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WELCOME

This issue has been in the making since January and I have to say, it's one I'm really proud of.

We've packed a lot in. There's a cover shoot at The Collector's Hall in Glasgow, which is a breathtaking new venue, and the dresses from Rachel Scott Couture are honestly something else.

We headed to Broxmouth Park for the groomswear shoot too, and if you've ever needed convincing that a kilt is the best thing a groom can wear, these pages will do it.

Alongside the gorgeous imagery, this issue has some features that moved me. We sat down with Sarah Gillanders (you'll know her from the latest UK series of *Married at First Sight*) and she was so honest, funny and real about the whole experience.

We also explored destination weddings through the eyes of couples who went abroad, one who decided not to, and the suppliers who've seen it all – and it's one of the most wide-ranging features we've ever run.

Next, we spoke to a couple of same-sex couples about planning without a traditional template, which felt like an important and long overdue conversation to have in these pages.

As always, every supplier you see featured has been handpicked by our team. That matters to us – we want you to be able to trust what you find here.

If you're newly engaged, welcome! You're in the right place. And if you're deep in the planning trenches? Hang in there. It's worth it.

Happy planning, Lesley

LESLEY TRAYNOR
DIRECTOR


IN THE NAME OF LOVE PHOTOGRAPHY


Lesley Traynor
DIRECTOR
lesley@yourscottishwedding.co.uk


Claire Muir
FEATURES EDITOR
claire@yourscottishwedding.co.uk


Jacqui Blair
HEAD OF MARKETING, PR & CONTENT
social@yourscottishwedding.co.uk


LEAH HODDER
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
adverts@yourscottishwedding.co.uk


JENNIFER GLEN
IN-HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER
jenniferglenphotography@gmail.com

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Hayley Paige
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or visit **thescottishweddingshow.com**

The Scottish Wedding Show is back at the SEC Glasgow on 17-18 October for a weekend of inspiration, advice, and everything you need to plan your perfect day. Following an incredible February show, where thousands of couples discovered the latest trends, met industry-leading suppliers, and experienced unforgettable live features, October promises even more! From runway fashion shows to expert-led speaker sessions, live entertainment, and exclusive offers - you won't want to miss it. Read on for the February highlights.

ENDLESS INSPO

The UK's top suppliers were there ranging from decor and venues, favours and cakes, celebrants and photographers, couples could leave with their wedding to-do lists ticked off!

LIVE BAND SHOWCASE

A dedicated stage with various acts across different styles, visitors could feel the energy, get first dance song ideas and curate the soundtracks for their big days.

RUNWAY FASHION SHOWS

The RAD Runway was packed with must-see designers and collections showcasing everything from the best in bridal and groomswear outfits, to bridesmaids, and mother-of-the-marrier looks.

PROSECCO & COCKTAIL BAR

Hosted by Manorview, visitors could indulge in a glass of prosecco or a bespoke cocktail.

Sign up to our newsletter and be the first to hear of show news and discounts for October!







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Edinburgh EH16 6LD
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MAFS What the *Camera* Missed

She walked down the aisle on national television to marry a complete stranger. Now Sarah Gillanders has some thoughts on what weddings are actually all about.

There aren't many people who can tell you what a wedding feels like when you remove almost everything couples spend months obsessing over – the venue research, the Pinterest boards, the years of knowing exactly who you're marrying.

When Sarah signed up for Channel 4's *Married at First Sight* (MAFS) she discovered what's left when most of that falls away. Quite a lot, as it turns out. And some surprising gaps.

"It's completely unconventional. But if you ask my friends and family, they'd say if anyone was going to do it this way, it was me," she smiles.

CAMERAS ROLLING

The *MAFS* ceremony isn't legally binding but that didn't make it feel any less real on the day. Sarah was up early, whisked into hair and makeup and spent time with her bridesmaids. The ceremony felt genuine too.

"The only difference is there are TV cameras, crew and production everywhere," she explains. The wedding breakfast felt like a wedding breakfast – until it didn't. Production directed where she sat and who she spoke to, which meant some loved ones slipped through the day almost unnoticed. "There were family members I sadly barely got to speak to. I was gutted."

The first dance was shorter than most. Copyright restrictions meant the songs could only play briefly, which left Sarah and her new husband Dean dancing for a fraction of a song before it cut. "It felt a little strange," she admits. The whole experience, she adds, was a complete whirlwind – and that's before factoring in that she was meeting her groom for the first time at the altar.

What she brought to the day was more than the show's format might suggest. Brides are given a budget towards their dress and choose it themselves. Sarah booked an appointment at Perfect Bridal Rooms in Aberdeen, which she describes with the kind of warmth that makes it clear the experience stayed with her.

The venue is chosen by production and hers was a grand country house just outside London that she likens to the set of *Downton Abbey*. Colour schemes, flowers and décor were planned during a trip to London as part of the casting process, with input from both the bride and groom.

Writing vows for a stranger, she says, was "certainly a different experience." But she thought she was ready. The matching process (and being told she had a match) felt, briefly, like an engagement. "I was so excited," she says.

She'd always wanted to get married, had been maid of honour for her best friend and felt the pull of it at every wedding she attended. "I thought: this is going to be it."

But it wasn't – and it changed something. Not her belief in marriage, though. It remains intact, the right person still firmly out there somewhere in her version of the future.

AFTER THE WHIRLWIND

What shifted was her picture of the wedding itself. She'd always wanted the big day, every detail considered and perfect. Now? "I would just want my closest friends and family there, and just to have the best day and night surrounded by my loved ones. It definitely takes the pressure off when you change the mindset."

Her dream wedding (one she's happy to describe in detail) involves returning to Perfect Bridal Rooms for a dress that's


SARAH GILLANDERS | CHANNEL 4


the atrium
EMMA LAWSON PHOTOGRAPHY

completely different to the one she wore on the show. "I recently modelled for their After Hours event and my dress – which came with gloves and a choker – was such a vibe."

The flowers are classic; mostly white, with a hint of colour. Guests enjoy a full three-course sit-down dinner with beautiful wines. And there are lots of margaritas, because that's her cocktail. A band kicks off the evening and a DJ finishes it. "I'm partial to an occasional rave so I'd definitely want my guests to have a good ol' boogie."

The non-negotiables are specific and telling. She and her partner would plan the whole day together. The vows would be personal and honest, and the guest list would be the people she loves most, in one room, without a camera crew.

Her advice to couples getting lost in the planning is the kind that really comes from experience – remind yourself it's your day, avoid other people's opinions where you can and take a break when it gets too much. "Planning a wedding should be fun, not stressful," adds Sarah.

And if you need one final, specific piece of guidance? "Maybe don't marry a stranger on national television," she smiles.

"There's something completely different about seeing a gown worn with real confidence and personality rather than on a mannequin or a professional model. Perfect Bridal Rooms' After Hours event felt fresh, stylish and very real."

– Emma, Emma Lawson Photography

PERFECT BRIDAL ROOMS, ABERDEEN
MICHAELA, BRIDAL STYLIST

"When Sarah called to book her appointment, she gave a different surname and said she was planning a quick elopement. When she arrived in store, and I realised I'd been the one to take her call, I asked her to tell me more about it.

She said, 'Well, I've actually got something to tell you.' She confessed she was going to marry a stranger on a TV show, though she couldn't say which one. I had a gut feeling and guessed right.

In many ways, the appointment was just like any other. She brought her bridesmaids, the energy was bubbly and full of anticipation, and her brief was clear – she loved lace and wanted a dress that would cover her arm tattoos for the ceremony. We explored several silhouettes before she narrowed it down to a whimsical Milla Nova A-line with appliqué, and a Pronovias crepe and lace fit-and-flare that hugged her figure perfectly. She said yes to the Pronovias.

What followed was a test in keeping everything top secret. Sarah came to us in December 2024 and the show didn't air until the following September. Holding onto that for nearly a year was a challenge – but to me, she was just one of my lovely brides who I wanted to protect and support.

She invited us to her first episode watch party at Malmaison (where I'd also styled her for the evening in a Grace Loves Lace satin halter neck gown). When she finally appeared on screen in her Pronovias dress, it took me right back to the moment I first pulled it for her in store. After all those months of waiting, it was a truly full-circle moment."



Leisha Lightbody In her *own* words

One of the most recognisable faces from the latest series of *Married at First Sight* UK (MAFS) has been talking to *YSW* – and she has a lot to say. Consider this a warm-up...

Leisha Lightbody describes going into MAFS as "the most surreal experience of my life." She arrived as a self-described "lover girl" with high expectations; genuinely hoping to meet the love of her life.

"I was willing to give it my absolutely all," she explains. What she got was something she didn't expect. It wasn't the ending she'd hoped for but it's something she's made peace with.

"I feel like my overall experience was very, very positive," she says – and she means it. She learned a lot about herself and came out with friendships she didn't anticipate. She still speaks to the girls regularly, and saw Nelly and Leah just a couple of weeks ago. "There's no beef," she laughs.

Life after the show has been its own adjustment. There was attention, messages and the occasional overwhelm. But Leisha is not someone who sits with the negatives for long. "I've used all of the negatives to create a positive," she says.

Post-MAFS, her confidence is up and her self-worth has grown. Plus she's found something she didn't quite have before – a community of women (strangers included) who have her back. "I feel so privileged to be in the position I am right now."

She's not done talking. Next issue, Leisha sits down with *YSW* properly to share her full story, her life now and everything she's learned about love and marriage since the cameras started rolling. This is just the beginning...



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“The most surreal
experience of my life”
– Leisha
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THE EDIT

FRESH NEWS, LAUNCHES AND HIGHLIGHTS SHAPING SCOTLAND'S WEDDING SCENE


JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY

NEW PEARLS FROM EMMA ROSE

Emma Rose Jewellery is set to launch a new pearl collection this summer, bringing a fresh, contemporary edge to a timeless bridal favourite. The collection reimagines classic pearl design with modern silhouettes and delicate detailing, offering pieces that feel both elegant and current. Sign up to the newsletter at emmarosejewellery.co.uk to be among the first to hear about the launch — and use code YSW15 for 15% off.

EMMAROSEJEWELLERY.CO.UK


KIMBERLEY BRAND PHOTOGRAPHY

TEN YEARS OF JASMIN FRENCH

Jasmin French is marking a decade in business this December — a milestone that reflects both growth and evolution. What began as a home-visit beauty service has developed into two distinct and well-established offerings: Jasmin French Salon and Jasmin French Bespoke Weddings.

Over the past 10 years, the business has expanded to meet a wide range of client needs, from everyday appointments in the salon to full bridal beauty experiences tailored to each wedding day. It's a journey shaped by consistency, trust and a clear sense of craft — making this anniversary feel like a moment well worth marking.

JASMINFRENCH.CO.UK



COLOUR IS HAVING A MOMENT AT FREJA

Mette at Freja Fashion is in the midst of summer commissions, working across a full spectrum from soft, romantic pastels to bold, saturated tones. There's a growing confidence in how colour is being embraced, with clients leaning into shades that feel both personal and expressive. If you've been waiting for a sign to go a little bolder, this might be it.

FREJA-FASHION.CO.UK

VOWS ON THE MOUNTAIN

Caro Wilson has launched The Adventure Celebrant, offering bespoke ceremonies for couples who feel most at home outdoors. Based in Perthshire, she creates ceremonies on mountaintops, lochsides and in hidden glens, perfect for mountaineers, trail runners, wild swimmers and anyone who'd rather say their vows with a view. Having just returned from running a five-stage 222km ultra marathon in Tanzania in 42-degree heat, Caro knows the terrain! Packages start from £495.

THEADVENTURECELEBRANT.CO.UK

NEW SUZANNE NEVILLE, INCOMING

Rachel Scott Couture is expecting new additions to its mother-of-the-bride range from Suzanne Neville. This includes a style from the Atelier Collection and an exclusive piece designed just for the boutique. Expect signature corsetry and Suzanne's characteristic attention to detail. Follow on socials or sign up to the newsletter to be first to know when they arrive.

RACHELSCOTTCOUTURE.CO.UK





SOMETHING OLD, MADE NEW

With gold prices at record highs, Fennes Jewellery is making the case for looking closer to home. A bracelet loved but never worn became a chunky everyday ring while a pendant was transformed by adding it to a plain band the customer already owned, and a grandfather's wedding ring became three stacking rings with a pink sapphire, gifted for a 21st birthday. If you have jewellery that means something but doesn't suit you, an appointment with the Fennes team might surprise you.

FENNESJEWELLERY.COM

BESPOKE BRIDAL JEWELLERY

Gemini Clay Studio is taking commissions for bespoke bridal jewellery for 2026, with each piece designed and made to order. *YSW* readers get 15% off when enquiring through the website with code YSW26.

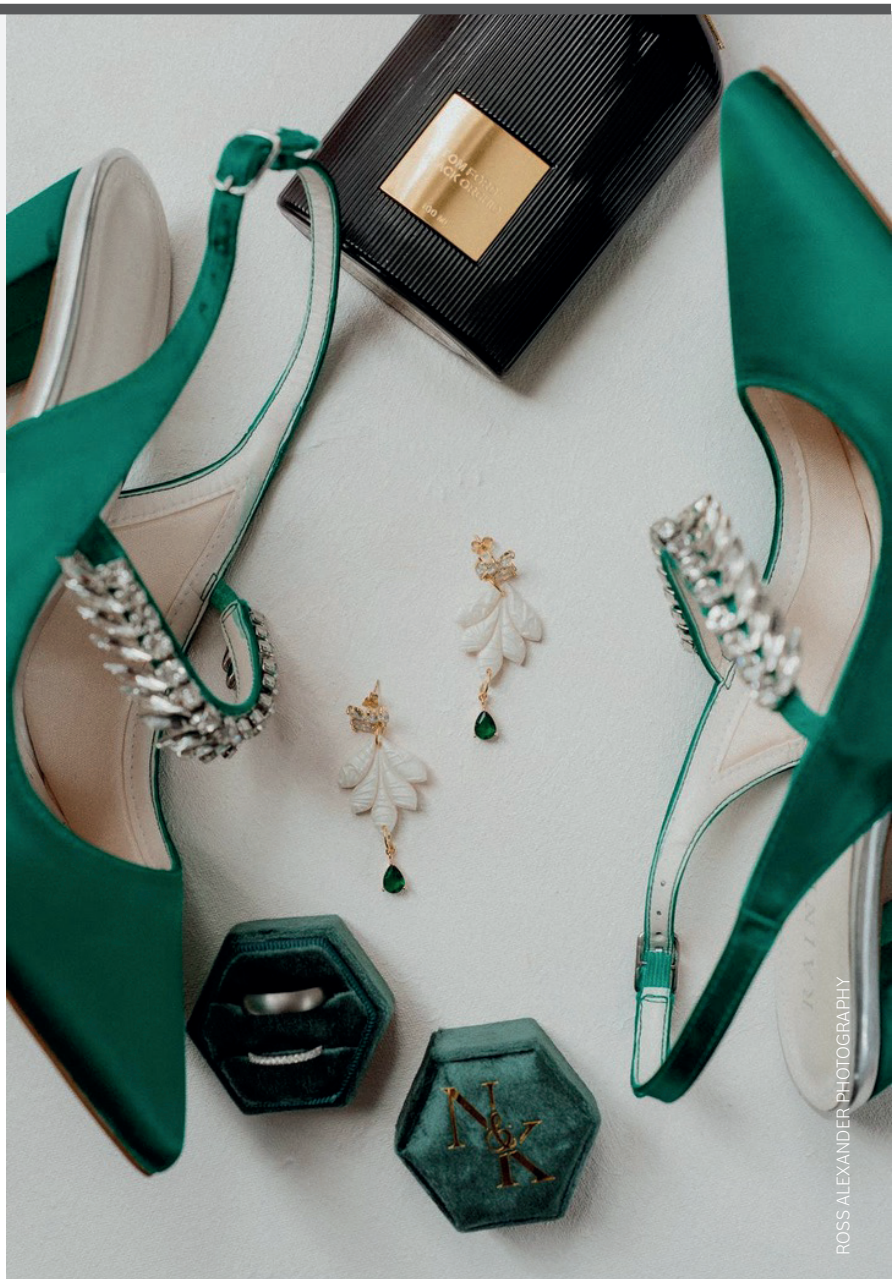
GEMINICLAYSTUDIO.COM

CAKE TO FAVOUR, PERFECTLY MATCHED

Infinite Indulgence in Troon has introduced its One Design Everything Matches service, creating wedding cakes and favours with beautifully coordinated packaging for a seamless, cohesive look across the day. It's a thoughtful approach that brings all the finer details together, ensuring everything feels considered and connected.

The award-winning studio has also recently been named as the chosen cake supplier for Blairquhan Castle — a venue known not only for its grandeur but also internationally as a filming location for *The Queen*.

INFINITEINDULGENCE.CO.UK



ROSS ALEXANDER PHOTOGRAPHY

THE VEIL TAKES CENTRE STAGE

As clean, minimalist gowns dominate the bridal floor, Baba-C Designs has responded with a new accessories collection going deliberately the other way. Think 3D beaded lace, oversized fabric flowers, beaded appliqué in birds, butterflies and trailing vines. Pearls and crystal remain but the new designs are anything but understated. Each veil is individually crafted, with beading and placement tailored to complement the gown.

BABA-C.CO.UK



CEREMONIES THAT GIVE BACK

Since 2012, Fuze Ceremonies has raised over £120,000 for charitable causes through The Fuze Foundation, with a portion of every marriage ceremony fee going to supported charities. For 2026, the beneficiaries are Alzheimer Scotland and Beatson Cancer Charity.

FUZECEREMONIES.CO.UK

25 YEARS OF GNK

Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers is marking 25 years since opening its flagship Canongate store – and the Edinburgh Kiltmakers Academy, which trains the next generation of makers, celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. New to the hire range are Auld Scotland Selkirk Tweed, Scottish Borderland Weathered and the GNK-exclusive Flodden Commemorative Tartan, designed to mark the 500th anniversary of the battle. The studio has also introduced Hybrid Kilts (around 90% hand-stitched with each machine-finished pleat individually shaped by hand) offering greater flexibility on cost and timeframe without compromising the GNK standard.

NICOLSONKILTMAKERS.COM



A NEW LOOK FOR AN OLD FAVOURITE

James Porter & Son has completed a significant refurbishment of its flagship boutique in Glasgow's Argyll Arcade — a space it has occupied since 1897. The redesign introduces a brighter, more spacious feel, with refined materials, enhanced lighting and carefully considered displays that allow each piece to stand out.

Alongside the visual update, the introduction of discreet consultation areas creates a more relaxed, personal experience, whether browsing or selecting something for a special occasion. It's a thoughtful evolution that respects the store's heritage while elevating the overall experience, balancing tradition with a more contemporary, customer-focused approach.

JAMES-PORTER.CO.UK

MORE TO HIRE, MORE TO PLAN

All Wrapped Up Scotland has expanded its hire collection with new chairs, linens and décor, available to view at the Glenrothes showroom by appointment. Couples who book their wedding furniture or planning package in 2026 get a complimentary planning power hour (a one-to-one session worth £99).

ALLWRAPPEDUPSCOTLAND.CO.UK



TONY MARSH PHOTOGRAPHY

A NEW HOME IN INVERURIE

McCalls Highlandwear is expanding its north-east presence with a new store opening in Inverurie in May. Watch their socials for the big announcement.

MCCALLS.CO.UK



JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



CONNOR BARRETT PHOTOGRAPHY

BEAUTY AND DRAMA IN A BALLGOWN

Carolyn Baxter is launching Dachaigh, a couture ballgown collection inspired by Scotland's grand and romantic wedding venues. The five-piece range spans sleek Mikado and intricate lace, with optional arm accessories and customisable details so each gown feels personal. Designed and made in Scotland, and available to try on at the Edinburgh store.

CAROLYNBAXTER.CO.UK

NEW NAMES AT FROX OF FALKIRK

Frox of Falkirk has added Monessa Joan and Samantha Jane to its occasionwear line-up this season, joining an established designer collection that includes Gabriela Sanchez, Couture Club, Fely Campo and Gill Harvey. The boutique's range covers dresses, jumpsuits and trouser suits for mothers-of-the-bride and -groom, with statement headpieces, and a professional shoe and bag dyeing service for a coordinated finish.

FROXOFFALKIRK.COM



ARRIVE READY, INSIDE AND OUT

Eileen A of Grow Salon has launched a new private half-day experience for couples in the lead-up to their wedding — a personal, one-to-one session in a luxury setting combining wellbeing and mindset work with bespoke hair and makeup. Weddings are meticulously planned, but how you feel on the day rarely gets the same attention. Each experience is tailored to the individual.

GROWSALON.CO.UK

THE BRAVE TAKE TO THE AIRWAVES

The Brave Ceilidh Band has been busy beyond the dance floor, releasing three new tracks and clocking up plays on Celtic Music Radio. Their nine-year residence at Stramash and 13-year stint at Ghillie Dhu continue, and February saw the band play at Murrayfield Stadium for Scotland v England on Valentine's Day – a gig that requires no further embellishment.

FACEBOOK.COM/BRAVECEILIDH

SHOWS SHAPING THE SEASON

A CURATED CALENDAR OF THE KEY WEDDING EVENTS WORTH PENCILLING IN FOR 2026/2027.



BRAEHEAD WEDDING EXHIBITION (GLASGOW)
16–17 MAY, BRAEHEAD ARENA, GLASGOW

THE BIG ORAN MOR WEDDING SHOW (GLASGOW)
31 MAY, ORAN MOR, GLASGOW

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (GLASGOW VILLAGE)
30 AUGUST – VILLAGE HOTEL, PACIFIC DRIVE, GLASGOW

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (FIFE)
6 SEPTEMBER – ROTHES HALLS, GLENROTHES

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (EDINBURGH)
13 SEPTEMBER – LEONARDO MURRAYFIELD, EDINBURGH

PAISLEY TOWN HALL (PAISLEY)
20 SEPTEMBER – PAISLEY TOWN HALL

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (DUNFERMLINE)
20 SEPTEMBER – BEST WESTERN PLUS KEAVIL HOUSE HOTEL, DUNFERMLINE

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (EAST KILBRIDE)
27 SEPTEMBER – MACDONALD CRUTHERLAND HOTEL & SPA, EAST KILBRIDE

THE NORTH AYRSHIRE WEDDING EXHIBITION (AYRSHIRE)
11 OCTOBER – GEILSLAND ESTATE, BEITH

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (FALKIRK)
11 OCTOBER – MACDONALD INCHYRA HOTEL & SPA, FALKIRK

RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION (EDINBURGH VILLAGE)
25 OCTOBER – EDINBURGH VILLAGE, EDINBURGH

THE SCOTTISH WEDDING SHOW
17–18 OCTOBER – SEC, GLASGOW

THE LUXURY SCOTTISH WEDDING SHOW (EDINBURGH)
17 JANUARY 2027 – ASSEMBLY ROOMS, EDINBURGH

RWE

RAZZMATAZZ
WEDDING EXHIBITION







THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION GLASGOW VILLAGE
30/08/26
Village Hotel, Pacific Drive, Glasgow, G51 1DB
11am to 2pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION FIFE
06/09/26
Rothes Halls, Glenrothes, KY7 5NX
11am to 3pm
Fashion & Entertainment Show 1pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION EDINBURGH
13/09/26
Leonardo Murrayfield, 187 Clermiston Road, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH12 6UG
11am to 2pm
Fashion & Entertainment Show 12:30pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION DUNFERMLINE
20/09/26
Best Western Plus Keavil House Hotel, Dunfermline, KY12 8NN
11am to 2pm
Fashion & Entertainment Show 12:30pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION EAST KILBRIDE
27/09/26
Macdonald Crutherland Hotel & Spa, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 0QJ
11am to 2pm
Fashion & Entertainment Show 12:30pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION FALKIRK
11/10/26
Macdonald Inchyra Hotel & Spa, Falkirk, FK2 0YB
11am to 3pm
Fashion & Entertainment Show 1pm

THE RAZZMATAZZ WEDDING EXHIBITION EDINBURGH VILLAGE
25/10/26
Edinburgh Village,140 Crewe Road South, Edinburgh, EH4 2NY
11am to 2pm

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Planning *without the* Script

The wedding industry runs on assumptions – bride and groom, who walks with who, and who gets the bridal suite. For most couples, those assumptions sit invisibly in the background. For same-sex couples, they're often the first thing that needs addressing.

"Language matters more than many suppliers realise," says wedding planner Oskar Gilchrist-Grodnicki, who married his husband George in 2018 after nearly two decades in the industry. "The moment couples see outdated terms like 'bride and groom' or 'bridal suite', or enquiry forms that assume traditional roles, it can immediately feel excluding."

He's seen things improve since attending wedding shows where conversations felt awkward – nobody meaning harm but nobody quite sure how to ask if he and George were planning the wedding together. He's also clear that progress isn't complete and there's "still room to grow."

What changes when couples aren't working from a traditional script? Quite a lot, in Oskar's experience. "Many LGBTQ+ couples are excited to create something truly personal, choosing which traditions feel meaningful and leaving the rest behind. It often leads to incredibly thoughtful and creative celebrations."

He says the most practical step the industry could take is straightforward – show diverse couples consistently, not just during Pride month. "When couples see themselves reflected naturally in your messaging, they immediately feel safer and more welcome."

REWRITING THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Morag Webster of Fuze Ceremonies sees the same freedom play out in the ceremony itself. "Every ceremony we create is written from scratch for the couple in front of us, so whether a couple are same-sex, opposite-sex or non-binary, we start with their story rather than traditional roles."

The traditions that tend to get rethought most often are the ones built around fixed roles, she says – who gives who away, who stands where and who walks with who. "Instead, families and friends are invited to stand alongside the couple as supporters of the relationship. I've seen couples walk in together, or both be accompanied by important people in their lives. These moments often feel very natural because they reflect equality and shared commitment."

But being same-sex doesn't automatically mean a couple wants something different. "The key is that we never assume," explains Morag. Celebrants think carefully about language in every ceremony, she adds, regardless of who's getting married. That means names rather than titles, 'partners in marriage' or simply 'the couple.' This extends to 'friends and family' rather than 'ladies and gentlemen.'

Craig of Independent Humanist Ceremonies puts it simply: "No couple is required to follow traditions, many of which are rooted in some dodgy, misogynistic history." He confirms that the only requirements are exchanging vows and observing the legal essentials. Everything else is yours to shape.

EVERY DETAIL, CONSIDERED

That openness extends to the practical details too. At Starca Designs, the shift away from 'bride and groom' wording on invitations has been gradual but consistent. "We've moved toward more inclusive language, using names, or 'the couple', or 'together with their families' rather than assuming roles," says Nicky. She also notes that on-trend styles are largely gender neutral.

For her, the change was personal as much as professional. Seeing someone from the LGBTQ+ community feel upset by a supplier prompted her to think carefully about how her own work could make everyone feel included and valued.

Helen of The Greenshed Flower Studio says the same-sex weddings she's worked on haven't felt fundamentally different – except in one respect. When both partners are equally invested in the florals, as tends to happen with two brides, the results can be particularly creative. At one wedding, each bride chose her own colour palette for the bridal party flowers – deep gothic autumn tones for one, lighter rusty oranges for the other. "The merging of the colours for the post-ceremony aspects was a really beautiful touch," she says.



DONNA MURRAY PHOTOGRAPHY | THE GREENSHED FLOWER STUDIO


STEVIE WEIR PHOTOGRAPHY | FUZE CEREMONIES

Laura of Cherry Blossom has seen a broader shift too – couples moving towards 'perfectly imperfect' floral arrangements; wildflower-inspired and organic, that feel personal rather than traditional.

GETTING READY

At Pamela Jayne's Bridal, two brides are accommodated however works best for them – shopping together, separately or with a coffee shop buffer between appointments.

And when it comes to making sure couples complement one another without feeling too matched, it's a case of subtle recommendations – or having a helping hand. "If they're shopping separately, a family member or friend has usually seen the dress the other bride has chosen and that makes the process smoother."

Imogen of Jasmin French has found that same-sex couples often bring a more relaxed energy to hair and makeup preparations. "Usually they come together and have fun with it," she smiles. She's also seeing more grooms getting involved in beauty preparations across the board – a shift that feels less like a trend and more like an overdue normalisation.

Caroline Stewart of Caroline Stewart Makeup Artistry agrees that the industry is broadly welcoming but flags one gap worth noting. "There is a lack of makeup artists that will do men's and trans makeup," she advises. "It's a practical consideration worth researching early."

It's a reminder that for all the progress, some groundwork still falls to the couple. Imogen's advice cuts through it simply: "Remember your partner wants to marry you, so look like you."


MATTHEW JOHNSTON PHOTOGRAPHY | FUZE CEREMONIES

SANDY AND DANNI – MARRIED AT NEWHALL ESTATE IN MARCH 2025


KAROL MAKULA PHOTOGRAPHY

"Danni and I met on Tinder 12 years ago. Our first date was at the London Dungeon on Halloween, and the rest is history. We got engaged in 2019 but postponed for ages thanks to Covid and then having a baby. A long engagement, but worth the wait.

As a same-sex couple we were always going to veer away from tradition but we kept the main format – partly to make suppliers' lives easier. We got ready together because we were too excited not to, and honestly it was brilliant. Mums, bridesmaids, bubbly, gossip. We had our dads walk us both down the aisle, our best friend Tim officiated and our mums did a ring-warming. We had three bridesmaids and three groomsmen, and everyone did speeches. Danni and I were too nervous to speak, so instead we wrote personalised letters for every guest. It took over a year to do but people were still talking about them months later.

Some suppliers initially assumed we were a heterosexual couple over email but were quick to apologise and inclusive from that point. We were lucky that our venue had hosted same-sex couples before and recommended all our suppliers, which made everything easier.

My advice to other same-sex couples is to be upfront with suppliers early. It irons out any issues and helps you quickly work out who you want to work with. For two brides, factor in the cost of two wedding dresses, and double the hair and makeup. And if you're likely to be getting ready together, decide whether that suits you — then lean into it."


RACHEL ROSS PHOTOGRAPHY

BRIAN AND PHILIP – MARRIED AT DUNKELD HOUSE HOTEL IN DECEMBER 2025

"Philip and I met in 2014. From very early on we joked that Brian would be the one to propose – he's the organiser, which meant Philip could just sit back and wait. He finally did in 2022 and we got married in 2025.

We knew we wanted a structure for the day (ceremony, dinner, reception) but after that we threw away the stencil and coloured outside the lines. We intentionally asked all of our guests to wear white, including the women. In our relationship there's no bride to upstage, so we wanted to give the girls an opportunity they never get. They embraced it completely and so many of our female guests looked like brides. We didn't care – they looked gorgeous and they felt gorgeous.

The moment that felt most like us came during the ceremony. Our celebrant asked if there was anything we wanted to do that would represent us. We love a cocktail, so we hid ingredients and a cocktail shaker under random chairs throughout the ceremony. Guests had to find them and bring them to the front. We added everything to a shaker, made a whisky sour after our vows and both drank it. It was perfect.

I won't pretend I wasn't nervous every time we contacted a new supplier – you never quite know people's beliefs. But we were met with love, kindness and support every time. The majority of people working in weddings are there to celebrate love, and there was an openness and willingness to do anything we wanted to make our day just right. So, go into every meeting being yourselves. You'll find people want to help."

YSW

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SARAH GILLANDERS, FEATURED ON *MARRIED AT FIRST SIGHT*

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Weddings

Podcast

EMMA LAWSON PHOTOGRAPHY, PERFECT BRIDAL ROOMS ABERDEEN

Paisley Town Hall
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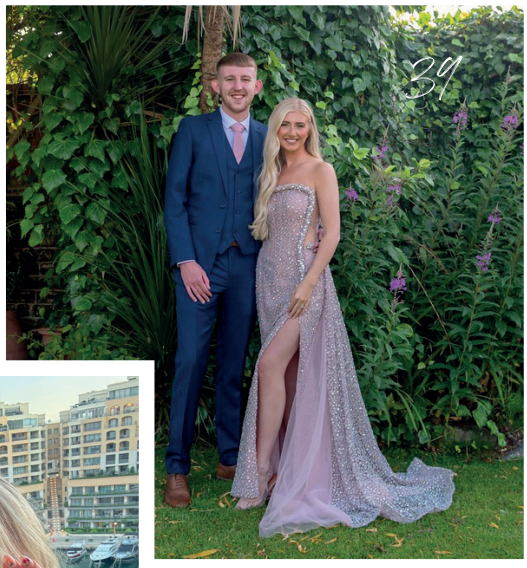
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Your Wedding Journey

Notes on love, style & the art of saying yes

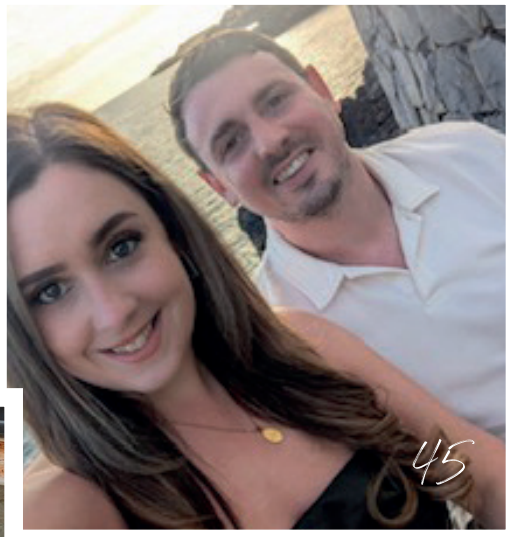
From the moment you get engaged, the adventure begins. Your wedding journey is filled with exciting choices, meaningful moments and memories in the making. Here, our real-life couples share the inspiration, style and unforgettable details bringing their wedding days to life.


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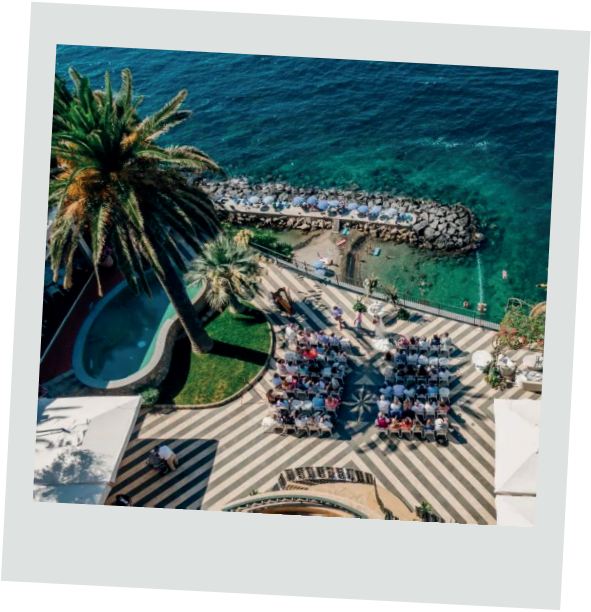

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CHLOE & TOMO



Working in weddings means Chloe sees beautiful celebrations every single week, which explains why her vision has evolved more than once. "The biggest thing that changed was the colour scheme," she laughs. "I kept seeing beautiful weddings and totally overthinking it."

The turning point came when the bridesmaids' dresses were finally bought. "We're staying with neutrals – stunning champagne satin dresses and all-white décor. Classy, elegant vibes. And no changing now… hopefully."

THE PLANNING

Some moments really are instant, and that was absolutely the case when it came to Chloe and Tomo's venue. "I thought 'that feeling' was just something people said," Chloe admits. "But as soon as we walked in, we both just knew." From the warmth of the wedding coordinator to being able to picture herself walking down the aisle, everything clicked – helped, of course, by the fact it sits on the Amalfi Coast. "That probably made it easier to fall in love with," she adds.

With all her key suppliers booked early, Chloe has felt surprisingly calm. Photographer Julieanne Whyte was a non-negotiable long before an engagement was even on the cards, and Mikey from one3 Wedding Films was an easy yes too. "Their work is incredible and the passion they bring is second to none." Flowers and styling will be handled by the venue team, with Chloe sharing inspiration and trusting them to take care of the rest.



THE REFLECTIONS

Despite working in the industry, Chloe admits it's still easy to get caught up in the small stuff. The difference this time, though, is perspective. "Everyone thought I'd be a bridezilla but anything that causes stress just isn't worth it. You're marrying your best friend – it's supposed to be fun."

There are also moments of meaning woven into the day. Chloe and Tomo will be missing people they love deeply, including Tomo's dad, Chloe's papa and her little cousin. To honour them, they'll each have a reserved seat with a photograph and as the ceremony begins, the bridal party will each lay a flower in remembrance. "It's really important to me that they're still part of the day," Chloe says.

Right now, the excitement outweighs everything else with her hen do approaching. The only daunting part? "How fast it's all going to get here. I feel like I'll blink and be boarding the plane to Italy."

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... 07.09.26

The vibe ... Romantic, sun-soaked, effortlessly elegant

The look ... Gown from Opus Couture, party dress from Odd Muse

Style ... Soft neutrals with golden hour accents

The plan ... Legal ceremony in Scotland, wedding in Italy, honeymoon in the Maldives

ALYSON & LEWIS

After years together, Alyson had a clear picture of how their wedding would feel. From the outset, the pair sat down and talked through what mattered most, building their plans from those foundations rather than getting swept up in every passing trend.

They visited several venues before stepping into Glenbervie House. "It ticked every box," Alyson says. "As we were walking through, we could picture ourselves getting married there. We just knew." Even after viewing other options, nothing compared to the feeling they had that first day. With the setting secured, everything else has gradually fallen into place.

THE PLANNING

Alyson had been curating a supplier list on her phone long before the proposal, which made booking surprisingly straightforward. "Lewis very wisely trusts me to make the decisions," she smiles. That said, she admits she can sometimes get carried away. "Apparently everything I book is 'too extra' so he occasionally has to rein me back in!"

Budget has been the biggest surprise. "I knew weddings weren't cheap but seeing how quickly it all adds up has been a shock." It's sharpened their focus, reminding them to prioritise the elements that genuinely matter rather than every tempting add-on.

The overall vibe is set – botanical and timeless. Think relaxed energy and a celebration that feels full of life while still beautifully put together. "We want it to feel effortless but still special."





Dress shopping is underway, though 'The One' hasn't revealed itself just yet. "I knew I might struggle but I'm still excited. There are so many dresses out there." Outfit shopping for Lewis is next on the list.

Personal touches will centre around their beloved fur babies, who will be very much part of the day. "They're our everything. We can't imagine getting married without them there."

THE BUTTERFLIES

Right now, they're in what Alyson calls 'the fun stage'. The major decisions are made and they're refining the details, like décor, music and timings. Alongside that comes a steady stream of celebrations with their wedding party.

The only thing that feels slightly daunting is picturing how all those moving parts will come together. "There are so many little details. Sometimes I worry I'll forget something." But it's butterflies rather than stress – the excited kind that signals something big is on its way.



THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... 21.05.27

Venue ... Glenbervie House

Vibe ... Botanical, timeless, relaxed

Planning mood ... Focused, excited with a few butterflies

Next up ... Dress and kilt shopping

BETHANY & ALLY

Bethany and Ally's vision has softened and clarified as planning has unfolded. What began as something more traditional has shifted towards comfort, practicality and togetherness. "We want everyone, especially our families, to feel comfortable and able to stay together," Bethany explains. "That matters more to us now than purely aesthetic details."

THE PLANNING

As photographers, the venue decision carried extra weight. Beautiful surroundings were essential but so was location. "We didn't want anywhere that would make travelling difficult for our families," Bethany says. What ultimately sealed it, though, was the feeling they got from the team at Gleddoch. "The trust, warmth and friendliness really stood out."

Some suppliers are still being finalised but one booking already feels particularly meaningful. Their photographer is an old colleague and mentor of Ally's; a choice rooted in history as much as talent. "Having someone so close to us involved makes it incredibly special," Bethany says. Conversations are also underway with cake and invitation suppliers, while band options are still being explored.

So far, they've found it easy to stay aligned on the big decisions. The finer details, Bethany admits, may prove more challenging. "I thought I'd be much more decisive," she laughs. "I've worked in the industry for years, so I expected to have everything mapped out by now."





THE REFLECTIONS

Having both experienced loss, Bethany and Ally are conscious of the people who won't be there; family members they always imagined standing beside them. "It's important that they're still part of the day, even if it's through photographs."

Their style choices are beginning to take shape too. Subtle nods of purple will run through the day, inspired by Bethany's amethyst engagement ring. And after getting engaged on the Isle of Skye (a place that holds huge meaning for them) Scottish traditions will feature as a thread through the Celebration.

For now, the excitement lies in seeing everything start to come together and the most daunting part is pulling all the pieces into something that truly feels like them. "It's about making sure our choices are for us," Bethany reflects. "At the end of the day, it's our day."

Next up: booking entertainment and décor, and finalising details with their cake and invitation suppliers.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... 07.10.27

Together ... Eight years

Proposal ... Neist Point, Isle of Skye

Ring ... Amethyst and diamond design from Chisholm Hunter

Venue ... Gleddoch Golf & Spa Resort

MEGAN & JASON



Planning has taken a definite turn since Megan and Jason first started sketching out ideas. "We actually considered eloping at the beginning," she says. "That was probably the biggest shift." Now, instead of slipping away, they're building a day that feels intentional, personal and centred around what matters most to them, much closer to home.

Their visit to Netherdale House confirmed that change almost instantly. Since then, the focus has been on prioritising experience over excess. Entertainment and music sit firmly at the top of their list and they're investing more heavily there than originally planned. Securing the right DJ proved unexpectedly challenging (their first two choices were already booked) but after widening the search, they found someone who ticks every box. "Having a proper party is really important to us. That probably took the most work of anything we've done so far."

THE GUEST LIST

Interestingly, their first guest list draft was far smoother than expected. "We thought it would be so much harder," she says. "That was a lovely surprise."

What has surprised her even more, though, is the rhythm of planning itself: bursts of intense booking followed by quiet waiting periods. "You secure loads at once then suddenly you're in limbo, realising it's probably too early to order your bud vases… Even though you've found the perfect ones!"



THE VIBE

The overall feel of the day is still forming but it's looking like a relaxed ceremony and wedding breakfast, flowing into a huge party. Décor is leaning classic and minimalist – for now. "It could change," Megan laughs.

Dress shopping is very much front of mind, with summer set to mark the start of trying gowns on. "I've actually started dreaming about it," she admits, half excited, half apprehensive. Bridesmaids' dresses and hair ideas are being talked about but it's early days.

There will be meaningful touches woven in too. Megan's dad is from Orkney and they plan to include the traditional Orkney Cog as part of the celebration – a nod to heritage within what promises to be a modern, joy-filled day.

Right now, the excitement lies in the smaller moments: planning days out with bridesmaids, her mum and cousin, and steadily ticking off the bigger bookings.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date … 27.08.27

Venue … Netherdale House

Priorities … Music, atmosphere, proper party energy

Planning mood … Productive and patiently waiting

Next up … Dress appointments, catering, picking groomsmen

MARIA & MICHAEL

Planning a wedding while working in the wedding industry might sound like an advantage, but for Maria it has been a mixed blessing. As a stationer and stylist, she's surrounded by inspiration daily, which means having a clear vision can sometimes be harder rather than easier.

From the start, though, one thing mattered most – the feeling behind the day. Maria wanted the celebration to be especially meaningful with thoughtful touches, beautiful floristry and memorable experiences for their guests.

Although some of their plans shifted along the way, particularly when it came to venues, that emotional core stayed the same and helped guide their decisions.

THE LEGALITIES

Maria and Michael are now days away from their legal ceremony and the elopement they've also been planning. Keeping the secret has been one of the biggest challenges of all.

"It's been surprisingly hard not telling anyone," Maria laughs. "If any of my family or friends are reading this, avert your eyes!"

Despite the secrecy, she's found the planning process largely joyful. Her advice to other couples is simple – trust your instincts. "Set a budget and keep reminding yourselves of it," she says. "If your gut says yes, do it. If it says no, don't. For me it always comes back to experience. How will it feel on the day, both for us and for our guests?"





THE CELEBRATIONS

Their celebration will unfold across two very different settings. In Florence, the couple will elope at a beautiful garden venue near the city centre that combines artful interiors with outdoor space for the ceremony – something Maria always dreamed of.

The Scottish marriage will follow later at The Marlborough, where the atmosphere will be entirely different. Think relaxed cocktail vibes, striking interiors and fabulous Italian food.

Maria has leaned fully into the venue's bold aesthetic when planning the design. "I never imagined red would be part of my wedding palette," she admits. "But the venue has such an edgy, modern look that I decided to embrace it completely."

Expect red florals appearing to grow from the ground, red candles tied with white bows and statement tableware, a dramatic contrast to the soft pastel spring tones planned for Italy.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... 20.03.26 (Italy), 04.04.26 (Scotland)

Together ... 11 years

Proposal ... Pollok Country House

Ring ... Bespoke yellow diamond inspired by Maria's Nana

The plan ... Florence elopement then Glasgow celebrations

CATRIONA & JOSH

As she enters the year of her wedding, Catriona reflects on her journey so far. She had always pictured a wedding day that felt minimal, classic and timeless – an aesthetic rooted not in trends but in who she is.

Elegant, understated and beautifully considered are the guiding principles shaping every decision – simplicity with intention, modern details where they matter and nothing that won't stand the test of time.

THE PLANNING

Finding a venue that matched that vision was a priority and The Collector's Hall did just that. "It's truly minimal, classic and timeless with modern additions, plus it's all in one space. We fell in love instantly," she says. "And being right in the heart of Glasgow was one of our biggest ticks."

From there, the big bookings fell into place: media team, day and evening entertainment, florist, stylist and trusted creatives. "I love a list," Catriona laughs. "Working through our must-have suppliers and ticking them off was so satisfying." Choices were instinctive, led by style, recommendations or personal connection.





And the dress search, something she had expected to feel pressured, became a highlight. Two "wonderful" boutique visits later, she found the dress. "I'm already so excited to wear it," she smiles.

WHAT'S NEXT

Right now, the most daunting aspect isn't a task, it's the unknown. "We've booked the big things. I have my dress. We've had planning meetings with the venue. But now that we're in the year of the wedding, I feel the pressure to keep going without really knowing what I should be doing!" Stationery and décor – the pieces that set the tone and aesthetic of the day – are starting to feel like the next natural step.

Bridesmaids' dresses (another detail that will shape the overall look and feel of the day) are also high on Catriona's to-do list. And with the countdown officially underway, she's embracing the joyful moments like hen do chats, suit try-ons and the thrill of seeing everything come together.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ...02.10.26

Style ... Minimal, classic, timeless

The venue ... The Collector's Hall, Glasgow

Must-haves ... Media team and all-day entertainment

Best moment so far ... Finding the dream dress

FIONA & WILL

After eight years together, Will proposed while the couple were snowboarding in Austria, catching Fiona completely by surprise. As it turns out, the location was strangely perfect — growing up, Fiona had always told friends she hoped to be proposed to on a ski holiday in the mountains, yet she'd never mentioned that to Will. Somehow, he instinctively got it right. The ring was the cherry on top: custom made especially for her and exactly Fiona's style.

Afterwards they headed straight to the top of the mountain for celebratory drinks. When Fiona called her mum, the response was immediate: "At last!" Will had spoken to her parents beforehand, meaning they'd spent the entire week waiting for the phone call.

THE ENGAGEMENT

Fiona was eager to begin venue-hunting but also conscious that the engagement period is such a fleeting stage in any relationship, so she wanted to savour it rather than rush straight into planning. Now that preparations are fully underway, she's enjoying the process.

Will's creative background means he's keen to be involved in the visual side of the wedding, from centrepieces to designing the save the dates and invitations. He also works alongside colleagues with extensive wedding industry experience, so the couple have been able to draw on plenty of insider advice and recommendations.





As one supplier recently joked when meeting them, "I love a groom who appreciates good stationery" – a description Fiona agrees suits Will perfectly.

THE PLANNING

The highlight of the planning journey so far has been finding their venue: the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. Ironically, this was also the most challenging part of the process. The couple spent years visiting venues across Scotland without quite finding somewhere that felt like the one. Once they stepped inside the College, however, everything clicked.

Food and drink were an immediate priority, so they quickly secured their caterers. A close friend who works as a celebrant will lead the ceremony, making the moment especially personal, while evening entertainment and videography are also arranged.

Next on the to-do list: photography, floristry and styling — and of course the all-important dress.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... 26.11.26

Together ... 15 years (engaged for seven)

Proposal ... On the Austrian slopes

Ring ... Perfectly custom made

Venue ... Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh

PAULINE & STUART

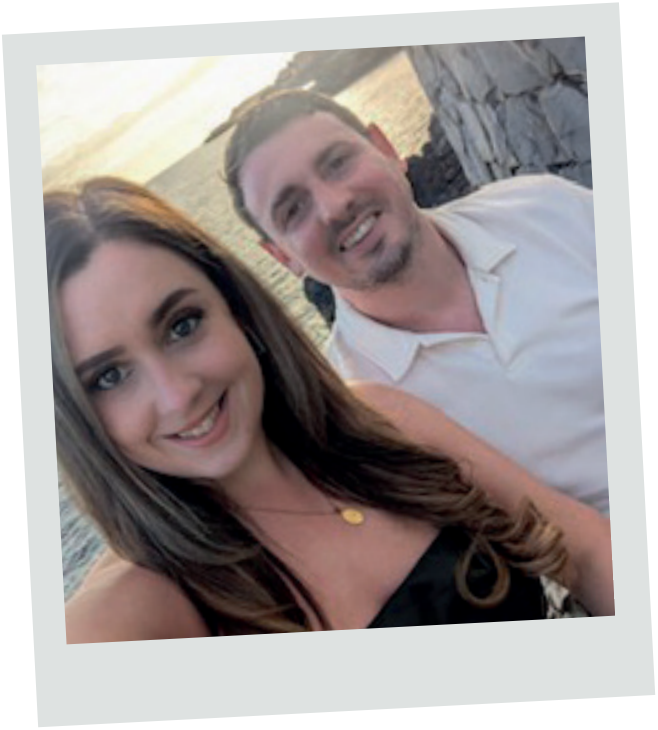
Pauline and Stuart's story feels almost inevitable. Although they only began dating a couple of years ago, they'd actually known of each other for more than a decade. Growing up in the same town, Pauline served Stuart behind the bar in her late teens and early twenties. "We'd bump into each other at social events over the years but never really had a proper conversation," she explains.

That changed when they spotted each other on a dating app after both coming out of long-term relationships. Soon after, they ran into each other again at Paisley Food and Drink Festival and spent most of the night chatting. A first date quickly followed and two years later, they were engaged.

THE PROPOSAL

With birthdays falling in January and February, the couple have a tradition of escaping for a few days rather than exchanging gifts. This year, Stuart booked a lodge in Newton Stewart and Pauline suspected absolutely nothing – but in hindsight there were clues! Stuart didn't take his jacket off during the two-hour drive (the ring safely tucked inside the pocket) but he remained "cool as a cucumber".





When they opened the lodge door, candles, petals and a chocolate fondue were waiting. Before Pauline could fully take it in, Stuart was down on one knee. "I did a full 180 away from him, burst into tears and covered my face in shock," she laughs.

THE PLANNING

As a humanist celebrant and former wedding coordinator of eight years, Pauline is no stranger to the industry – but planning her own day feels completely different. "It's surreal that it's now my turn," she says.

They're hoping to marry this year and have already begun exploring options, though a proper planning push will begin once they return from a holiday to Thailand. The temptation to call in trusted suppliers is strong, Pauline admits, but choosing may prove the hardest part. "Scotland has so many fantastic venues and suppliers and I've worked closely with so many of them over the last 10 years."

So far, it's been exciting rather than stressful. The couple are aligned on what they want from the day, which makes decisions easier, even if narrowing them down might take some time.

THE DETAILS

Wedding date ... Tbc

Together ... Two years

Proposal ... Lodge in Newton Stewart

Ring ... Emerald-cut diamond from Dubai

The plan ... Hoping to marry this year!

BRIDAL FASHION



HAYLEY PAIGE | CHARD PHOTOGRAPHY

THE COLLECTOR'S HALL

Soft romance meets imposing architecture at The Collector's Hall in the heart of Glasgow.





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FLOWERS & CANDLES
ALL WRAPPED UP SCOTLAND



DRESS DEVON BY DANIELLE FRANKEL, FROM RACHEL SCOTT COUTURE | **NECKLACE** O BY YOKO PEARL & DIAMOND CHOKER, JAMES PORTER & SON.





CAKE THE KILTED CAKE COMPANY | **DRESS** DANIELLE FRANKEL VEDA BODICE, DREE SKIRT AND MARI SLEEVES, FROM RACHEL SCOTT COUTURE



Behind *the* Scenes



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ALL WRAPPED UP SCOTLAND

"From statement ceremony pieces to the final details on your guests' tables, every element should be chosen with intention. The black box lanterns used on the shoot were a nod to the windows high above The Collector's Hall (your décor should enhance the venue, never compete with it). All Wrapped Up offers a bespoke wedding design service – prices on application."

THE KILTED CAKE COMPANY

"A statement five-tier white cake finished with embossed detailing and elegant fondant draping that flows naturally from tier to tier. Clean, romantic and timeless; crafted to make a statement while still feeling beautifully balanced. Similar designs are available from two tiers upwards."

HELEN, THE GREENSHED FLOWER STUDIO

"My look for the shoot featured fresh spring florals in white and green; seasonal favourites including narcissi, tulip, anemone, hellebore and ranunculus. For the showstopper bouquet I simply kept adding more and more flowers until I couldn't hold any more, binding everything together with long strands of eucalyptus for extra impact. The table arrangement featured lots of tiny vases at different heights, keeping things dainty without losing the drama. Prices on application."

RACHEL SCOTT COUTURE

"We combined New York and London's most coveted bridal designers. Both honour tradition and cool girl aesthetic befitting of Glasgow's coolest new wedding venue." - Rachel, Rachel Scott Couture.





LEIGH, MAKEUP BY LEIGH BLANEY

"The inspiration behind this look was modern, elevated bridal beauty – refined, skin-focused and intentionally understated. I wanted the complexion to feel luminous with soft sculpting to enhance natural structure. I paired this with diffused neutral tones on the eyes and a polished, light-reflective finish. I worked with a carefully chosen selection of high-performance products, including Charlotte Tilbury, Rhode, Dior, Hudson Beauty, YSL and Tom Ford."

THE COLLECTOR'S HALL, GLASGOW

Housed within the beautifully restored former City Parish Halls, The Collector's Hall sits in the heart of Glasgow. At its centre is the iconic dome; the ceremony space that anchors the venue's sense of occasion for celebrations both large and small. Connected to the AC Hotel by Marriott Glasgow, with more than 240 bedrooms just moments away, and the Liberty Suite available as a private retreat for the morning of the wedding.
thecollectorshall.co.uk

STEPHANIE CHEAPE, MODEL

"Being part of this shoot was such a special experience. From the beautiful setting of The Collector's Hall to the incredible team behind it, everything felt so thoughtfully put together. I'm still in awe of the dress collection and working with *Your Scottish Wedding* was an absolute joy. There was such a warm, collaborative energy throughout the day and many giggles with the fantastic all-female glam team. Getting married was such a special, private moment in my life, so sharing this version of being a bride felt very meaningful."

OLESJA, IN THE NAME OF LOVE PHOTOGRAPHY

"Shooting the *YSW* cover at The Collector's Hall was a real pleasure. The concept was well-produced, the team was exceptional and the venue – a striking new Glasgow space – made for a beautiful editorial backdrop. I used the Canon R6 Mark II with a 28–70mm f/2.0, a 100mm macro and a 24–35mm f/2.0, which gave me the range to move between detail shots and wider editorial frames throughout the day."

JAMES PORTER & SON

"As a fifth-generation family business based in the heart of Glasgow's Argyll Arcade, we love being invited and involved in creative projects with fabulous Scottish suppliers."



DREAM TEAM

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FLOWERS | THE GREENSHED FLOWER STUDIO
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INTERVIEWS | THE WEDDING GURU
JEWELLERY | JAMES PORTER & SON
MAKEUP | MAKEUP BY LEIGH BLANEY
PHOTOGRAPHER | IN THE NAME OF LOVE PHOTOGRAPHY
SOCIAL MEDIA | JB MARKETING
STATIONERY | STARCA DESIGNS
VENUE | THE COLLECTORS HALL ■



RACHEL SCOTT COUTURE

Why 'not overshadowing' might be the MOST misunderstood STYLING rule in weddings.

There's a moment I see again and again in the boutique. A woman steps out of the fitting room, looks at herself properly – and something changes. She realises she doesn't have to make do or fit into a mould – she can look and feel confident and beautiful. And that's magical.

For years, mothers-of-the-bride and groom have walked into occasionwear shopping with a set of assumptions – stay neutral, stay safe and don't take up too much space. Choose something nice, appropriate and flattering – but not too striking, not too memorable and definitely not attention-seeking.

But that mindset is changing; moving towards something far more powerful – no compromise.

THE POLITICS OF THE ROLE

Being a mother-of-the-bride or groom isn't the same as dressing for any other event. There are the unspoken negotiations, like what colour? Should it match the bridesmaids? Should it avoid matching the bridesmaids? Is there a hat? No hat?

And if you're mother-of-the-groom, the etiquette becomes even more layered – don't clash with the mother-of-the-bride but don't coordinate too closely either. Don't decide before she does, wait for the nod. These roles are filled with pride and emotion – and often pressure.

I've been in this industry for more than 20 years and dressed many mothers on a bespoke basis, but even I hadn't fully appreciated the emotional weight that comes with this position. There's thought, politics and a huge amount of self-editing.

Underneath the practical questions sits something deeper – worries about body image, confidence, age and taking attention away from your child, and the fear of getting it wrong. I've realised that often it's less about the dress and more about visibility.

THE MYTH OF 'NOT OVERSHADOWING'

One phrase comes up repeatedly in my boutique: "I don't want to overshadow." It's a generous instinct. Of course, mothers want their children to be the focus. Of course, they want to step back and let the day centre on the couple.

But I challenge the assumption that fading into the background is the way to achieve that. There's a belief that if you wear something safe or understated, you're somehow being supportive. But often the opposite is true.

An outfit you feel uncomfortable in, unsure about or disconnected from doesn't make you invisible. It makes you self-conscious – and self-consciousness draws energy inward. It distracts and it can create tension.

Confidence, on the other hand, frees you completely. When you feel incredible in what you're wearing, you're relaxed. You're not adjusting, apologising or worrying. You can give your full attention to your child. That's what support looks like. Not overshadowing doesn't mean shrinking. It means being secure enough in yourself that you don't need to compete.

NO COMPROMISE

For me, it really comes back to one word: choice. It really is everything in fashion. And I'm predicting a real progression in mother-of-the-bride styling over the next few years as that choice expands. From Suzanne Neville's structured bodices and intricate beaded embroideries to Vivienne Westwood in bespoke colours, and Andrea Hawkes with her flowing silhouettes and incredible flower-petal dyed silks, there has never been more opportunity for mothers to express their own style.

My advice is always the same – do it once and do it properly. You deserve to feel body confident and you deserve something that's made to fit you beautifully. This isn't being fussy or self-centred, it's acknowledging that this is a milestone for you too.

For many women, that shift in mindset is the hardest part. We spend decades prioritising everyone else and a wedding can easily become another moment where we instinctively move to the sidelines.

Part of my role is creating space for something different – a fully immersive, personal and private experience where mothers are treated with the same care and attention as our brides. Somewhere we can explore ideas without pressure, try silhouettes you wouldn't usually consider and take the time to find something truly right.

And when that exploration leads to the right outfit, the reaction is incredible. Often the bride lights up, seeing her mum suddenly relax – more confident, more herself. In truth, many brides want exactly that. They want their mums to feel special, to be pampered and to experience the same sense of occasion they're having themselves. It becomes a shared moment rather than a practical task.

REFRAMING THE SUPPORTING ROLE

The balancing act of being a mother on a wedding day can feel impossible – look special but not showy; stylish but not scene-stealing; visible but not centre stage. But I believe the balance is achievable, just not in the way many expect.

If your goal is to be the perfect framing backdrop to your child's wedding, then you have to feel like yourself: authentic, comfortable and proud. When a mother stands tall in something she genuinely loves, she strengthens the overall picture. She becomes part of the aesthetic confidence of the day.



"You deserve to feel body confident and you deserve something that's made to fit you beautifully."

And perhaps that's the real shift happening now.

Brides have embraced freedom and personal expression. They are no longer bound by rigid silhouettes or outdated rules. Increasingly, their mothers are following suit – because a wedding isn't just a milestone for the couple. It's a moment of transition for the whole family.

And stepping into it without compromise means standing comfortably in your place – visible, confident and entirely yourself.

ABOUT RACHEL SCOTT

Founder of Rachel Scott Couture, one of Scotland's most respected luxury bridal and occasionwear studios, Rachel has spent more than two decades championing design innovation, fabric excellence and a deeply personal approach to couture styling. With a background in textile science and a reputation for empowering women through choice, craft and confidence, she brings an insider's perspective to modern bridal and occasionwear fashion.

GROOMSWEAR




JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



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IN *His* WORDS



A long ENGAGEMENT and the big pieces finally in place, Will Grewar is enjoying a CALM run-up to the day.

Will and Fiona crossed paths as teenagers; always at the same house parties but strictly just friends. It wasn't until their twenties that things shifted. From there, eight years flew by before he decided it was time to propose.

The setting was always going to matter. One of their first couple holidays was snowboarding in Söll in the Austrian Alps – where Will taught Fiona how to snowboard. When they returned in 2019, he carried the ring in his hand luggage then in the most secure jacket pocket he owned, waiting for the right moment. "It took four days to find a spot that wasn't too busy but had amazing views," he says. She said yes – and celebratory hot chocolates in a slopeside lodge followed.

WHEN HINTS PAY OFF

The ring was custom made – an emerald centre stone surrounded by diamonds, designed around hints Fiona had dropped over the years. "She loved it – massive relief."

Planning didn't happen overnight. They started venue-hunting early, paused when Covid hit and only really picked things back up last year. In hindsight, the long engagement worked in their favour. "Our priorities changed and we're much more relaxed now," Will explains.

SIGNED AND SEALED

They've since booked the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, for 28 November 2026. The New Library won them over instantly, and a festive city backdrop sealed it. Catering is in the hands of Saltire, entertainment is sorted with Tartan Entertainment, and a close friend who runs cinematic brand studio VIM Media will capture the day on film.

With the 'big five' underway, the mood is steady. "I'm pretty relaxed," he admits, though being centre of attention isn't his natural habitat. "I'll just need a lot of caffeine."

Next up: finding a photographer and designing the invites himself – a perk of his graphic design background.




"Our priorities changed and we're much more RELAXED."
WEDDING DATE: 26.II.26
VIM MEDIA

WEARING THE STORY

A kilt is so much MORE than formalwear. It's HERITAGE, IDENTITY and, for many grooms, a shift in how they CARRY themselves. Here, three Scottish kiltmakers explain what REALLY happens at the fitting.

THE MOMENT IT CLICKS

There's a point in every kilt fitting, says Gordon of Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers (GNK), when something shifts. It happens gradually. With each component added in the proper way, the full picture slowly comes together. Finally, the groom stands in front of the mirror and sees himself properly for the first time.

"His confidence grows as he realises how good the outfit looks on him," Gordon explains. And the small adjustments matter as much as the big ones, from a sporran at the right height to a waistcoat buttoned correctly. These are the details that take an outfit from almost there to exactly right. "By this point, the groom is standing taller, fully relaxed and feeling 100% ready for his day."

At Kilts 4 U, the team know first impressions hit fast. "We never have him leaving a fitting room without looking the part," says Iain. "It's a truly proud moment, for him and for us."

Levi of McCalls Highlandwear recognises something else in that moment too. "For a lot of grooms, it's when the day starts to feel real. Up until then, the wedding can still feel like plans and to-do lists. Seeing themselves fully dressed in a properly fitted kilt is often when it all clicks into place. There's a real sense of pride in that."

For many grooms, it's the first time they've ever worn a kilt so the nerves are real. What all three makers have found, though, is that the nerves don't last long.

MORE THAN CLOTH

Ask any of these kiltmakers what surprises people most about a properly made kilt and the answer starts with the work involved. A traditional kilt uses at least eight yards of tartan; enough to give it the volume to move when you walk and return to perfectly neat pleats. All of Gordon's tartans are woven in Scotland while some of the 16 tartans at Kilts 4 U can only be crafted in one mill in the world, because it's the only one with the technology to do so.

"Most people have no idea what's actually involved," says Gordon. Every stage of GNK construction is done by hand, by kiltmakers trained at the Edinburgh Kiltmakers Academy. There may be hidden pleats, extra fabric folded invisibly into the structure or careful built-in excess that allows for adjustments and repairs over the years. "A good kilt can last forever if you treat it well. One day you can even pass it on to the next generation."

Levi puts it simply: "It takes skill, structure and time – from the way the tartan is matched and pleated through to the finishing details that give it shape, movement and longevity." McCalls has a video on its website showing every stage of the process. "Even after working here for five years, it still took me by surprise just how many steps making one kilt has. It really is a craft; a labour of love."

That longevity is something Kilts 4 U returns to too. "Is there another garment you can truly say should fit you all the way through your life then be handed proudly down through generations?" asks Iain. The answer, of course, is no. A kilt doesn't go out of fashion. Instead, it gathers meaning.

WHERE THE HEART IS

The tartan question is rarely straightforward. For some grooms it's a practical choice, like a colour scheme built around the wedding palette; the rest of the day taking its lead from the cloth. For others it carries something heavier – possibly a family tartan worn by a previous generation, in many cases someone no longer alive to see the day.



KILTS 4 U | JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



That choice shapes everything that follows, from the jacket tones to the sporran and accessories. When a kilt is made to measure it can be built as a complete, considered outfit. Individually styled and one of a kind; made for the biggest day of your life.

Gordon encourages every groom to see the outfit as an expression of himself rather than a uniform to be worn correctly. Subtle choices (the colour of a tie or the style of a sporran) can transform a look just as dramatically as bolder decisions. "The important thing is that the groom expresses himself, building his own individually styled outfit from the kilt up."

For Levi, the balance between tradition and self-expression is the heart of it. "It's never about choosing between the two. The beauty of Highlandwear is that it allows both. You can respect the history and craftsmanship behind it while still creating an outfit that reflects your personality and the way you want to present yourself." McCalls' strapline captures it neatly: Scottish Heritage Meets Modern Style.

And wherever in the world you marry, a kilt carries its meaning. "No matter what country the wedding is taking place, if a kilt is the chosen attire, you know where the groom's heart is from," smiles Iain.

WHEN THE GENERATIONS COME IN TOGETHER

There's one kind of fitting that stands apart from the rest. When multiple generations (grandfather, father, groom, son) arrive together, something different happens in the room.

"You hear family stories," explains Levi. "You see different tastes and personalities come through, and sometimes there's real emotion. It's a reminder that Highlandwear isn't just about dressing for the day, but about family, connection and occasion.

It's a moment that no to-do list prepares you for, and one that makes the whole craft worth it.




MCCALLS JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY

GORDON
NICOLSON
KILTMAKERS

Welcome to Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers, a family-run highlandwear retailer, proudly based on Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile.

At the heart of our work is a dedication to preserving the craft of hand-sewn kiltmaking. Using the finest materials and time-honoured techniques, our highlandwear reflects the very best of Scottish craftsmanship.

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THE BIG *Interview*

25 YEARS on from opening on the ROYAL MILE, GORDON, founder and owner of GORDON NICOLSON KILTMAKERS, reflects on authenticity, evolving wedding style and why Highlandwear is anything but static.

***Your Scottish Wedding*: How did the business begin and how has it evolved?**

Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers: We opened on Edinburgh's Canongate 25 years ago this year. Before launching independently, I worked my way up from the shop floor to managing some of the city's largest Highlandwear stores. What pushed me to start GNK was frustration. In the 90s and early 2000s I could see quality declining – mass-produced imports were flooding the market and traditional kiltmaking skills weren't being passed on. Provenance and attention to detail were being lost. I wanted to create something different – authentic Highlandwear, made properly, using the finest materials, woven as locally as possible. We started small (just me and one kiltmaker) and through long days, plenty of mistakes and a lot of determination, we've grown into two Edinburgh stores, a global e-commerce platform, a warehouse and workroom in Dunbar, and the Edinburgh Kiltmakers Academy.

***YSW:* How do you balance heritage with contemporary style for couples today?**

GNK: Highlandwear is traditional by nature but it's also a living part of our cultural identity. Our couples come to us because they value authenticity and craftsmanship but they also want to express their personality. We guide them by listening first. Once we understand what they want their outfit to say, we can introduce subtle individuality like artistic linings, coloured thread detailing, bespoke sporrans or commissioned kiltpins. The foundation remains classic, but the expression is entirely personal.

***YSW:* What are couples looking for now that they perhaps weren't 10 or 20 years ago?**

GNK: Weddings have become more intimate and personal, and that shift shows up in clothing. Some grooms now opt for a relaxed approach – a kilt with a beautiful shirt and no jacket or tailored trews instead of a full formal outfit. We're also seeing more pets involved in ceremonies; so much so that we now offer tartan accessories for four-legged ring bearers. The common thread, though, is individuality. Couples don't want their wedding to look like anyone else's.

***YSW:* Are you seeing more women and non-traditional clients coming to you?**

GNK: Absolutely. Through our LoullyMakes label, we create bespoke shawls, capes, tartan bouquets, clutch purses and accessories – many made in-house by our own seamstresses. More women are coming to us wanting to incorporate tartan or tweed into their outfit in a way that feels modern and intentional. We shape tradition to suit them.

***YSW:* How do those conversations differ creatively or emotionally?**

GNK: Every conversation we have is personal. Whether someone is hiring for one celebration or investing in an outfit they'll wear for a lifetime of occasions, we start by understanding their aspirations. We consider how the outfit might evolve, how accessories might be added over time and how everything works together. It's about guidance, not prescription.



PHOTOS BY ZOE



PHOTOS BY ZOE

***YSW:* How would you describe the Gordon Nicolson signature?**

GNK: Authentic. Our kilts are handsewn to the unequalled GNK standard using traditional heritage skills. Our unique jackets and waistcoats are crafted to our own designs using specifically developed pattern blocks, refined over decades. We use only the finest wool tartans and tweeds woven in Scotland and collaborate with trusted artisans to create exclusive pieces. A defining moment for us was being asked to supply a GNK hire outfit for the permanent archives of the National Museum of Scotland. That felt like validation of our mission – making exceptional Highlandwear accessible, without compromising quality.

***YSW:* For couples unfamiliar with the process, what goes into making a bespoke kilt?**

GNK: A traditional handsewn kilt begins with a minimum of eight yards of Scottish-woven wool tartan. Each pleat is meticulously shaped and stitched to match the wearer's measurements, including subtle shaping from seat to the small of the back. We also build hidden ease into every GNK kilt, allowing it to be resized over time. That future-proofing is important because a kilt should last decades. Through the Edinburgh Kiltmakers Academy (which we established in 2016) we've trained more than 135 students from around the world. In 2021, handsewn kiltmaking was placed on the red list of endangered heritage crafts. Protecting and passing on these skills is central to what we do.

***YSW:* There's been a shift towards more expressive weddings. How does that show up in your work?**

GNK: Bespoke tartan design is becoming a significant part of our business. There is something incredibly powerful about a couple creating their own tartan; choosing colours and patterns that symbolise shared memories, heritage and hopes. Once registered with the Scottish Register of Tartans, that design becomes part of the permanent archive. It's a meaningful way to mark a union.

***YSW:* Are grooms thinking differently about how they want to feel on the day?**

GNK: Definitely. They want to feel distinct. They don't want to look like they've chosen a package deal or replicated a friend's wedding. At GNK we don't do standard. Every outfit, whether hired or purchased, is curated for the individual. It's an honour to play a part in such an important moment.

***YSW:* Do any client stories stand out as particularly memorable?**

GNK: One couple asked us to design a new tartan in memory of the groom's late father, using his favourite colours. It was an emotional process. After refining the design together, we created something that carried real poignancy. They described it as not just fabric, but a weaving of remembrance and union. Moments like that remind us why this craft matters.

nicolsonkiltmakers.com



ROSE AND JULIEN

IN *His* WORDS



"I designed the RING myself."

"Ana-Rose and I actually met at work. We both joined the same company during Covid, helping build a new bank. So, it's far from the typical dating-app story. In the early days we'd grab coffee together, chatting through face masks and navigating the strange world of social distancing. After six months together, we moved in with Ana-Rose's parents to start saving for our dream home.

After about two years we moved into it. And now, five years after meeting, we're planning our wedding.

I proposed during a weekend away for Ana-Rose's birthday at the Roxburghe Schloss in Kelso in April 2025. We were lucky with the weather and spent the afternoon relaxing in the outdoor pool with the sun shining.

Later that evening we went for a walk around the grounds and that's when I asked the question. We kept it very low-key afterwards so we could spend the first night just the two of us celebrating but I'd planned a family dinner for when we got back. Then we headed straight to London to share the news with some loved ones.

I designed the ring myself, with the help of a family friend who is a jeweller. It's a three-stone, classic-cut trilogy.

Ana-Rose didn't waste any time – we were already talking about wedding plans on the day of the proposal.

We knew we wanted either Edinburgh or St Andrews, as both places mean a lot to us. In the end we chose the Old Course Hotel. We've spent a lot of time there over the years and I love golf, so that's a bonus.

As much as I love the sun, we went for a December wedding. You can never guarantee the weather in Scotland, regardless of season, so went all in with winter – and a Christmas-themed wedding, which will be pretty magical.

Most of the big decisions are already sorted and we've loved every minute of planning. Next on the list are evening invitations and food choices. Then it's on to the fun part – stag, hen and honeymoon."





WEDDING DATE: 19.12.26

STEPH NICOL PHOTO



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KILT KILTS 4 U EIGHT-YARD SPIRIT OF LOCH TAY KILT (EXCLUSIVE TO KILTS 4 U, £590) WITH MATCHING TARTAN FLASHES (£40), BLUE TWEED CASHMERE BLEND SHERRIFMUIR JACKET AND WAISTCOAT (£850), FOX ANTIQUE SPORRAN (£460), BROWN LEATHER DAY BROGUES (£135), MADE TO ORDER IN FRANK'S GOLD ROOM | **RING** JAMES PORTER & SON



















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KILT GORDON NICOLSON KILTMAKERS, BLUE BUCHANAN 100% SCOTTISH WOOL STROME WEIGHT KILT BY LOCHCARRON, ARGYLL JACKET AND WAISTCOAT WITH ANTIQUE BRASS BUTTONS, DARK BROWN GHILLIE BROGUE SHOES WITH ANCIENT BLUE KILT HOSE, KILBERRY BAGPIPES EBONY SGIAN DUBH, ANTIQUE BRASS SPORRAN AND MATCHING CHAIN WITH RACOON SKIN, BRASS STAG KILT PIN, BLUE SHIRT, BROWN TIE. AVAILABLE TO HIRE FROM £125 AND PURCHASE FROM £1585. | **BUTTONHOLE** CHERRY BLOSSOM | **RING** JAMES PORTER & SON

















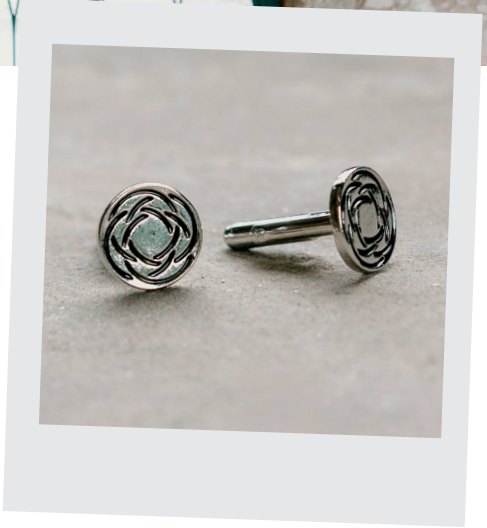


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Behind *the* Scenes



Broxmouth Courtyard was an ideal backdrop for this photoshoot. Set within a striking converted stable block in East Lothian, the venue is built around natural light and considered detail.

Ceremonies take place in The Stables Gallery; a double-height space with grand arched windows that open onto a Mediterranean-style cobbled courtyard, with three drop-pendant chandeliers adding a luxurious finish. Reclaimed herringbone flooring connects each area of the ground floor, creating a natural flow from the ceremony space through the cosy Tack Room Bar and into the Dining Hall. Here, foliage-lined ceiling lighting and the venue's iconic double arched doors take couples and their guests from dining through to dancing.

For grooms, there's a dedicated Groom's Room in the Courtyard Cottages (complete with a pool table and beer tap), which has become a firm favourite for wedding mornings.

The venue holds up to 160 day guests and 180 for the evening, with accommodation for up to 22 guests on site and a further 24 across the estate.

"It was a joy to have the *YSW* team along, bringing professionalism, passion and a whole lot of energy to the day," says Jenna at Broxmouth. "The resulting images showcase each aspect of the venue beautifully."

Photographer Jennifer Glen made the most of the setting. "Broxmouth has so much character. Vast outdoor spaces, gorgeous spots around every corner and it's just minutes from the beach. We headed down to catch the beautiful soft light. A shoot location that genuinely makes the job easier."

The fashion came courtesy of four of Scotland's finest – Kilts 4 U, McCalls Highlandwear, Clan Kilts and Gordon Nicolson Kiltmakers – with flowers by Cherry Blossom.









DREAM TEAM

FASHION | KILTS 4 U, MCCALLS, CLAN KILTS, GORDON NICOLSON KILTMAKERS
FLOWERS | CHERRY BLOSSOM
JEWELLERY | JAMES PORTER & SON
PHOTOGRAPHY | JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY
SOCIAL MEDIA | JB MARKETING
VENUE | BROXMOUTH COURTYARD ■

Mums' *Collections*

An important role deserves a look to match. Whether you're drawn to understated elegance or something a little more statement, find inspiration for outfits that feel considered, flattering and ready for a truly special day.


JOHN CHARLES
LONDON

THE Family Business

THAT PUTS MUMS FIRST



Twenty years in the hotel industry, a FAMILY working the shop floor and a knowledge of occasionwear for mothers-of-the-bride and groom that's second to none. Sisters Pauline and Louise built CATWALK Falkirk from a local boutique into one of the UK's largest occasionwear destinations – and they still call each other DAILY on the drive home.

When Pauline and her sister Louise decided to open Catwalk Falkirk in 2004, they were taking a big leap. Twenty years in the hotel industry, working for their parents, had given them an eye for service and a feel for what people need when they want to feel looked after. When their parents retired and a local shop became available, the timing felt right.

What began as a local ladieswear boutique has grown, over two decades, into one of the UK's largest occasionwear destinations, with mothers of the bride and groom travelling from across the country to find their outfit. "I've always had an eye for style and love working with the public," says Pauline.

It still maintains that family feeling though. Pauline and Louise still work on the shop floor alongside Pauline's daughter Janine and Louise's daughter Ailie. Most of the wider team have been there for years. "It definitely feels more like an extended family," Pauline smiles.

Despite spending all day together, the pair often find themselves calling each other on the drive home. "There's always something else to plan," they laugh. They socialise and holiday together too, with their husbands, parents and extended family whenever they can. They're still the best of friends as well as sisters.

Since opening Catwalk more than two decades ago, it's clear to the duo that the way mums approach occasionwear shopping has shifted noticeably. "They really do their research now, online via social media, reading advice in wedding magazines or attending wedding exhibitions."

Where once the brief was classic and traditional, Catwalk's customers are now choosing contemporary silhouettes, vibrant jewel tones and modern designers. The range reflects that – John Charles, Veni Infantino and Maisoniël among them, covering everything from intricate embellishment to flowing, understated elegance.

Catwalk has won Scotland's Best Mum Retailer on multiple occasions; something Pauline attributes to the team's consistency rather than any single gesture. The measure of it, she says, is the number of customers who come back. Not just for the next wedding in the family, but because the experience felt worth returning to.

Day-to-day, Pauline is often in front of the camera presenting the latest collections with styling advice, while Louise works behind it making reels and answering enquiries. They agree that "teamwork makes the dream work."

If there's one thing the duo wish they could tell mums before they step through the door, it's this: "Whilst there's no right or wrong time to start searching, we always recommend visiting in the early part of the year when the new spring/summer collections are delivered. A second collection arrives in June/July, which is ideal for autumn/winter weddings. But lots of styles are transitional and perfect for any season."

Catwalk stocks styles from size 8 to 24 and exclusivity is important. "We generally only get one in each size, so shopping early in the season is key to get the biggest choice of styles and sizes," they advise.

> "I've always had an eye for style and love working with the public." – Pauline

Catwalk Falkirk | catwalk-falkirk.co.uk

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THE Boutique that starts with people NOT DRESSES



When Fiona Wilson opened FROX OF FALKIRK during the 2009 recession, she had a SIMPLE conviction: mothers of the bride DESERVE better. Fifteen years on, that hasn't changed.

The women who walk into Frox of Falkirk often arrive apologising – for their shape, for their age, for not wanting to make a fuss. Fiona has heard it all, and she's spent 15 years dismantling it.

"We know it's never just an outfit," she says. "It's pride, confidence and a once-in-a-lifetime moment." The boutique was born from exactly that belief; that mothers-of-the-bride and groom were being treated as an afterthought, handed whatever was left once everyone else had been considered. Fiona saw it too many times and decided to do something about it.

The story that stays with her (and with everyone at Frox) involves a woman who arrived in tears. She was a size 36, had already visited several shops and had been made to feel that her size was a problem to be managed rather than a person to be dressed. By the time she reached Frox, she had told herself she didn't even want to go to her daughter's wedding anymore.

Fiona sat down with her and the first thing she said was that size is just a number. "No one has ever walked up to someone at a wedding and said 'Lovely outfit, what size is it?' They say 'Lovely outfit, where did you get it?'"

She tried things on and her smile came back slowly. She left with a beautiful outfit, a headpiece and shoes, and a bag dyed to match on order. More importantly, she left feeling like herself again. She has since returned to Frox for the weddings of her other two children and buys all her occasionwear there now. She is, as Fiona says, very much part of the Frox family.

Moments like that are what the job is actually made of but Fiona is clear about the weight of it. The emotional side is harder than people realise, and Frox carries nerves, family dynamics, last-minute changes and a lot of tears. "Happy tears, overwhelmed tears and occasionally 'I didn't expect to like myself in that colour' tears." There are sleepless nights when deliveries are tight or a shoe must be dyed quickly to finish a look. "But when a mum looks in the mirror and her whole posture changes, when she says she feels amazing, it makes every bit of pressure worth it."

The way mums approach shopping has shifted noticeably over the years. The traditional dress-and-jacket in block colour has largely stepped aside. Now, jumpsuits, tailored trouser suits, bold colour and statement headpieces are all part of the conversation. Social media has opened eyes to what's possible – though it brings its own pressures. Fiona sees her role as bringing it back to how a woman feels rather than what anyone else is wearing.

When someone arrives unsure, the first thing the team work on is the language, encouraging the customer away from "I hate my arms" or "I can't wear that," and guiding them towards "Let's see how this feels."

The team at Frox are extensively trained before taking appointments (on body shape, proportion, skin tones, hair colour) but instinct plays its part too. "Sometimes you just know someone can carry something a little unexpected," Fiona smiles. "Watching that realisation happen in the mirror is magic."

Her advice to anyone worried about overshadowing the bride is simple – you're not competing. "A confident, beautifully dressed mum enhances the whole picture. There's space for everyone to look incredible." And the misconception she'd most like to retire? That mother-of-the-bride fashion has to be simple, muted or safe. "Style doesn't expire. It simply evolves. Confidence doesn't have an age limit."

At Frox of Falkirk, it's always been people first, dresses second. Appointments are about the laughter, the tears and the hugs in the fitting room. Fiona adds, "We're not just dressing mums. We're honoured to be part of their story."

froxoffalkirk.com

"A confident, beautifully dressed mum enhances the whole picture."

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Gina Smart Boutique

THREE DECADES OF

Dressing women right

For more than thirty years, Gina Smart Boutique has been EXPERTLY dressing the women behind the wedding, from mothers to grandmothers and everyone in between. No fuss, no hard sell. Just considered, PERSONAL styling in the heart of Ayr.

Gina Smart Boutique has been part of Alloway Street in Ayr for more than three decades; long enough to have dressed mothers, daughters and now grandchildren for the moments that matter most. Founded by Gina Nicoline Angela Smart, it's a business built on the kind of consistency that doesn't need to shout about itself.

The boutique's philosophy has always been straightforward - fashion should be expressive and accessible, not overwhelming. Rather than chasing trend cycles, the focus has been on building a carefully curated edit that reflects personality, lifestyle and confidence. It's an approach that has resonated with clients who are looking for so much more than an outfit; they're looking for something that feels like them.

The boutique works by appointment, which shapes everything about the experience. Rather than overwhelming customers with rails of options, the edit is deliberate. You'll find Joseph Ribkoff, John Charles, Ispirato and Veromia among the labels. And they're all chosen with real women in mind.

Each appointment involves one-to-one styling guidance tailored to the individual – everything is considered from body shape to colour preferences and lifestyle. The aim is always the same – an outfit that feels intentional and flattering rather than a compromise.

In an era when fast fashion dominates much of the market, Gina Smart has taken a different position. The emphasis is on well-made garments and carefully chosen fabrics. These are pieces that last beyond a single season and can be worn with confidence long after the wedding photographs have been framed. It's a considered approach that aligns with the way many women are now thinking about their wardrobes; investing in fewer, better pieces rather than accumulating options they'll never reach for again.

These days, the team say mums are arriving with a clearer sense of what they want than they used to. They want more colour, more confidence – and there are fewer apologies. Gina Smart has evolved alongside that shift, adding Spanish-inspired collections and contemporary silhouettes without losing the personal service that has kept customers coming back across generations.

The boutique's social media presence reflects that evolution too. It's full of styling ideas, outfit inspiration and real-client looks that show how pieces can work across different shapes, occasions and personal styles. It makes the whole process feel more approachable before anyone even steps through the door.

For brides and wedding guests, the styling process can feel overwhelming before it even begins. The appointment-based model is designed to simplify that. You get expert guidance, a curated selection and enough time to make confident choices without the pressure of a busy shop floor. The result, consistently, is a look that photographs well and feels authentic on the day.

The breadth of occasions the boutique dresses for is part of what's kept it relevant across three decades. From milestone weddings to celebrations of every kind, the range adapts without losing its identity. What remains constant is the commitment to making every woman who comes through the door feel considered — not as a sale, but as an individual with her own story to dress for.


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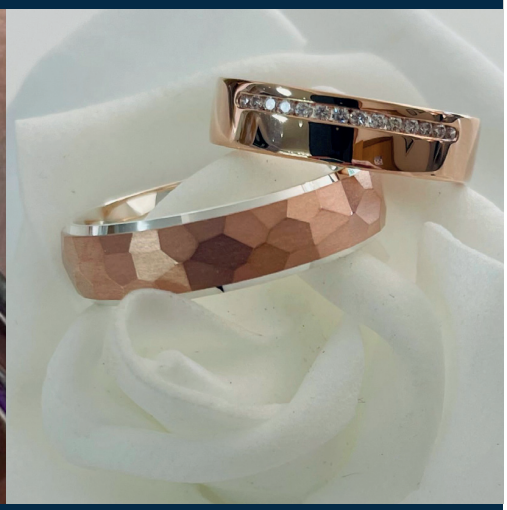
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KAREN SIMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY

The *Secret* to Bridal Radiance

WITH DR KALY JAFF

There's something quietly powerful about the moment you decide you are ready.



Not just ready for a wedding – but ready to step into a version of herself that feels elevated, radiant, and entirely her own.

As I begin my journey as a columnist for *Your Scottish Wedding*, it feels only right that my first piece isn't simply an introduction… but an invitation into *The Secret*.

As a clinician and founder of The Secret, I've spent over a decade treating women at every stage of their lives – but there is something uniquely special about the bride. This is not just preparation for a day; it is a transition into a new chapter. And how you feel within yourself during that process matters just as much as how you look.

For those of you who are new to The Secret, it's not simply a clinic. It's a space, a philosophy, and for many of our brides, a ritual. A place where preparation becomes intentional, luxurious, and deeply personal. Because looking incredible on your wedding day isn't about a last-minute facial the week before – it's about understanding your skin, your physiology, your confidence – and building from there.

In fact, the most common mistake I see is brides starting too late. True skin transformation should begin 6–12 months before your wedding day, and throughout this column, I'll be guiding you through exactly how to approach that timeline with confidence.

This year, we are taking bridal preparation to an entirely new level.

One of the most exciting developments I am proud to introduce is babyGLOW by Teoxan – a treatment that has quickly become one of the most sought-after protocols.. Think of it as the ultimate skin investment: a carefully curated combination approach designed to improve hydration, luminosity, and overall skin quality. Brides today are no longer asking for quick fixes, they want skin that looks like their skin, just elevated, lit from within, and effortlessly flawless both in person and on camera.

At The Secret, we don't chase perfection, we create presence.

And this year marks a truly monumental milestone for us.

We have officially signed a contract with Harrods to bring a series of collaborative luxury events to life – curated experiences designed to bridge the world of high-end beauty, wellness, and bridal preparation. These will be intimate, limited-space events, offering brides and their bridal parties priority access to the very best in aesthetic innovation and luxury self-care.

Imagine curated evenings where cutting-edge treatments meet iconic retail. Champagne in hand, expert-led education, personalised consultations, and the opportunity to experience the future of beauty – before anyone else.

Our June event will centre around one of our most transformative offerings: Exomind, showcased alongside MyBlend's red LED light masks. As the only clinic in Scotland to offer this pioneering treatment, we are incredibly proud to introduce brides to a new dimension of preparation – one that supports the mind as much as the body. From improving sleep to reducing anxiety in the lead-up to your wedding day, this experience is designed to help you feel calm, clear, and completely in control.

In July, we turn our attention to skin essentials. This event will focus on the foundations – facials, skin health, and the building blocks of long-term results. Because before advanced treatments, great skin begins with function, balance, and consistency.

> "This year, we are taking bridal preparation to an entirely new level."

Then in September, we move into an area that is often overlooked, yet deeply impactful: hair health. In collaboration with innovative LED technology from Shark, we will be showcasing advanced solutions for hair loss, alongside The Secret's regenerative treatments, including microneedling with polynucleotides and exosomes. Whether you are experiencing thinning, shedding, or simply want to enhance volume and strength ahead of your wedding, this is where science meets truly transformative results.

What excites me most about these events is not just the treatments – but the experience. Brides, friends, mothers, and bridesmaids coming together not just to prepare, but to celebrate. To invest in themselves in a way that feels empowering, elevated, and entirely aligned with the moment they are stepping into.

Because this journey should never feel overwhelming.

It should feel considered. Supported. Luxurious.

Throughout this year, I'll be using this column to guide you through everything you need to know, from pre-wedding treatment timelines to insider advice on what truly works (and what to avoid). Consider this your bridal blueprint, shaped through years of experience and a deep understanding of what creates not just beautiful results, but confident women.

If you are planning your wedding and want to begin your journey with us, I always recommend starting with a personalised consultation at The Secret – because the most powerful transformations are the ones that are tailored entirely to you.

So whether you are newly engaged, deep in the planning process, or simply exploring what is possible … consider this your sign.

Your glow-up doesn't start the week before your wedding.

It starts now.

And in my next column, I'll be sharing the exact treatment timeline I use for my own brides – what to do, when to start, and just as importantly, what to avoid.

Trust me … this is only the beginning.

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HAUS®
OF DENTISTRY

The Smile That Changes Everything



By Adam Morgan, Clinic Director, HAUS of Dentistry

There is something so special about the way a wedding brings every detail into focus.

During the months of planning, attention naturally turns to the dress, the venue, the flowers, the atmosphere and all the thoughtful elements that make a celebration feel personal. But alongside all of that, there is something else that quietly shapes how a bride feels throughout the day — her smile.

A smile is such an important part of a wedding. It is there in the morning with your closest people, in the nerves before you walk down the aisle, in every photograph, every laugh, every speech and every fleeting moment in between. Long after the day itself has passed, it is one of the things that lives on most vividly in your memories.

For me, that is what makes dentistry feel so personal.

I have always believed that confidence has a way of changing how we experience life's most important moments. When someone feels comfortable in their smile, it shows in a way that goes far beyond appearance. There is a lightness to it. A freedom. A sense of being fully present, rather than holding back.

That belief is what shaped the vision behind HAUS of Dentistry.

When I created HAUS, the aim was to build something that felt different from the traditional idea of a dental clinic. I wanted to create a space that felt welcoming, calm and elevated — somewhere people could come not only for exceptional dental care, but for an experience that felt considered from beginning to end.

The environment matters. The energy matters. The way people are greeted, listened to and looked after matters. For many people, dentistry has historically felt intimidating or purely functional, and I wanted to challenge that. At HAUS, we believe dental care can feel refined, reassuring and deeply personal all at once.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people, each with their own reasons for walking through our doors. Some come to us because they want to improve their oral health. Some are looking for subtle cosmetic changes. Others are preparing for a milestone moment in their lives — and a wedding is one of the most meaningful of all.

There is often a quiet emotional layer to wedding preparation that people do not always speak about. Looking your best is part of it, of course, but more than that, most brides simply want to feel like the very best version of themselves. Not different. Not overdone. Just confident, comfortable and radiant. That is often where smile confidence comes in.

For some brides, that may mean a brighter smile through professional whitening. For others, it could be a little more time and planning, with treatments such as Invisalign or carefully considered cosmetic work to refine the shape, balance or harmony of their smile. Often, it is not about dramatic change at all. The most beautiful results are usually the ones that feel effortless — the kind of difference people notice without immediately knowing why.

That is something I feel strongly about. Dentistry, particularly cosmetic dentistry, should never be about chasing perfection or creating something that does not feel authentic. It should be about enhancement in the truest sense of the word. A smile should still feel like your own, just fresher, softer, brighter or more balanced in a way that brings out natural confidence. And that journey looks different for everyone.

At HAUS, every conversation starts with understanding the individual in front of us. Some people arrive with a clear idea of what they would like to change, while others simply know that they want to feel better when they smile. Both starting points are

equally important. What matters is creating a plan that feels personal, realistic and in keeping with the person as a whole.

For brides, timing is an important part of that process too. Some smile-enhancing treatments can be done relatively quickly, while others benefit from a little more space and planning. Beginning that conversation early can make all the difference, not because anyone needs to commit to major change, but because it allows room to explore what feels right without any pressure.

Of course, beautiful smiles are built on healthy foundations. While people often associate HAUS with cosmetic dentistry, routine care is just as central to what we do. Looking after oral health, maintaining confidence and helping people feel at ease in their own smile is never about one single treatment. It is about the full picture, and about creating an experience where care and aesthetics sit naturally side-by-side.

Writing for *Your Scottish Wedding* feels especially meaningful because weddings are filled with emotion, beauty and individuality — all the things that make smile confidence so personal in the first place. Over the coming year, I hope to share thoughts and advice that make dentistry feel more approachable, more relevant and perhaps a little more inspiring too.

Because while a wedding is, of course, about style and celebration, it is also about feeling like yourself at your most joyful. And when someone feels truly comfortable in their smile, it changes the way they carry themselves. It shows in photographs, in conversation, in laughter and in all those unguarded moments that end up meaning the most. Sometimes, the smallest shift creates the biggest difference.

If you are planning your wedding and have ever thought about your smile, perhaps this is simply an invitation to start thinking about what would help you feel your best. It does not have to mean transformation. Sometimes it is just about refinement, confidence and giving yourself one less thing to think about when the big day arrives.

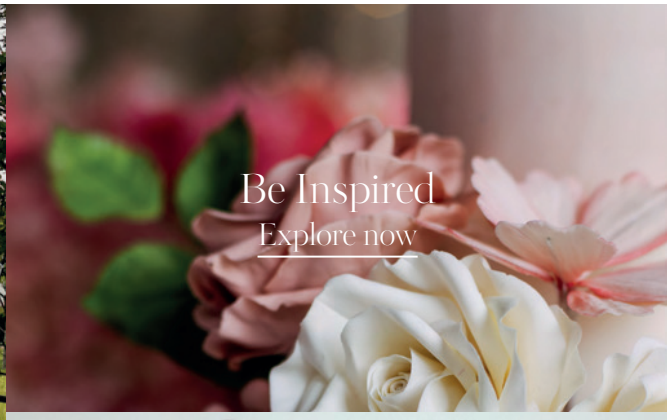
Because when the moment comes, the most beautiful thing any bride can wear is ease. And confidence has a way of showing up in every smile.



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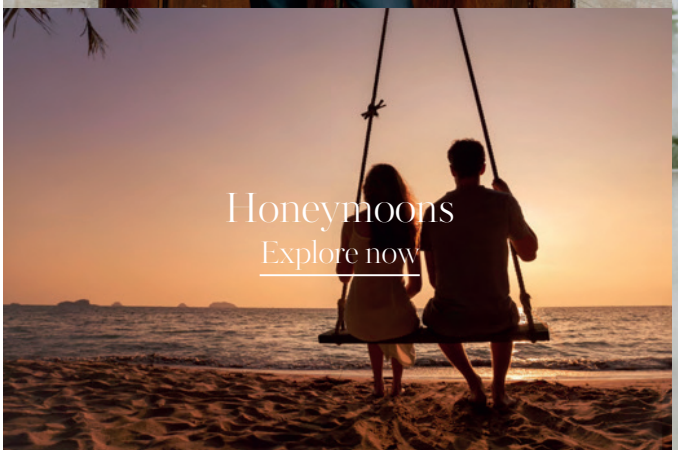
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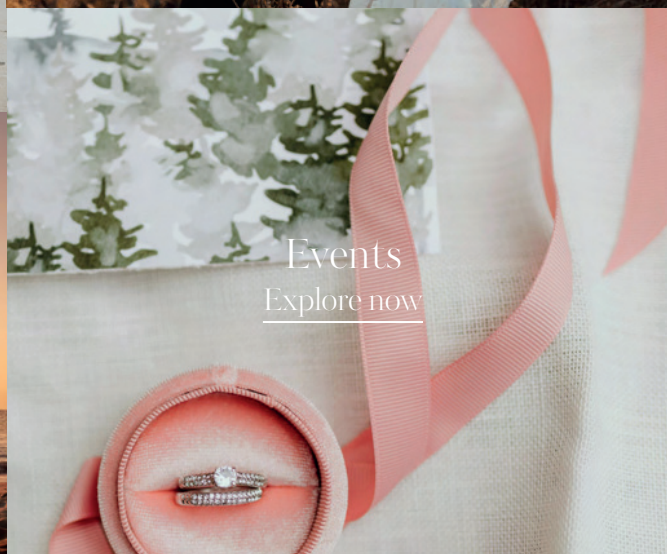












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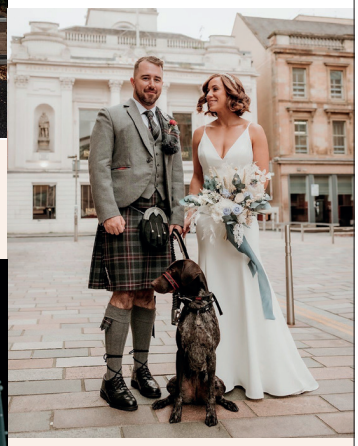


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What THE Band Sees

There's a particular kind of focus that settles over a band the moment a couple walks onto the floor. The room goes quiet and for the next three and a half minutes, the people closest to the moment aren't family or friends. They're the musicians with a front-row seat to everything the photographs won't show. Because anything, as it turns out, can happen...

ANDY, WIRELESS (REPRESENTED BY HIREABAND)

"Last January, a bride got in touch with an unusual request. Could we stop playing mid-first-dance (*Caledonia* by Dougie MacLean) and break into *Jumping All Over the World* by Scooter? Strict instructions to tell no one, especially not the groom.



WIRELESS (REPRESENTED BY HIREABAND)
MARK TIMM PHOTOGRAPHY

It turned out one of the couple's party pieces was that dance and, after a moment's hesitation, they both went for it. Everyone loved it.

We film first dances for our socials, so we tagged the couple as usual. A few hours later the bride messaged asking us to remove the tag... The clip had hit two million views on TikTok and her phone hadn't stopped!

Most couples ask us to invite everyone onto the floor after the first verse and chorus, and it's understandable. Standing in front of your family and friends while everyone watches is a strange experience. You can see the relief when they're no longer alone out there. Most couples chat to each other the whole time, which is lovely to watch.

What people often underestimate is the second song. The first dance gets all the attention but the second song is where the night begins. If the floor is still full, we keep it full. If it needs a reset, we go straight into a *Gay Gordons*. We never write a setlist in advance because the room tells us what it needs.

Song choice matters too. Most first dances are ballads but some couples like to start with a bang. Last summer, a couple chose *I Believe in a Thing Called Love* by The Darkness. It was a bold call and we asked them to imagine how it would feel standing on the floor in that moment. But they knew their crowd – and it worked. The bride and her mum then joined us on stage for the second song, and it turned out they'd secretly learned to play the bagpipes."

DEE, SPLENDID GENTLEMEN

"We were once asked to learn a first dance song by a local band because the couple lived in Germany and wanted something meaningful. The song was in English but had a full brass section we had to arrange for guitar, bass and drums. No online lyrics, no chords. We figured it out entirely by ear.

Then the couple mentioned the band back home were so pleased about it being chosen that they wanted a film of the performance to send them. We didn't relax our concentration for a single second until the song was done. On the night, it went well but the couple had no idea what was happening behind that calm exterior.

How do you know when a first dance is really working? As cheesy as it sounds, you can see it in how they look at each other. There's a gut feeling in the room when something has



THE BRAVE CEILIDH BAND



SPLENDID GENTLEMEN | IRH PHOTOGRAPHY

"We were once asked to learn a first dance song by a local band because the couple lived in Germany and wanted something meaningful."

– Splendid Gentlemen

genuinely connected but it's that moment between the couple that tells you everything. If they're smiling at each other rather than at the crowd, you've got them.

One thing couples underestimate is how long it feels to be standing in front of everyone with all eyes on them. Getting the bridal party up quickly, then the whole room, takes that pressure off – and it means the floor is already full when the first proper song starts."

SCOTT, THE BRAVE CEILIDH BAND

"The most stressful three seconds of my career happened during a first dance. Back when music still ran on CD, I realised mid-song that the track – *Caledonia* by Dougie MacLean – was corrupted. It cut out at 35 seconds. I had exactly three seconds to find the same track and mix it in cleanly.

I managed it and the couple didn't notice a thing.

One question that comes up more than people might expect is whether to choose a recorded track or a ceilidh dance for the first dance. A recorded song, or even a slow waltz from the band, is safer; something considered and calm before the night opens up. But for a bit more excitement, a ceilidh dance as a first dance can be brilliant.

The only issue is that if the majority of guests don't know the steps, you lose a few minutes teaching it – and with that you lose a little of the momentum. *A Grand March* is even more involved and needs someone on the floor to direct it.

None of this is a rule. It's just worth thinking about what you actually want that moment to feel like, and planning around it."

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STEPPING INTO THE Spotlight

On stage, she was fearless. But in front of family and friends at a wedding? Heart pounding. Felicity Drever of *Learn 2 Wedding Dance* tells Claire Muir how that moment sparked a 20-year career, focused on turning first-dance fear into confidence.



"I was a professional dancer but stepping onto a wedding floor felt completely different," admits Felicity. "Everyone's watching and there's no script." Little did she know, that moment of vulnerability would become her spark. Because if it felt daunting for someone trained to perform, how must it feel for someone who'd never danced at all?

Twenty years later, she's built a business around that exact feeling – and what happens when it shifts.



Word of mouth carried her name across Scotland, alongside wedding fairs, advertising and, eventually, multiple awards. "Couples couldn't believe how much they could learn in such a short space of time," she says.

Although recognition came, growth never meant losing the personal touch. Evenings and weekends were always the busiest, and hiring space proved limiting. So she converted her own living room into a studio – and later expanded into a dedicated dance space. "Larger venues want to cram lots of couples in at once. I wanted to keep it personal."

Felicity says that intimacy is where the magic happens. "One groom swore he'd never dance. His bride told him they were meeting the vicar!" But he stayed, he learned and he later admitted the first dance was his favourite part of the wedding.

It's often the grooms who transform most dramatically. "They shuffle in, shoulders hunched, saying 'I don't dance.' By lesson three, they're leading like they were born for it."

There have been challenges along the way – pregnant brides, couples navigating disability and even a bride losing her sight. For this couple, Felicity held lessons in their actual venue so the bride could learn the space by feel. "If you close your eyes, you can feel your partner's movements more and learn to trust," she adds.

Over Felicity's two decades, the wedding dance scene has evolved. Couples now arrive with YouTube clips and ambitious Instagram lifts, and often, Felicity reality-checks. "Most of those are professionals or have danced their whole lives. And your dress will fight you." The key, she says, is simplicity – forward steps, close feet, no tripping and, if the bustle snaps, you choreograph around it.

For Felicity, a great first dance isn't about perfection. "It's two people who forget the room. Less choreography, more connection. Like dancing in your kitchen at midnight – fun, natural and definitely no Lego hands."

She keeps the business intentionally small, choosing not to use booking apps or waiting lists. "You text me and I text back." She knows their nerves before they walk through the door but always reassures that the magic isn't the steps. "It's you. And no one else can do that."

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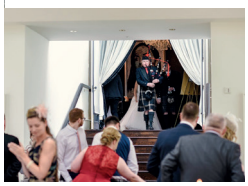
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HAYLEY FRASER PHOTOGRAPHY





Love *on the* Old Course

KLAUDIA SZULC & JIM STEWART

A wedding blending Polish tradition, Irish heritage and a shared love of GOLF.

Klaudia and Jim first met at a golf club in St Andrews in 2016. She worked in the bar while his office was nearby, and they became friends before starting a relationship four years later.

Jim proposed during a winter stay at The Fife Arms in Braemar. After two whiskies at the bar ("very unlike him," Klaudia laughs) they set off for a crisp walk along the River Dee. With the Cairngorms as backdrop, nerves gave way to a ring and a yes. "Jim did an amazing job choosing my ring."



"It felt understated but PERSONAL."

WEDDING DATE:
FRIDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER 2025
VENUE: ST SALVATOR'S CHAPEL, OLD COURSE HOTEL, ST ANDREWS
PHOTOGRAPHY: G VALCOVIAC



THE DECISIONS

Planning began just nine months before the big day, so priorities were clear. The Old Course Hotel was secured first, followed by St Salvator's Chapel. "I think it's the most beautiful venue I've ever seen," Klaudia says.

Both venues are woven into their working lives. Jim hosts golf trips at the Old Course while Klaudia creates bridal make-up looks there. Choosing it felt natural – and the outlook across the course sealed it. "We're both golfers so this view was important to us."

The aesthetic was refined luxury – clean, fresh and minimal. Klaudia created her own faux hydrangea centrepieces, keeping décor simple and white, while her mother-in-law (a retired florist) crafted the fresh bouquets. Her aunt baked intricate cookies inspired by Klaudia's gown and Jim's suit. "It felt understated but personal," she smiles.

She tried 45 dresses before finding the one – a lace design from a boutique near Gdynia, Poland. Fitted, subtly sparkling and romantic, it struck the balance she was searching for. A jewelled belt and veil added extra shimmer, while Jim chose comfort over formality. Ditching the morning suit, he worked with a stylist and opted for a cream textured blazer, a baby-blue satin shirt and turned-up chinos – polished yet true to his everyday style. He carried his great-grandfather's pocket watch, a family heirloom passed down through four generations of 'Jim Stewart'. "It reminds me of the importance of family," Jim explains.

THE DAY

The ceremony in St Salvator's Chapel felt fairytale-like with sunlight pouring through stained glass as Klaudia walked down the aisle to an organist playing the *Wedding March*. "Seeing Klaudia arrive was the best moment of my life," Jim says.

At the Old Course reception, Polish tradition took centre stage with a playful 'blockade' by guests outside. The couple donned aprons, made cakes and 'bribed' the bystanders with gifts before celebrations began properly. Jim surprised everyone by delivering part of his speech in Polish and leading the room in a vodka countdown.

The evening escalated quickly with a first dance to *Only You* by Yazoo (a song that carried them through lockdown), two DJs, Polish disco-polo, 80s music and a dancefloor that barely emptied.


“The most
beautiful VENUE
I’ve ever seen.”





THE REFLECTIONS

Looking back, what stands out is the joy: guests letting go, traditions blending seamlessly, a chapel steeped in history and a ballroom overlooking the Old Course.

Considering couples currently planning, they say: "Make sure you enjoy yourself as you only get one chance. If the preparation is right, everything will run to plan and your guests will be happy."





BEHIND THE DAY

VENUE
ST SALVATOR'S CHAPEL, OLD COURSE HOTEL
VIDEOGRAPHER
AWP PHOTO + FILM
PRIEST
THE REVD GILES DOVE
GROOM
HUGO BOSS
BRIDE'S SHOES
RYLKO
HAIR
MEGAN GARGARO AT SOPHIE BUTLER HAIRDRESSING
MAKE-UP
KLAUDII BEAUTY (THE BRIDE)
CAKE
FISHER & DONALDSON
FAVOURS
THE FROSTING QUEEN CREATIONS
DJS
DJ ADAMO, TARTAN ENTERTAINMENT
RINGS
LAINGS



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"This was a truly special experience for me as Klaudia is my best friend. The Old Course Hotel provided a beautiful backdrop, and the entire celebration felt relaxed, elegant and full of genuine emotion. Days like this are incredibly rewarding. When the people around you feel comfortable and connected, authentic moments unfold effortlessly." ■

GRZEGORZ, G VALCOVIAC

Black tie *Energy*

MICHAELA TEAGUE & CRAIG CULBERTSON

A December wedding where BLACK TIE meets non-stop party energy at Gleneagles.

Michaela and Craig met on Bumble in 2019. Four years later, Craig proposed in the Maldives with a ring designed in Barbados and secretly smuggled home by Michaela's mum – worn on the flight home so it wouldn't be discovered.

From the moment they got engaged, Michaela knew exactly who she wanted involved. The Function Band was booked first. "They played at my brother's wedding and brought the vibe. I knew I wanted them."

THE VISION

Gleneagles had been her dream venue since her teenage years, after watching her cousin marry there. "I just didn't think it would ever be possible," she admits.





WEDDING DATE:
SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2025
VENUE: GLENEAGLES, PERTHSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: RICKY
BAILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY

"We NEVER left each other's side."

The theme was strictly black and white. Sharp, modern and dramatic, it included a black aisle, a black dancefloor and bridesmaids in sleek black dresses designed to be worn again. For the gents, it was midnight shadow tartan kilts and Prince Charlie jackets from Kinloch Anderson – black tie with edge.

Michaela thought she knew exactly what dress she wanted – until she started trying them on. "I found it overwhelming and underwhelming at the same time."

Then she stepped into Sophia Grace Couture and remembers knowing which dress was right as soon as she put it on. Alterations by Cat Garforth brought her vision fully to life. "It was the best feeling trying it on once it was complete," she smiles.

Craig's look was kept secret. When Michaela walked down the aisle to *Stargazing* by Myles Smith, she saw Craig, their son Alfie and the groomsmen all in midnight tartan for the first time. "That moment was magic."



THE DAY

The morning – Champagne, hair and make-up with her bridesmaids – was one of Michaela's favourite parts of the day. Craig spent this time with Alfie and the groomsmen "trying to calm down".

Their celebrant, Andrew Scott, delivered a ceremony that balanced humour and heart. They drank from the quaich, shared a symbolic final kiss with their mums (the women who first kissed them) and had their dads as witnesses.

By 3pm, the conga line had already begun. "It was a non-stop party from the minute guests arrived the day before until the last person went to bed," Michaela laughs.

Cole Page performed at the drinks reception and guests were dancing long before dinner was served. "People told us they forgot they hadn't even eaten yet." After speeches that were hilarious yet heartfelt, including one from the maid of honour, they took to the floor for *Tennessee Whiskey*, a song they had chosen years earlier.

Craig's favourite moment was sitting at their sweetheart table on stage, looking out at a room filled with everyone they love. And Michaela loved standing on the podium with The Function Band, singing *Stargazing* as the entire room sang it back. "At some points it felt like we were the only two in the room," Craig says. "We never left each other's side."

THE REFLECTIONS

Putting it all together was nerve-wracking but seeing it unfold made every bit of stress worth it.

The newlyweds would tell other couples to take their time and ignore the TikTok pressure – because "the small details won't matter nearly as much as the feeling in the room."

"All that matters is having your favourite people in one place, having the best time," adds Michaela.





"It was a non-stop PARTY."





BEHIND THE DAY

BAND
THE FUNCTION BAND
BRIDESMAIDS
CLUB L LONDON
CELEBRANT
ANDREW D SCOTT
DÉCOR & FLOWERS
JORDANA EVENTS
DRESS
ENZOANI FROM SOPHIA GRACE COUTURE
HAIR
LAIRD & CO
KILTS
KINLOCH ANDERSON
MAKEUP
EVE LEARMOUTH MAKE-UP ARTIST
MUSICIAN
COLE PAGE
RINGS
LAINGS, ROX
SHOES
JIMMY CHOO
VEIL
CATRIONA GARFORTH BRIDAL
VENUE
GLENEAGLES, PERTHSHIRE
VIDEOGRAPHER
TLC MEDIA



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"This wedding was all about timeless elegance. The grandeur of the ballroom set the tone for a magical ceremony and an exquisite, candlelit dining experience. Photographing weddings at Gleneagles is always such a privilege to be a part of."

RICKY, RICKY BAILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY



WEDDING DATE:
SATURDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2025
VENUE: DUMFRIES HOUSE, AYRSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: BODA PHOTOGRAPHY

Where it all *Began*

NICOLE MCMAHON & DEREK LESKE

Nicole and Derek married EXACTLY two years after their FIRST date, on HOME soil.

Nicole and Derek met the modern way, through an online dating app, but their love story quickly became anything but ordinary. One year in, Derek proposed at the summit of Ben More on the Isle of Mull, carrying the ring in his rucksack for days before the moment felt right.

With blue skies stretching across the Inner Hebrides, Nicole suggested filming at the summit – unknowingly capturing the proposal itself. "We floated back down the mountain," she smiles.

THE DECISIONS

Although they met later in life, Ayrshire had always been home. Dumfries House sits just ten minutes from both of their family homes so it's central, familiar and full of memory. Nicole had planted





trees on the estate as a child through a local initiative and it was where Derek's parents first met her over afternoon tea. It felt like the natural venue choice.

They didn't set a rigid theme. Instead, they leaned into Scotland, incorporating tartan tones, natural textures and sustainability wherever possible. Many suppliers were local; many details were handmade. Their tables were named after the first Munros they climbed together, with Ben More (the proposal mountain) as the top table.

Family was woven into everything. Their mothers made the cake and favours, while Nicole's nanny gifted them an inscribed quaich. It was filled during the ceremony with the same whisky they'd shared on Mull.

Nicole wore two repurposed dresses from Bliss Studio in Edinburgh, drawn to the idea of giving something beautiful a second life. "I'm not very fashion-minded, so finding something that felt like me was everything." Adding a little sentiment, her mum gifted her Gran Ena's engagement band to wear on the day.

Derek chose a soft sage-green kilt (a nod to countryside roots and natural tones) while his groomsmen wore grey tartan for contrast. And the bridesmaids wore elegant Ghost dresses in keeping with the woodland setting – classic but comfortable enough for reeling later on.

THE DAY

Storm Amy threatened the weekend, bringing torrential rain right up until the ceremony – then clearing, almost miraculously, for sunshine afterwards.

Nicole entered to *Canon in D*, performed by a string quartet. Their celebrant, Laura MacKenzie, told their story in a ceremony that felt grounded and personal. Family tartan ribbons were used for the handfasting and they shared a quaich filled with Mull whisky. "There wasn't a dry eye," they remember.

Traditional fiddle music was played during dinner, a nod to the countless weekends they'd spent walking Munros and exploring the Hebrides together. Later, ceilidh dancing pulled nearly every guest to the floor. "It was complete and utter joy," says Nicole.

One particularly special detail: Derek's brother (and best man) stopped a watch at the exact moment they said 'I do' – a time marked forever.

> "It was complete and utter JOY. It was more than we could have imagined."

THE REFLECTIONS

Looking back, what stands out most is the sight of almost every guest joining the ceilidh; generations whirling together. And, despite Storm Amy's best efforts, the weather became part of the memory rather than the problem. "Enjoy the things you can't control," they advise.

Their biggest takeaway was to stay rooted – don't follow trends and don't plan for anyone else. Trust your intuition as a couple and build a day around what you genuinely love, whether that's Munros, whisky, fiddle music, sustainable choices – or all of the above.

"Scotland has everything," adds Nicole. "Nature, community and history. We just leaned into that."




“Finding something that felt like ME was everything.”





BEHIND THE DAY

BAND
LITTLE RED
BRIDESMAIDS
GHOST
CELEBRANT
LAURA MACKENZIE
DRESSES
BLISS STUDIO
FLOWERS
JG FLOWERS
HAIR
UKIYO HAIR
KILTS
KILTS 4 U
MAKEUP
MAKEMEUP BY CLAIRE
MUSICIANS
ROSEWOOD STRINGS, RYAN YOUNG
PHOTOGRAPHER
BODA PHOTOGRAPHY
PIPER
BRYCE MACDONALD
RINGS
MR HAROLD & SON
VENUE
DUMFRIES HOUSE
VIDEOGRAPHER
MICHAEL WESTCOTT FILMS



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"I'd met Nicole and Derek at another wedding, so it felt like I was photographing good friends. The venue was the perfect match for them – elegant, romantic and effortlessly timeless. Everything just flowed and it felt especially personal to me."

SARAH, BODA PHOTOGRAPHY

Barefoot Vows

JESSICA COLAIANNI & LUKASZ RAMOWSKI

They chose SEA AIR over seating plans and PRIVACY over tradition on a secluded Scottish shoreline.

In May 2019, Jessica's landlord asked her to show a spare room to a prospective tenant.

It was a Friday, she had a train to catch and she wasn't in the mood. "I was so annoyed," she laughs.

The late arrival in a checkered shirt, inspecting door handles and wardrobe hinges, was Lukasz. Jessica remembers "thinking he was a bit weird." He moved in the following week and friendship followed – PlayStation marathons, cherry vodka, shared chocolate and long conversations.

"What I loved most was the friendship. I could be 100% myself." One night felt different, though, and led to their first date – and one of the best kisses of Jessica's life.

Six and a half years later (after a Paris proposal that fulfilled Jessica's childhood dream) they chose to marry in a way that felt authentic and intentional.



WEDDING DATE:
FRIDAY 15TH AUGUST 2025
VENUE: ST CYRUS BEACH, ABERDEENSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: LAURA ANNE PHOTOGRAPHY







"We did it EXACTLY how we wanted."

THE DECISIONS

"We wanted it to be just us, real nature and our full attention on each other," Jessica explains. St Cyrus Beach had exactly what they were looking for – space, privacy and sea air. They didn't book far in advance; once they found the spot, they chose the date.

There was no theme, no colour palette and no elaborate styling. Instead, they created a picnic to share after the ceremony, which featured a heart-shaped basket they still use today, charity shop vases filled with white flowers and a supermarket cake topped with a simple 'Just Married' sign. "It turned into the best picnic ever and now everything we bought holds even more meaning."

One coincidence felt too good to be true – a bottle of Champagne they'd been gifted when they got engaged sat waiting for a year, only for them to realise it read 'Cyrus' on the label. The same name as the beach they'd chosen.



"Real nature and JUST us."





Jessica and Lukasz's trio of suppliers became more than a photographer, videographer and registrar – Laura, Larissa and Debbie not only helped carry everything down to the sand but were also their official witnesses.

THE DAY

They woke early, peaceful yet nervous, and the dolphins that appeared offshore felt like a sign. “Such a special moment,” remembers Jessica.

They got ready together in the same space. Lukasz helped with Jessica’s hairpins so her curls could fall naturally, then zipped her dress before they walked barefoot down to the beach – they hadn’t even eaten breakfast!

At 10am, with only the sound of waves around them, they exchanged private vows while holding a Celtic knot. There was light drizzle, barely any wind and no one else in sight. “It felt as if everything else stopped,” Jessica explains. “Time both flew and stood still.”

Afterwards, they went to a local pub for food and drinks, strangers cheering as they walked in.

THE REFLECTIONS

Looking back, what stays with them isn’t a single detail but the feeling. “We did it exactly how we wanted and we were 100% happy.”

Nothing about the day felt ordinary. From dolphins at dawn to the personal vows, it was intimate in a way that would have been impossible in a crowded room. Their advice to other couples is simple: “Follow your own flow. Do what you want, not what others expect because what truly matters is you – and the memories you'll carry forever."







BEHIND THE DAY

ACCESSORIES
ASOS
DRESS
JJ'S HOUSE
FLOWERS
FLOWERS BY FIONA
REGISTRAR
DEBBIE CRICHTON
RINGS
DIAMOND PALACE JEWELLERS
SUIT AND SHIRT
HUGO BOSS
VENUE
ST CYRUS BEACH, ABERDEENSHIRE
VIDEOGRAPHER
LK PHOTO & VIDEO



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"As a photographer used to large, fast-paced weddings, this elopement was a breath of fresh air. Jessica and Lukasz got ready together — we'd planned a first look but quickly realised the most beautiful moments happen naturally, so we let them unfold. When they read their vows, there wasn't another soul on the beach. We captured it from a distance, waves crashing so loudly we couldn't hear a word. It wasn't until I looked back at the photographs that I could see the emotion in their faces. An absolute privilege — we were their witnesses too." ■

LAURA, LAURA ANNE PHOTOGRAPHY



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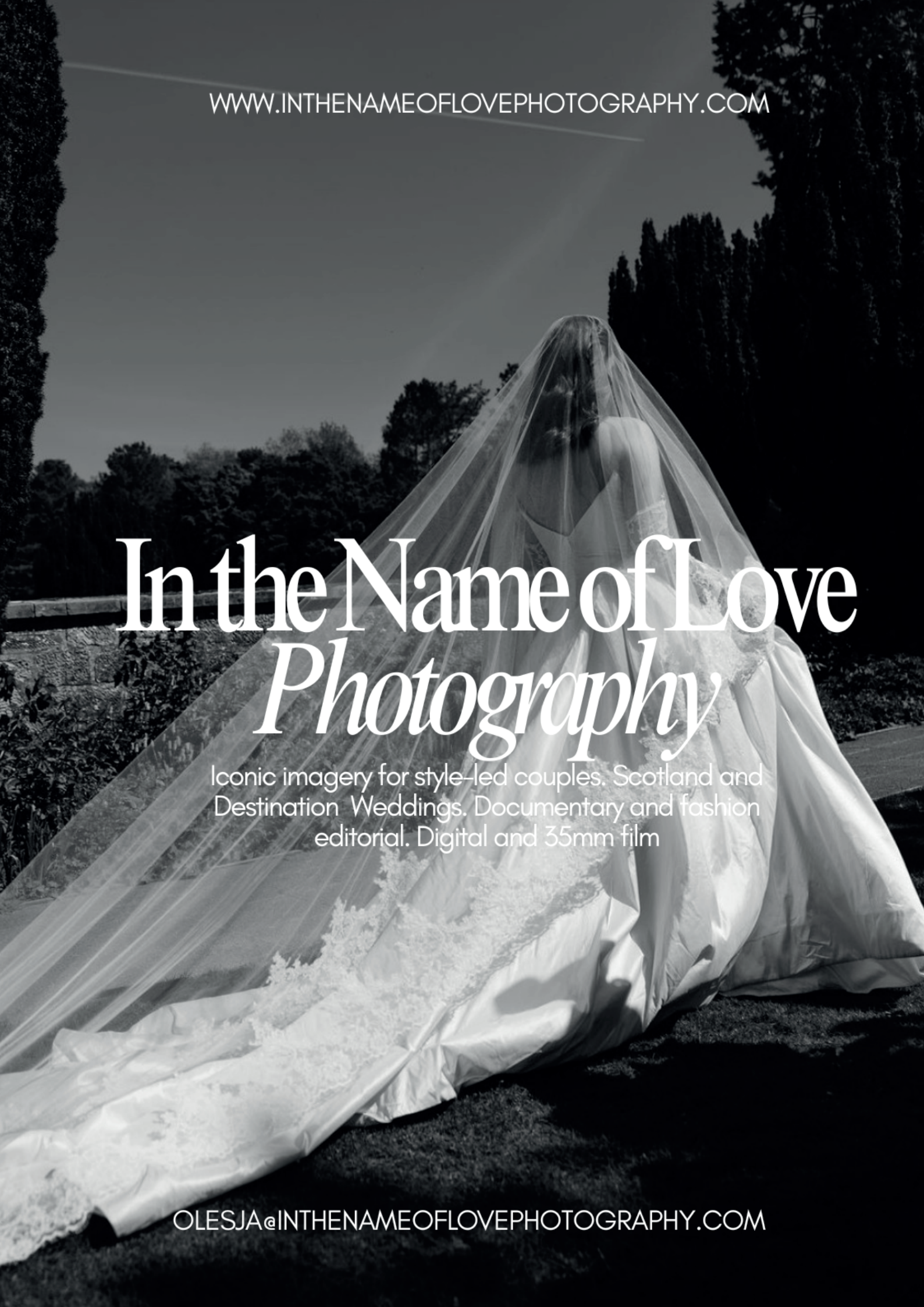




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HAYLEY FRASER PHOTOGRAPHY

What You Don't See

The highlights reel is the easy part – here's what's actually happening behind the lens.

The groom was sitting on the hard shoulder of the motorway. He'd forgotten his kilt jacket and was now weighing up whether to turn back and get it or continue to the venue and borrow one from the wedding party. He sat there long enough that going back would have been quicker.

Back at the venue, nobody knew any of this. Allan of Biggar Picture Photography and the celebrant exchanged a look and made a decision – stall.

What followed was, in Allan's words, "the longest pre-wedding portrait session ever." The bride went along with it, reassured about timings, kept calm and – crucially – in the dark about the situation unfolding on the motorway.

The jacket made it, the couple got married and the photographs looked exactly as they should. This is the part of wedding photography that doesn't make it into the gallery.

"When couples book us they're not just booking the photographer," says Hayley of Hayley Fraser Photography. "They're booking our 12 years of experience in the industry." That experience covers a lot of ground, from weather shifts and dress malfunctions to timelines that need rebuilding on the fly.

The job, as both Hayley and Allan describe it, is as much about managing the day as it is about capturing it.

The work that happens away from the wedding is, if anything, the greater share. "The work doesn't finish when we leave the wedding," Allan explains. He's talking about the initial download of the day's images, the upload to a backup hard drive, the cloud upload, then the editing suite and the first run through to get sneak peeks to the couple.

Balancing editing hours with couples' availability, pre-wedding shoots and planning meetings means "essentially a job with very unsociable hours." With two children and a wife who works in hospitality, it's a real juggle for Allan – but getting the photographs to couples on time remains the priority above everything else.

Hayley agrees that "lots of things go beyond the actual day," and highlights admin and running the business as a time-suck. "Even scheduling social media posts is a job in itself."

To make sure her couples' experience runs smoothly, she shares tips once they book – practical things that make a difference on the day and factors they often haven't considered. Timelines are the big one. If there's travel between ceremony and reception, it needs to be factored in properly, for example.

"It's never nice for couples to feel rushed," she says. The goal is always to make sure they have space to actually enjoy the day with their guests rather than being chased from one location to the next.

What both photographers describe, in different ways, is a job that requires being present for every moment – while cleverly thinking several steps ahead. Your photographer will be reading the room, reading the light, reading the timeline – and occasionally reading a groom's face when he realises his jacket is still at home.

The best wedding photographs look effortless, and that's the whole point.



HAYLEY FRASER, CAPTURED BY TJ CHRISTIE PHOTOGRAPHY

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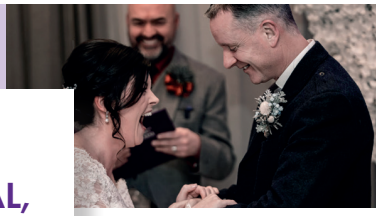
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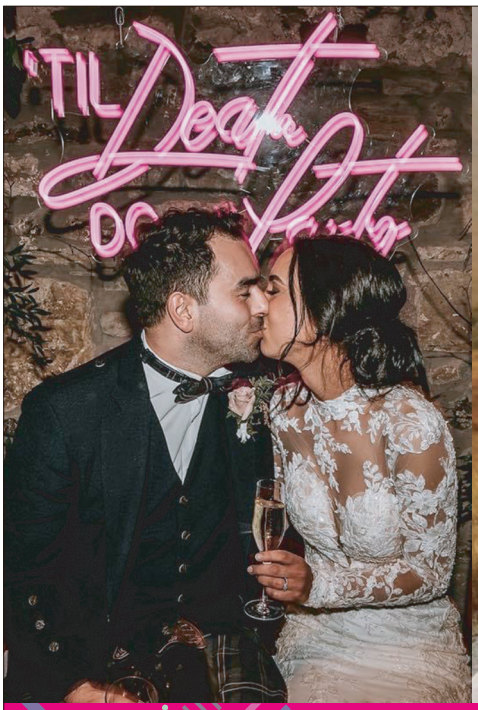
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At NOVU Weddings & Events, we believe that a wedding should feel as effortless as it is unforgettable — a true reflection of who you are, set against some of the most extraordinary backdrops Scotland has to offer.

Founded by Jamie Neil, NOVU was created with a clear vision: to design and deliver weddings with style, soul, and substance. With over a decade of experience in the industry, Jamie brings a calm, considered approach to planning, paired with a deep understanding of what it takes to create a seamless and elevated guest experience.

Specialising in destination weddings in Scotland, NOVU works with couples from across the globe who are drawn to the country's wild beauty, rich heritage, and romantic sense of place. From the dramatic landscapes of the Highlands and the Isle of Skye to the timeless elegance of Edinburgh's historic venues, Scotland offers a setting unlike anywhere else in the world — and NOVU ensures every celebration feels both deeply personal and effortlessly refined within it.

What truly sets NOVU apart is its highly tailored approach. Every wedding begins with a story — your story — and from there, each detail is thoughtfully curated to reflect your vision. Whether it's an intimate elopement on a secluded clifftop or a multi-day celebration within a private castle estate, NOVU works closely with a trusted network of Scotland's finest creatives to bring each moment to life with intention and artistry.













With a focus on full-service planning, NOVU supports clients through every stage of the journey. From venue sourcing and design concept creation to logistics, supplier management, and on-the-day execution, every element is handled with precision and care. For destination couples in particular, this level of support is invaluable, offering not only expert guidance but complete peace of mind from afar.

NOVU is known for its editorial aesthetic and modern, design-led approach. Drawing inspiration from Scotland's natural textures, seasonal palettes, and architectural beauty, each celebration is crafted to feel immersive and cohesive — where every detail, from tablescapes to lighting, contributes to a larger story.

Beyond the visual, NOVU places equal importance on how a wedding feels. The atmosphere, the flow of the day, and the experience of every guest are all carefully considered, ensuring that each celebration is not only beautiful, but deeply meaningful and memorable.

As destination weddings continue to grow in popularity, NOVU stands at the forefront of this movement, offering couples a truly bespoke planning experience in one of the world's most captivating destinations.

For those seeking a wedding that is thoughtfully designed, seamlessly executed, and entirely their own, NOVU offers a refined and personal approach — creating celebrations that linger long after the final toast.



CAROLINE BICKERSTAFF WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Turning Wedding Visions into Unforgettable Experiences



CAROLINE BICKERSTAFF | LINDSAY STOCKLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

At the heart of every unforgettable wedding is a story – and for Caroline Bickerstaff, lead planner and creative force behind Caroline Bickerstaff Weddings & Events, that story is always at the centre of everything she creates.

Known for her calm approach, meticulous attention to detail, and effortlessly elegant style, Caroline has built a reputation for planning and designing weddings that feel deeply personal, beautifully curated, and completely unique.

Formerly known as The Creative Occasion Co., the business has recently rebranded to Caroline Bickerstaff Weddings & Events – an evolution that places Caroline herself firmly at the centre of the brand. While the name has changed, her ethos remains the same: to deliver exceptional, highly tailored weddings rooted in connection, creativity and trust.

Based in Scotland and working across the UK, Caroline has become particularly known for her expertise in destination weddings in Scotland. From romantic countryside escapes to iconic castle celebrations, she works with couples from across the globe who are drawn to Scotland's dramatic landscapes and timeless charm. Whether it's an intimate elopement in the Highlands or a multi-day celebration in a historic castle, Caroline brings each vision to life with care, precision and effortless style.

"My promise is to guide you with care, creativity, and precision - helping you discover what matters most, and then bringing it all to life in a way that exceeds your expectations," she explains.

Caroline offers a range of services designed to support couples at every stage of their planning journey. From full wedding planning and design, where every detail is managed from concept to completion, to partial planning for those who have already begun the process but need expert guidance. Her on-the-day coordination service ensures everything runs seamlessly, while her elopement packages cater to couples seeking something more intimate and personal. For those simply needing clarity or direction, her Planning Power Hour provides focused, expert advice in a short, impactful session.



MADHOUSE WEDDINGS



But why hire a wedding planner? For Caroline, the answer is simple. It's about saving time, reducing stress and ultimately creating a better experience. With years of industry knowledge and a trusted network of suppliers, she is able to streamline the planning process, often saving couples both time and money while elevating the overall result. More importantly, she offers peace of mind - ensuring that every detail is considered and expertly managed.

"For me, planning and designing weddings is deeply personal," Caroline shares. "I pour my heart and soul into every celebration, crafting unique, heartfelt experiences that tell each couple's story. I take time to truly get to know you—your style, your quirks, your love story – and use that as inspiration to design a wedding that feels unmistakably you."

This level of care and connection is something her clients consistently highlight. One couple reflects, "I naively thought I could manage the planning and on-the-day coordination of our wedding without support – and how wrong I was. Luckily this is where Caroline stepped in and from the first moment we spoke, I had a massive sense of relief."

Another shares, "Caroline was definitely the one detail of our day we never thought we needed, but if we were to do it again, she would be the first person we'd book. We enjoyed every step of the way working with her and can't thank her enough for the effort she put in to make our day so special."

Her creativity and industry connections are also frequently praised. "Caroline's creativity is truly unparalleled. She introduced us to unique ideas and outstanding vendor contacts that we would never have considered on our own."

Caroline's work is defined by a balance of creativity and organisation – where beautiful design meets seamless execution. From sourcing exceptional suppliers to managing timelines and logistics, she ensures every element comes together effortlessly, allowing couples to fully immerse themselves in the joy of their wedding day.

"I absolutely adore what I do and feel very privileged to spend my days meeting incredible couples from all over the world and creating unforgettable celebrations that reflect their love stories perfectly," she says. "There's nothing more rewarding than seeing the joy and emotion on my couples' faces when it all comes together."

With a growing reputation across Scotland and beyond, Caroline Bickerstaff Weddings & Events continues to redefine what it means to plan a wedding – offering not just a service, but a truly personal and collaborative experience.

For couples dreaming of a wedding that is as unique as their story – whether in a Scottish castle, a hidden Highland setting or further afield - Caroline brings vision, expertise and heart to every celebration she creates.

Caroline Bickerstaff
07889001512
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RACHAEL FRIEND PHOTOGRAPHY

Far *from* Home

The couples who went abroad, the one who didn't, and the suppliers who've seen it all. Here's what they actually think.

There's a moment, early in most wedding plans, when someone says it out loud: "What if we just went abroad?" Sometimes it's a joke, and sometimes it's the first genuinely exciting idea in months. And sometimes, as the couples in this feature discovered, it's the beginning of something that shapes the way you think about what the day is actually for.

Destination weddings have shifted. They're no longer shorthand for barefoot ceremonies on hired beaches. Now, couples are choosing places that mean something – the Italian town they fell for on holiday or the island they've always wanted to share with the people they love most. They're building celebrations that last days, not hours. And they're making decisions that, one way or another, tell you a lot about who they are.

This isn't a guide to going abroad. It's an honest look at what it's really like from the couples mid-plan and the ones already home, to the suppliers who've seen it all from the other side.

CHLOE AND THOMAS – PLANNING THEIR WEDDING IN SORRENTO, ITALY

Chloe works in the wedding industry and has been to most venues in Scotland. So, when she and Thomas got engaged after 12 years together, a wedding at home was never really on the table. "We always said when the time came, it would be abroad," she says. The destination, though, took care of itself. In 2022, they went to Sorrento for a holiday and on day one, they knew.

The planning has been easier than many might expect, partly because of the venue and partly because of Chloe's own temperament. Italian wedding planning, she's found, runs on a different timeline to Scotland. Venues here often ask for decisions two or three years out. In Italy, details like décor and menus come together in the months before. For a self-described relaxed bride, it suits her well.

"What will be will be," she says. "I think if you're a type A personality, putting your full trust into someone else from a distance is probably hard. But for me it's been smooth sailing."

There have been occasional language barriers but the venue has been, in her words, amazing. And the bigger picture (the one she comes back to when people ask why abroad, why Sorrento, why not just pick somewhere closer?) is clearer than any logistical concern: "I think it really shows you who's there for you. I'd move heaven and earth for the people I love. And I know they feel the same."

She's most looking forward to the morning with her girls and her glam team, then walking down the aisle with her dad as Thomas watches on. And, later, showing everyone they love their favourite little corner of Italy.

Her advice to other couples is the same philosophy applied practically – do one thing for the wedding a week. If something causes you stress, let it go. And whatever you do, don't compromise on your photographer. "It's the one thing you can't redo. Don't let anything stop you from getting the person you want."

ROMY AND STEWART MARRIED IN NAXOS, GREECE, IN SEPTEMBER 2025

Romy knew her wedding day would fly by but it still caught her out. "People always say the day is a blur and it really



DEMETRIOS



> "The greatest week of our lives." – Romy

was," she explains. "I'd absolutely love to go back and relive every moment."

Romy and Stewart always wanted an abroad wedding – the combination of celebration and holiday, of gathering their closest people somewhere worth travelling to. Looking back, neither would change a thing. But the moment that confirmed it wasn't the ceremony itself. It was the week around it.

They'd organised a sunset dinner for everyone in the days before the wedding and it ended, as the best nights tend to, with people dancing on tables at a bar. "It was such a great night – and was exactly why we wanted to have an abroad wedding," Romy smiles.

Destination weddings offer something that a single day at home rarely can – time. There's less of the rushed, slightly anxious time of a wedding morning and more actual, stretched-out time with the people you love most, somewhere that feels like a gift to everyone who made the trip.

"It was the perfect balance of socialising and down time," she says. "The greatest week of our lives."

THE COUPLE WHO CONSIDERED A DESTINATION WEDDING AND CHOSE NOT TO

The original appeal of a destination wedding was partly practical for this bride. She and her partner wanted a small ceremony (immediate family only) and going abroad felt like the cleanest way to manage that without anyone feeling left out.

They also liked the idea of more time together with the people closest to them; somewhere worth the trip. And they'd been told it could work out cheaper. It made sense – on paper. But then came the engagement party. "It was so special and we had the best time with our friends. Suddenly we couldn't imagine not having them there."

When they'd floated the idea of going abroad to their closest friends, nobody said anything difficult – but she could tell. When they announced they'd changed their minds, the response was immediate. "They were so overjoyed. It just reassured us completely."

There were practical considerations too. Their first choice destination didn't allow legal marriages, which would have meant a separate ceremony at home regardless. Many packages abroad offered little room for personalisation and work schedules made the required lead times complicated – it all added up. "We still looked into it but it got complicated quickly."

She's clear this isn't a warning, it's just what was right for them. Her advice to couples weighing the same decision is simple – research both options properly, don't let other people's preferences drown out your own, and trust what you and your partner actually want.

"You'll know between yourselves," she says. "That's all you need to focus on."

RONI HYSLOP, ALL WRAPPED UP SCOTLAND

"We've been helping couples get married in Scotland from overseas for nearly 20 years and one thing remains constant – the legal paperwork. Make time to deal with it. My other advice is to think like a guest. Consider the time of year, the location and what you're asking people to spend. Being a wedding guest can be expensive before you factor in flights and hotels.

We have fond memories of all our weddings but one of our favourites has nothing to do with paperwork or logistics. In 2016, we helped plan a surprise wedding for Cecelie and Marc, based in Denmark. They invited 15 friends to pack a suitcase, bring their passports and meet them at Copenhagen Airport. That was all anyone knew. At the gate, Marc handed each of them a ticket to Edinburgh (and the men a package containing a kilt, shirt and bowtie).

On the wedding morning, a minibus took them to the harbour at South Queensferry. Eight Danes in matching kilts stepped off the bus followed by their partners, where a piper greeted them. They sailed to Inchcolm Island where the ceremony took place in the ruined abbey."

JAMES, DEMETRIOS

"When choosing a gown for a destination wedding, let the setting lead the decision. Climate, location and atmosphere all influence how a dress looks and feels. Something light and effortless works beautifully for a beach; something more structured suits a city or villa.

Comfort is equally important. You'll be moving throughout the day and need fabrics and construction that adapt to different conditions. Think practically about every detail, including how your gown travels. It needs to arrive in perfect condition. The goal is a look that feels true to you and complements the destination beautifully."

LEIGH, MAKEUP BY LEIGH BLANEY

"My advice is consistent – take your glam team with you if you can. There's no language barrier, no issues with having a trial before the day and sometimes a real difference in products and application style. Taking your home team means you know exactly what you're going to look like and how confident you'll feel.

For those booking locally or doing their own makeup abroad, preparation is everything. Products that work in Scotland don't always perform the same way in heat and humidity. Build up light layers, keep a personalised top-up kit close and – if you're doing your own – book a private lesson before you travel. You'll arrive knowing exactly what you need and how to achieve it.

One of my brides, Ellis Munro, invited me to join her in Spain after her intimate family celebration at home. The whole friendship group was there – six of them, all women I'd worked with over the years. I've been through all their special days, seen them grow and become mums. They were so excited to have me there. I had a queue!"

KIRSTY, KIRSTY MACPHERSON HAIR AND MAKEUP ARTIST

"I worked on a wedding in Chianti, Tuscany, in a converted village surrounded by vineyards. Many warmer climate weddings start at 4pm or 5pm to avoid the worst of the heat, and the light at that point is something else. When my bride walked out onto the veranda, I watched the sunlight catch her dress as she moved. That will stay with me.

For brides booking a hairdresser abroad, look carefully at their portfolio and show them clear reference images because language barriers work both ways. A trial at home before you travel means you arrive knowing exactly what you want and can communicate it clearly.

If humidity is a concern (and in most destination wedding locations, it will be) prep your hair with an anti-frizz product before styling. I'd recommend Moroccanoil Frizz Shield Spray, blow-dried in, particularly for wavy or curly hair. It won't eliminate humidity entirely but it buys you time."

METTE, FREJA DESIGNER DRESSMAKING

"I once watched a bride walk across a Caribbean beach in a corseted dress with a long train and heels. The train pulled through the sand and the heels sank. It was a beautiful dress in the wrong place.

"You are, after all, the bride." – Trina

So, my advice for any destination bride is to embrace the environment. A light and floaty silk, chiffon or linen dress with bare feet on sand, for example. The same applies in the Scottish outdoors – suitable footwear and a cover-up built into the outfit from the start. You'll look better and you'll have a much better time.

Start by understanding how you want to feel on the day and what atmosphere you're creating. Get that right and the dress follows."

TRINA, BABA-C DESIGNS

"Don't limit your accessories because you're travelling. If you want drama in your accessories, there are ways to do it. If you want something understated, that can be equally striking.

Practically speaking, combs and pins travel well, take up minimal space and can be worn different ways if plans change on the day. Veils can be stored with the gown, removing the need for extra luggage.

And clear reference photos are worth more than any written description when working with an unfamiliar hairdresser. Show them exactly what you want and where you want it placed. You are, after all, the bride."



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ROMY AND STEWART | RICKY BAILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY



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From clifftop castles to converted warehouses, Scotland's venues don't need much persuasion – the hard part is choosing. Here's where to start...



GLENEAGLES / RICKY BAILLIE PHOTOGRAPHY

THE VENUE EDIT

STANDOUT SPACES SHAPING SCOTLAND'S WEDDING SCENE



A NEW LOOK FOR AN ICON

As Boclair House approaches its 10-year anniversary, the hotel is unveiling a refreshed ballroom for 2026. Expect a new neutral palette of cream and champagne tones, updated carpeting, chairs, wall lighting and soft draping between the bar and main space – all designed to create an elegant, versatile backdrop for every style of décor.

boclairhousehotel.co.uk



RACHEL & TONIE PHOTOGRAPHY

THREE DAYS AT CAMBO

Cambo Estate has launched two new wedding packages, both based on three nights' exclusive hire of this historic Fife estate. The Classic package (from £5,000) gives access to the courtyards, Old Laundry, Old Kitchen, Boudoir, Baronet's Club, Party Woodland and Top Lawn. The Grand, from £16,000, adds the family rooms (entrance hall, grand staircase, dining room, drawing room and library) for couples wanting the full house. Both include tables and chairs for up to 120 guests, lighting, heating and an on-the-day coordinator. House accommodation is priced separately. **camboestate.com**





NEW LOOK, SAME SEA VIEW

Seamill Hydro in Ayrshire has unveiled two new spaces. Tides is a reimagined coastal restaurant seating up to 180 while Sirens is a Champagne and cocktail lounge. Both open onto panoramic Firth of Clyde views and follow recent investment that includes a new wedding extension and health club. The kind of additions that make a venue worth revisiting...

seamillhydro.co.uk

A ROOM WITH A STORY

Òran Mór in Glasgow has unveiled The Beattie and MacLennan, a newly renovated private dining room named after Colin Beattie, founder of Òran Mór, and David MacLennan, founder of A Play, a Pie and a Pint. Tucked behind private doors off the main bar, it seats up to 30 for an intimate wedding, and comes dressed with chandeliers, candlesticks, foliage, candelabras and a stained glass window.

oran-mor.co.uk





DANIEL MCAVOY PHOTOGRAPHY



WINTER AT WINTON

Winton Castle in East Lothian has launched its 2027 winter wedding packages, available January to March. Exclusive hire of the 500-year-old castle includes seven interconnected reception rooms, overnight accommodation for up to 20 guests across 10 bedrooms, open fires, fire pits, ceremony, reception drinks and canapés, a three-course wedding breakfast and evening buffet. Intimate packages for 30 guests start from £12,400 for one night; classic packages for up to 80 guests from £18,000. Two-night options (including a rehearsal dinner the evening before) are also available.

wintoncastle.co.uk

COLIN ROSS PHOTOGRAPHY



JANUARY JUST GOT INTERESTING

Unusual Venues of Edinburgh – The Caves, The Rowantree and Marlin's Wynd – is offering remaining January 2027 dates with no venue hire fee. Three of the city's most atmospheric underground spaces, available at a rare discount. Worth moving quickly.

unusualvenuesedinburgh.com





A STAY UNLIKE ANYTHING ELSE

Eden Leisure Village near Cumbernauld has added two Vessel Pods to its accommodation, a design-led concept said to be the first of its kind at any UK wedding venue. Each pod sleeps two and comes with en suite facilities, an outdoor kitchen and bar, a fire pit and a cinema screen projector, from £250 per night. Open to Eden couples and those marrying elsewhere, they're designed as a private retreat before or after the wedding – a venue that keeps giving after the celebration ends.

edenleisurevillage.co.uk



Based in Newtonmore, The Lunchbox Boys—recent winners of Your Scottish Wedding Awards Caterers of the Year—have built a strong reputation for locally sourced food and exceptional service across Scotland. Their friendly, dynamic approach makes them one of the country's most in-demand caterers, delivering over 100 weddings each year. Check out their socials and reviews to find out more.



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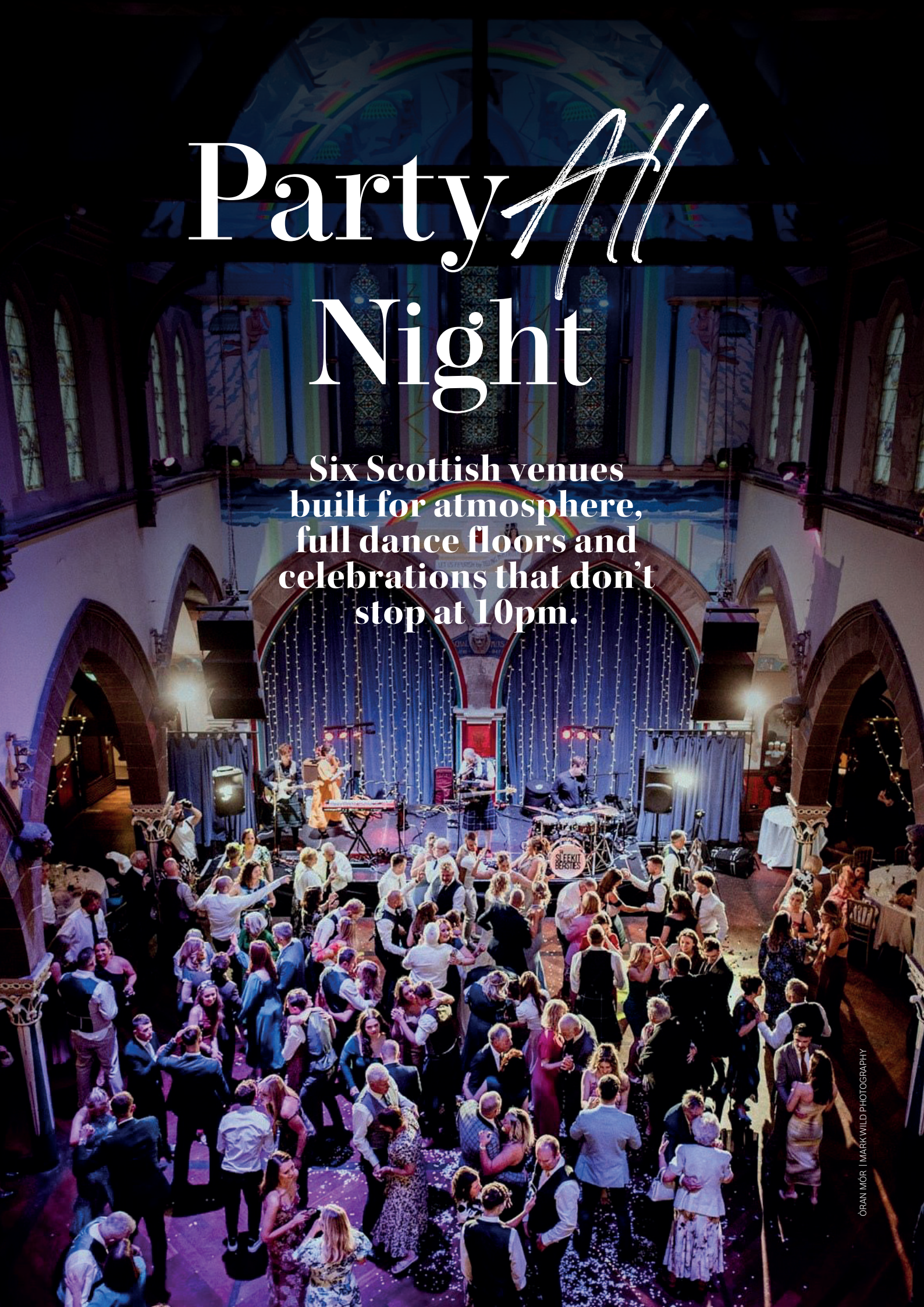
nts.org.uk/weddings

NATIONAL TRUST *for* SCOTLAND

The National Trust for Scotland is a Scottish charity, SC007410

Party All Night

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ÒRAN MÒR | MARK WILD PHOTOGRAPHY

ÒRAN MÓR | WEST END, GLASGOW

If the priority is a party that genuinely goes the distance, Òran Mór is difficult to argue with. The Auditorium (a converted church with a giant dance floor and a full in-house sound system with no limiter) holds 200 for dinner and stays open until 2am. There are bars across four levels, a confetti cannon launched from the gallery, a big stage for live entertainment and an in-house nightclub – open 'til 4am – for when the Auditorium finally winds down. For couples whose wedding day ends somewhere around sunrise, this is the one. **oran-mor.co.uk**

MAR HALL BISHOPTON | GLASGOW

Some venues feel like a party waiting to happen and Mar Hall, set within 240 acres of private parkland overlooking the River Clyde, has that quality. The grand country estate is close to Glasgow yet far enough away to feel like a proper escape. The recently refurbished hotel offers flexible spaces for intimate celebrations and larger gatherings of up to 150 – as well as after parties and next-day celebrations. With 74 bedrooms (and discounted wedding accommodation rates) plus an on-site spa, golf and a dedicated events team, Mar Hall has everything you need for a legendary wedding weekend. **marhall.com**

VIRGIN HOTELS EDINBURGH OLD TOWN | EDINBURGH

If your wedding vision involves a packed dance floor, flowing cocktails and a crowd that isn't ready to call it quits, Virgin Hotels Edinburgh is built for it. The hotel blends dramatic heritage architecture with Virgin's signature nightlife-ready style – and the centrepiece is Greyfriars Hall, a former 19th-century church with soaring vaulted ceilings and a sound system designed for live bands and DJs. By day it creates a soft, romantic ceremony backdrop; by night the adjustable uplighting shifts to full colour washes and the dance floor takes over. With 222 chambers and suites, a rooftop terrace overlooking the Old Town, the Scarlet Lounge and the Commons Club bar, the hotel is a full-scale party space. **virginhotels.com/edinburgh**

NORTON HOUSE HOTEL & SPA | EDINBURGH

Celebrations at Norton House are designed with a party in mind, keeping everything moving without anyone noticing the mechanics behind it. Set within the main house, the Usher Suite holds 140 guests during the day then transforms from romantic ceremony to high energy, welcoming up to



VIRGIN HOTELS EDINBURGH | NATALIE HOLT PHOTOGRAPHY


THE CAVES | FLAWLESS PHOTOGRAPHY


NORTON HOUSE HOTEL & SPA | CAMERON [illegible]GRAPHY

200 for the evening celebration. The fact it's connected to the Oak Room Bar means energy doesn't leak out when your guests go to refresh their drinks. Alternatively, the Garden Suite, tucked within the walled garden, has floor-to-ceiling windows and a fairy-lit approach that's warm, intimate and party-ready. With 83 bedrooms on site and discounted rates for wedding guests, the question of taxis home answers itself.
nortonhousehotel.co.uk

THE CAVES OLD TOWN | EDINBURGH

Beneath the cobbled streets of the Royal Mile, the stone vaults of the South Bridge have been hosting gatherings since the 18th century. Once known as Whisky Row for the volumes stored here, The Caves is now one of Edinburgh's most atmospheric wedding spaces. Expect raw sandstone walls, flickering candlelight and the kind of energy that comes from a room that has really seen things. It holds up to 150 for a wedding breakfast and 400 for an evening reception, with live bands and DJs a regular fixture. The history is UNESCO World Heritage listed. The party, when it gets going, is entirely yours.
unusualvenuesedinburgh.com

GHILLIE DHU | EDINBURGH CITY CENTRE

Ghillie Dhu is Grade A listed, which is the kind of thing that usually signals restraint – but not here. The Auditorium holds 180 for a seated dinner and 250 for the evening, has a built-in stage and full PA system, and is yours exclusively until 1am. When 1am arrives, the main bar downstairs (open on Fridays and Saturdays) is ready for whoever isn't done yet. As part of Scotsman Hospitality, discounted room rates are available across The Scotsman Hotel, Murrayfield House Hotel and The Grassmarket Hotel, which covers the overnight question without much effort. It's a venue that balances character with capability — grand enough to feel special, but flexible enough to shape around the kind of celebration you want. Whether you're planning something classic or leaning into a more lively, late-night feel, it's a space that can comfortably do both.
ghillie-dhu.co.uk



GHILLIE DHU | MARTA ROCCI PHOTOGRAPHY

ABERDEEN, GRAMPIAN, HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS




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Gothic *Romance*

EMMA DUNCAN & STEVEN BAIN

Emma had always DREAMED of a gothic wedding – and she completely nailed the brief.

Emma and Steven's story technically began on the same street where they grew up as their parents had been close friends for years. But romance didn't happen until a chance smile in town. "Steven refers to it as an arranged marriage," Emma laughs, crediting her mum for quietly nudging fate along.

Six years later, he proposed in horizontal rain on a hill in Braemar, beside Prince Albert's pyramid, during a yellow weather warning. "We couldn't see our hands in front of our faces. But when I turned around, he was on one knee," remembers Emma. The sapphire ring, inspired by Princess Diana, was her childhood dream.

THE VIBE

Emma had always imagined something gothic – not moody for the sake of it but dramatic, romantic, theatrical – and Coos' Cathedral in Aboyne gave them the perfect blank canvas to make it happen. "It was an empty shell, and we could completely make it ours."

Burgundy ran through everything, from velvet bridesmaids' dresses to scarlet candles. Ivy trailed around vintage candelabras, horror-film scores played softly as guests arrived and crows (so many crows!) appeared in



SATURDAY IST NOVEMBER 2025
VENUE: COOS' CATHEDRAL, ABERDEENSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: J DYER PHOTOGRAPHY, SAMANTHA CLYNE PHOTOGRAPHY





every corner. "It was getting serious," Emma jokes.

But beneath the drama was so much personality. Wedding photos of every married guest formed a 'Wedding Wall' and a silent projector played *Young Frankenstein* for anyone needing quiet. Emma wrote a personal letter to every guest and made Taylor Swift friendship bracelets, each with an assigned song. "It felt like the inside of my head exploded into real life."

THE DAY

Emma walked down the aisle to *Ice Dance* from Edward Scissorhands beneath haunted-library backdrops hand-built by her dad. Steven waited in a jacket he had designed and sewn himself – finished at 11:45pm the night before. He hadn't told her and she admits she had "no idea" what her husband-to-be had created. "He knocked it out of the park," smiles Emma.

They had written their own vows and Barclay, the family dog, delivered the rings. Eleven meaningful ribbons were woven into a handfasting (from family tartans to embroidered tributes to grandparents) and each was brought



“EMOTIONAL in a
way I didn’t expect.”



forward by someone significant. "It was emotional in a way I didn't expect," Emma adds. "I just started crying."

THE CELEBRATION

They entered the reception to a Formula 1 anthem before pivoting into Lana Del Rey for their first dance. A Victorian sword cut through red velvet cake, and the gothic dessert and cheese banquet disappeared within minutes.

When Emma looks back, one moment stands above the rest – a dancefloor packed with everyone they love, singing Taylor Swift at the top of their lungs. "The energy was unreal."

For Steven, the surprise was seeing Emma in black. For Emma, it was seeing the jacket he'd secretly made. And for both of them, it was the same realisation – everything felt exactly right.

Emma advises others: "It goes by outrageously quickly, so just make it yours," while Steven adds: "If you're going to make your own wedding outfit, don't leave it until two weeks before!"









"We could make it completely OURS."

BEHIND THE DAY

ACCESSORIES
VIVIENNE WESTWOOD, IVORY & CO
ALTERATIONS
MARTINE BLAIR DRESSMAKER, THISTLE ALTERATIONS
BAND
VH5
BOOTS
DOLLS KILL
CATERING
COUNTRY FLAVOURS
CELEBRANT
LOUISE MCALLISTER
DRESS
ESSENSE OF AUSTRALIA FROM PERFECT BRIDAL ROOMS
FLOWERS
FLOWERS BY JUDITH
HAIR
JODIE MACINTOSH HAIR
GROOMSWEAR
KILTS WI HAE
MAKEUP
PAULA BEATTIE MAKEUP ARTIST
PHOTOGRAPHER
J DYER PHOTOGRAPHY, SAMANTHA CLYNE PHOTOGRAPHY
RINGS
MEGAN FALCONER JEWELLERY
TRANSPORT
DOG CHAPERONE
VENUE
COOS' CATHEDRAL, ABERDEENSHIRE
VIDEOGRAPHER
AFTERGLOW WEDDING FILMS



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"Emma and Steven did their day their way. Their group shots weren't the usual 'everyone lined up and smiling' photos, and they just went with it for their couple shoot – authentic and real, which is how all couples should be." ■

JONY, J DYER PHOTOGRAPHY

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Main photo by Michael Carver
Left: Euan Robertson
Middle: Bernadeta Kupiec

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BROXMOUTH COURTYARD | JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY



EDINBURGH, LOTHIANS & THE BORDERS

BROXMOUTH COURTYARD | JENNIFER GLEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Winter in Scotland

KATHERINE AMOUR & NIALL SPOWART

A winter wedding in Scotland, where LOVE AND LIGHT cut through January frost.

They were engaged on 5 January 2023 and two years later, Katherine and Niall married one day shy of the anniversary.

Niall had planned to propose on the Isle of Skye but couldn't wait once he had the ring. Instead, he recreated their first date and proposed outside St Giles' Cathedral on their way for a dram. "He was far too excited to hold onto it," Katherine smiles.

Niall chose a timeless oval diamond, after meticulously researching cut and clarity. After the engagement, Katherine gifted him a black zirconium band – later engraved in secret for extra meaning.

Four years together felt like the perfect time. They had navigated a global pandemic, built a home and were ready.



SATURDAY 4TH JANUARY 2025
VENUE: WINTON CASTLE, NEAR EDINBURGH
PHOTOGRAPHY: SIOBHAN STEWART PHOTOGRAPHY



“Nowhere else felt
like WINTON.”





THE DECISIONS

Winton Castle was the first priority – and first booking. Katherine grew up in Pencaitland and had worked weddings at the castle after university. She'd seen how effortlessly grand yet truly personal they felt. "Nowhere else felt like Winton," she says.

The homely warmth of the rooms, the ability to move between the hall, library and fire pits, and having family stay across the estate made it feel less like a venue and more like a home for the weekend. "Having a beautiful breakfast with our nearest and dearest, complete with wedding bouquets as centrepieces, on the first day as a married couple was the perfect end."

The vibe was clean, chic and Scottish with white linens, white florals, champagne-toned dresses and layered tartans. Personal touches appeared throughout – a quaich gifted by a friend and filled with sentimental whisky; tartan from Niall's kilt tied with Katherine's maternal family name; Essence of Harris candles that still scent their home now; handmade bridal bouquets and photographs remembering loved ones in the entrance hall.





THE DAY

They married in the Drawing Room, which was intimate but grand. "The idea of the ceremony made us nervous," Katherine admits. "It's such a meaningful moment."

What their celebrant, Andrea Taylor, crafted was personal – without "clichés or vague sentiments". There was a handfasting, a poem written and read aloud by Katherine's mum, and a real feeling that the room was full of love.

Dinner came first so everyone could gather properly afterwards – and "unreal food" had been a non-negotiable during the planning stages. As evening hit, the GeoGospel Choir filled the castle with joy and the energy shifted. Instead of dancing in the ballroom, Katherine and Niall chose the Drawing Room for their first dance (*Take My Hand* by Skerryvore) performed live. "It felt like dancing in our living room, surrounded by our favourite people," she says. And, for the ultimate keepsake, the choir recorded the song for them.



THE REFLECTIONS

When asked what surprised them most, it wasn't a single detail but the feeling of it all coming together. "There's so much debate about what type or size of wedding to have. But to feel that love in the room, whether it's two or two hundred people, is truly special."

Their advice is simple - pick two or three non-negotiables. "Once those are right, everything else feels smaller. And make decisions that make you both happy. Your guests will feel it."



BEHIND THE DAY

ALTERATIONS
MIRA'S TAILORING
BAGPIPER
THE PICKLED PIPER
BAND
THE HAGGIS CHASERS CEILIDH BAND
BRIDESMAIDS
SIX STORIES, BILLY J, COAST
CAKES
CAKES BY EMMA
CATERING
SALTIRE HOSPITALITY
CELEBRANT
ANDREA TAYLOR
DÉCOR
ALL WRAPPED UP
DRESS
WENDY MAKIN FROM KUDOS BRIDAL
HAIR
HAIR BY KIARA MORRICE
KILT
GORDON NICOLSON KILTMAKERS
MAKEUP
ERIN STEWART MAKEUP
MUSICIANS
GEO GOSPEL CHOIR
VENUE
WINTON CASTLE, NEAR EDINBURGH



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"Such a fun winter day, full of Scottish touches that really reflected them. The chic, clean-cut styling kept everything feeling simple and elegant, and the atmosphere was relaxed yet full of energy, thanks to their brilliant friends and family."

SIOBHAN, SIOBHAN STEWART PHOTOGRAPHY



© Photography: Karol Makula



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LOUISA AND ROBIN

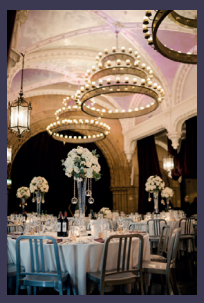
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Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House

For more information on Prestonfield House please visit
www.prestonfieldhouse.com



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House

For smaller weddings, the beautifully appointed private dining rooms provide a cosy yet luxurious atmosphere for up to 50 guests, ensuring a seamless transition from ceremony to reception. For couples looking for a moment of intimacy on their special day, they needn't look further than the opulent Salon Privee. Designed for just two guests, it is the ultimate romantic hideaway for a meal to commemorate or dinner to kick-start the celebrations.

Each space is thoughtfully designed with versatility in mind, allowing couples you to personalise their day and bring their unique vision to life. At Prestonfield House, weddings are not just created, extraordinary experiences are crafted that will leave you newlyweds and their guests truly enchanted.



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House



Credit: Prestonfield House

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FIFE & TAYSIDE



PHOTOS BY ZOE



WEDDING DATE: SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2025
VENUE: DUNKELD HOUSE HOTEL, PERTHSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: RACHEL ROSS PHOTOGRAPHY

A White Wedding

PHILIP PETRIE & BRIAN FRASER

With no bride to upstage, these GROOMS encouraged their guests to wear WHITE.

Philip and Brian met on Tinder in 2014, "back when it was used to find love," Philip laughs. A cinema date turned into hours of conversation, drinks and not wanting to say goodbye.

Eight years later, after a difficult year that included losing Philip's mum, Brian proposed at the top of The Shard during their annual Christmas trip to London. "It had been such a hard year. That moment felt like hope."

Both men wear identical platinum engagement bands. When Brian bought Philip's ring, he got an identical one for himself too. "He didn't want to feel left out," Philip smiles.

THE DECISIONS

Dunkeld House Hotel was booked first; the scenery, the setting and the ease of travel for friends and family made it an easy choice. And the theme was 'nice day for a white wedding'. Guests





were invited to wear white or keep it monochrome – a bold move that paid off visually and set the tone for something luxurious and playful.

Personal touches were everywhere. The couple are known for house-party goody bags, so of course wedding guests got them too. Packed with handwritten notes, miniature bottles of their favourite drink and Scottish tablet, it just felt them.

They wore matching white tuxedos – Brian with a black waistcoat and Philip with a black cummerbund. Later, Brian changed into a black tux, while Philip switched into an all-black kilt from Houston Kiltmakers. Their best women (lifelong friends Steph and Gemma) wore black off-the-shoulder gowns with bouquets of gypsophila. Steph's speech left Brian "red-faced and hiding" after a playful roasting.

Both grooms carried personalised handkerchiefs gifted by Steph, embroidered with meaningful quotes about their mums, who have both passed away.

THE DAY

They woke up together and got ready side by side with Champagne flowing and music playing.

Their vows were heartfelt and one line stayed with Philip in particular: "I have loved every version of you." Through career changes, different looks and life's hard seasons, they kept loving each other. "That's marriage," he adds.

The atmosphere was electric. Games and activities ran throughout the day and guests embraced every single thing. "It was so, so special."

After dinner came a quick costume change, then their first dance, followed by a lively round of Mr & Mr. Fireworks lit up the winter sky before everyone returned inside for saxophone-fuelled dancing and an adult scavenger hunt that had guests sprinting around the marquee.

THE REFLECTIONS

When asked how it felt to see everything come together, Philip answers in one word: "Relief!"






"I have LOVED every
version of you."

But the bigger takeaway came afterwards. The day after the wedding, sitting together, decompressing and replaying it all, was actually one of their favourite moments.

Their advice? "Look around the room and take it in, but don't worry about not giving people enough attention. You won't speak to everyone but they're there to celebrate you and they'll understand."

Philip adds: "Remember you're marrying your teammate and your biggest supporter. Make time for little moments just the two of you."





BEHIND THE DAY

BEAUTY
ANNETTE WISEMAN
HAIR BY RACHEL
CELEBRANT
THE SCOTTISH CELEBRANT
ENTERTAINMENT
CLOUD 9
ELLIOT G SAX
FIFE WEDDING ENTERTAINMENTS
PHENOMENAL FIREWORKS
FASHION
HOUSTON KILTMAKERS
SLATER MENSWEAR
OTHER
BLAIRGOWRIE WALKIES
JEWELLERY
CARTIER
STYLING
COPPER ROSE WEDDING CAKES
CRAZY DAISY FLOWERS & EVENTS
ILLUSTRATIONS BY HANNAH
THE PRAIRIE QUEEN EMPORIUM
VIDEOGRAPHER
KILTED CREATIVE
YOUR DAY UNPLUGGED



PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"From the Champagne spray and the wildest entrance to the heartfelt speeches, sparklers and firework show, it was non-stop fun. The dance floor was easily my favourite part – pure joy, great vibes and photos that feel like one big celebration."

RACHEL, RACHEL ROSS PHOTOGRAPHY



TEASSES FIFE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVE

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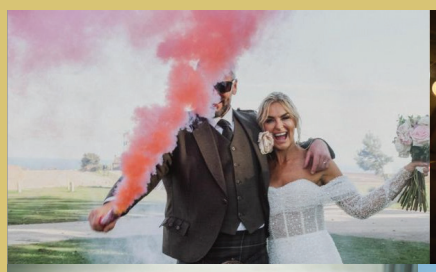
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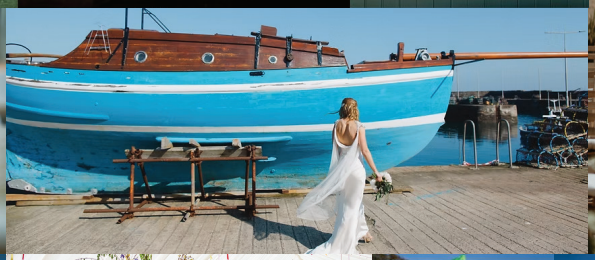














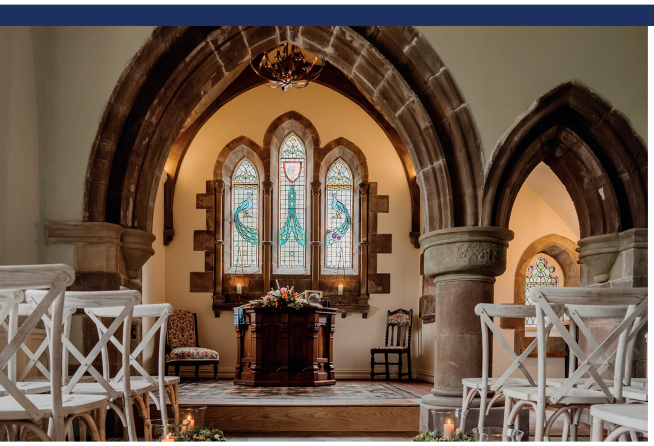






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At the heart of Culdees wedding experience is the Garden Pavilion, a new addition space designed for larger celebrations. Overlooking the estate's breathtaking gardens, this elegant space is perfect for bigger weddings, where guests can dine in style and dance the night away in a setting that blends romance with timeless charm.

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Adding a touch of opulence, The Champagne Turret is a standout feature of Culdees Castle. This exclusive space is perfect for raising a toast to new beginnings.

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THE COLLECTOR'S HALL

All White

SKYE SYKES & JOHN RILEY

A WINTER wedding where elegance met drama against Scotland's frosted coastline.

Skye and John met through social media ("the most modern way possible," she smiles) but when they met in person it felt familiar rather than new.

Seven years later, John proposed during lunch at The Shard. What began as a simple day out ended with dessert arriving alongside a diamond ring. "I was completely overwhelmed," remembers Skye. "And of course, I said yes!"

THE DECISIONS

Turnberry had always been Skye's dream venue. The sweeping sea views, grand ballroom and statement chandelier delivered the scale she had imagined since she was young. And her vision was clear – all white. A winter wedding that felt like stepping inside freshly fallen snow.

The ballroom became a sea of white florals, candlelight and soft texture,



THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2025
VENUE: TRUMP TURNBERRY, AYRSHIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY: CHRIS CHAMBERS PHOTOGRAPHY




“It was a
DREAM
come true.”



with Scotland's winter scenes visible beyond the windows. One extra special detail had pride of place among the grandeur – a media screen honouring Skye's late grandad, whose presence was felt throughout the day. Behind the scenes, Skye's mother Kathleen acted as planner, confidante and calm anchor.

John kept things classic in a black three-piece suit, finished with his father's tie – a simple but meaningful detail. Skye's gown was designed to embody the winter wonderland theme. A structured corseted bodice, intricate lace and a full satin skirt created a regal silhouette, while a cape added softness and movement. "It flowed like falling snow, adding drama without overpowering the gown. It was almost cinematic as I walked," she explains.

A crystal crown completed the look, paired with a long veil for full drama. "I wanted to feel elegant, confident and unforgettable, and I did." Keeping it real, though, she slipped on white ASICS trainers for dancing later on.

Choosing the bridal party was one of the most meaningful parts of the wedding for Skye and she styled them in keeping with the theme, down to their elegant capes. Both mothers embraced the aesthetic, tying the look together beautifully.





THE DAY

The morning began early (at 4am for hair and make-up) fuelled by breakfast and fizz.

When the glass doors opened and Skye stood beside her dad, ready to walk down the aisle to XO by Beyoncé, it was the moment she remembers most clearly. "I could see everyone looking stunning," she smiles. Family played a central role throughout the ceremony. Her uncle Elias delivered a Bible reading close to her heart and she carried her grandmother's Bible down the aisle, just as her grandmother had done 54 years earlier.

From the night-before celebrations through to the final dance, the energy never dipped. Speeches from both families and the bridal party were heartfelt and full of humour. Their first dance, to One Touch by Jess Glynne, opened the floor before the party truly began.







THE REFLECTIONS

Looking back, the overwhelming feeling is gratitude. "It was a dream come true, seeing months of planning come to life."

Her advice to other couples is simple: don't stress. The details fall into place, and the day will feel exactly as it's meant to.

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PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE

"It was truly a privilege to photograph Skye and John's wedding. Their day was filled with love and joy, and it was an honour to capture those special moments as they unfolded."

CHRIS, CHRIS CHAMBERS PHOTOGRAPHY



















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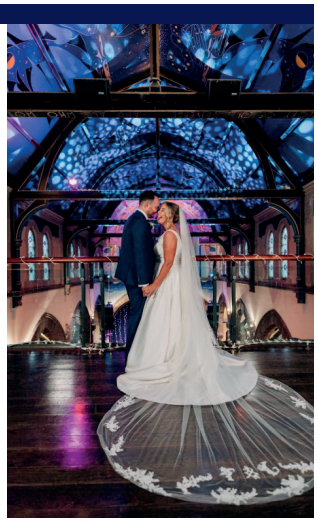


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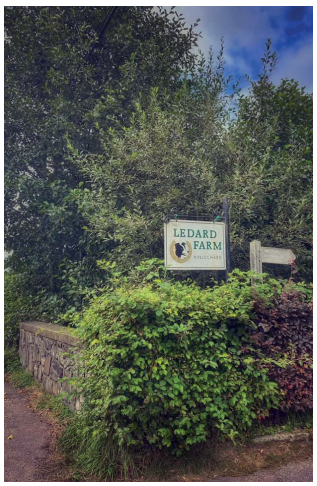
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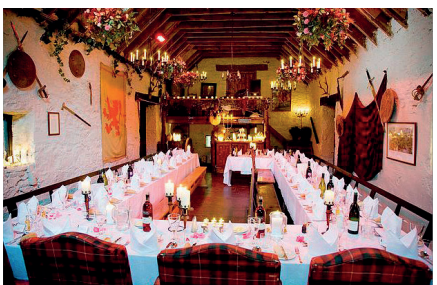






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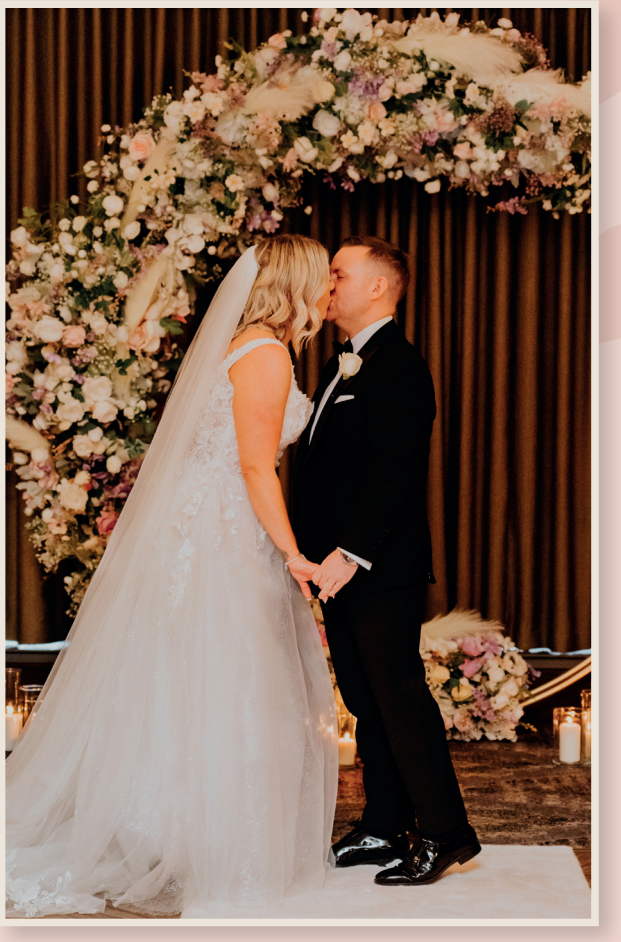
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