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Photography © Marc Stockland



I do AT CHEWTON GLEN

When it is your wedding day, you want everything to be perfect. But bringing every aspect together into a glorious marital symphony of taste, colour and style can be a daunting prospect.

So for the greatest day of your life, expect only the very best: which is exactly what Chewton Glen, one of the finest wedding venues in England, can offer. Chewton Glen provides the most beautiful location, sumptuous rooms, unfettered luxury, gourmet dining and an unsurpassed wine collection.

All are absolutely vital to an ideal day, but what Chewton Glen understands intuitively too, is that it is the people who work with you in the months before your wedding and also on the day itself, who are just as essential to creating the perfect wedding day and the hotel works with a wide variety of talented individuals who lead their respective fields.

People such as wedding photographer Mark Stockland, who has covered many of Chewton Glen's most prestigious weddings; or Suzanna Reeves, an award-winning bridal stylist, complement the role of Chewton Glen's brilliant and unflappable wedding co-ordinators and, often become the happy couple's most trusted aides in the run-up to the event and on the day itself.

Firstly though, the bridal couple need to choose the size and type of wedding they want. Chewton Glen has the flexibility to offer a variety of styles to suit every taste. The hotel can accommodate up to 140 guests for a wedding banquet and 200 for a wedding ceremony. Civil ceremonies can be performed and the vows can be taken in the intimacy of one of the private lounges or outside in the Water Garden Room.


The Lake Suite, with its own private entrance and terrace overlooking the perfectly manicured gardens and parkland, is the hotel's most popular venue. A plethora of classical full-length French doors allow light to burst through the room, showering the ceremony in dappled sunlight for a truly fairytale atmosphere.

To ensure that every part of the day can be catered for, it can be divided into three separate areas, allowing a three course wedding breakfast to take place as well as ceremony and celebrations. Chewton Glen's Executive Chef, Luke Matthews will also meet with the couple and create a bespoke wedding menu that reflects the bride couple's preferences and delights their guests.

Many couples take over the entire hotel for their wedding day, allowing them privacy and the flexibility of having one of the most exclusive hotels in the country entirely at their disposal. But it is the little things that also count on your wedding day. Because the team at Chewton Glen has such extensive experience in planning and hosting weddings and special occasions, they can offer exquisite detailing that makes the day even more special: from stunning floral arrangements, personalised menu and place cards, a glorious string quartet, to the services of a professional toastmaster.

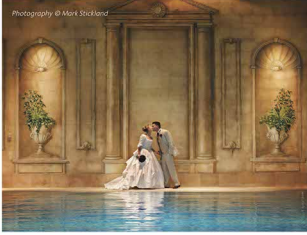
Not everybody is looking to host a large wedding and Chewton Glen can offer intimacy for those couples in the Terrace Room in the conservatory, which offers fine dining and celebrations for up to 30 guests. With its own private terrace, it provides a perfect outdoor space for watching the sun set over the parklands with your dearest friends and family after the wedding and celebration meal.

Chewton Glen's wedding organisers implicitly understand how stressful couples can find planning the day, and have plenty of ideas on how to make the run-up as relaxed and enjoyable as it can possibly be.

These ideas include making the 'right' decisions early-on in the planning process and we would always recommend visiting the wedding venue as a couple to discuss your plans with the wedding organizer first, and then having a separate visit with your parents once the details have been agreed. Book as far ahead as you can. Chewton Glen receives bookings for summer weddings a year or more in advance. 

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Photography © Mark Stickland



Also, you should consider the time of day you want to hold your wedding. A wedding breakfast served around lunchtime is traditional, but at Chewton Glen we have hosted afternoon tea receptions and elegant evening dinners as an alternative. Almost anything is possible.

Guests invited just for the evening must feel as special as those who will be with you for the whole day and you should remember to include an evening buffet and drinks reception within your wedding budget.

Children at weddings may need entertaining and at Chewton Glen we can offer children's menus and an entertainment package. It is always best to consider a venue with outdoor space for little ones to explore and with 130 acres of parkland and gardens, our younger guests can enjoy letting off a little steam and enjoying the woodland tree house or playing on the swings near the stream. Attached to a rather gracious ancient tree, the swings are often used for photographs of the bride and groom.

But the most important piece of advice for the bridal couple in planning their wedding is to keep things simple. It will save hours of deliberation and allows you the opportunity to focus on what is really important on this special day.

Once you have booked the perfect venue for your celebration – how do you ensure that without overshadowing the enjoyment of the bridal party and guests you achieve a beautiful selection of photography to remember the day with? Chewton Glen works with many fine photographers, including Mark Stickland, who has just won a European Gold Award from the Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers for a wedding photograph taken at Chewton Glen.

From the first to the last click of the shutter, a wedding photographer should capture all the elements of your wedding day. Today's wedding photographers use a variety of photographic techniques and styles, so first decide if you are looking for reportage of the intimate moments and action, traditional photographs for the family group pictures, directed photography or a mixture of them all.

Next, find someone who has a wealth of experience and look at their work to get a feel for their style. Look for someone who is calm and easy-going and who ideally has good relationships with the other people who will be involved professionally in your day, such as your venue host, florist and hairdresser. This will ensure that he or she can achieve the very best shots for you with the minimum of interruption of the day's proceedings.

We would also recommend that you get involved with how the final photography will be presented. A photographer's level of skill and expertise in creative post-production forms an essential part of the digital photographic process, ensuring that your finished images are professionally enhanced and imaginatively presented to their maximum effect.

Creating the perfect look for the bridal party is essential and bridal designers and stylists can offer expert guidance and advice. A wedding dress is likely to be the most expensive gown a bride will ever wear so she needs to feel beautiful in it and be able to move freely within its folds.

Couture bridal designer Nicki Hill says you should consider your venue and the time of year you are having your wedding before deciding on

your gown. A full skirted gown may not be practical down a narrow aisle and a long train might be a hindrance in an intimate venue. No matter what your body shape, a good dress designer will be able to make you look and feel fabulous. A good cut should accentuate all your best features whilst also minimizing those that you are less happy with," she says.

Bear in mind that a couture dress will be based on your body shape when you come in for your initial fittings. If you are planning to lose weight before your wedding, do this before you choose your gown as alterations may be difficult and costly to make later on.

Find a designer who has a wide portfolio of work and someone who you feel can interpret your ideas and in whose company you feel relaxed and happy.

Once that dream dress has been found, it is time to complete the rest of the look, and stylists such as Suzanna Reeves can help create the image. "Talk to your hairstylist about creating a look that will complement your face shape, body shape and personality," she says.

The style of your dress is also an important consideration. A low scooping neckline can look wonderfully romantic with loose tendrils of hair, whereas a sleek bob with a chic slash neck is exceptionally elegant. If you have a low back on your dress you should draw attention to it by wearing your hair swept up and away from your neck.

The bride should plan her wedding hairstyle approximately three months in advance allowing time to get your hair into top condition and have at least one trial run of the look you are aiming for. A head of strong, beautifully conditioned hair looks stunning however it is styled. Regular trims every six weeks will remove split ends, and a conditioning treatment will boost moisture and add shine.

Consider having your bridesmaids styled in a similar way to your bridal look, to complement rather than distract from it. Flowers are a simple way to reflect wedding colours but beads, jewels and feathers can also look beautiful.

Chewton Glen has an extensive list of suppliers who can help create the perfect wedding day, including photographers, make up artists and hair stylists, bridal designers, florists and floral designers, toastmasters, musicians and entertainers, wedding cake specialists, honeymoon experts and many more. ❧

Our thanks to:
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this feature.

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