

GEORGINA ALEXANDER

WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Understanding Wedding Terms & Phrases

Aisle Runner

A long piece of fabric placed in the centre on the ground that starts at the entrance of the wedding ceremony, and ends where the ceremony will take place. Usually, the aisle runner divides the ceremony seating (indoor or outdoor) into two sides and is the path the wedding party will walk down during the processional and recessional. There are no rules with aisle runners, couples can get creative with fabric, colour and pattern.

All-inclusive Wedding Package

Offered by some venues, all-inclusive packages typically include ceremony room hire, canapes and one drink per guest for the drinks reception, 3 course sit down meal with sparkling wine for the toast, evening reception room hire, in house DJ, cold evening buffet. Make sure you check with the venue as to what is actually included, different venues might offer different options or may not offer this as a package.

Baffle Screen

Used for marquee weddings, this is a staggered screen that placed at the entrance of the catering tent, where it joins the main marquee. It's used to prevent guests having a direct view of the catering kitchen area.

BEO

A BEO, or Banquet Event Order is an agreement from your venue that includes details on any audio / visual, food and beverage and venue setup (tables, chairs, linens) the venue will be providing. It also outlines the costs, staffing requirements and taxes / VAT.

Black Tie

This is the most formal dress code for a wedding - men should wear a black tuxedo / dinner jacket and a black bow tie, women should wear a long evening gown or cocktail dress.

Bridal Party (or Wedding Party)

The group of people chosen by the couple to participate in the wedding ceremony, e.g Best Man / Woman, Maid / Man of Honour, Bridesmaids, Ushers.

Buffet Style

Informal dinner service where guests choose what they want to eat from a selection of different options laid out.

Bustle

When the brides train is secured with buttons / hooks under (sometimes over) the skirt to avoid it dragging on the floor. This is usually done for the reception or first dance.

Buttonhole / Boutonniere

A small spray of flowers, or bud pinned to the lapel of a jacket, typically worn by a groom, groomsmen, father-of-the-bride, and / or father-of-the-groom.

Cake Cutting

Wedding tradition where the couple cut into the cake together and share a small bite which symbolises commitment.

Canapes / Hors d'oeuvres

Small bite-sized snacks served during the drinks reception / cocktail hour. They can be hot or cold, savoury or sweet, and are often presented on a skewer, spoon, or cracker.

Cash Bar

A bar where guests pay for their own drinks.

Celebrant

An officiant who will lead your ceremony, but isn't allowed to perform a legal ceremony.

Ceremony Rehearsal

Run through of the wedding ceremony with all those involved in the wedding (couple, best man, bridesmaids etc). This usually happens the day before the wedding.

Chargers / Charger Plates

Large, decorative plates that are placed underneath a dinner plate. They add colour, depth, and dimension to place settings. As they are decorative only, they come in a variety of materials ranging from glass to plastic.

Chiavari Chair

Type of wooden chair that has a slender, curved back and a cushioned seat. It is often used for weddings because of its elegant and versatile design. It can be painted or decorated with ribbons, flowers, or sashes.

Civil Ceremony

A civil ceremony is a legally binding marriage ceremony without any religious context, performed by a Registrar (applies to England & Wales).

Clear Down / Load Out / Tear Down / Take Down / Strike

To take down equipment such as a DJ / band / stage or dancefloor, and clear away items such as tables, chairs, flowers and décor for example, that have been set up for your wedding. Depending on the time you need to leave your venue / marquee site, this happens immediately after your wedding has finished or the next day, depending on what you have agreed with your venue / marquee site.

Contingency Plan

A back up plan for all or part of your wedding day, such as a provision for wet weather.

Corkage (or corkage fee)

A fee charged by some venues or caterers if you bring your own alcohol. It covers the cost of opening, pouring, serving, and disposing of the bottles, as well as the use of glassware. It is usually calculated per bottle or per person.

Draping

Lengths of fabric that are draped from the ceilings or down walls, and are often used to decorate marquee spaces. They can also be used as décor for indoor spaces/venues.

Drinks Reception / Cocktail Hour

Takes place straight after the ceremony, and usually lasts an hour and a half. Guests can mingle and enjoy a drink and canapes while photographs are taken.

Dry Bar

A bar hired without staff, equipment or drinks.

Dry Hire Venue

A venue you hire that doesn't provide anything other than use of the space - you'll need to hire in chairs, tables, cutlery, linens, dancefloor, staging and so on. Examples of dry hire venues are marquees, tipis, and some indoor spaces operate on a dry hire basis too.

Emergency Wedding Kit

Provided by your Wedding Planner, contents include items such as deodorant, plasters, tissues, sewing kit etc for the couple to utilise on their wedding day in case of emergencies.

Escort Cards

Usually displayed near the entrance to the wedding reception, each card has the guest name and table number / table name of where they will be seated for the meal, and can include their meal choice or a personal message from the couple. Escort cards are an alternative to a table plan, showing guests where they will be seated.

Exclusive Use

Hire of an entire venue, it's facilities and staff exclusively for your use for a predetermined period of time. No other events will take place during that period.

Favours

Small tokens of thanks for wedding guests, which are often edible. Historically these were 5 sugared almonds representing health, happiness, wealth, fertility and long life. Favours can be anything from a candle, a magnet, a keychain, sweets, or a personalised item.

First Dance

The first dance shared between the couple, and typically opens the dance floor for guests to begin dancing.

First Look

A private moment for the couple to see each other for the first time before the ceremony. Usually takes place in a private and secluded location, and captured by the photographer and videographer.

Flat Lay

A photo shot directly from above (a bird's eye view) of an array of carefully arranged objects, such as wedding stationery and accessories.

Floor Plan

A bird's eye view of how each space for the wedding should be set up.

Floral Installation

A large floral arrangement such as a hanging flower arrangement, a large pedestal, a flower arch or flower wall.

Food Station

Style of dinner service consisting of multiple buffets set up at stations throughout the wedding reception. Food stations allow wedding guests to mingle with others and sample a variety of menu items.

Get-In / Load In

Refers to the specified time for your suppliers to arrive and access your venues for any set up before guests arrive.

Gobo

A piece of acrylic or metal that is placed in front of a spot light to project a message or pattern, such as a monogram onto walls, ceilings and floors.

Golden Hour

The hour before sunset when the light has a golden hue, an ideal time for couple portraits.

Guy Ropes

The ropes used to secure a traditional marquee.

In-House Caterer

Caterers based at the venue; it is sometimes a condition of booking that you need to use the venue caterers in order to use the venue.

Master of Ceremonies (or Toastmaster)

A person appointed to direct proceedings throughout the wedding reception. They will announce the entrance of the couple into the wedding reception and initiate applause, introduce the speakers during the speeches and often announce the cutting of the cake.

Menu Card

A card placed at each place setting or on the table, which lists the courses and dishes that will be served for the wedding breakfast. It can also include the ingredients, the wine pairings, or a personal note from the couple.

Menu Tasting

Offered by most venues and caterers for the couple to sample different dishes in order to decide on their wedding menu. Some venues and caterers charge an additional fee for this.

Monogram

The combined first initials of the couple into a logo that can be used on wedding stationery and gobos.

Non-exclusive Use

Allows you private use of your chosen function space only, other events could be taking place in other areas of the venue so you don't have the venue all to yourself.

On-the-day Stationery

Stationery that is used on the day of your wedding, such as Welcome Sign, Order of Service / Ceremony Programmes, menus, place cards, table plan and so on.

Open Bar / Hosted Bar

Bar with your choice of alcohol (which you pay for) such as beer, wine, spirits and so on, which is served to your guests at no charge.

Pipe & Drape

Adjustable light-weight aluminium tubing that provides a support frame for draping panels. Often used to divide, hide, and / or decorate a space temporarily.

Place Cards

Cards with the name of the individual guest indicating where they will be seated at a table.

Place Setting

The individual place setting for each person at the table that includes cutlery, crockery and glassware.

Plated Dinner / Sit Down Dinner

A formal dinner service that usually involves 2 or more courses, served by waiting staff to guests at their assigned seat and table.

Poseur Table

Tall, round cocktail tables that guests can stand at / gather around, mostly used during drinks receptions and evening receptions.

Processional

The part of the ceremony when the wedding party walk down the aisle, usually accompanied by music.

Reception

Takes place after the Ceremony and celebrates the couple being officially married.

Recessional

the part of the ceremony where the wedding party exits down the aisle after the ceremony, usually accompanied by music.

Registrar

Registrars conduct legally binding marriage and civil partnership ceremonies in England & Wales. They are employed by the local authority and can conduct ceremonies in Register Offices or any building / space that is licenced for civil weddings.

Room Block

A group of bedrooms set aside and exclusively reserved for your guests. Some hotels may require a minimum number of rooms to hold a room block.

Room Reveal

The first time the wedding couple see the wedding reception space, with all the tables and details set, before your guests arrive to take their seats.

RSVP

An abbreviation for the French phrase "Répondez s'il vous plaît," which means "Please respond" and is used to request confirmation of attendance from invited guests. It is usually printed on the wedding invitation or a separate card, which asks the guests to confirm their attendance by a certain date, and contact details for the response.

Save The Date

Announcement cards that are sent to the guests before the wedding invitation, which announces the date and the location of the wedding. They are typically sent up to 12 months in advance of your wedding date and can also include a wedding website or a registry link.

Shot List

A list of the formal photos you'd like your photographer to take, this is provided ahead of the wedding day to your photographer.

Signature Cocktail

A featured cocktail personal to the couple – they can be created to represent a theme, colour or mix of the couples' favourite drink.

Stationery Suite

All your designed paper goods for the wedding, usually includes save-the-date, invitation, outer and inner envelopes, RSVP response card, and on-the-day stationery such as wedding program / order of service, menus, place cards, table plan.

Supplier

A wedding supplier is any vendor who provides products or services for weddings. This includes caterers, florists, photographers and so on.

Sweetheart Table

An alternative to a top table, a sweetheart table is a smaller table for just the two of you. It seats the newlyweds, while the rest of the wedding party and immediate family are seated elsewhere.

Tablescape

The whole design for your wedding table. This includes linens, place settings, florals, centrepieces, candles, and so on.

Table Numbers / Names

Indicates which table guests will be seated on for the meal. This corresponds with their escort card or the table plan.

Table Plan

An overview of each table to show guests where they will be seated for the meal.

Timeline

A document used by wedding suppliers to make sure every detail for your wedding is accounted for. A wedding day timeline usually includes the time and location of all events happening that day and is produced by your Wedding Planner (if you are using one).

Tray Service

Drinks and / or canapes served by wait staff to guests, usually during the drinks reception.

Trussing / Lighting Truss

The poles / structure used to hold lighting – they are used to hang and support lighting such as festoon lights.

Turnaround

If you are using the same space at your venue for the ceremony and reception, the venue will require time to change the room around and reset it to fit your requirements. This is known as turnaround.

Unity Ceremony

A symbolic ritual performed during the wedding ceremony to signify the couple's union, such as lighting a unity candle or mixing sand.

Uplighters

Set around the perimeter of a room, they are small lights that are placed on the floor with their beam projecting upwards, they can be set to any colour.

Vendor

Another word for supplier.

Vows

Promises made by the couple to each other during the wedding ceremony.

Venue / Wedding Co-ordinator

A venue or wedding co-ordinator works for the venue, as opposed to an independent Wedding Planner hired by a couple. They'll act as a liaison between you and the venue operations team, show you the venue, help co-ordinate any services offered on-site and be your point of contact in the lead up to your wedding.

Wedding Breakfast

Not actually breakfast, it's the traditional name for the first meal you share as a married couple.

Wedding Registry

A wish list of gifts compiled by the couple and shared with guests.

