

WHERE TO WED

First thing's first - your venue is the beginning of your journey to planning your wedding, so it's vitally important to book the best. Here's the Irish Tatler guide to Ireland's top locations, plus a few more alternative options.



CASTLEMARTYR

This five star resort is part of the Dromoland Collection situated in east Cork.

Guest capacity: Up to 190 people can be accommodated in the Capel Suite.

Reception room: The Capel Suite features huge chandeliers, floor to ceiling windows and magnificent drapes, while the more

intimate Kiltha Room is situated in the Manor house and provides views across the meadows.

Food: Executive chef Roger Olssen creates a menu tailored to the bride and groom's own style and creativity using local, seasonal produce.

Accommodation: The bride and groom can enjoy their wedding night with a stay in an exceptional Manor House State room, with old-world grandeur and views of the lakes and meadows, while the hotel has a total of 103 rooms and suites.

Something special: Castlemaryr makes a commitment to host only one wedding party per day, so you won't be sharing your space with another celebration. Wedding parties also have exclusive use of the picturesque demesne, formal gardens, infinity pool, swan lake and Manor House for photography.

Castlemaryr Resort, Castlemaryr, County Cork; tel: 021 421 9000; castlemaryrresort.ie



BROOK HALL AT MACREDDIN VILLAGE

BrookLodge is at the heart of Macreddin Village, nestled in the Wicklow Mountains, and Brook Hall is its dedicated wedding venue.

Guest capacity: Up to 200 diners can be catered to in the River Room, while Macreddin Hall, the non-denominational venue, can seat 150, with added standing room for 30 people, and can carry out civil weddings and blessings.

Reception room: The River Room is a bright, vaulted grand hall, with five double-doors opening onto a south facing garden and deck overlooking Ballycreen Brook, making it ideal for summer nuptials. The Mezzanine Bar and stone fireplaces at either end of the River Room provide cosy warmth for cooler wedding days.

Food: Seasonal menus come from Macreddin Village and its certified organic restaurant The Strawberry Tree. Spring soups include wild nettle and new potato soup, while autumn mains such as roast loin of venison and all use only wild and organic produce.

Accommodation: There are 24 ensuite bedrooms at BrookHall, while BrookLodge Hotel comprises 90 bedrooms from standard rooms to New York style mezzanine suites.

Something special: The Wells Spa at BrookLodge offers the perfect added extra for brides and grooms to be. All the water in the centre is from Macreddin's own pure water wells, and the Serail Mud Chamber experience for two is his and hers bliss.

BrookHall, Macreddin Village, County Wicklow; tel: 0402 36444; brooklodge.com

TANKARDSTOWN HOUSE

A privately owned 18th century Georgian House, Tankardstown is set amid 80 acres of parkland in county Meath. Civil ceremonies can be provided within the house.

Guest capacity: The larger of the two dining rooms can seat up to 80 for dinner, although it is possible to set up a marquee adjacent to the house for whatever number of guests you require.

Reception room: There are six reception rooms and two dining room options available. The Morris can seat up to 40 guests, and the Connolly can seat 80.

Food: A wide range of canapés, an extensive menu to choose from and late bites for your guests are all on offer at Tankardstown. Main course options include fillet of Angus Beef, slow braised pork and whole roast poussin, while the executive chef meets each couple to tailor their menu accordingly.

Accommodation: There are six luxurious bedrooms within the house itself, and additional courtyard accommodation for a further 24 guests.

Something special: The intimacy of the house means you and your guests will have exclusive use of the premises within the private walled grounds on your special day.

Tankardstown House, Slane, County Meath; Tel: 041 98 24621; tankardstown.ie



TANKARDSTOWN HOUSE

RENVYLE HOUSE HOTEL

An old country house nestled in the wilds of Connemara by the Atlantic Ocean. Its 200 acres include a lake, golf course and pebble beach.

Guest capacity: The dining room seats up to 160, the courtyard 180.

Reception room: Receptions can be held on the croquet lawn, or inside in the Long Lounge.

Food: Head chef Tim O'Sullivan prides himself on using only the freshest and best foods.

Accommodation: The 65-bedroom hotel can be hired exclusively for parties with 100 guests or more. Recently refurbished rooms have views of sea, lake or hotel gardens and range from superior suites, family suites, and standard rooms.

Something special: Renvyle was where WB Yeats spent his honeymoon, and since then it has been host to Bono and Cate Blanchett. The 2010 wedding package includes a free afternoon of clay pigeon shooting, or a picnic outing for the wedding party with massage and Reiki treatments for the bride and groom.

Renvyle House Hotel, County Galway. Tel: 095 43511; renvyle.com.



RENVYLE HOUSE

PARKNASILLA RESORT

This historic hotel in the lush Kerry landscape is a romantic paradise set among 500 acres of parkland.

Guest capacity: Sit 180 guests at the hotel's restaurant, or up to 500 in a marquee.

Reception room: The dining room has original Victorian décor and overlooks Kenmare Bay. A marquee outside benefits from striking mountains on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other.

Food: The award-winning Pygmalion restaurant is headed by Chef Peter Brennan, and features locally sourced, Irish produce.

Accommodation: The main house has 92 bedrooms and suites, while 38 villas and 24 two-bedroomed cottages provide extra accommodation.

Something special:

Parknasilla offers an invitation to its newlyweds to return to the resort one year later for a complimentary one night stay to celebrate that all-important one year anniversary.

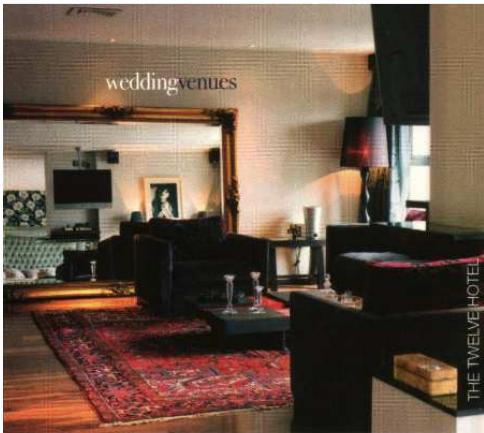
Parknasilla Resort & Spa, Sneem, County Kerry; Tel: 064 677 5600; parknasillahotel.ie



PARKNASILLA RESORT

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Fota Island Resort has teamed up with Fota Wildlife Park to offer those celebrating their nuptials something a little different. The luxury hotel and resort is already famous for hosting idyllic weddings, thanks to its location and five star facilities, and now newlyweds can inject a little fun into their special day by taking a walk through the neighbouring safari park for some photo opportunities with a difference. Inspired photo-ops include showing off your ring to the ring tailed lemurs, teaming the groomsmen in their tuxedos up with the penguins of similar attire and ruffling a few bridesmaid's feathers next to the flamingos. Call Fota Island Resort on 021 488 3700 or visit fotaisland.ie for more info.



TWELVE HOTEL

For a luxury boutique wedding, the Twelve Hotel in Galway is authorised to host civil ceremonies and offers a chic option to couples and their guests.

Guest capacity: The Twelve Hotel can host cocktail receptions of up to 120 people, while 100 can be accommodated for a sit down dinner.

Reception room: The beautiful and intimate setting of the Beanna Beolla Suite exudes the designer charm of this out of town hotel.

Food: Enjoy a specialist tailored menu from The West restaurant, while the on-site bakery will create a bespoke wedding cake for the occasion.

Accommodation: Master Suite XII is the perfect setting for your first night as a married couple. The glass-walled en-suite, complete with Jacuzzi and open fire is just one of 48 boutique guest rooms.

Something special: A wine pairing consultation comes as part of the dedicated service, with an experienced sommelier at hand to help you choose your wine from one of the most extensive wine collections in Ireland.

The Twelve Hotel, Bearna, County Galway. Tel: 091 597000; thetwelvehotel.ie

BRIDGE HOUSE HOTEL

A grandiose venue in Tullamore, celebrating its 40th year in 2010.

Guest capacity: Rooms are available for parties of 65 people, while the soon to be completed Charleville Suite, will accommodate up to 350 guests.

Reception room: Banqueting suites vary from small intimate spaces to glorious suites with chandeliers and balcony views.

Food: A seven course meal is on offer from head chef Paddy Kennedy and his team, who recently won his third Michelin Guide Recommendation.

Accommodation: Some 70 guest rooms include the bridal suite, the executive suite and presidential suites with Jacuzzi.

Something special: The Leisure Club and Sanctuary Spa's bridal bootcamp ranges from five day to six week programmes, including fitness classes, spa treatments and professional makeup application.

Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore, County Offaly. Tel: 057 932 5600; bridgehouse.com



SHEEN FALLS LODGE

Set in the romantic surrounds of Kenmare Bay, and close to the cascading Sheen Waterfalls, Sheen Falls Lodge is five star luxury and the ultimate in romance.

Guest capacity: The hotel can accommodate up to 160 guests for dinner at its main restaurant. Alternatively, the Oscar bistro sits up to 45 and the Drawing Room up to 32 guests, for more intimate weddings.

Reception room: La Cascade Restaurant is an elegant, classical dining room, with panoramic windows overlooking the Sheen Waterfalls and on to the bay. The Sun Lounge, the oldest part of the lodge, and The Cocktail Bar with its warm, club-like atmosphere are perfect spaces for pre and post dinner meeting and entertaining.

Food: Innovative and creative dishes are prepared by Executive Chef Heiko Reibandt and his kitchen brigade from the fresh daily seafood and an abundance of local produce.

Accommodation: The hotel itself has 66 rooms and suites, including the luxurious Lansdowne and Presidential Suites, while luxury villa rentals on the grounds mean that the hotel can offer a total of 85 rooms.

Something special: Facilities include salmon fishing on the private stretch of the Sheen River, while a helipad allows guests to arrive in the ultimate luxury. Sheen Falls is currently offering 25 per cent off for those who book wedding receptions for the months of November, February and March.

Sheen Falls Lodge, Kenmare, County Kerry. Tel: 064 664 1600; sheenfallsloodge.ie

SCORE!

Croke Park recently launched its brand new offering - wedding packages. Now GAA enthusiasts (and their lucky other halves) can have a truly unique wedding day, as the sports ground is authorised to host Civil Ceremonies, and there are a range of options from the intimate to traditional. Receptions take place with a pitch side view, and accommodation is available at the four star Croke Park Hotel for guests. Linda McCoy, Commercial Manager, Croke Park Stadium knows that the venue holds a special place in a lot of people's hearts. "But we also know that couples these days are also looking for a unique setting for their wedding, and one which offers unparalleled service and attention on the day," she adds. Packages include pitch side access for photographs, but cannot guarantee an 80,000 + audience in the stands. Call 01 819 2316 or go crokepark.ie for more info.

THE CLARENCE

For a city centre celebration, just minutes from Dublin's Temple Bar and Stephen's Green, The Clarence Hotel is a luxury boutique alternative to the Irish country weddings.

Guest capacity: The Clarence caters for weddings with guest numbers between 20 and 77 people in any of its three inter-connecting rooms.

Reception room: The Clarence Suite on the hotel's first floor overlooks the River Liffey, and is the main function room, while the Octagon Bar is the meeting place for your guests, for pre-wedding drinks and cocktails. The Tea Room is the hotels' original ballroom, and its 20 foot covered ceiling and spacious interior make it a great alternative space for your wedding.

Food: The seasonally changing menus for wedding packages come with the hotel's reputation for great cuisine. Summer dining options include apple and crab salad followed by a roasted fillet of salmon with fennel salad, while lighter more casual dining options such as canapes and wine selections are available on request.

Accommodation: The Penthouse on the hotel's top floor can be used for entertaining with its own piano and bar, while it is serves as the perfect wedding night accommodation with it's outdoor Jacuzzi on the city centre roof. There are 49 bedrooms in total at the hotel, each individually designed.

Something special: The bridal shower package offers brides-to-be a pamper weekend before the day including accommodation, rose Champagne and cupcakes on arrival, massage treatments and Clarence cocktails in the two bedroom and penthouse suites.

The Clarence, 6-8 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2, Ireland. Tel: 01 407 0820; theclarence.ie



URBAN DELIGHTS

For a city centre wedding with modern style and class, try Fallon & Byrne on Exchequer Street, Dublin. The beautifully lit function room can fit up to 120 guests, and the wedding planners on site are happy to arrange everything from the cake, to the DJs and flower arrangements and can even recommend photographers, hairdressers and makeup artists. As would be expected, the food is the main draw, and each couple can design their own menu and wines to suit tastes and budgets, while options range from simple canapés to buffet banquets to five course tasting menus. call 01 472 1011 or visit fallonandbyrne.com for more info.

RITZ-CARLTON POWERSCOURT

Set in the garden of Ireland, the Ritz-Carlton in the beautiful Powerscourt estate in Enniskerry is a timelessly elegant venue.

Guest capacity: Choose from various venues at the Ritz-Carlton, catering for anything up to 300 guests.

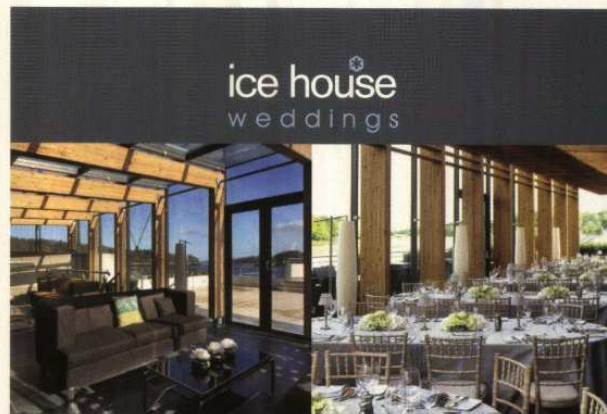
Reception room: The ballroom is impressive, with six crystal chandeliers, Georgian corniced ceilings and silk wall coverings all adding to its elegance. There is also a private secret garden available for hire.

Food: A unique offering in Ireland, couples and their guests can enjoy food from special menus designed by the celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay. Starters like McConnell's Smoked Salmon Carpaccio and mains of Wicklow Lamb form a feast to be remembered.

Accommodation: There are 200 guest rooms available at the hotel, including 124 suites, as well as a luxury spa with 22 treatment rooms and a 20 metre Swarovski crystal-lit pool.

Something special: The Ritz-Carlton has dedicated show room for meeting planners and couples to pre-design their event, while other unique offerings include bridal showers at afternoon tea and martini nights for bachelor parties.

The Ritz-Carlton Powerscourt, Powerscourt Estate, County Wicklow. Tel: 01 274 8888; ritzcarlton.com



MORE CHILLED THAN MANY, COOLER THAN MOST.

A chic boutique hotel and spa in a stunning location on the banks of the River Moy, the Ice House is a delightful fusion of old and new.

It's the perfect location for a wedding with a difference for up to 150 family and friends. And with our in-house dedicated wedding planner to help with your planning, we'll ensure everything runs smoothly.

Call Claire on 096 23500 or email weddings@theicehouse.ie

The Ice House, The Quay, Ballina, Co. Mayo www.theicehouse.ie