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WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Understanding Wedding Terms & Phrases

To support you throughout your planning journey, I've curated this glossary of commonly used wedding terminology.

From design details to logistical language, this guide is designed to help you feel confident when reviewing proposals, liaising with suppliers, and making informed decisions. Where helpful, I've also included insight into how each element may shape your wedding day experience.

A

Aisle Runner

A design feature placed along the ceremony aisle, creating a defined and elevated walkway for your entrance. It can be styled in a variety of fabrics, colours, or patterns to complement your overall wedding aesthetic.

All-Inclusive Wedding Package

A venue offering where multiple elements such as catering, drinks, staffing, and entertainment are bundled into one package. Inclusions vary, so we always review these carefully to ensure they align with your vision.

B

Baffle Screen

Typically used in marquee or temporary structures, a baffle screen discreetly conceals catering or service areas, maintaining a polished and uninterrupted guest experience.

BEO (Banquet Event Order)

A detailed document provided by your venue outlining catering, staffing, layout, and logistical arrangements. It forms the operational blueprint for your day and is reviewed carefully during planning.

Black Tie

A formal dress code inviting elegant evening attire - tuxedos or dinner jackets for gentlemen and floor-length or sophisticated cocktail dresses for ladies.

Bridal Party (Wedding Party)

The group selected to support you on your day, including roles such as maid of honour, bridesmaids, best man, and ushers.

Buffet Style

A relaxed dining style where guests serve themselves from a curated selection of dishes.

Bustle

A method of securing the train of your dress after the ceremony, allowing ease of movement for the reception and dancing.

Buttonhole / Boutonnière

A small floral detail worn on the lapel, typically for the groom, groomsmen, and key family members.

C**Cake Cutting**

A traditional moment where you cut the cake together, symbolising your first shared act as a married couple.

Canapés

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

A celebrant leads a highly personalised ceremony but is not legally authorised to conduct a marriage in England & Wales. Legal formalities are completed separately.

Ceremony Rehearsal

A run-through of the ceremony, ensuring everyone involved feels confident and the flow is seamless on the day.

Chargers / Charger Plates

Decorative plates placed beneath dinner plates, adding depth and refinement to table settings.

Chiavari Chair

Type of bamboo 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

The process of dismantling and removing all hired elements after your wedding, either immediately after the event or the following day, depending on your venue.

Colour Palette

A curated selection of colours that define the visual identity of your wedding. Your palette influences everything from florals and linens to lighting and stationery, ensuring a cohesive look throughout.

Contingency Plan

A carefully considered backup plan - most commonly for weather, to ensure your day runs seamlessly regardless of conditions.

Corkage (or corkage fee)

A fee charged by venues or caterers when you provide your own alcohol, covering service, glassware, and disposal. It's an important consideration when comparing catering options.

D

Design Concept

The creative foundation of your wedding, bringing together your aesthetic direction, inspirations, and overall vision. This guides every design decision, from florals to stationery and styling details.

Draping

Fabric installations 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

The celebratory period following your ceremony, where guests enjoy drinks and canapés 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.

E

Emergency Wedding Kit

Provided by your Wedding Planner, a carefully prepared kit containing essentials for any last-minute needs, for the couple to utilise on their wedding day in case of emergencies.

Escort Cards

Individual cards guiding guests to their assigned table, offering a refined alternative to a traditional seating plan.

Evening Turnover

The transformation of your space from day to evening, often involving adjustments to lighting, layout, and styling. This creates a clear shift in atmosphere as your celebration moves into the party phase.

Exclusive Use

Full private hire of a venue, ensuring the space is entirely yours for the duration of your wedding.

F**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.

Festoon Lights

A style of decorative lighting consisting of suspended strands of warm bulbs, often used to create a soft, atmospheric glow. They are particularly effective in marquees, outdoor spaces, or evening receptions, helping to define the space and enhance the overall ambience.

First Dance

Your first dance as a married couple, often marking the official opening of the evening celebration.

First Look

A private moment before the ceremony where you see each other for the first time, often captured beautifully by your photographer.

Flat Lay

A styled overhead photograph of wedding details such as stationery and accessories.

Floor Plan

A detailed layout of your ceremony and reception spaces, ensuring every element is thoughtfully positioned.

Floral Installation

A large-scale floral design feature, such as an arch, hanging arrangement, or statement backdrop.

Food Stations

An interactive dining experience where guests explore different food offerings across multiple stations.

G

Get-In / Load In

The scheduled time your suppliers arrive on-site to begin setup.

Gobo

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

Golden Hour

The hour before sunset, offering the most flattering natural light for photography.

I

In-House Caterer

A catering team provided by your venue, often a required element of your booking.

M

Master of Ceremonies / Toastmaster

A professional who guides the flow of your reception, ensuring transitions feel seamless and well-paced.

Menu Card

A menu card is placed at each setting or table, outlining the courses to be served during your wedding breakfast. Beyond its practical purpose, it also contributes to your overall tablescape design and can incorporate thoughtful details such as ingredient descriptions, wine pairings, or a personal message.

Menu Tasting

An opportunity to sample and refine your wedding menu ahead of the day. Some venues and caterers charge an additional fee for this.

Monogram

A bespoke design element combining your initials, often used across stationery and décor.

O**On-the-day Stationery**

Printed elements used during your wedding, including menus, place cards, and signage.

Open Bar / Hosted Bar

A bar where drinks are provided to guests at your expense.

P**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

Individual cards displaying each guest's name, indicating where they will be seated. They form part of your on-the-day stationery and contribute to the overall tablescape styling.

Place Setting

The arrangement at each guest's seat, including tableware, glassware, linens, and printed details. Each element is carefully considered to ensure a cohesive and elevated dining experience.

Plated Dinner / Sit Down Dinner

A formal dining style where guests are served courses at their table. This creates a refined and relaxed dining experience, allowing guests to remain seated throughout the meal.

Poseur Table

Tall cocktail tables typically used during drinks receptions or evening celebrations, encouraging guests to gather and mingle informally.

Processional

The moment during the ceremony when the wedding party makes their entrance, setting the tone for the proceedings.

Production Schedule

A detailed, supplier-facing document outlining the precise timing of set-up, transitions, and clear down. This is more operational than your timeline and ensures every supplier understands exactly when and where they need to be throughout the day.

Power Requirements

Particularly important for marquee or dry hire weddings, this refers to the electrical capacity needed to support catering, lighting, entertainment, and production. Careful planning ensures everything runs safely and seamlessly behind the scenes.

R**Reception (Wedding Breakfast)**

The part of your wedding day following the ceremony where you and your guests come together to dine and celebrate. Traditionally referred to as the wedding breakfast, this is the first meal you share as a married couple and often includes speeches and key moments within the day.

Registrar

The authorised official who conducts legally binding civil ceremonies in England & Wales.

Room Block

A group of hotel 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

A private moment for you to see your reception space fully styled before guests enter.

RSVP

An abbreviation of the French phrase “Répondez s’il vous plaît,” meaning “please respond.” It is used to request confirmation of attendance by a specified date, ensuring your guest list, seating plan, and catering arrangements can be finalised with care and precision.

S

Save The Date

A pre-invitation sent to your guests to share your wedding date and location in advance of the formal invitation. Typically sent several months ahead, it allows guests to make arrangements early and ensures your date is prioritised.

Shot List

A curated list of must-have photographs shared with your photographer in advance.

Signature Cocktail

A bespoke drink created to reflect your personalities or wedding theme.

Stationery Suite

Your complete collection of printed wedding materials, from save-the-dates to on-the-day details.

Supplier

Any professional contributing to your wedding, from florists to photographers.

Supplier Call Sheet

A comprehensive document shared with all suppliers, containing key information such as contact details, timings, venue access instructions, and responsibilities. It ensures clear communication and alignment across your entire team.

Sweetheart Table

A private table for the two of you during your reception.

T

Tablescape

The complete styling of your table, including linens, tableware, glassware, florals, candles, and decorative details.

Table Names / Names

Identifiers used to organise guest seating, indicating which table each guest will be seated at during the wedding breakfast. These can be styled as traditional numbers or creatively designed names to reflect your overall theme, location, or story.

Table Plan

A display showing guests where they will be seated for the meal.

Timeline

A meticulously planned schedule of your wedding day, ensuring everything flows effortlessly.

Transition Moments

The carefully planned shifts between key parts of your day - such as moving from ceremony to drinks reception or from dinner to dancing.

Tray Service

A style of service where drinks and/or canapés are circulated by waiting staff on trays during moments such as the drinks reception.

Trussing / Lighting Truss

A structural framework, typically made from aluminium, used to support lighting and suspended design elements. Commonly used in marquees or larger venues, it allows features such as festoon lighting or statement installations to be positioned safely, while maintaining a clean and refined overall look.

Turnaround

When the same space is used for ceremony and reception, it needs to be reconfigured and reset to fit your requirements. This is known as turnaround.

U

Unity Ceremony

A symbolic ritual performed during the ceremony to represent your union.

Uplighters

Lighting placed around a room to enhance ambience and complement your colour palette.

V

Vendor

Another term for a wedding supplier.

Venue Access Window

The agreed period during which your suppliers are permitted to access the venue for setup and breakdown.

Venue / Wedding Co-ordinator

A representative of the venue responsible for managing their services and operations. This role differs from an independent wedding planner.

Vows

The promises you make to one another during your ceremony.

W

Wedding Breakfast

A symbolic ritual performed during the ceremony to represent your union.

Wedding Registry

A curated list of gifts shared with guests.

Wedding Planner (Independent)

An independent professional who works exclusively on your behalf to plan, design, and manage your wedding in its entirety. From shaping the overall vision to coordinating suppliers, logistics, and guest experience, your wedding planner ensures every detail is thoughtfully considered and seamlessly delivered.

Welcome Drinks

A relaxed moment of hospitality, typically offered as guests arrive or immediately after the ceremony.

