

# HOT TOPIC

This issue our experts answer your venue queries

## Venues

### Meet the experts



Claire Jones  
Floral



Nic Cleave  
Photographer



Ruth Hunter  
Wedding planner

### A PICTURE PERFECT LOCATION FOR US

**Q** My fiancé and I are in the process of choosing our wedding venue. Our priority is to have really great photographs to remember our day by so, from a photographer's point of view, what should we keep in mind when looking for a setting?

**A** *Nic says:* Firstly, a professional wedding photographer should be able to provide you with amazing images from your wedding day, no matter where you decide to get married. That said, some venues will certainly make this task easier than others! I would suggest choosing a photographer who can show you examples of their environmental portraiture. This might sound simple, but some might focus only on taking close-up images of couples and, while this is great for romantic photographs, they might miss the opportunity to capture images of the grounds, meaning the shots could have been taken just about anywhere.

It might be an idea to look for a venue that offers opportunities for indoor photography too, in case of inclement weather. While many couples love to embrace the weather and have photographs outside come rain or shine, it's useful to know that good photographs can be taken inside too. Look for venues with small rooms to provide privacy, and rooms that have large bay windows to allow some natural light in. Bridal suites with four-poster beds and art deco interiors also look stunning in photos.



www.niccleave.com

### Church blooms

**Q** We're getting married in our local church and we're hoping to decorate it with lots of flowers. As we're planning to spend quite a lot on our arrangements, am I right to assume that we can bring the displays with us to the reception venue afterwards?

**A** *Claire says:* Yes, most churches will now allow you to take your flower arrangements with you after the ceremony, however, I would let them know your plans out of politeness. I agree that it's often a good idea to double up wherever you can to save on the budget.

To start, I would recommend that you opt for an altar arrangement that is long and low, and this can also double up as your top table decoration. Pedestals also make a big impact and look great in larger churches. You can then take these to your reception venue afterwards and have them on either side of the top table or in the bar areas. Pew ends are often really pretty, but can be difficult to re-use at the reception. I always advise my brides to leave these in the church as a nice token for the congregation to enjoy during their Sunday service.

Create an impact: The Millennium Centre in Cardiff has plenty of space for big bands and dancing



### The ideal stage

**Q** We'd love to theme our wedding around Broadway and West End musicals, and will be having a big band and lots of dancing. What type of venue might suit our celebration?

**A** *Ruth says:* The most obvious choice would be a beautiful art deco theatre such as The Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl, or even something more contemporary like the Millennium Centre in Cardiff. Not only will these look great and impress your guests, but they also provide enough space for big bands and dancing.

Another option would be for you to consider a marquee reception. This will provide you with a blank canvas that you can use to create a big impact with your theme. Add a starlight ceiling and a disco ball to create a striking effect over the dancefloor, and hire props and backdrops from a theatre company to use to decorate the inside. It will make your guests feel like they've just walked on to a theatre or film set.



### We don't know where to begin

**Q** There are so many venues close to where we live in Cardiff that my fiancé and I are finding it hard to pick one. We can't decide if we want a wedding in the heart of the city, or something more rural in the surrounding countryside – they all look wonderful! How will we know which one suits us best?

**A** *Ruth says:* There are lots of different elements you need to consider here, the most important being capacity. Select a venue that will comfortably fit the amount of guests you would like to invite, without it being too cramped or too vast. You will also need to consider the logistics of the day itself. If you are having a church wedding, you will need to ensure guests can travel to the reception venue easily enough. If you do choose a city centre location, make sure there is plenty of parking so guests aren't driving round searching for a place to park their cars.

Next, consider the style of your wedding and the look you want to create. For example, a country fête-inspired day would benefit from a rural setting with plenty of gardens and open space, while a sophisticated celebration could be accommodated at a sleek boutique hotel or restaurant in the city centre. Always go with your instinct, you'll know the perfect venue the moment you see it.

### We say

Ensure that your venue can accommodate the band you have chosen and that it does not have any sound restrictions.

### Contact our experts...

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