

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

WEDDINGS AT BALBIRNIE

BEST SCOTTISH WEDDINGS MAGAZINE

'Balbirnie weddings brim with celebration...a guarantee of the ultimate in special occasions...recognition of superlative standards...regarded as an outstanding wedding venue, Balbirnie is much in demand amongst couples beguiled by it's understated luxury and charming ambience'.

CONDE NAST WORLD TRAVELLER

'Widely recognised as Scotland's top privately owned hotel'.

VOGUE

'It is official! Balbirnie House is Scotland's top wedding venue'.

TATLER

'Here is the crème de la crème of Scotland's wedding scene'.

THE SCOTTISH WEDDING DIRECTORY

'Memories are made of this!'

Balbirnie House is a quite unique multi-award winning hotel, which combines understated luxury with superb service and outstanding value. The house is set as the centrepiece of a 400 acre estate and is located only half an hour from Edinburgh, St Andrews, Perth and Dundee.

The hotel is recognised as an absolutely wonderful venue for weddings. The delightful ambience of the old house, Grade A listed circa 1777, combines with the newly created (1999) purpose-built special events areas which have as the main attraction of focus – The Millennium Ballroom, a beautiful venue which can accommodate gatherings of any size from 70-216. With architecture and design very much in sympathy with the original Grade A listed house, following some 5 years of complex planning, the Ballroom was purpose built in 1999 to accommodate special gatherings.

Balbirnie is, as a destination, a truly splendid backdrop which wedding photographers dream about. The house plays host to special events in all shapes and sizes but with one thing in common – a tradition of personal service. Our main wedding promotional material contains lots of helpful information. For example, suggested menus, helpful hints, a comprehensive wine list, and even some detail on protocol.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is our policy to only ever provide a destination for one wedding per day, and with the means to tailor your day to your own precise requirements, our special events department will offer every assistance with planning the fundamental timings and details of the day.

Each and every wedding is quite individual and as such we discuss every wedding on a one to one basis with respective Balbirnie brides, grooms and parents. We have a range of delightful rooms that may or may not be utilised for the various elements involved in making up your successful special day and at the time of initial discussion we will outline the various areas within the hotel which are available, and the best ones applicable to the size of your special event. Once we understand the particular elements of the entire day's proceedings, the management of the hotel would intimate the best choice of areas. On certain occasions room hire charges become applicable. In approximate terms these are outlined herewith but for the avoidance of doubt this detail would form part of any wedding discussion.

In passing, we mention that any wedding that takes place at Balbirnie has the dedicated attention, for planning aspects 'within the hotel,' of an in-house personal Wedding Co-ordinator. Particularly for brides who live out with the local area, we do have many requests for planning services in a wider overall context, and subject to limited availability, if you would like advice and assistance for example with everything from the choice of dress, cars and transport, hairdressers, string quartets, stationary, gifts, etc etc etc, with a complete personalised service for all planning, we would be delighted to quote for this on an individual basis, dependant upon your requirements.

The following pages provide a brief insight into the details of planning a wedding. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

HAVING THE WEDDING SERVICE AT BALBIRNIE

We offer the opportunity to actually have the wedding service within Balbirnie. The ceremony can be of either a religious, humanist or civil format.

For ceremonies up to 100 guests-

The Long Gallery is the main 'central' room of the original Grade A listed 1777 house. With Georgian lunette windows, ceilings which have an illusion of being domed, and of course the trompe d'oeuil (trick of the eye) 3 dimensional plasterwork, The Gallery is quite an atmospheric room and works very well indeed for ceremonies.

Room hire charge £700.00

For ceremonies between 100 and 150 guests-

The Orangery was added to Balbirnie in 1999 as part of the Millennium Extensions. With a mirrored tinted glass ceiling, floor to ceiling lunetted Georgian windows, an air of tranquillity and views out to the surrounding parkland, The Orangery also works very well for ceremonies.

Room hire charge £800.00

THE MILLENIUM BALLROOM

When used in association with other reception areas within the hotel, i.e. as the venue for the main banquet, there are no applicable room hire charges for The Ballroom.

The vast majority of wedding meals at Balbirnie are for 90 to 120 daytime guests. Our absolute maximum numbers for a meal in The Ballroom are 216.

Allowing space for a dance floor and band, there can be physical seating for up to 180 guests. We would suggest that our maximum capacity for the evening celebrations is no more than 250 guests.

RECEPTION MINIMUM NUMBERS/CAPACITIES

In routine circumstances the minimum wedding numbers (for daytime adult guests) are in the region of 70 covers. Weddings at Balbirnie can take place each and every day of the week. On certain days throughout the year, we do have a restriction on minimum numbers attending the wedding meal, as follows-

OCTOBER TO APRIL

FRIDAYS 90

SATURDAYS 100

SUNDAYS 70

MAY TO SEPTEMBER

FRIDAYS 100

SATURDAYS 100

SUNDAYS 100

(On these dates, if we agree to do a wedding with daytime numbers of less than the numbers stated then a surcharge prevails equivalent to £52.50 per person.)

EXCLUSIVE USE FOR YOUR SPECIAL DAY

Combine a quite unique prospect with what is also *'a really great value deal'* for what is quite simply the ultimate in private occasions. The keys to the house are yours!

What we propose is, subject to availability-

Any bridal party who would like to take over Balbirnie exclusively must be happy to fill all bedrooms at 100% occupancy at special accommodation rates as follows-

April to December - £70.00 per person, bed and breakfast

January to March - £55.00 per person, bed and breakfast

(Bridal parties may often also choose to subsidise the rate for accommodation rates.)

There are no upgrade supplements, and we will ask the bridal party to help us allocate standard rooms (17), single room (1), deluxe rooms (8), family suites (2) and four posters (2).

CHARGES FOR EXCLUSIVE USE ARE AS FOLLOWS-

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY £2,500.00

FRIDAY £4,000.00

SATURDAY £4,500.00

SUNDAY £2,500.00

(Please note that ceremony hire charges also still apply.)

THE INITIAL RECEPTION

One or more of our public rooms may be integrated into the wedding reception, depending on numbers. We will outline the various opportunities during final discussions. In routine circumstances each day we deal with a wide variety of clients and their respective requirements. Naturally, our endeavour is to integrate all of these proceedings to ensure each and every guest enjoys the particular occasion being held at Balbirnie.

THE SELECTION OF MENUS

At an early stage, and as the menu element of the day is being considered, there is a huge choice in the selection of dishes that formulate the menu. As the arrangements evolve, the choice will be made and menu selected. For all large gatherings at Balbirnie the final selection would produce a pre-set menu, for avoidance of doubt this means there is not a multi-choice option. The reasons behind this are varied. Importantly, our wedding menus are cosmopolitan, universally appealing, and tried and tested over the course of many special gatherings.

In simplistic terms our endeavour is to ensure the highest of standard of quality and an efficiency of service. In other words, we endeavour to offer to a large banquet a similar experience to dining in our restaurant.

And of course, if on the day anyone does express a wish to have something else, rare thought that is, then we are readily available to assist.

In mentioning the above we also integrate into detailed discussions the need for specialist menus to cover guests who may be vegetarians, vegan, require gluten free menus etc. And of course we are delighted to do special menus for children... (usually 3 courses at £13.95 and consisting of melon, chicken goujons with chips, and ice cream with chocolate sauce to follow...)

In passing, should you wish to sample a selected menu, it is possible to do this on a set menu basis for a minimum of 4 people. This must be pre-arranged with the wedding co-ordinator. Sample menus are charged at full price to the main account.

THE SELECTION OF WINES

Our banqueting wine list offers a wide selection of wines at varying prices and the Special Events Co-ordinator will be pleased to elaborate and explain more fully the advantages of one wine over another.

For the avoidance of doubt we do not have a facility for clients to supply wines, champagnes etc on a corkage basis.

PRICING STRUCTURE

Our pricing structure runs each year from 1 April to 31 March and there may or may not be inflationary increases from year to year depending on the prevailing economic circumstances that each of us have to contend with. The prices within this pack are valid until 31 March 2008.

If, for example, you are booking a wedding 2/3 years ahead of the actual day the potential of increase should be encompassed when discussing the detail with our Special Events Co-ordinator.

ACCOMMODATION AT BALBIRNIE

(rates applicable until March 2008)

Special rates for all guests on the night of the wedding ...

We usually initially set aside at a special discounted rate, 8 of our 30 bedrooms for the main bridal party. In due course we will ask the bride to provide us with the rooming list for this. Contained within this allocation are usually a Bridal four poster suite, 2 deluxe rooms and 5 standard rooms. All rates are inclusive of full Scottish breakfast and VAT. We can however book as many rooms as required at the same rates if more are needed.

The current rates that prevail and which are applicable on the evening of the wedding only, are as follows:

Standard Double/Twin Room	£140.00 per room
Deluxe Double/Twin Room	£180.00 per room
Bridal Four Poster Suite	£210.00 per room, including champagne!
Standard Single Room	£95.00 per room
Deluxe Single Room	£135.00 per room

Please note that your guests are also able to book directly at Balbirnie with *the same special rates* as detailed above, subject to availability.

2 NIGHT ACCOMMODATION PACKAGE

A great idea especially for those travelling from afar...

Again subject to availability, we are also able to offer a special 2 night accommodation package for those guests wishing to arrive the night before the wedding. This rate includes dinner the night before the big day, accommodation for 2 nights and breakfast on 2 mornings:

Standard Double/Twin Room	£350.00 per room
Deluxe Double/Twin Room	£430.00 per room
Standard Single Room	£225.00 per room
Deluxe Single Room	£305.00 per room

Please note that to avoid disappointment, we strongly advise you to book any rooms required for the night before the wedding as soon as possible.

CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT TIMES

-Check-in time for residents is from 2.00 pm onwards.

-Checkout time for residents is routinely 11.00 am.

Balbirnie House is unfortunately unable to provide any facilities for early check-in to bedrooms.

Please note that if for example, the bridal party is intending to get ready at Balbirnie on the morning of the wedding itself, then to guarantee access to rooms prior to 2pm they must therefore be reserved for the night before.

OUR RECOMMENDED SUPPLIERS

We do have a list of associates who have provided aspects of service for weddings over the course of time. These range from pipers to pianists, cake makers to chauffeurs, and we consider each and every one of them to provide a great standard. These are our own recommendations and as such it is left entirely to the bride and groom to determine if they can assist with the big day.

Note regarding hire of special table linen, chair covers and table accessories

Please note that Balbirnie provides white linen table cloths and napkins as standard for all our weddings. For brides wishing to hire specialised chair covers for the ceremony and wedding meal (see our Suppliers List for recommended suppliers), we do charge a £1.00 per chair charge if Balbirnie are required to put on the chairs covers/ties. Please also note that we have a maximum of 115 armless chairs available at Balbirnie. If your final guests numbers are greater than this, you will hence need to hire additional chairs.

EXTRAS

For all those 'special little things' that make the difference (favours, candles, gifts etc. etc. etc.) we would appreciate if these could be delivered prior to the special occasion, on the day before between 4.30- 6.30 pm, and in turn, given that we have no storage facilities, any leftover items must be collected/uplifted the morning after the wedding.

CONFETTI!

In passing, it would be very helpful indeed if you could advise your guests that Balbirnie House asks that if confetti is to be thrown, then to respect the environment and park policies, please use either rice or flower petals. Please note that confetti cannot be used within the house itself.

CHOCOLATE FOUNTAINS

We have an in-house chocolate fountain! Please refer to our menu section.

SPECIAL TOUCHES

As well as providing the pre-planning services of a dedicated in-house wedding co-ordinator, we include all the following-

- Red carpet welcome
- Printing of place cards and personalised menus
- Table plans
- Master of ceremonies facility for the special day itself
- Cake stand and knife
- Reception room hire (dependent upon numbers)
- Banquet management

We can also provide assistance and advice on the following aspects of the day, from both in-house and referral services for-

- Wedding cakes
- Flowers
- Entertainment- the piper, the pianist and the band
- Beauty

YOUR INITIAL SHOWROUND AT BALBIRNIE

-A member of our management team is available to assist you in considering the initial planning stages of your special day. However, we would appreciate it very much if you would telephone for an appointment before visiting for a showround. This would enable us to devote our full attention to your arrangements and would also avoid inconvenience to yourself should you come when we are already engaged in other business.

-Please be advised that we never provide client showrounds when an actual wedding reception is taking place at Balbirnie.

-Appointments can usually be scheduled within one month. We will have set aside an hour or so to discuss your wedding and to show you around the building.

-Please do let us know if you would like us to reserve a table for lunch or dinner following your showround of the House.

THE WEDDING DAY ITSELF

IN-HOUSE CEREMONY TIMINGS

- The Groom, Best Man and Ushers should arrive circa 12.30pm, ready to welcome the guests.
 - Guests can take a 'refreshment' prior to the ceremony.
 - Ushers should seat guests (and if applicable hand out orders of service) 10 minutes before the ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- (Please note that the earliest time we can host a ceremony at Balbirnie is 2.00pm, and on a Sunday it is 2.30pm)

TRADITIONAL RECEPTION PROCEDURE...

ARRIVAL AT THE HOTEL, circa 2.30/ 3.00pm.

If the ceremony is out with the hotel, the photographer will normally be first to arrive at Balbirnie. The bride and groom will then arrive, closely followed by the remainder of the wedding party and guests.

WELCOME DRINKS

It is customary to have drinks available for guests on arrival and this may be champagne, sparkling wine, fruit punch (summer), mulled wine (winter) or alternatively Pimms, soft drinks, whisky and wine. Weather permitting; drinks can be taken either in the gardens, or in an appropriate area of the hotel. With flowering borders, striped lawns and dark green sunshades, the gardens are just stunning in the summer months. Each season of the year offers something different at Balbirnie.

PHOTOGRAPHY 3-4pm

It will normally take approximately one hour to have all photographs taken, either outside in the gardens or inside in the various lovely rooms. In passing, we mention that it works very well indeed if the bridal party pre-arrange a running order for group shots, and agree this in advance with the photographer. **In addition, it is also very helpful if the Best Man and Ushers have this information and are on hand to assist the photographer with who is in which shot.**

Photographers naturally have their own particular ways of working but all acknowledge that Balbirnie provides a wonderful setting for this important element of the proceedings.

THE RECEIVING LINE 4-4.45pm

It is generally accepted that the principal wedding group, which includes the Bride and Groom, Bride's parents or representatives, Groom's parents or representatives, Best Man and Bridesmaids, will formally greet all guests in an official handshaking ceremony. Guests in turn offer compliments. Quite apart from anything else, this lovely part of the proceedings provides the opportunity for everyone on the top table to physically meet every single guest.

CAKE CUTTING 4.45pm

Immediately after this, guests proceed to the cake cutting ceremony during which an appropriate toast drink should be offered. The master of ceremonies will usually announce the cutting of the cake.

THE WEDDING MEAL 5.15-7.15pm

The master of ceremonies will announce the meal and once all the guests have located their seats they will be asked to 'be upstanding to receive the bride and groom.' Usually the bride and groom are piped to the top table. Grace can be said either by the minister, or by a guest.

TOASTS AND SPEECHES

At the end of the meal, following the service of sparkling wine or champagne, speeches should commence. The master of ceremonies usually announces the first speech, and it is nowadays entirely appropriate for the individual speaking next and those thereafter to take their turn unannounced.

1. First to speak is traditionally THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE, who at the end of his speech will propose a toast to "THE BRIDE AND GROOM".
2. Second to speak is THE BRIDEGROOM who after replying to the first toast will then speak and at the end of his speech will propose a toast to "THE BRIDESMAIDS".
3. Thirdly, the BEST MAN will reply on behalf of the bridesmaids and will then make his speech. After he has finished speaking he can then read any selected cards and telegrams.

In this day and age, although it is rare, the bride may also wish to say a few words!!

THE CELEBRATIONS CONTINUE

Depending on the programme for the day, the speeches will normally finish around 7.30/45pm, (any evening-only guests should arrive at this time). If this is the case, the first dance will usually be around 8.15/8.30pm, and dancing will continue thereafter.

After the meal, both the Ballroom bar, and the adjacent Lobby bar will of course be set aside for the exclusive use of you and your guests. For your convenience, in order that your party does not, as such, become 'fragmented' during the evening celebrations, we do not provide bar service to wedding guests in our 'upstairs areas'.

When evening guests arrive an arrival drink is usually offered. These would normally be served from the Ballroom landing as guests make their way to the Ballroom.

EVENING BUFFET

This is served around 10pm. We always specifically advise to cater for the numbers present, contrary to what some wedding magazines advise these days!!!

On the odd occasion when we have followed instructions and catered for less than those present, then we have ended up with a queue of guests holding empty plates!!!

DEPARTURE FOR THE HONEYMOON

It is always a nice idea to finish the evening celebrations with 'Auld Lang Syne' with the bride and groom present, thus allowing conclusions on a high note! (usually either midnight or 12.30am).

For the avoidance of doubt, no access is given to the Bridal Suite to anyone other than the bride and groom!

LATE BAR FACILITY

A late bar facility is available solely for resident guests in The Library Bar until 2.00am, with charges being made to room accounts only.

BRIDAL PARTY RESPONSIBILITIES (as tradition has it..)

BRIDE'S MOTHER

- Helps book reception as early as possible.
- Arrange printing of invitations.
- Send invitations.
- Order wedding cake and cake boxes.
- Hire photographer.
- Arrange florist for church and reception.
- Arrange display of presents.
- Hire cars.
- Contact local newspaper for announcement.
- Arrange entertainment for the evening.
- Hire video company if required.

BRIDE

- Choose Chief Bridesmaid and Bridesmaids.
- Select dress for Bridesmaids and yourself.
- Book hair appointment.
- List wedding presents preferred.
- Choose favours, if required.

BRIDESMAIDS

- Choose clothes with Bride.
- Help Bride with delivery of all peripheral items to Balbirnie on day before.
- Help bride to dress on day.
- Chief Bridesmaid takes charge of Bride's bouquet during ceremony.
- Ensure arrangements are all in order for the end of the evening and/ or the departure of the Bride and Groom.
- Oversee removal of all peripheral items morning after.

BRIDEGROOM

- Arrange ceremony.
- Choose Best Man.
- Buy the ring.
- Arrange kilt or morning dress.
- Order flowers for Bride, Bridesmaids and Mothers.
- Arrange buttonholes for himself and Best Man.
- Obtain Registrar's Certificate if needed.
- Arrange travel for honeymoon.
- Arrange for cars to and from the church.
- Prepare response to "the Bride and Bridegroom" Toast.
- Choose gifts for Bridesmaids and Best Man.

RESPONSIBILITIES (as tradition has it)... contd

- BEST MAN

- Make sure Groom arrives at church on time!
- Look after the rings.
- Organise cars from the church.
- Pay Church fees on behalf of the Bridegroom.
- Liaise with Master of Ceremonies on arrival at Balbirnie.
- To hand and assisting Ushers during 'group photography'.
- Reply to "the Bridesmaid" Toast.
- Read telegrams and congratulation cards.
- Organise transport for the Bride and Groom for departure for honeymoon.
- Return the Bridegroom's and your kilt or morning wear.
- Ensure presents and top tier of the wedding cake are kept safely.
- Liaise with Banquet manager as the celebrations continue through the evening.
- Ensure arrangements are all in order for the end of the evening and/ or the departure of the Bride and Groom.

BRIDE'S FATHER

- Double check transport arrangements.
- Order kilt or morning dress.
- Escort the Bride to the Church.
- Make speech and propose toast to bride and groom.

BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS, PAYMENT AND CONDITIONS

1. In order to secure your date and allow us to make appropriate arrangements, we would ask for a non-refundable deposit of £750.00, which will be deducted from the final account. In turn we will then issue confirmation, along with a letter of agreement, which must be signed and returned to us within 7 days.
2. Approximately 4 months prior to the wedding we would like to discuss final details.
3. 6 weeks prior to the wedding, a pro-forma invoice will be forwarded to you and we would request that 75% of the estimated account is settled at least 3 weeks prior to the day.
4. Two weeks prior to the wedding, we request proposed final numbers and table plan.
5. The final numbers attending a wedding should be given two days before the event. This will be the number charged to the account, unless there is a subsequent increase.
6. Receipt of a deposit constitutes a binding contract between hotel and client, as laid down in hotel policy.
7. Tariffs commence on 1 April each year running for a year. These prices prevail for any event happening in that particular year. In general terms only a change in government tax (VAT) would affect these, although we reserve the right to increase with, of course, prior notification. Put into context, this would be a rare event. Any forthcoming event booked in advance but coming within a particular forthcoming year should take account of potential increases and the likelihood of these can be indicated at the time of booking.
8. Initial deposits and main account settlements via credit card incur a surcharge of 3%.
9. In the unfortunate event that circumstances arise which necessitate a client cancelling a wedding that is confirmed to be held at Balbirnie, our cancellation policy is as per our Hotel Policy and as such, both initial deposits and 75% pre-payments are non-refundable. Please ask us if you would like to obtain a routine copy of our Hotel Policy for referral. We recommend that wedding insurance be considered for all weddings at Balbirnie.
10. Balbirnie will not be held responsible for any personal items lost after a wedding, or for any wedding accessories left at Balbirnie after a wedding, unless the items have been given to a member of staff for safe keeping with their agreement, or we have agreed by prior arrangement to store certain items.
11. We are very happy to offer the facility to sample your chosen menu prior to the wedding itself. This is usually conducted in our restaurant and the menu will be charged per person at 4 covers minimum at the actual menu price specified in this pack.
12. Our published prices for weddings have no applied service charges, and guests therefore often ask us about gratuities. For the avoidance of doubt, we do of course happily accept donations into the brigade gratuity fund, with all proceeds being divided twice yearly and equally between all members. Donations are entirely at the discretion of the client.
13. Guests are asked to remember that Balbirnie House is a Grade 'A' listed building, and to therefore treat the house with due consideration. You will be responsible for the orderly conduct of your guests and shall ensure the house is in no way jeopardised.
14. Balbirnie House reserves the right to withdraw any bar facility, if necessary.

As a final point, one and all we really look forward to working with you as we plan your special day. Best wishes from the team.