



PICTURE PERFECT

Kate Oliver, Head of Events at Hagley Hall, is used to arranging weddings for clients – but how did she fare when she organised her own nuptials at the venue?

James and I got married at 2pm on Saturday June 19 at Hagley Hall. The ceremony was in the Saloon, a most beautiful and historic setting with quintessentially English views of the village church and cricket ground. This was followed by champagne cocktails in the White Hall, serenaded by our pianist on the baby grand piano. We dined in the Long Gallery beneath the wonderful sparkle and glitter of the crystal chandeliers and gilt plasterwork looking out onto the deer park. Picture perfect – but I knew it would be, as organising weddings at Hagley Hall is my job!

When people asked if it was a busman's holiday organising my wedding at the venue where I worked, my reply was that I couldn't think of anything more perfect. Isn't it every bride's dream to see her wedding venue on a daily basis, to be able to experiment with different styles, and to know through firsthand experience what does and doesn't work – not to mention having a superb list of local suppliers whose professionalism, creativity and reliability is 100% guaranteed? Put quite simply, it didn't even cross my mind to look anywhere else.

Using the lavish interiors as inspiration, I set about styling the wedding with a vintage theme that I felt would complement the rococo style décor and plasterwork and bring an air of sophistication that I felt was only fitting for a stately home.

Of course the dress needed to reflect these

design elements and I found the perfect dress by Ronald Joyce at Très Charmante; a beautiful fish tail design in a light gold silk that tapered to the knee with a tulle puddle train. The dress also had a bolero jacket with ruffled colour and sleeves to add a touch of Hollywood glamour.

The dress was supplied with five fabric flowers to be stitched on to complete the design – this gave me an idea for a head dress, and I enrolled on a millinery course! I ordered an extra metre of material and made a selection of roses and flowers, which I added to both the head dress and dress. I was thrilled with the result and of course knew that I was wearing a totally bespoke and unique piece. Once I had the dress the rest simply fell into place.

Lorraine Voss from Floral Fantasies provided the most wonderful bouquet. The dress needed something subtle as it was a statement in its own right, and she chose hand tied vandella roses with a trail of asparagus ferns. Knowing that I was making the headdress, she asked me to supply a few extras for the bouquet; I made some rouleau loops which Lorraine arranged in amongst the flowers to form an attractive frame. The table centres continued the vintage theme with trailing amaranthus, vandella roses, hydrangea, ivory lissianthus, and soft asparagus ferns in tones of ivory and green. This was perfect for the Long Gallery with its ivory painted woodwork and delicate pastel silk wall coverings.

Amadeus dreamt up a menu that fitted the sophistication of the day both in terms of presentation and taste. Their staff were impeccable and the dessert in particular was a real statement dish.





Menu

Lemon and chive crab,
marinated anchovies,
Bloody Mary jelly with a guacamole dressing,
served with a selection of rustic breads

Pan-fried fillet of beef, red pepper relish,
buttered asparagus, fondant potato, and
blueberry jus

Marbled chocolate truffle served with a
shot of white sauce garnished with a white
marshmallow brochette

Coffee & petit fours

Louise Tugwell's photography captured the day beautifully. Her studio is in Harborne but she lives in Belbroughton so she knew the venue well. We wanted to get some unusual shots for the album and as James is a keen biker, we did a series of shots with his motorcycle. Louise understood immediately the look we were after and delivered exquisite imagery that was beyond our expectations – helped in her task by makeup artist Katy Bird. What a transformation – I felt like I had walked off the page of a bridal magazine! ■

Suppliers
Photography: www.louisetugwell.co.uk
Flowers: www.floral-fantasies.net
Catering: www.amadeusfood.co.uk
Katy Bird: www.katybird.co.uk



To arrange a wedding at Hagley Hall, ring Kate on 01562 887290