

Your perfect wedding

“The perfect wedding is not about having the latest designer dress or most elaborate change of clothes for the day. Nor is it about having the glitziest venue and biggest budget.” says Tim Hanbury of Apollo Event Consultants. And he should know, having been involved in some of the most beautiful weddings in the south east of the last decade which include a royal wedding in the grounds of Kensington Palace!



Pippa MacKenzie Photography



In fact, Tim's experience of creating dazzling but personal events extends far beyond weddings and includes Mick Jagger's 40th birthday and Diana Ross's wedding, as well as the historic 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede with 4,500 high profile guests!

Tim's events could, and probably have, been described as everything from the flamboyant to the extraordinary. But when it comes to weddings, what is overwhelmingly apparent, and striking is that an Apollo wedding is unique, profoundly personal and sublimely stylish.

From place holders made out of rifle cartridges for the groom with a love of shooting and miniature pots of jam for each guest made by the bride, to a fleet of vintage London buses or a lovingly restored Morris Minor, when you browse Tim's portfolio, you're struck by the sense that you know something of the bride and groom's story. That their day really was all about them. And the photos reflect an intimate glimpse into their lives.

So, if it's not the perfect dress or venue, what is Tim's formula for creating the perfect wedding.

“The real secret, if it is one, starts with the bride and groom and getting to know them really well. It's about finding out what matters to them and for the bride, what she's always dreamt of. Then it's about creating a day that is a reflection of them in every single tiny detail, ensuring that it all aligns with their personalities, values and story.

That involves creativity and balance. You have to think of each part of the day as a scene in a play. The bride and groom are at the centre of each act but in particular it is the bride who should be at the centre of every scene.

The set has to be perfect and evoke a hushed sense of wow from the guests but the bride has to be the finishing piece. Guests arrive and are first hit by the beauty of the church, marquee or reception room but then as the bride walks in, there's a second wave of wow as

she perfectly completes the picture.

You also want to bring out little details of the bride and groom's story. For example, with Zoe and JP's wedding we wanted to highlight their love of shooting. We included pheasants' tail feathers in the floral displays, the table place cards used shooting language and were illustrated with birds and the bride arrived side saddle on a horse as a nod to her love of horses.

But the secret to this is both in the attention to tiny details like these but also, not to get so carried away with the detail that it becomes a distraction. Get the balance right and you have something profoundly personal, very beautiful and elegant. Get it wrong and you have a cluttered feel which distracts from the bride.

The second aspect to a creating a perfect day has to be the more practical side and ensuring meticulous attention to detail and planning. This is where a wedding planner really earns his oats. For the bride and her family, the six months in the run up to



the wedding should be a time of great happiness and fun! Not stress and worry. A wedding planner's role is to take that worry from them and box it up.

From my point of view that means creating a very detailed and extensive brief and ensuring everything is organised with military precision. I check everything: every booking, every delivery, every item and every detail so that on the day (and in the days running up to it) the atmosphere is calm and everything runs seamlessly. If things go wrong, the bride and groom and their family and guests don't need to know or worry about it.

Knowing the bride and groom well also means I can anticipate what they might want as we plan and organise the day, so when the bride says to the florist, "I want 150 individual flowers for the table places," the florist can reply, "I know, Tim's already organised it."

I also believe, you have to keep weddings grounded. Even though I have organised some truly extraordinary events, I'm an ordinary married man with children. However large (or small) your budget, I believe it should always be spent wisely.

That doesn't mean cutting corners. It means identifying what is really important and what is less so, so that you can achieve what you want within budget. That keeps everyone happy! If I think a certain expenditure isn't worth it, or that there's a more economical route, I'll advise it.

One example of this might be the flowers. It is possible to spend a small fortune on flowers. But with clever planning, some of the flowers from the church can be whipped away after the service and used to decorate somewhere else. This creates the impression of an abundance of flowers without the abundance of expenditure. The money saved then might go towards something more extravagant or more important to the bride and groom.

Being grounded also means that if I think there's a practical step that needs to be taken care of (laying tracks for vehicles to get in and out of a field for example), I'll anticipate and organise it. Because the last thing you want on your wedding day is the father of the bride in his wellies in a field of mud trying to push the guests' cars out! One of the benefits of my many years' organising large events is that I have a very good nose for how things work (from the electrics and generators to the marquees) which also means I have a very good nose for what could go wrong and making sure it doesn't.

I suppose the last piece of the puzzle is the suppliers you use. This comes back to planning and making the experience for the bride and her family a pleasure from the moment they come to see me. That



means the suppliers have to understand and believe in the experience we're trying to create.

I always ensure the marquee is set up at least a day before it needs to be, so that no one is stressed on the day, and I work to ensure there's a sense of fun and camaraderie. If you have guests staying the night before the wedding, the last thing you want on the morning of the big day is banging, shouting and a sense of panic coming from the tradesmen. You want the waiters, the photographer, your housekeeper, your gardener and everyone else to feel involved and to feel like they're contributing to the success of the day.

Finally, and above all else, the perfect wedding is reflected in the faces and photographs of the day. The perfect wedding is when the bride and groom and their families look blissfully happy and you know that they're going to look back on this day with that same sense of pride and happiness for many decades. If you can achieve that, you've achieved the perfect wedding!"

So what is Tim's feeling about what will be popular this year?

"2019 will be about keeping things simple. Recent royal wedding dresses have had an elegance in their simplicity. There's also a trend towards bringing the outside in and taking the inside out, with clever use of foliage and marques. But what I hope for most this year is that brides ensure that their day is a unique reflection of them and the wonderful man they're going to marry!"

So, what about Tim himself? When you meet him, you're instantly struck by the fact that despite his extraordinary imagination and vision, here is a man who is down to earth, charming and passionate about what he does. He's all the things you'd want from someone in whom you're going to place enormous trust and who you're going to be spending quite a lot of time with. His clients clearly think of him as a trusted friend and you can't help but leave Tim's company with an overwhelming urge to organise a wedding.

You can find out more about Tim Hanbury at www.apollo-ec.co.uk or contact him by phone at 01428 658 624.

