

Wedding tea party perfection

A resurgence in the popularity of the tea party has resulted in more brides opting to serve guests high tea rather than a formal wedding breakfast.

Having afternoon tea with girlfriends is also becoming more favoured for hen parties – though it is unlikely that bachelors will catch on to the delights of scones with cream and jam and dainties as a stag night theme.

Hotel chain Travelodge asked 6,000 people about their views on afternoon tea and while half associate it with a British holiday treat, one in 10 said that they celebrate a special occasion with the custom. Keith Newton, a tea connoisseur and founder of the website afternoon.tea.co.uk said: "Our evidence shows that taking afternoon tea is increasingly popular. Britons are turning back to their traditional pastime – it is comfort food at an affordable price." And whether you follow the Cornish way of making a cream

scone by spreading jam first, followed by cream, compared to the Devonshire way, where the cream is spread first, the majority (65% polled) chose English Breakfast Tea to accompany afternoon tea as opposed to 'perfumed' varieties.

A summer wedding is a great opportunity to combine the quintessentially vintage and floral themes – some wedding venues will provide an afternoon tea garden party reception, but even a modest garden at home can look the part when decked with a marquee. Maybe a neighbour or family friend will donate their garden for a day as a wedding gift. The essential dressings are heaps of beautiful British flowers such as roses, lavender, sweet pea and big blowsy peonies of all colours. Tables can be set with vintage china and crockery, pretty white doilies, while a marquee can be open-sided and decorated with floral bunting. Serve afternoon tea complete with delicate sandwiches, fruit or lemon drizzle cake and scones and jam, and arrange it all on quaint, vintage style serving plates, and the table was scattered with rose-petals.

Plates, bowls and cake stands of finger sandwiches, scones, tea cakes, strawberries, salads, fruits and cup cakes in the centre of tables that guests can help themselves to. Create a romantic, elegant scene by decorating tables with pretty floral and pastel coloured table cloths and napkins, and decorate the garden of the venue with fresh seasonal flowers.



Celebrate good times with diamonds and butterflies

FOR a wedding with a Royal theme, Fuschia Designs has a new collection of partyware called 'Beautiful Day'. Featuring a butterfly design in white and silver, the theme works as well for any party where a touch of elegance is required.

Fuschia suggests diamond crystals and silver heart confetti to scatter on the tables, ribboned boxes in platinum silver ribbon and white and silver

shot glasses, platinum personalised chocolate bars or personalised candy jars with mint imperials for favours and added decoration. The range includes cake stands, plates, napkins, food flags, cake cases and bunting.

The Fuschia team can help party organisers to design and style any type of celebration. Specialising in weddings, celebrations and corporate events.

The team is led by sisters,

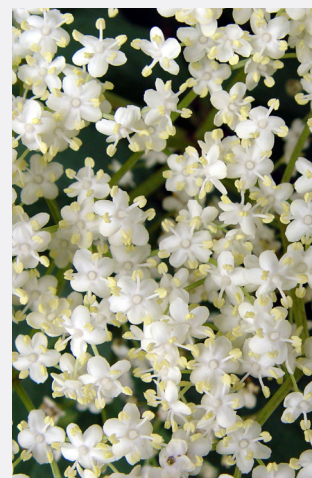
In praise of the peony

PEONIES are perfect flowers for a romantic summer wedding – they can be used for a hand-tied bridal bouquet or for a fabulous centrepiece for the reception. Peony cut flowers range from pure white through to soft pinks and delicate peach to deep pinks and rich, dark reds. The peak season for British-grown peonies is from mid May to the beginning of July, but you may be able to find peonies grown overseas from April through to October and possibly even into November.



Elderflower fizz

COULD there be a better accompaniment to a traditional English garden party wedding than Elderflower Champagne? Mildly alcoholic, Elderflower Champagne is not widely sold ready-made but there are many recipes online and it is quite easy to make at home. The following link is a recipe from River Cottage. Elderflowers are in season in June. The advice is to use glass bottles with swing tops and also to keep an eye on the brew. http://www.channel4.com/food/recipes/chefs/hugh-fearnley-whittingstall/elderflower-champagne-recipe_p_1.html



Royal Wedding factfile

* THE Duke of Edinburgh had two stag parties before his wedding (the first was at the Dorchester, where press were invited). The second saw the groom head to the Belfry Club with a group of his closest friends. The couple were showered with rose petals as they headed off on honeymoon.

* The Queen's wedding cake on November 20, 1947, was 9ft (2.74m) high.

* The Queen was the first British monarch to celebrate a diamond wedding anniversary.

* And among the 2,500 wedding presents were two pairs of bed socks and a home-made tea cosy sent by members of the public. Another present, a piece of crocheted, cotton lace made from yarn personally spun by Mahatma Gandhi was sent on behalf of the Indian Government.

* The royal couple departed for their honeymoon in Broadlands in Hampshire, home of Prince Philip's uncle Earl Mountbatten, from Waterloo station, accompanied by Her Majesty's corgi, Susan.

* For their 60th wedding anniversary, the Royal couple travelled to Malta where they lived as a young married couple from 1949 to 1951 while Prince Philip was stationed there as a serving Royal Naval officer.

* Queen Victoria started the Western world's white wedding dress trend in 1840 – before then, brides simply wore their best dress.

* Queen Victoria's wedding cake weighed 300 pounds.

* The engagement between Princess Elizabeth and Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten



RN was announced on the July 9, 1947. Philip was born Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark. He joined the Royal Navy in 1939 and after the Second World War.

* The fabric for the Queen's dress was woven at Winterthur Silks Limited.

* The flowers decorating the tables at the Queen's wedding were pink and white carnations.

* The grave of the Unknown Warrior was the only stone that was not covered by the special carpet in the Abbey.

* William will be the 11th member of the Royal Family to be married in Westminster Abbey. The first Royal Wedding to take place in the Abbey was when King Henry I married Princess Matilda of Scotland on November 11, 1100.

* The Queen's bridal veil was made of tulle and held by a tiara of diamonds. This tiara was made for Queen Mary in 1919. It was made from re-used diamonds taken from a necklace/tiara purchased by Queen Victoria from Collingwood and Co and was a wedding present for Queen Mary in 1893.

* The Queen's wedding ring was made from a nugget of Welsh gold which came from the Clogau St David's mine.



Nicola Briginshaw and Jacqueline Forbes. Nicola and Jacqueline both have degrees in design, and Nicola said: "We feel our professional and specialised design background really gives us the design edge and with our many years of experience we are able to move with current trends and source, design and produce fashionable and high quality products for the evolving Fuschia customer."

"As well as having a great team to work with who bring a lot of experience and fun it is important to us that our customers receive a high level of service."

To book an appointment call 0118 977 3931, email info@fuschia designs.co.uk

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Daisy made a stylish carriage to sing about



WHEN it comes to making a grand entrance few brides can top that of Leonie Grace Cormack-Cook. A VW camper van called Daisy was her carriage of choice to St Johns Church, Woodley.

Leonie, an opera singer, married Philip John Cook in the autumn. The best man flew in from Seattle and some of her operatic friends sang through the service.

The sun shone and Leonie's son, Sammy was the page

boy. Friend Jon Hillyer was head usher with brothers on both sides, David Cook and Peter Cormack. The camper van was hired from Boutique Campervan in Goring for Daisy's first wedding. The owner thoughtfully put a bottle of bubbly and two glasses in the fridge. The reception was held at Shiplake Memorial Hall where 120 guests were served a three course meal.

John's mum, Janet, made the Smartie-decorated

wedding cake and in the evening they danced to two bands, one an especially assembled ensemble and another called The Cover Up. John said: "Everyone had a great time."

Philip works for PACT (Parents And Children Together) and Leonie is a self-employed singing teacher and is studying with the English National Opera. For singing lessons contact leoniegrace_cormack@hotmail.com

