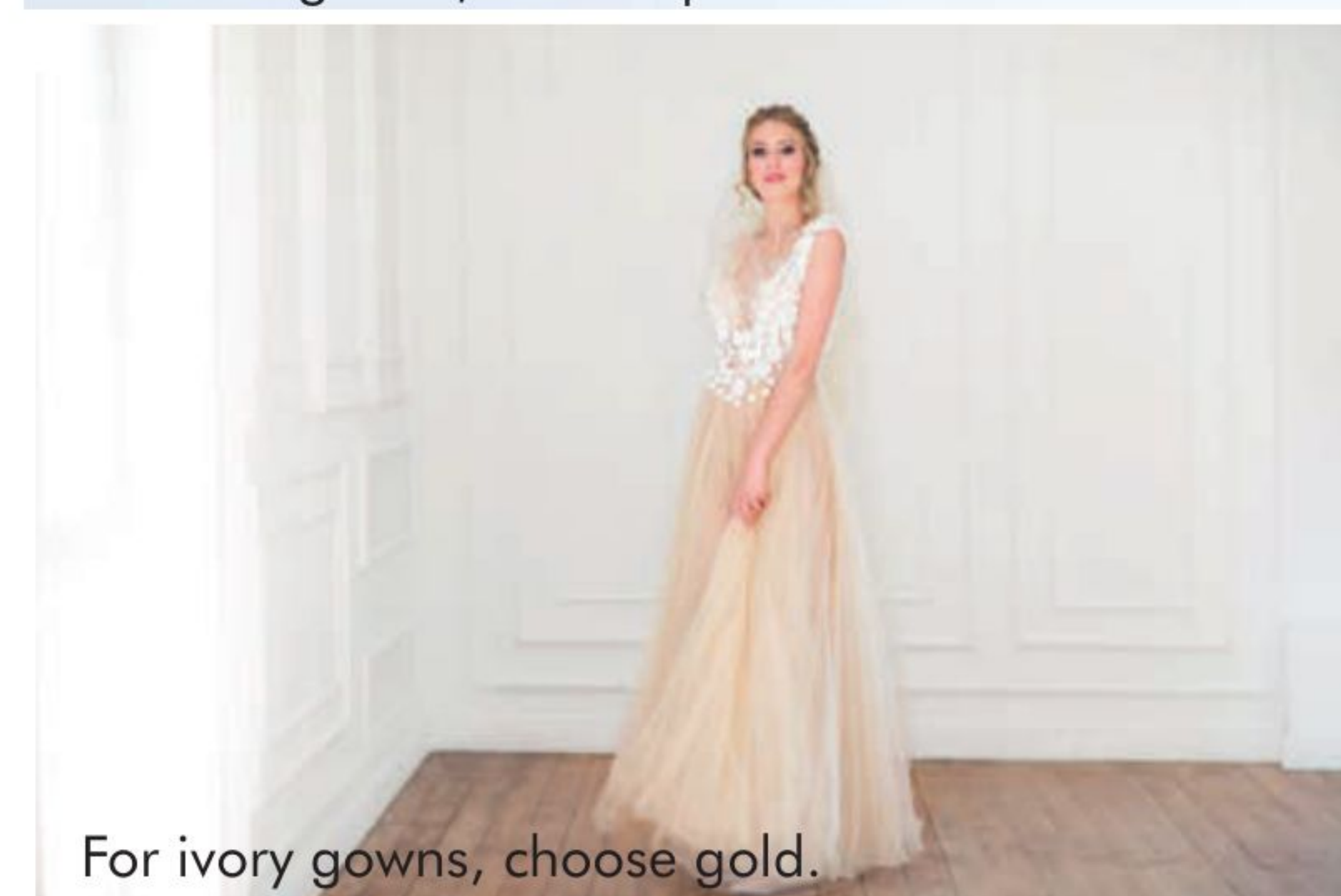
Once the all-important attire is ticked off, everything else will fall into place. Knowing what hue you need to match, what neckline you're dressing up and what level of fabric detail you're considering will make accessory shopping a doddle. You can even accentuate the detailing in your dress with coordinating accessories, just as real bride Rebekah did, mirroring the pearls scattered all over her dress in her delicate hair accessory.

MATCH, DON'T MIX

Select your precious metals based on the hue of your dress to make sure you wear your jewellery, and that it doesn't wear you! Be sure to stick with one and avoid mixing, which will look messy.



For white gowns, choose platinum or silver.



For ivory gowns, choose gold.



For blush gowns, choose rose gold.



STYLE IT OUT

Remember your theme. While we don't recommend being the bridal version of Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, a nod to your palette through subtle stone hues can be gorgeous. Consider pretty pastels or rich jewel tones. You could even nod to trends and Pantone's colour of the year, Classic Blue, by draping yourself in sapphires. A pop of colour brought into play through your footwear is also hugely popular. We love real bride Alex's Bambi Irregular Choice shoes from last issue, as well as Amy's Ruby Shoo shoe and clutch bag combo from this issue (page 24).

Also, bear in mind your style. If you've opted for a rustic-, boho- or festival-style day with a dress to complement it, classic pearls and diamonds might not work.

A modern take on vintage is very much in vogue this year, along with geometric patterns, nature-inspired designs and textured surfaces.

WITH THIS RING...

The wedding ring is for life, not just for the day, so choose something you love. Check out our shopping guide:

- ♥ Find a jeweller with a large wedding ring sample selection and allow yourself time to try on a get a feel for a ring you like. Take your time, it's an important decision.
- ♥ Start the search early. If you can't find exactly what you're looking for, you might consider a custom design – a process that can take time, but is well worth the wait. Check out stephenjonesjewellers.com
- ♥ Consider how to match your engagement ring. Using the same metal is a must, so that they wear evenly. You can have the band made especially to sit perfectly alongside it's neighbour, either by curving or carving to a complementary fit. This also prevents an uncomfortable fit or unnecessary wear between the two.
- ♥ Consider something that's both timeless and suits your lifestyle. If you have a particularly heavy-handed occupation, choose platinum over gold.
- ♥ The option of making your wedding rings at a one-day workshops is proving very popular. You can even recycle, using gold from both families, mixed together and split between you. Check out noctua.co.uk



TOP 10

10 tips for planning your dream sustainable wedding

Celia Gaze is the founder of The Wellbeing Farm, and says, "As we're getting more conscious about our environment and how we can protect it, the idea is also flooding the wedding market, as brides are looking for a lush wedding day that doesn't cost the planet. As a venue that has always had a green centre, here are our 10 top tips if you're planning a sustainable wedding..."

1

DITCH THE PALM BEACH WEDDING IN FAVOUR OF SOMETHING LOCAL

This may be an obvious one, but it's a good starting point. As nice as those pictures of destination weddings look, think of all the air miles to fly everyone over, and then transport from the airport... that's a lot of CO2 emissions. With that in mind, if your venue is accessible by public transport, even better.

PLAN A VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN MENU

One of the biggest trends is cutting out a lot of meat and other animal products from your diet. Whilst your wedding has been considered the one day you can indulge, this now doesn't mean that you can't splurge on taste without cutting out the meat. Even as an omnivore, some of the nicest food I have had is vegetarian and vegan. If your menu is seasonal, organic, or uses fair trade ingredients, or a mixture of all three, even better!

2

SPEAKING OF SEASONAL, KEEP YOUR FLOWERS SEASONAL TOO

Seasonal flowers save the air miles, there's no need to import tulips from Holland in the middle of September. Also start thinking about what you are going to do with the flowers afterwards, and if your florist avoids using foam in their arrangements, that's a big fat green thumbs up. If they are also supplying confetti, look at a kind that is bio-degradable.

3

Think about transport

If your venue isn't easy to get to via public transport, instead of a million cars arriving at your venue, think about hiring a coach from a suitable meeting point e.g. the hotel your guests are staying at; this will hopefully cut down a lot of emissions even before your big day starts.

4

USE RECYCLABLE MATERIALS OR SECOND-HAND PROPS FOR YOUR DÉCOR

One of our biggest features for our brides is our Prop Shed, which holds every kind of decorative prop you can imagine: saving time, money and the planet as everything is reused from couple to couple. Some brides like to use bits they've picked up themselves – afterwards, think about donating to other brides for their day.

5

SUSTAINABLE WEDDINGS



6

ASK YOUR VENUE ABOUT ITS GREEN POLICY

A big note when looking around venues is looking at its bar – if they are still using plastic straws, that's a big no-no! Do they recycle everything on-site, use local suppliers, grow their own produce and have they cracked down on single-use plastic, among many other measures.



DRESS UPCYCLE

Why not donate your dress to a charity shop to make an impact long after the big day – this also applies to the bridesmaids' dresses too if you're looking for a green wedding! Also, keep away from silk and other materials that come from animals.

9

CONSIDER SUSTAINABLE FAVOURS

Think about not just what you want them to be, but also how they are packaged. Stay away from the plastic toys and trinkets, and cellophane wrapping that cannot be recycled. If there is an animal, environmental or sustainability charity that means something to you and your partner, a donation favour to that charity would be a good choice.

8



7

Find local suppliers

From your cake to your DJ, using suppliers who are local to you/your venue is key to making your wedding sustainable and keeping your wedding's carbon footprint down. Venues should have a list of recommended suppliers on their websites, who are all local to the property.



10



IS YOUR STATIONERY SUSTAINABLE?

As pretty as the save-the-date invitations and other stationery looks, think about using invites made from an ethically sourced or recycled material.

TO FIND OUT MORE GO TO: THEWELLBEINGFARM.CO.UK

FOLIAGE AND FORAGING

Our wedding will be a relaxed affair. How can we make our venue flowers less formal to reflect the chilled-out vibe?

If you're getting married in 2020, you're in luck! The trend for bringing the outdoors in is set to continue this year and well beyond. Think foliage, think texture, think garlands and an abundance of scented draping eucalyptus.

Speak to your wedding florist about creating a relaxed and natural feel by using a range of foliage in your bouquets, ceremony room and reception room. You need your bouquet to look as though your florist wandered through an English meadow, foraging for blooms. You can then follow this style through to the venue with foliage garlands, ceiling installations and centrepiece wreaths, with a range of candles.

Rachel Peers,
labeaufleurs.co.uk

HOT TOPIC

Our experts offer stellar wedding-planning advice

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

How can we create a romantic and intimate atmosphere for our ceremony?

Firstly, set the scene. For a good 20 minutes before the ceremony, entertain your guests with live atmospheric music of your choice, whether it's popular, classical or just your favourite tunes. This will immediately enable those close to you feel involved. Alternate the more gentle tunes

with other more lively ones so that there's a contrast, but ensure the bride's entrance is a slow number.

Winter weddings in particular, have an ambience of their own if you're clever with your lighting. Whatever the season, keep your colour scheme simple, and coordinated, to create unity, and flow. Flowers, décor, lighting, as well as music, are all key to your special day's tone and success.

Fay Wert, carltonensemble.co.uk





RSVP EXPERT ADVICE

What would a full wedding stationery package involve and what timescales should we be working to?

Wedding stationery is a very personal thing and is as complicated or simple as you make it. Although, it probably shouldn't be too taxing! Most important is to think about the information your guests need to know: where and when, local accommodation, a note about gifts, and so on. There are all sorts of additional details you can include too such as menus, a timeline, RSVP card, maps, and song requests. It's always advisable to order a few additional invitations just in case you need to send out a second wave, or you find you've missed someone out.

Save-the-date cards are growing in popularity. They're particularly useful for weekday weddings, bank holidays, or peak vacation periods. You should opt to send these out a year ahead, followed by the invitations three to four months before the wedding.

The next steps are: stationery for your ceremony, the wedding breakfast, and to say "thank you." For a church wedding, an order of service is a must – either one per guest, or one per couple. Then we come to the wedding breakfast. You'll need a seating plan and place cards, plus signs to help guests find their tables. You may also choose to have menus, a guest book and further signage. If your guests have pre-ordered their menu choices, it's a good idea to remind them of what they have chosen, either by providing menus, or putting their choices on the back of the place cards. Finally, there's the "thank you" cards. If you'd like them to match, consider ordering along with your other items.

Do give yourself enough time to get things right. A professional designer will need two to three months notice. Be sure to ask for samples of card stocks to manage expectations, and proof read everything before printing. Twice!

Ling Warlow,
dragonflycouturestationery.com



VEGAN SPICE

We want to serve a vegan wedding breakfast, packed with flavour, that all of our guests can enjoy. What would you suggest?

These days us Brits have wide and varied tastes so don't worry too much about how your guests will react to a bit of spice and some heat in your vegan wedding meal.

It's best to take inspiration from the cultures that do vegan food well, such as the Indian subcontinent – the Middle East and Far East for example. To keep everyone happy, I'd avoid going for anything too hot in terms of chilli heat, and instead go for dishes that balance spice with sweetness such as tagines or coconut-based curries.

Traditionally, a wedding breakfast is individually plated with key elements, and if you want to stick to this approach then a star vegetable should take centre stage, for example red peppers stuffed with jewelled couscous works well, or a griddled cauliflower steak dressed with pomegranate, pine nuts and tahini. However, this approach has a couple of potential pitfalls. Some of your less adventurous guests may not like it, and secondly, if the schedule on the day slips even slightly keeping the crunch in the vegetables can become difficult for the kitchen team.

I personally think that serving a wedding breakfast family style on the table in serving bowls is perfect for a vegan feast. It gives you a wider variety of dishes and flavour profiles, and will mean that everyone will find something they like. Ordinarily, serving this way is more costly than plated, simply due to the increased volume of food required, but the fact that there's no expensive protein element does mean you won't be breaking the bank. Think about the flavours you like or dishes that have significance to you and your new spouse, and start from there.

Sit down and chat with the chef, and from there they'll be able to come up with a menu inspired by you, and more to the point, something that's deliverable. Finally, always insist on a tasting – understanding spice is a real skill and you need to be on the same page in terms of expectations!

Candice Fonseca, delifonseca.co.uk



Shoes by Dune London, pink dress by Phase Eight and ivory dress by Warehouse.



HIGH STREET HOT LIST

Fashion favourites Warehouse has announced the launch of an exclusive bridal edit for the new season. The 19-piece collection offers a range of silhouettes in soft chiffon and satin fabrics using a muted colour palette of baby pink, navy, and ivory. They feature simple yet chic details, with vintage-inspired dresses, floral prints, fluted sleeves and back details. Prices range from £79 to £89. To shop, visit warehouse.co.uk

[warehouseuk](https://www.instagram.com/warehouseuk)

Phase Eight has revealed a new capsule bridal collection consisting of luxury designs with affordable price tags all under £500. There's a nod to the glamorous era of the 1920s with an ivory fringed dress, and this pretty blush tulle style, plus coordinating hats and fascinators. To shop, visit phase-eight.com

[phaseeight](https://www.instagram.com/phaseeight)

Shoe experts Dune London unveil the new 20-piece footwear collection alongside an exclusive range of matching clutch bags. Brides will love the jewel trims, ribbon ankle ties and sparkling details. Prices start from £130 for shoes and from £60 for bags. To shop, visit dunelondon.com

[dune_london](https://www.instagram.com/dune_london)

SAY 'YES' TO THE DRESS

Contemporary fashion brand KITRI has launched its debut bridal collection, a nine-piece selection of fun, feminine dresses and jumpsuits. Prices start from £195 for this *Fontana* style, and range up to £245. The pieces feature draped hems, exaggerated sleeves and cascading ruffles. There's choices for an engagement party or pre-wedding dinner too, and bridesmaids will also love the fashionable styles. Designer, founder and creative director of the brand Haeni Kim says, "We received requests for playful, wearable and affordable bridalwear from our customers since the launch of the brand so I'm very excited about our capsule bridal collection. We have designed a selection of dresses and jumpsuits that will be perfect for many occasions surrounding a modern wedding. It's such an honour to be a part of someone's wedding and we can't wait to see how our customers will wear them."

To shop, visit kitristudio.com

[kitristudio](https://www.instagram.com/kitristudio)



FASHION

focus

Fashion editor Claire Ridley reveals the latest bridal news, buys and launches

EDITOR'S PICK

This dusky pink ribbon and lace bodysuit is from the new Muse by Coco de Mer collection and is the perfect pick for your wedding night and honeymoon. Prices range from £20 for a thong to £120 for a slip, and pieces are available in sizes 30D-F to 36B-F. To shop, visit coco-de-mer.com

[cocodemeruk](https://www.instagram.com/cocodemeruk)



Editor's choice

Dress your little ones in the latest styles from French designer childrenswear brand Marie-Chantal.

This blue floral printed dress called Eve is the perfect pick for a spring wedding, and others include pretty pastels in gingham and tweed.

To shop, visit mariechantal.co.uk

[mariechantalchildren](https://www.instagram.com/mariechantalchildren)



Sisterhood

Kate Halfpenny, the talented designer behind the luxury Halfpenny London bridal brand has launched Sister, a bridesmaid collection with prices ranging from £70 to £295. Multiple styles are available in soft fabrics and three colourways – pink, pewter and navy. Kate says, "The Sister collection has something for everyone – from my signature separates to dresses and even a jumpsuit. They've all been designed to wear again and again, styled in your own way." To shop, visit halfpennylondon.com

[halfpennylondon](https://www.instagram.com/halfpennylondon)

HEADLINERS

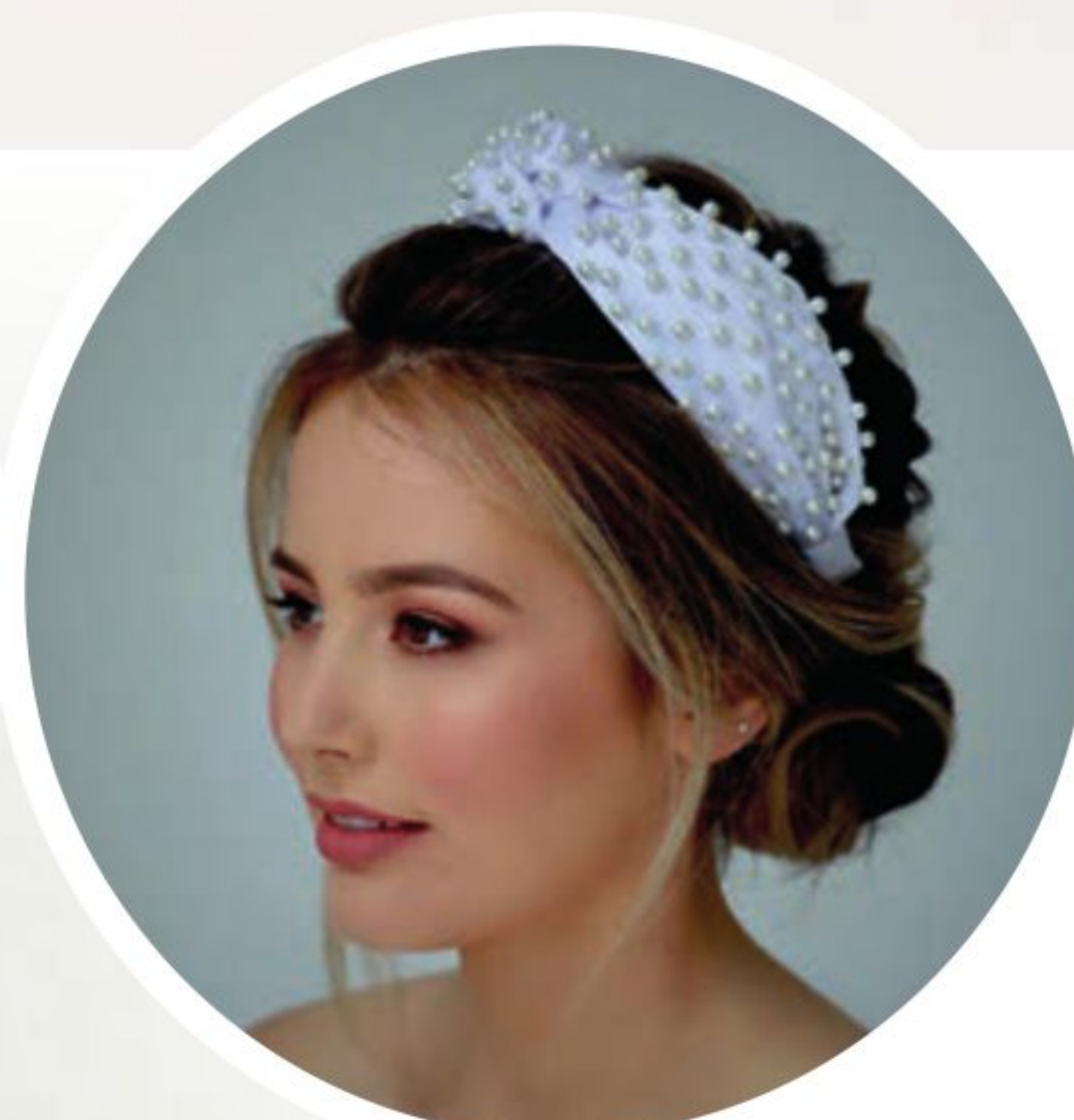
Hair clips, bands and accessories were spotted at the recent bridal catwalk shows. Get the look with our Insta-worthy selection



Headdress, from a selection, mervebayindir.com



Tiaras and veils spotted at demetrios.com. For similar, try richard-designs.com



White silk pearl headband, £59, alicandblair.co.uk



Veil, £175, rainbowclub.co.uk



Pearl-encrusted headband, £23, chichiclothing.com



Fascinator with ivory flowers, £35, phase-eight.com



Hair slides, from £19 for set of four, alicandblair.co.uk



Set of three hair slides, £15, oliverbonas.com



Cream knot headband, £4.99, newlook.com



Headband featuring large flower, from a selection, uk.accessorize.com



Pearl-effect beaded hair clips, £12 for set of two, crown-love.com





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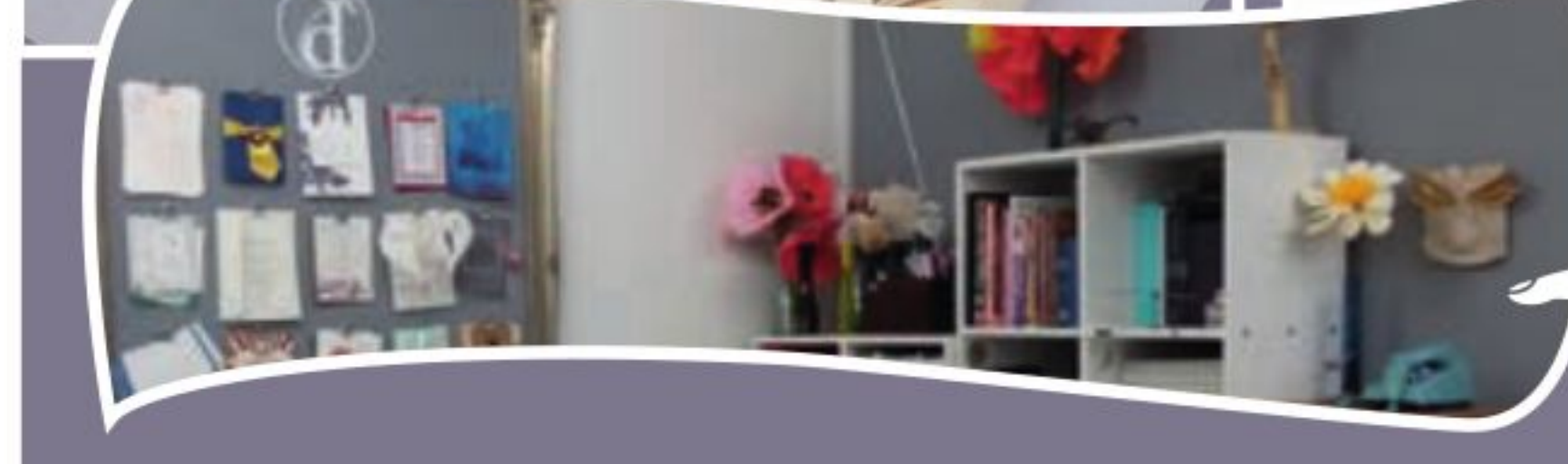


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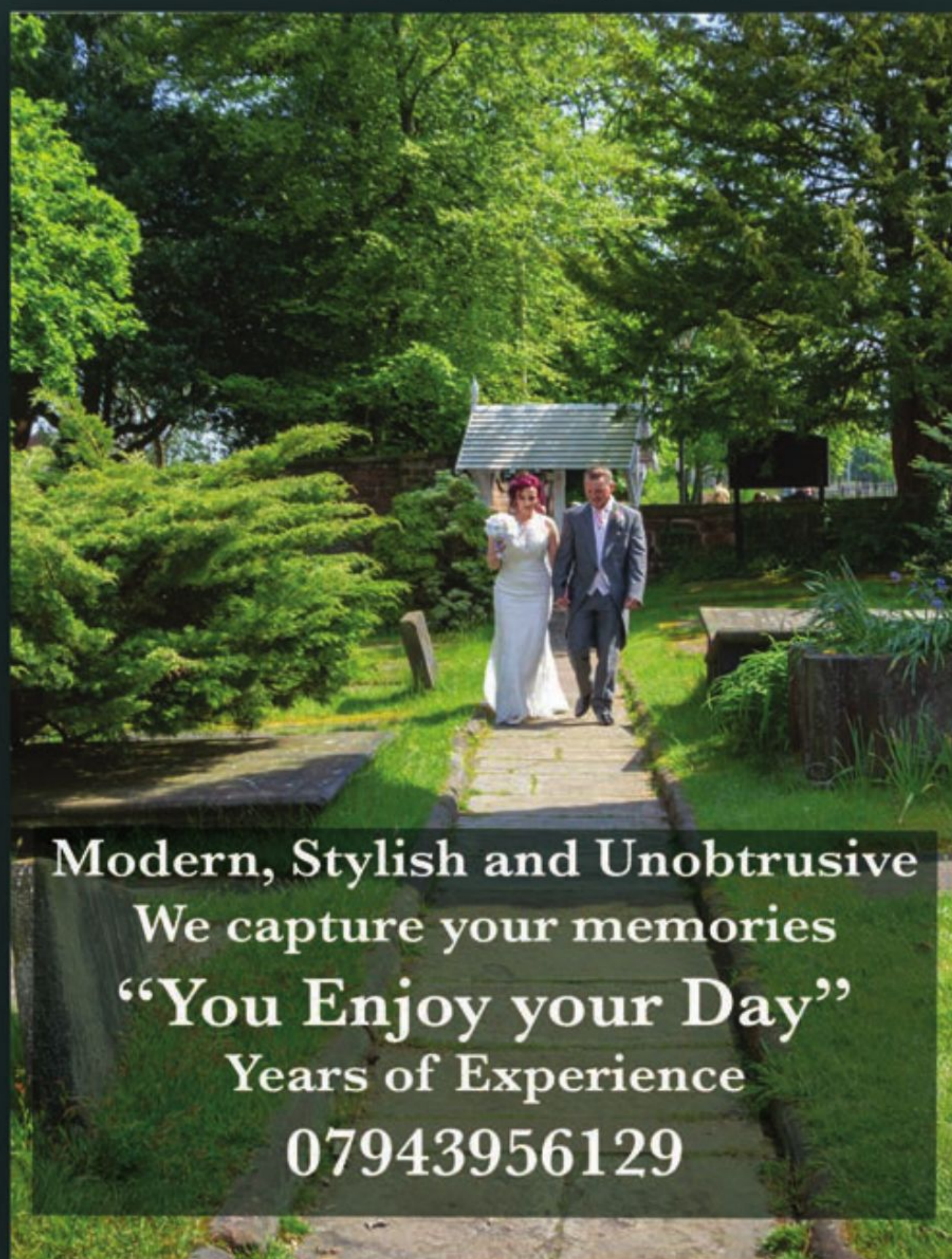
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07943956129

One-shoulder
suzanneneville.com



Fun and frivolous

These flirty styles are setting the trends for 2020

Long sleeves

adriannapapell.com



Halterneck

catherineparrybridal.com



Short and sassy

justinalalexander.com

Oversized bow

alanhannah.co.uk



*Embellished
back detail*

clairepettibone.com

*Vintage-inspired
sleeves*

kitrystudio.com

Short sleeves

elbethgillis.com

Bib-front

katyakatya.co.uk

Slip dress
warehouse.co.uk



Shirt-style jumpsuit
kitristudio.com



Plunge neckline
jesuspeiro.com



Feathers
demetrios.com

Chic jumpsuit
charlottebalbier.com



Fringing
phase-eight.com



Elegant cape
jennypackham.com



Tulle detail
kelseyrose.co.uk





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Elegance with a sense of drama



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A magnificent Berta Privee gown.

To visit our boutique, book an appointment by emailing info@knutsfordweddinggallery.co.uk
11 - 13 Minshull St, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 6HG 01565633333 www.knutsfordweddinggallery.co.uk
 Knutsford Wedding Gallery  Knutsford_Wedding_Gallery

These elegant styles can be worn as they are, or teamed with pretty shrugs or statement chokers for maximum impact

Madelyn dress with collar by elbethgillis.com

CHIC AND *strapless*

Aerial by charlottebalbier.com



Anais by clairepettibone.com



Style no 014 by demetrios.com



Margot by Kelly Faetanini at elliesanderson.co.uk

Bianca by jennypackham.com



Fern by alanhannah.co.uk



Style no 058 by jesuspeiro.com



Rose by whistles.com



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the mood with some
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ONLY TIME WILL TELL

BOSS Watches has launched three new products. The Vela Collection includes statement-making timepieces that were inspired by open skies, urban streets and broad horizons.

Each watch seamlessly combines aesthetics with performance and signature features such as water resistance, glow-in-the-dark markers and engraved backs. Designed to accompany grooms-to-be on the biggest day of their lives, each one has a stainless steel chronograph with a masculine bracelet.

To find out more, visit bosswatches.co.uk



Read all ABOUT IT!

Grooms editor Melissa Barker shares the latest best buys and product launches

DRESSED TO IMPRESS

Chester Barrie has launched a new range of men's formalwear. The AW19 Collection features old classics and new and improved accessories, including bow ties, evening suits, shirts and handkerchiefs. The semi-bespoke gentleman's tailor is located in London and offers both ready-to-wear and made-to-measure options.

To see more, visit chesterbarrie.co.uk



GOING GREEN

London-based company, Bluebuck has released a new collection of sports trunks and briefs manufactured using Seaqual – an eco-fabric made from recycled plastic waste.

The collection combines the brand's eco-sustainability mission with green fashion. The range has a sleek, sportive cut, and is designed for more adventurous men who want a durable undergarment without compromising on comfort.

Priced from £22–£29 from bluebuck.net

Grand plans

Award-winning suit company, Master Debonair has unveiled plans to open six new stores across the UK in 2020.

The fashion firm currently has boutiques in Bolton, London and Chesterfield and a separate showroom in Tyneside. It's become a favourite with grooms-to-be looking for stylish yet affordable suits and accessories.

Check out masterdebonair.com for more.



Oh-so handsome

We love Murdock London's latest range of gift sets. Ideal for grooms-to-be, each collection is made in England using the finest products. The range is designed to offer quality and effective daily essentials that encapsulates the heritage of Great British grooming, along with the sought-after style of the modern gentlemen.

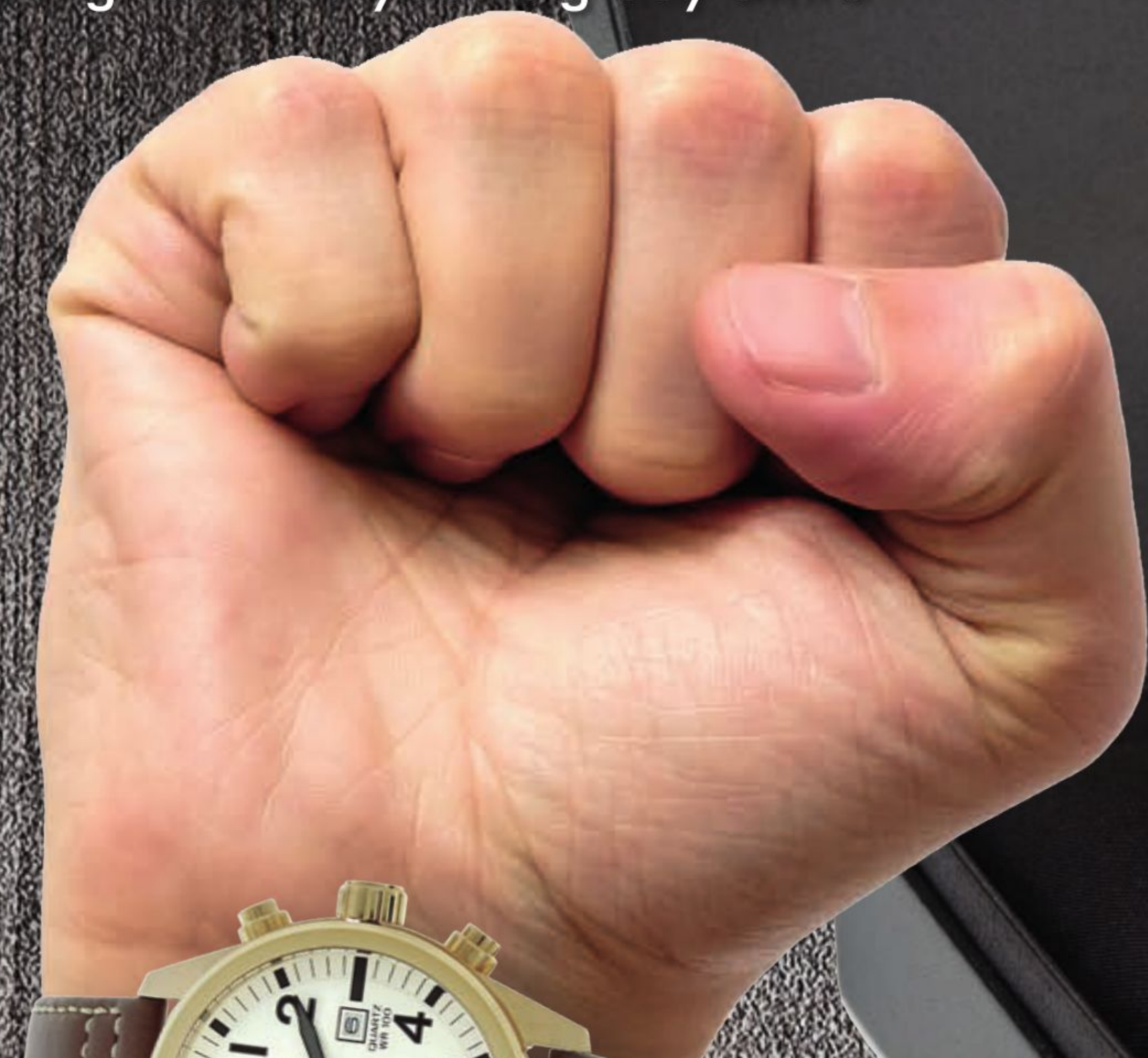
Our favourite is the Bailey set, priced at £50, it comes with a beard shampoo, moisturiser, oil and luxurious comb.

To see more, visit murdocklondon.com



TIME'S TICKING

Add the finishing touch to your big-day attire



1. £59.99, gettingpersonal.co.uk
2. £89.99, tkmaxx.com
3. £30, riverisland.com
4. £250, newgateworld.com
5. £240, thewatchhut.co.uk
6. £449, hugoboss.com
7. £690, mauricelacroix.com
8. £224.99, timex.co.uk



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Bouquet & Bells

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09.05.2020 / 9.30AM - 2.30PM

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[BOUQUETANDBELLS.COM/WEDDING-FAYRES](http://bouquetandbells.com/wedding-fayres)



STEP INTO *spring*

We've rounded
up our favourite
products to
help you create
the ultimate
seasonal look

£110, burton.co.uk



£35, foxandchave.com



£45, davidwatson.uk



£59.95, remusuomo.com



£100, joebrowns.co.uk



£99.99, tkmaxx.com



£199, newgateworld.com



£22, villageleathers.com



£24.99, gettingpersonal.co.uk



£110, dunelondon.com

Beauty Q&A

Local professionals offer advice on how to look your big-day best

BRONZED BEAUTY

What's the secret to using bronzer and highlighter to best effect?

Julie says: Both products can be used to achieve multiple effects, so make sure you get your money's worth! For a natural sun-kissed healthy glow or a contoured look, always opt for a matte formula, and never in a shade that's too dark for your skin tone. Be sure also, to avoid overloading your brush. For a perfect contour, always remember to follow the hollow of your cheeks, building up the colour. I'd recommend using a smaller brush with a rounded end.

For an all over healthy glow, sweep the product up the cheekbones, across the forehead, down the nose, and along the chin bone. Make sure everything is well blended or you might not have such a natural-looking glow!

Highlighter really is a fabulous multi-use product. There are two formulas available: cream or powder. Cream highlighter should be applied before foundation for a more natural look, with powder going on after foundation. Apart from brushing along the top of the cheekbones, highlighter can also be used under the arch of the brow, lightly over concealer to camouflage dark circles, and above the Cupid's bow to give the look of a fuller lip. A technique I use on my brides is to also use on the inner corners of the eyes to really open them up.

THE PERFECT COMPLEMENT

Should my bridesmaids' make-up be the same or a complete contrast to mine?

Jessica says: I'd usually recommend the bridesmaids have a different make-up look to the bride. However, I would advise that you consider using the same sort of tones on the eyelids, so that the overall style flows and works in harmony for those all-important photographs. Too strong a contrast should be avoided though, as this will really make the bridesmaids stand out, and you should be the only belle of the ball on your big day.

TIP FOR THE TOP

What are your hot bridal hair trend tips for 2020?

Natalie says: I love brainstorming with my brides – exchanging hair ideas and inspiration. It's important, of course, to take into account hair type, colour, length and texture, and at the same time considering the silhouette of the dress, the accessories, the venue, and the overall theme of the day.

My head goes in to little bit of a spin, thinking about the latest trends, as a whole whirlwind of images pop into my mind from magazine articles, bridal catwalk shows, and styled shoots I've worked on. The trends I think will lead the way in bridal hair in 2020 will definitely be soft tousled waves rather than curls, and low textured buns over full volume up dos. In general, styles that are super-relaxed, with a hint of sass!

Hair accessories are set to be huge for this year's brides. Flower crowns, and jewelled or beaded headbands will be seen widely across spring/summer weddings, right the way through to autumn/winter.

For me personally, it's all about making current trends work for my brides. There isn't anything that can't be adapted to suit. It's all about feeling confident and comfortable. The main thing is to have fun with it, and to feel like the absolute best version of yourself on your big day.

CONTACT OUR EXPERTS

Julie McCulloch, Julie Mac Make Up, juliemacmakeup.co.uk

Natalie Mills, Cheshire Wedding Hair, cheshireweddinghair.co.uk

Jessica Mair Hair & Makeup Artist, jessicamairhairandmakeup.com

Sanda Aromatherapy Eye Pillow, £22, sandafeelgood.com

"I'm in love! The eye pillow is simple, yet so versatile, and great to have on hand for times when you feel like you need to stop and take a few moments. I put it through its paces and tried it warm first of all. Just 30 seconds in the microwave is plenty. The heat releases the amazing aroma (mine is rose and cardamom), which enhances the whole experience. I popped on a five-minute mindfulness meditation and shut out the world."

"The next night I tested the cold experience – 20 minutes or so in the freezer does the trick. After a tense day it calmed my head and soothed my tired, contact lense-wearing eyes. I can't wait to try it in the summer when itchy hayfever eyes kick in."

– Kelly Andrews



A CALMING influence

We put these soothing saviours to the test, perfect for beating wedmin stress



Amphora Aromatics Relaxing Bath Oil 100ml, £6, amphora-aromatics.com

"I love a bath. Any excuse to get me in the tub, I'm there, and I have to say, I've tried a lot of bath oils. So, I was eager to dive right in with this Relaxing Bath Oil from Amphora Aromatics."

"I truly believe this is the best bath oil I've ever tried. It has exactly the right combination of a heavenly aroma that's not too overpowering, and nourishment, without being greasy. My skin felt instantly balmy and fragrant, which lasted throughout the following day to boot."

– Danielle Harvey

Sanatio Naturalis Frankincense Essential Oil 10ml, £26, sanationaturalis.com

"I had to dig deep at the back of the cupboard to find my essential oil diffuser to test out Sanatio Naturalis' Frankincense Essential Oil, but I'm glad I did! Distilled from wild-growing tree resin in Somalia, it has an exotic, spicy scent. Without being overbearing, it filled my room with a deliciously heady fragrance that was the perfect backdrop to some me-time. The strong smell is brilliant for focusing the mind and it's been shown that inhaling frankincense reduces your heart rate and blood pressure – so if you're feeling the stress of wedmin, it's definitely worth a whirl."

– Hannah Faulder



Kyushi Jasmine, Lavender & Cedarwood Face Oil 30ml, £39, kyushi.co.uk

"The first thing I noticed about this face oil was the earthy smell that filled the room. Kyushi recommend placing three drops into the palms of your hands, gently rubbing them together and cupping over your nose and mouth before taking some deep breaths, as the mindful application is as important as the product itself. I did find it had a calming effect, and it smelled divine. It also made my skin feel incredibly soft and hydrated. I recommend using it before you go to bed for a long, restful sleep."

– Melissa Barker

Tisserand Aromatherapy Total De-Stress MoodFix Mist 100ml, £9.45, tisserand.com

"I can't promise this handy spray will work miracles when it comes to tackling a hectic lifestyle, but what it does do is allow you to stop, if only for a minute, and just breathe. A quick squirt provides a comforting mist of calm when the going gets tough and the blend of geranium, orange and nutmeg natural pure essential oils smells great too!"

– Sarah Reeve





IN PURSUIT OF WELLNESS

STILL London, the non-toxic, cruelty-free, vegan and environmentally friendly nail studio, has now launched a regenerating and protecting hand balm. With marine algae extract, lupine peptides, olive oil derived squalane, shea butter, cocoa butter and soya wax this potent formula regenerates, protects, moisturises and firms the skin.

There's also a new cuticle oil available where grape seed and evening primrose oil work seamlessly with a Norwegian algae extract, vitamin E and tea tree to absorb quickly and heal the skin naturally.

The hand balm is priced at £23 and the cuticle oil at £18. Both are available from still-london.com



Glow-givers

Blending natural extracts and cutting-edge science, Scientia Skincare utilises no less than 23 oils sourced from all around the world, including morning seed oil from Uganda, and wild carrot oil from France, which deliver maximum skin health while boosting wellbeing. The first exciting products to launch from this brand are the Dawn and Dusk Elixirs, formulated to give you your daily and nightly dose of radiance.

Priced at £32 each from scientiabeauty.com

WELL LIT

This highly-pigmented, three-in-one highlighter creates a perfectly radiant glow that will take you from ceremony to celebrations. This super-versatile micro-fine powder is easy to apply to cheeks, brow bones and décolletage for a quick all-over radiance. You can play it safe with a natural shimmer or make a statement by creating a multi-dimensional strobing effect.

This convenient make-up bag hero in Sahara is actually an ombre of Kevyn Aucoin's three best-selling highlighters, Candlelight, Starlight, and Sunlight. In this case, three is most definitely not a crowd!

Available from spacenk.com, priced at £30.



Beauty editor Kelly Andrews shares her latest beauty must-haves for the bride-to-be

Beauty BUZZ

Crystal clear

If hours of traipsing around wedding shows and agonising over budgets has left you in need of a bit of R&R, this will come as music to your ears. LLIO's Crystoil helps with those little moments in life where you can finally enjoy some you-time, aiding sleep, boosting energy and enhancing the mood. You can invoke Crystoil's power in two ways: shake the bottle and add a few droplets to a bath, or massage all over before stepping into a warm bath or shower. The lush passionflower, apricot and rosehip oils make for deliciously soft nourished skin.

LLIO will be donating £1 of every sale to Winston's Wish, a charity giving hope to grieving children. Priced at £45, check out llo.love



A ROSY GLOW

Looking to achieve that natural dewy flush of colour for your wedding day? The folk at Beautaniq Beauty have just the thing. Introducing the Butter Cheek & Lip Balm. This cream blusher blends seamlessly into cheeks using nothing more than the warmth of your fingertips, and doubles up as an effortless lip colour. Crafted with 90% natural plant-based oils to nourish, condition and hydrate the skin, it simultaneously bestows a gorgeous, creamy radiance.

Available at beautaniqbeauty.com it's priced at £12.50.



Sustainability, solved

Disposable face wipes are a thing of the past with the sustainable, vegan-friendly and cruelty-free Face Halo. These microfibre pads remove your make-up and lightly exfoliate the skin in just seconds. Face Halo works with water helping the clever HaloTech fibres, which are 100 times finer than human hair, to get to work on removing even the most stubborn make-up. Reusable, the Face Halo can be machine washed up to 200 times, meaning it's a cost-effective way of looking after your skin and it helps the environment. Around these parts we call that a win-win!

The Face Halo Original is priced at £17.99 and is available from Beauty Bay, Boots, Selfridges and Harrods. Check out facehalo.com



COLOUR WITH CARE

Founded by French sisters, and beauty experts, Hamida and Yasmine Smatti, L'Atelier Green is a breathable and bio-sourced polish that cares for your nails. After helping countless beauty fans to repair nails damaged by acrylics, gel manicures and toxin-filled varnishes, they saw first-hand the need for a product that not only gave the desired colour, shine and long-lasting effect, but that also nurtured nails and cuticles.

The debut Naked Nails collection boasts breathable properties, which help to bring your nails back to full health. Enriched with high-performance, organic and active ingredients, the lacquers stimulate nail growth and repair damage without sacrificing glossiness and longevity.

Priced from £15.99, see the website lateliergreen.com



FAREWELL SPLIT ENDS!

Let's be honest, a dry and damaged barnet is not the look for your wedding day, so, now's the time to banish split ends for good. Check out BondiBoost's Rapid Repair range. Start your haircare routine with Rapid Repair Shampoo (£22.50). Formulated to repair split ends, reduce breakage and seal cuticles, it delivers a boost of essential oils rich in antioxidants, vitamins and amino acids. Follow with Rapid Repair Conditioner (£22.50), which improves signs of damage. Then, finish by applying 1-2 pumps of the Rapid Repair Serum (£22.50) for softness and shine. Hey presto – damaged hair is a thing of the past. Easy. Available at boots.com

Step it up

If you simply don't have time for a complicated multi-step skincare regime, help is at hand. Designed to streamline your routine in a fast-moving world, Frances Prescott's multitasking natural skincare will have your complexion big-day ready in no time. With the Tri-Balm (£46) and Tri-Spritz (£45) all you need are two simple three-in-one steps.

The luxurious facial balm cleanses, exfoliates and moisturises in one solid stick bursting with botanical oils. Meanwhile, the spritz works to aid cellular repair, protect against pollution and set make-up.

For further information see francesprescott.com



BEAUTY SLEEP

The must-have beauty accessory for flawless skin and hair is a pillowcase, but not just any. The Gingerlily Beauty Box contains a 100% silk pillowcase for the ultimate in luxury that allows you to reap beauty benefits while you sleep. Soft and seamless, the A-grade mulberry silk adjusts to the temperature of your body and is naturally hypoallergenic, ideal if you suffer with allergies or have sensitive skin. Thanks to its high protein content, this fabric doesn't absorb moisture, so it helps to prevent wrinkles, while keeping skin hydrated and hair glossy.

Available in silver grey, nude, ivory and white, they're priced at £59 each and available from gingerlily.co.uk



BEAUTY NEWS

STRESSED SKIN SOLUTION

Cannabooster Detox from French holistic skincare brand Ho Karan (meaning "I love you" in Breton) is a clarifying, brightening and energising serum – a real skin saviour. Rich in potent terpenes, it helps to detoxify, clarify and create a formidable shield against the harmful effects of pollution. It's gentle on stressed skin, hydrating, nourishing and protecting.

As its name implies it contains the trending plant extract CBD, which has calming, anti-inflammatory and sebum balancing effects. So unsurprisingly this wonder-ingredient is being championed as the latest wellness hero.

Find out more at hokaran.com





PICTURE-PERFECT PARADISE

The private Maldivian-owned boutique island resort of Baros has won the title of World's Most Romantic Resort for the seventh consecutive time at the annual World Travel Awards. Voted for by industry professionals and travellers from across the globe, it certifies its places as one of the top honeymoon destinations. General manager Ibrahim Shijah says, "This award maintains Baros' status as a Maldivian legend and furthers the significant impact of the resort within the international luxury market around the world."

To highlight its romantic offerings, the resort has launched its Romantic Moments package. Including a private candlelit beach dinner, a couple's massage and a spectacular sunset cruise, it makes the ultimate honeymoon retreat. Visit baros.com



A WILD MINI-MOON

You can journey across South America, Asia and Africa at Kent's authentic safari park Port Lympne Hotel & Reserve. We love that guests can now enjoy some peace and tranquility under the stars in The Bubble, a 180-degree panoramic lodge with stunning views across the 600-acre reserve. Couples can also take their romance to new heights with a once-in-a-lifetime hot-air balloon ride over Port Lympne and the surrounding countryside. After a day exploring the reserve, why not enjoy a romantic dinner at its Moroccan Courtyard or Bear Lodge Restaurant before heading back to your quirky accommodation. For more information, head to aspinnallfoundation.org

HONEYMOON

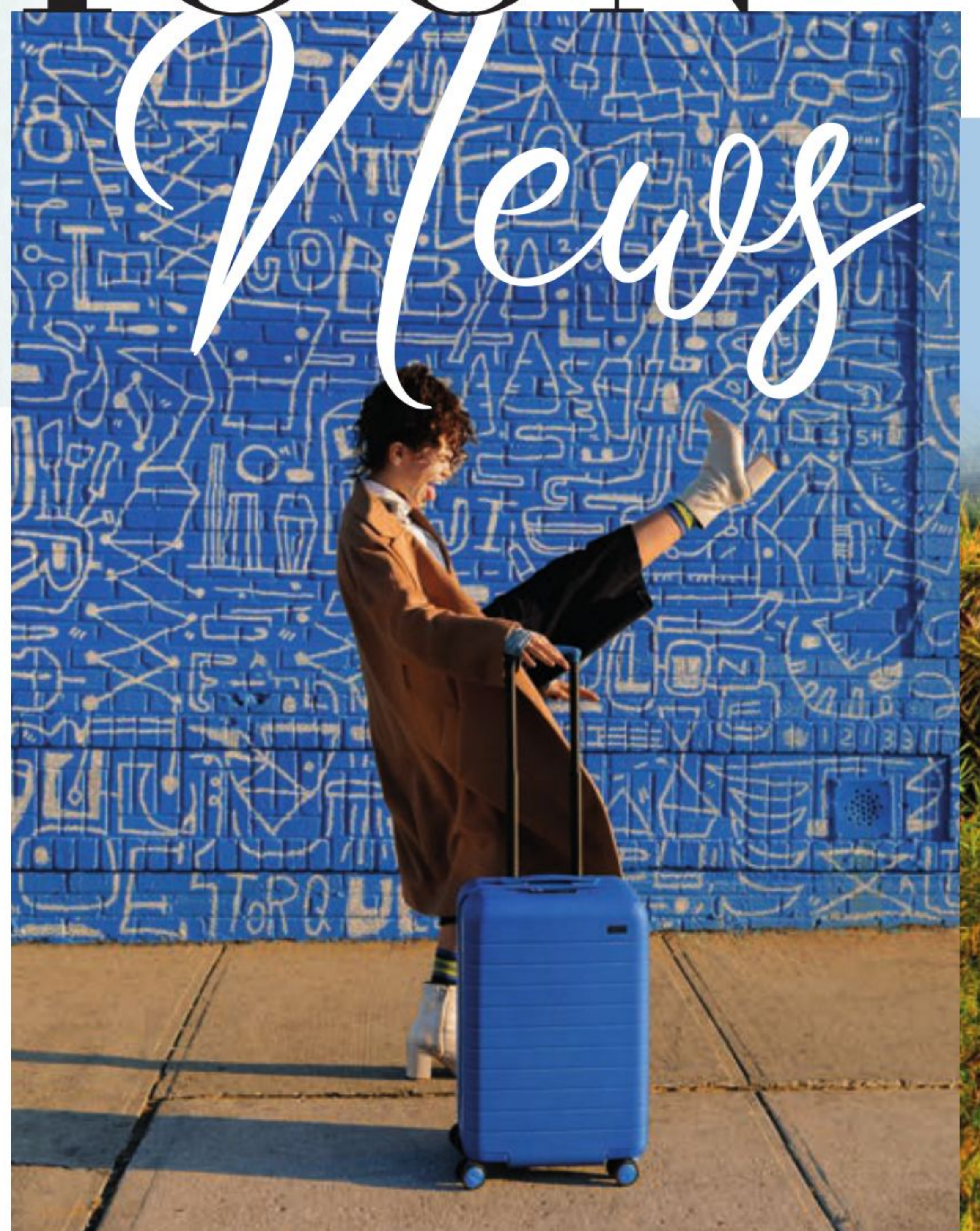


Travel editor Hannah Faulder reveals her top honeymoon destination picks and travel essentials

HOT HOTEL OPENING FOR 2020

I love a short-haul flight, so MarBella Collection's MarBella Elix on mainland Greece is a 2020 hotel opening I'm very excited about. The third hotel to join the portfolio and the first outside of Corfu, it will be perched above the beautiful Karavostasi Beach in the Parga region, looking west towards Corfu and Paxos. Couples arriving after the June 2020 launch will be able to marvel at the outstanding natural beauty, the inviting golden coastline and crystal-clear waters.

Within an hour's drive of Preveza Airport, the hotel can also arrange boat transfers from Corfu, which is ideal for those looking to twin with the MarBella Collection's two properties on the Ionian island. Book your honeymoon here, and you can expect luxurious accommodation, incredible scenery, exhilarating activities and delicious dining. Check out marbellacollection.gr



A classic case

Anyone else loving the 2020 Pantone Colour of the Year Classic Blue? It's evocative of vast skies and deep blue waters so it's ideal for travelling, and Away have hit the nail on the head with its limited edition Colour of the Year Collection. See the range at awaytravel.com

WINE TIME

Legacy wine estate Boschendal in South Africa's Cape Winelands introduced the country's first tented wine experience in March 2020. Wine-loving honeymooners can stay in one of seven luxury serviced tents in the heart of the 4,500-acre working estate and vineyard, offering a one-of-a-kind perspective on its staggering landscape.

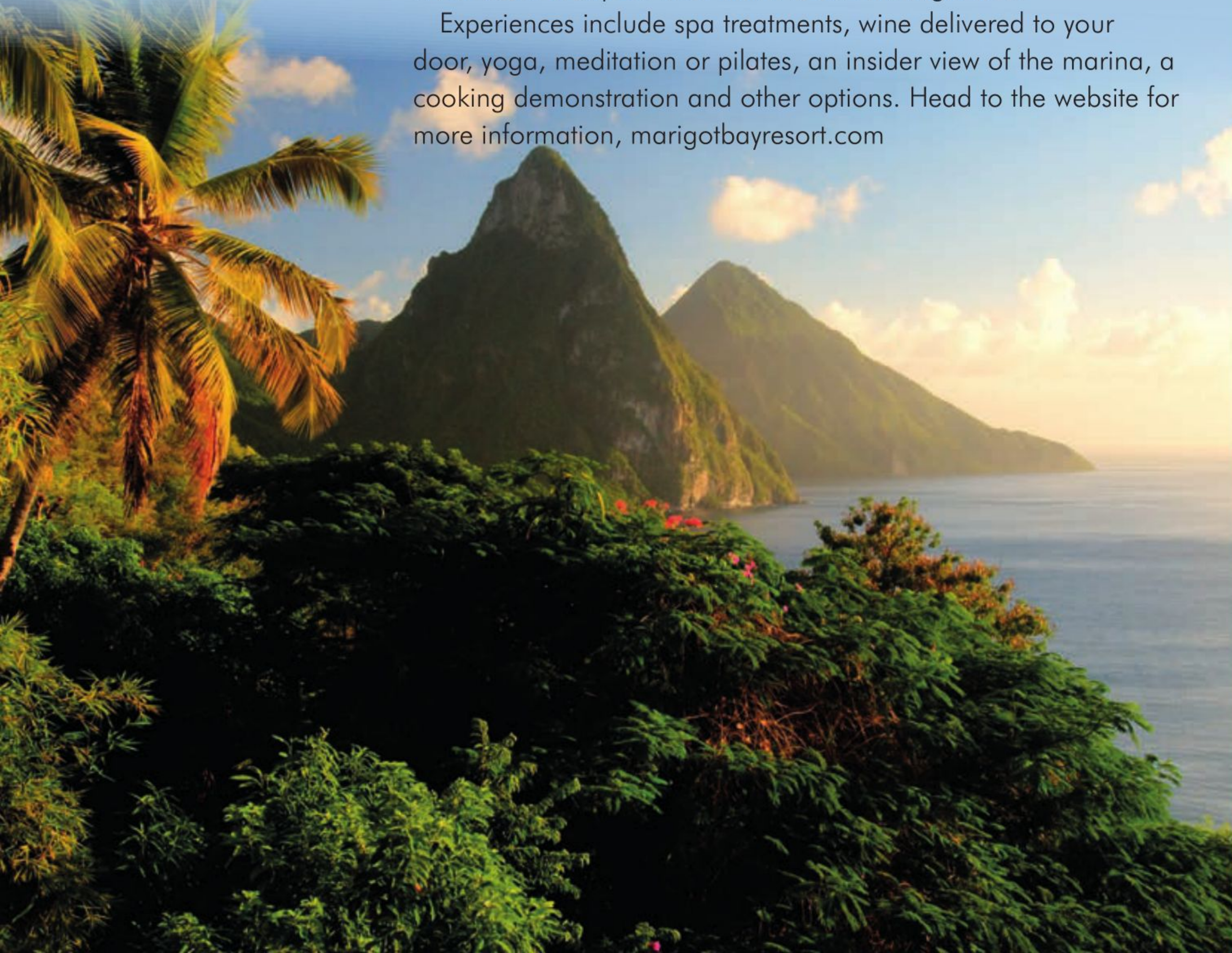
The property is dedicated to conserving its natural biodiversity and guests have the opportunity to become a part of the landscape that cultivates the exquisite produce found in its restaurants and wine cellar. To find out more, visit boschendal.com



MARRY, GO

St Lucia is one of my favourite holiday spots, and I'm not alone as it's consistently voted as one of the most romantic destinations in the world. The fabulous Marigot Bay Resort has come up with a dreamy new honeymoon package called Marigot Moments, which includes a full week of experiences and the seventh night free.

Experiences include spa treatments, wine delivered to your door, yoga, meditation or pilates, an insider view of the marina, a cooking demonstration and other options. Head to the website for more information, marigotbayresort.com



HONEYMOON NEWS

KEEP ON MOVING

With the Olympics just around the corner, you might be getting in the sporty mood. If you and your partner are more likely to be running on the beach than snoozing on it, then these active honeymoon picks are for you...

- ♥ Mountain biking in Mauritius. The Mauritius Tour Beachcomber 2020 is held 30th April to 2nd May and consists of four stages over a total distance of 195km. The challenging route allows cyclists to soak in their stunning surroundings. Book at beachcombertours.uk
- ♥ Running in Victoria Falls. The Victoria Falls Marathon in Zimbabwe is definitely a bucket-list event. Taking place in July, participants will be running alongside incredible scenery, amazing wildlife and one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Book at africaalbidatourism.com
- ♥ Diving in Fiji. Sign up for the THIRDHOME Adventure's Jean-Michel Cousteau's Fiji Island Hideaway Adventure in September to spend a week on a private island with guided diving and snorkelling alongside the world-famous oceanographic explorer and his expert marine biologist. Book at adventures.thirdhome.com
- ♥ Wild swimming in the Seychelles. Eager to try the wild swimming trend but the cold UK water's not for you? Dip your toes in at the five-star Hilton Seychelles Northolme Resort & Spa and swim or snorkel along the 650-metre coral trail. Book at seychelles.hilton.com
- ♥ Stay active at sea. The launch of Blue World Voyages in 2021 will see the world's first active lifestyle cruise take to the Mediterranean with two decks dedicated to fitness, sports and wellness. There will also be a seawater pool, which will be lowered into the ocean so guests can swim alongside the ship. Book at blueworldvoyages.com

A TASTE OF PARADISE

Editor Claire Ridley travelled to the island of Anguilla in the Caribbean to discover what this popular honeymoon destination has to offer

When the opportunity arose to experience what's new for 2020 on this luxurious island in the Eastern Caribbean, I packed my passport and bikini and was ready to fly! The lure of its 33 pristine beaches with powder-white sand and clear turquoise sea – regularly voted some of the best in the region – along with the promise of some winter sun had me jumping on board the Virgin Atlantic flight from London Gatwick bound for the British West Indies.

It's a good idea to break the journey with a one-night stopover in Antigua. Curtain Bluff is a spectacular all-inclusive resort set against the backdrop of not one but two palm-fringed beaches – Bay Beach and Surf Beach. I stayed in a stunning one-bedroom, split-level Bluff Suite boasting panoramic sea views from the terrace.

Honeymooners can while away the day in a hammock or snorkel around the reef to discover a rich variety of sea life. For active types, there's scuba diving, waterskiing and basketball, all included in the room rate, while those wanting something more relaxing will love the spa treatments available in the private couple's treatment room.

The Seagrape restaurant offers beachfront dining, while the plantation-style Tamarind Restaurant is located in a more secluded setting, both served by the most extensive wine cellar in the area – be sure to ask for a private tasting.

Wish you were here

Boarding the inter-island Trans Anguilla Airways flight (prepare for a very small plane!), I was excited to touch down on this small yet perfectly formed jewel of the Caribbean where I was greeted by Colwayne from the Anguilla Tourist Board and whisked off to visit the Valley Street Festival, a vibrant introduction to the local arts and crafts scene. A 20-minute massage here from Big Joe really helped me to recover from the flight and relax into island life where, as the locals say, you should 'make time to lime' (hang out!)

Next up was a scenic tour of this honeymoon hotspot pointing out areas of interest including The Valley (the capital city) and Crocus Hill (the highest point). Lunch at the Bayside Grill beach bar at

da'Vida Restaurant & Spa was my first introduction to Johnny cakes – a doughnut-like savoury snack – and the local mahi-mahi fish giving me some much-needed energy for a two-hour afternoon kayaking tour from Crocus Bay to Little Bay with Liquid Glow. Through the clear-bottom kayaks I spotted tropical fish and even a turtle as we paddled along the sapphire shores, stopping for a snorkel around the cliff edge at the secluded Little Bay. Honeymooners will love the romantic night kayaking tour they offer, where you get the chance to see turtles sleeping at the bottom of the ocean.

It was soon time to check into the redesigned, award-winning CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa located on Rendezvous Bay that was to be my home for the next three nights. It's a glamorous white building with azure blue touches and a Mediterranean feel mixed with Caribbean flair (think of the architecture in Santorini and you get the idea). KazBar, the lounge area in the lobby, is a Moroccan-inspired space furnished with pops of bright colour, ideal for relaxing with rum and tapas while enjoying the live music. All 91 suites (including the Beachfront Junior Suite where I stayed), seven villas and two penthouses have been recently renovated and boast a bright coastal feel.

This super-stylish resort promises a gourmet-dining scene where guests can enjoy tastes from around the globe, including authentic Anguillian food created by new executive chef Juan Bochenski. He uses local ingredients and sustainable practices, and dishes include sushi and sashimi at the award-winning Japanese restaurant Tokyo Bay.

After a dip in the pool and some much-needed sunbathing time in a private cabana, it was time to get ready for dinner at Maundays Club located at dreamy resort Belmond Cap Juluca. Here, I sampled the tasty Peruvian menu including the mouth-watering Caribbean fish ceviche.

This romantic hideaway nestled on Maundays Bay offers Insta-worthy snaps at every turn and by day, the resort's turquoise VW Campervans and vintage-style bicycles allow for easy viewing of the grounds. A horse ride along the beach at Meads Bay on Tosh, proudly led by owner Zambezi, was a highlight and is suitable for riders of all levels. Check out the sunset excursions; great for honeymooners.

Enjoying #qualitytime at Curtain Bluff #curtainpics

Drinking a #coconutcocktail at da'Vida Restaurant (left), and the #infinityedgepool and #cutecampervans at Belmond Cap Juluca (right) #anguilla #beyondextraordinary

#horseriding on the #beach #meadsbay #belmondcapjuluca



Admiring the #seaviews
and #infinitypool at Zemi
Beach House Hotel &
Spa and CuisinArt (left)

Beyond the beach



Breakfast at Mosaic at CuisinArt certainly didn't disappoint, with the banana bread, coconut muffins and reviving smoothies so delicious I just had to order seconds. The restaurant features an open kitchen and wrap-around bar and is also open for dinner. After a swim in the ocean and enjoying the soft sand between my toes, it was time to be transported to the jaw-droppingly beautiful Shoal Bay East. (The easiest way to travel around the island is with Premier Taxi and Tours). This stunning stretch of sand is home to the Zemi Beach House Hotel & Spa boasting infinity pools and picturesque vistas. To say I ate well here was an understatement, with mahi-mahi tacos and hand-crafted coconut mocktails on the menu at the Zemi Beach Club. This was followed by a therapeutic massage at the zen-like Zemi Thai House Spa before enjoying the spectacular sunset that this island is well known for.



That evening, I headed for dinner at Café Celeste inside the colonial-style Malliouhana resort simply oozing with glamour and Caribbean charm, perched on the stunning Meads Bay. Highlights on the menu include red snapper, conch curry served with coconut dumplings and yummy plantain fritters.

Another day in paradise



Fully immersed in island life, I enjoyed an early morning yoga and meditation session followed by a refreshing dip in the healing waters pool in the Spa by CuisinArt. This tranquil spot is home to 16 treatment rooms, including a couple's suite featuring an outdoor Jacuzzi, where a heated bamboo massage and aqua massage are on the menu. The Scrub Blend Bar experience isn't to be missed, giving guests the option to make their own spa product to take home with them, and other more adventurous activities include aquatic kickboxing, stand-up paddleboard yoga and tennis (with lessons available). There's also a fun cookery class to learn how to make Portuguese petiscos and a rum and cocktail-making lesson.

Golf enthusiasts will love the 18-hole Greg

Book it



Tropic Breeze offer holidays to Antigua to stay at the Curtain Bluff resort, 01752 880 880, tropicbreeze.co.uk, @ tropicbreezeholidays curtainbluff.com @ curtainbluffresort



HONEYMOONS

#freshseafood
and a #romantic
ambience at Café
Celeste (above
and below)

Norman Signature Design Championship course, the only one on the island, situated close by on the resort's sister property, The Reef by CuisinArt. This oceanfront boutique hotel boasts 80 rooms and suites built across four beachfront buildings and an open-air lobby. Foodies will love The Yacht Club Restaurant, opening on to the feature pool, serving breakfast and dinner while Breezes Beachfront Restaurant & Bar offers a lounge-style atmosphere for lunch and dinner. Sundowners are a must-try at Santorini at the Clubhouse, also open for lunch.

There's a cool party vibe at this hotel with regular live DJ sets around the pool and poolside treatments available to book through Spa to You.



Next up was a visit to the colourful Arts & Crafts Center in the West End, a treasure trove of island trinkets including conch shells to take home. From here, I headed to the Sunshine Shack beach bar and grill perched on Rendezvous Bay, a short stroll along the beach from CuisinArt, where I tucked into the delicious grilled lobster accompanied by the local Carib lager. It's well worth the walk and you're encouraged to scribble a message with your name on the shack before you leave.



Coming to the end of my magical trip, as the sun went down, the wonderful team at CuisinArt arranged for me to experience some private dining at the water's edge at the Beach Bar & Grill where I enjoyed an amazing array of food and live music. I departed Clayton J. Lloyd International Airport with a smile on my face that lasted the entire way home – this tropical paradise, one of the best-kept secrets in the Caribbean, will always hold a special place in my heart ❤️

Virgin Holidays offer holidays to Anguilla to stay at CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa, 0344 739 6909, virginholidays.co.uk

ivisitanguilla.com @ anguilla_tourism

f BigjoePradel

davidaanguilla.com

anguillakayak.com @ axaliquidglow

cuisinartresort.com @ visitcuisinart

belmond.com @ belmondcapjuluca

f AnguillaHorses

f premiertaxiandtours

zemibeach.com @ zemibeachhouse

aubergeresorts.com/malliouhana/dine/celeste

@ malliouhana

thereefbycuisinart.com @ thereefanguilla

sunshin Shack.net @ sunshin Shack_

Practising #yoga
and #golf at
CuisinArt (above
and below)



#grilledlobster at
the Sunshine Shack

MOROCCAN *magic*



Hannah Faulder discovers that whatever you want from your honeymoon, you can find it at Mazagan Beach and Golf Resort in Morocco

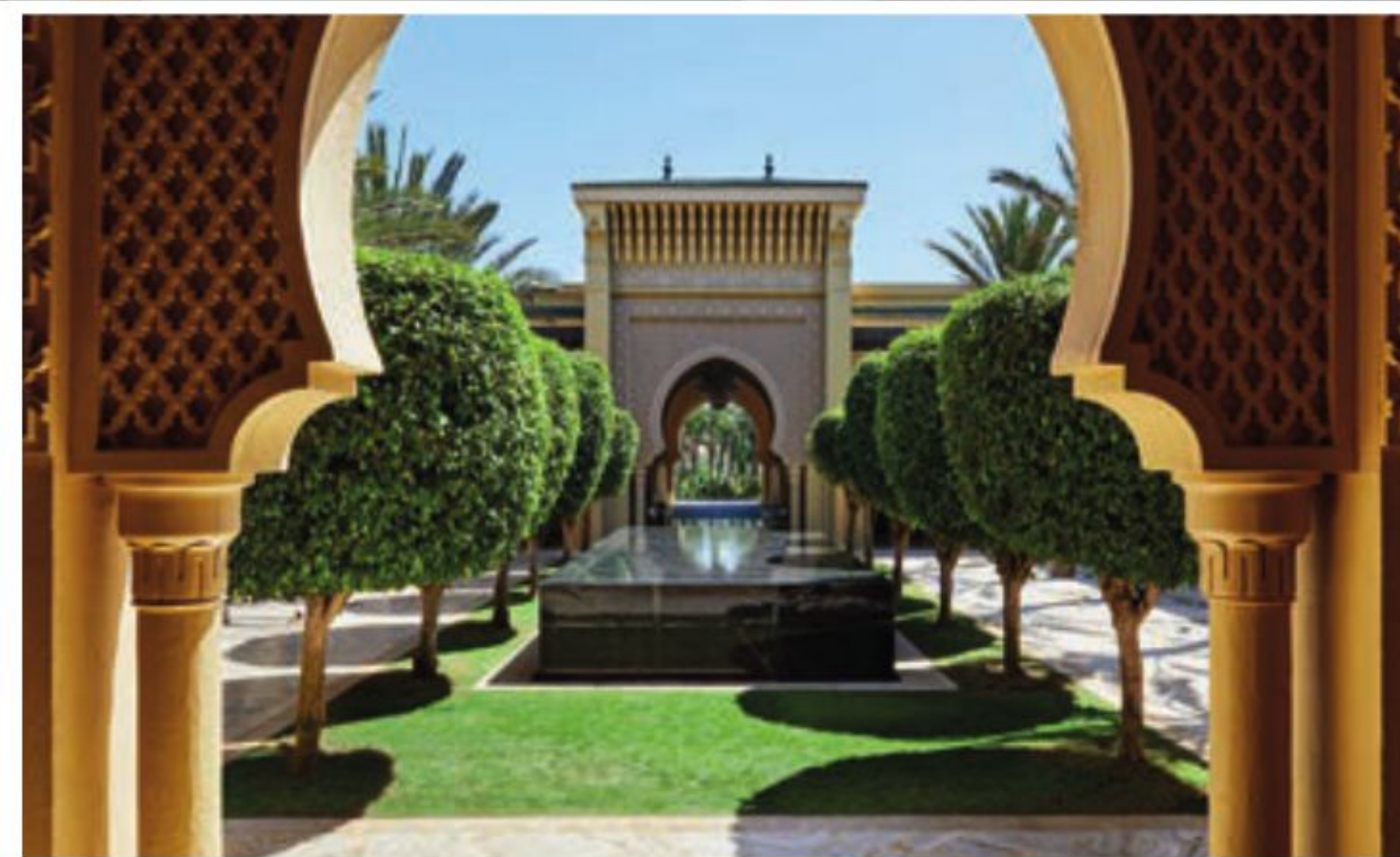
If, like me and my husband, you want to spend your holiday ticking off activities but your partner wants to lounge by the pool, then Mazagan Beach and Golf Resort in Morocco might just be your ideal honeymoon destination. Year-round sun: tick. Action-packed activities: tick. Fun with the kids: tick. Luxury: tick – there's not much this place doesn't offer. And it's not by accident. Everything is meticulously planned and designed to cater to your every need within its 250 hectares of paradise.

A snappy three-hour flight, plus a one-hour transfer from Casablanca Airport, and you'll find yourself winding down Mazagan's grand driveway and seeing the resort emerging from its lush grounds in all of its decadent Moorish glory. As the only destination of its kind in Morocco, you might just find yourself rubbing shoulders with royalty and celebrities – I'm basically BFFs with Dougie from McFly now.

You can expect to find traditional Moroccan influences alongside contemporary luxe – think ornately carved doors, colourful lanterns, textured rugs and mosaic tiles. There are 13 restaurants and bars, a huge spa, the most glamorous gym imaginable, an 18-hole golf course and North Africa's biggest casino.

STAY

It's always a little disorienting arriving somewhere after dark, and the stylish but seemingly endless corridors of Mazagan heightened the confusion. I didn't need to worry; within a couple of minutes, a friendly chap with a walkie-talkie (who had clearly been sent to find the lost Englishwoman with too much luggage) was guiding me to my room. This was the level of service I came to expect here. Once inside, I was met with the most enormous marshmallowy bed, a spacious bathroom and floor-to-ceiling windows – in





HONEYMOON

the morning, these revealed incredible views across gardens and the secluded 9km beach beyond. I was told that if you're awake early enough (I wasn't), you can watch the resort's herd of rescue horses take their morning gallop across the deserted sands. Beautiful (I imagine).

Within the walls of Mazagan, you feel untouched by the outside world. The feeling of serenity is in every corner of the resort, which is especially incredible considering there are 500 rooms here. Sometimes I could walk around for 10 minutes and not bump into another soul.

EXPERIENCE

This place goes all out when it comes to experiences and activities. I'll confess that I'm a total wuss, so looking at my itinerary and seeing quad-biking, zip-lining and horse-riding did send me into a mild panic. However, I'm pleased to report I stepped out of my comfort zone – and I'm so glad I did! First up, I was introduced to the sassy Caramel, my noble steed for the hour. We rode along the practically deserted beach in the sunshine with the sound of the waves lapping on to the shore – what an incredible moment and an absolute must-do for honeymooners.

Next up, we jumped on some quad bikes and whizzed along the beach in hot pursuit of our guide, who took us to see an incredible shipwreck protruding from the water. He was also our personal photographer, getting snaps that made my group look like the most badass girl band of all time! After this, I had caught the action bug, and flinging myself down a zip line at high speed through the trees was the next logical step.

Bringing things back to my normal pace, we wandered through the

idyllic grounds to the spa, where, in a moment of madness, I decided against the planned full-body massage and instead opted for the hammam. The authentic Moroccan bathing ritual was certainly an experience! First off, you sit in an incredibly hot steam room where a lady washes you down with eucalyptus oil. Next, she showers you and lays you on a huge marble plinth and scrubs your skin with a mitt, which is akin to sandpaper. Then you're showered again, smothered in a mud mask, wrapped in a towel and left to bake on the plinth. The end result: seriously smooth skin! I felt like a newborn baby, and I've been recommending a – frankly bizarre – hammam to anyone who'll listen.

EAT

Foodies will love the choice of 13 restaurants and bars here. There are two huge buffets offering everything you could possibly want alongside high-end eateries that specialise in different cuisines. For breakfast, it's worth heading to Olives and sitting by the pool, where fresh food, soft music and elaborately served mint tea all add to the chilled-out vibe.

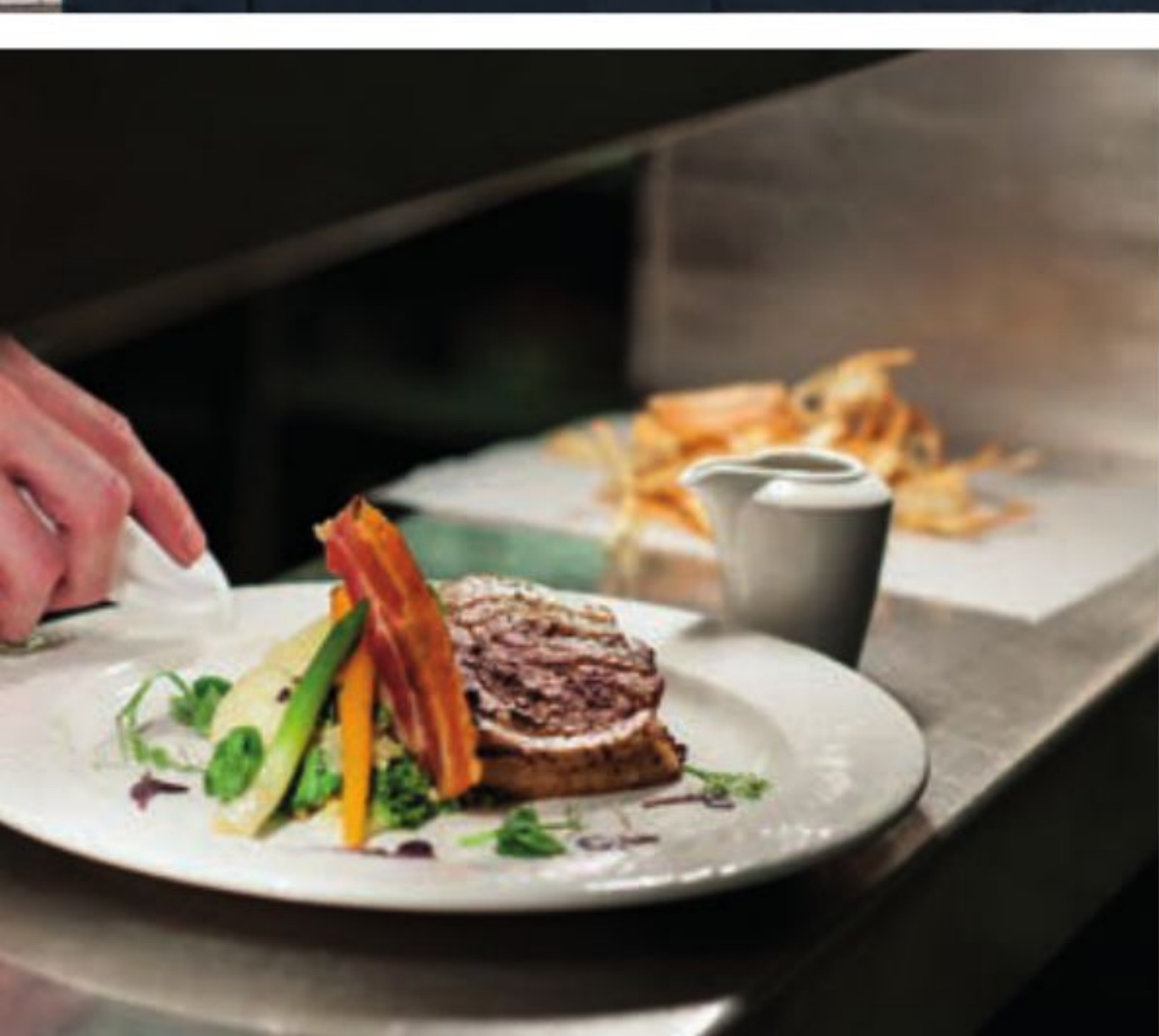
One evening, we opted for the elegant Sel de Mer, which serves the finest seafood. Fellow veggies, don't despair! They whipped me up a yummy quinoa stack and vegetable pasta. I'd also recommend the rustic charm of La Cave for warming French fare.

LOVE

The final evening was spent looking out at the setting sun, cocktail in hand, watching the golden rays twinkle across the waves. It was a perfectly romantic time to reflect on a trip that offered everything honeymooners could want: adventure, luxury and unadulterated romance in equal measure.



For more information, and to book your stay, visit mazaganbeachresort.com



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Olivia Gibson reviews the Castle Hotel Windsor

I didn't quite realise how incredible my stay would be at the Castle Hotel Windsor, throughout the trip my partner and I created amazing memories full of happiness, laughter and relaxation. Maybe it was the charming décor, impeccable service or the fact that Windsor Castle is nestled right opposite the hotel – creating the perfect backdrop.

When the chance to visit the establishment first arose, I immediately jumped at the opportunity. For a while, it's been on my bucket list to visit the UK town but something would always come up. But not this time, the stars aligned and next thing I know, my bags are packed and I'm on my way.

The hotel was first built in 1528 and was previously known as The Mermaid Inn serving as a bar for the town's 1,000 residents and is now one of the oldest buildings in the area. After being lovingly restored, the hotel still boasts elegance of its rich and fascinating history left behind.

Throughout the hotel, many features highlight the venue's story such as the Pennington Penny which was an in-house token issued by George Pennington back in 1656. I loved how the authentic essence of the venue has been kept and highlighted with some original features, when you look closely stories start to come alive.

PURE INDULGENCE

When stepping through the doors for the first time – and thinking how amazing everything looked – friendly staff quickly greeted us and took their time to explain the local area with the best places to see – they couldn't have been more helpful!

With 108 rooms available ranging from suites, superior and the classic rooms, there's something for everyone. Inside our room we found a 40-inch flat-screen TV, White Company toiletries, minibar and iron. After a long week, I was very excited to try out the queen size bed

which was covered with Egyptian cotton. It was so comfortable that I ended up having a nap! Once I had awoken from my slumber, we headed off for a romantic walk around the area and discovered plenty of independent boutiques, clothes shops and cafes – we walked around in comfortable silence just enjoying each others' company. As we visited in winter, the night drew in early leaving the dark streets beautifully lit.

TO DINE FOR

We couldn't fault our dining experience at The Marco Pierre White restaurant located in the hotel and I must say, it's one of the best meals I've ever had – and I'm not exaggerating! The service was faultless and I have told everyone about it. For starter I had Mr White's Scotch Egg which tasted divine, the egg inside was cooked to perfection. For main I opted for The Governor's Fried Haddock and Triple Cooked Chips, a simple dish which is my personal favourite and I wasn't disappointed.

After dinner we headed off to the bar where we enjoyed plenty of cocktails, my favourite was the classic daiquiri and spent our time relaxing on the comfortable chairs, it was so lovely to be able to spend time together without any distractions.

After having a lovely rest, we started our day with a great breakfast. It was a buffet-style set-up with choices of hot foods or continental. My partner says the blueberry muffin was his favourite, I would have loved to try some but I was so full-up!

While eating, guests could watch the changing of the guards right outside the window, it was impressive and there was an excited buzz all around – it was like a movie scene!

It was sadly time to leave; we both loved this hotel so much and will be booking our next trip back later this year!

Discover more about the venue here: castlehotelwindsor.com

WIN!

A LUXURIOUS FIVE-NIGHT HONEYMOON TO OMAN

Enter now for your chance to win a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the incredible Salalah Rotana Resort in Oman

Rotana Hotels & Resorts has partnered with County Wedding Magazines to offer one lucky couple a luxurious five-night honeymoon at Salalah Rotana Resort in Oman.

Set against a beautiful backdrop of lush vegetation, rolling mountains, golden sands and crystal-clear waters of the Indian Ocean, the five-star resort provides a tranquil setting that's ideal for those looking to unwind.

Whilst staying in one of the resort's Deluxe Ocean View rooms, the lucky couple can wake up with spectacular views across the water and enjoy coffee in the sun from their very own private terrace or balcony. Complimentary half-board dining will ensure the winners are spoilt for choice at both breakfast and dinner at Saffron restaurant.

As well as relaxing on the private golden beach, the newlyweds will also be treated to a couple's spa massage at Zen the Spa, the

perfect way to unwind after a hard day spent in the sun.

Salalah Rotana Resort is ideally located in the Salalah Beach destination – one of the most breath-taking natural settings in the Sultanate, between spectacular mountains, freshwater springs and tropical scenery, where wildlife and frankincense trees can be marveled.

The waterfront resort's 422 rooms and suites are built around waterways, whisking guests away to a coastal utopia. The resort prides itself on providing five-star opulence synonymous with the Rotana brand, infused with traditional Omani hospitality. With four restaurants, the resort offers the perfect mélange of East-meets-West hospitality.

With its state-of-the-art facilities, couples can keep fit at Bodylines Fitness & Wellness Club, take a dip in the swimming pool or relax and rejuvenate at Zen the spa at Rotana.

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