

Four of the best English hotels for weddings, by Francesca Syz

email travel.magazine@telegraph.co.uk

BAILIFFSCOURT HOTEL & SPA WEST SUSSEX

Built by the Guinness Family in the 1920s using medieval stone from a nearby ruin, Bailiffscourt, which has its own Norman chapel, is a labyrinth of open fires, flagstone floors and Gothic mullioned windows, and is perfect for an atmospheric winter wedding. There are 39 bedrooms shared between the Medieval House, the Thatch House, the Court and the Coach Houses, the Gate House and the Moat House. You can have a civil ceremony in the Music Room (for up to 60 guests) and/or a blessing in the chapel, which has space for 40 people seated and up to 65 standing. Take over the whole estate and have the option of a marquee for 300 on the grounds. If you're not doing that, be sure to book the Baylies Suite, which has a vaulted ceiling, four-poster bed and wood-burning stove, for the wedding night. There is also an excellent spa for before and after treatments, with indoor and outdoor pools. The hotel is so close to the sea – a bracing walk on Climping Beach is a brilliant hangover cure – that you can hear it when the windows are open. **The details** Doubles from £225. Call the events co-ordinator for more information (01903-723511; hshotels.co.uk).



ROYAL CRESCENT HOTEL BATH There are few more romantic settings than Bath, and within the city itself locations don't get much better than the Royal Crescent, one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in Britain. The 45-room Royal Crescent Hotel, the city's only member of Relais & Châteaux, inhabits the two central buildings of the crescent, has a fantastic restaurant, spa and an enormous fairytale garden, ideal for champagne receptions in fine weather. Through the garden, in the most secluded part of the hotel, is a series of converted coach houses and stables. One is home to the award-winning Dower House restaurant, which works brilliantly for a wedding reception for up to 80 people. For the wedding ceremony itself, there are a number of grand reception rooms to choose from, including the Sir Percy Blakeney Suite, the Drawing Room and the Montagu Room. The hotel can organise all aspects of the big day, including fun extras such as a jaunt down the river aboard a 1920s launch, the Lady Sophina. **The details** Doubles from £245. Call the events manager for more information (01225-823333; royalcrescent.co.uk).

THE LANGHAM LONDON

If it's a classic London wedding you're after, look no further than the Langham on Portland Place, Europe's first 'Grand Hotel', built in 1865. Should you be after a church wedding or blessing, the John Nash-designed All Souls is immediately across the street. The hotel also has a wedding licence, so the ceremony can be carried out on the premises. After an £80 million overhaul, the hotel is looking better than ever, with new suites ideal for the wedding night (of which the most fabulous is the Infinity Suite), a beautifully restored Grand Ballroom for the mother of all receptions, a newly created space ideal for a champagne kick-off and, imminently, a brand-new spa. There are numerous wedding packages available, offering treats from a moonlit champagne tour of London in one of the Langham's fleet, to personally embroidered bathrobes. Looking ahead, a spacious, tucked-away courtyard, one of the oldest private gardens in the West End, will be available for alfresco receptions from summer 2011. It is named Middleton Garden, in memory of the late gardening broadcaster Cecil Middleton. **The details** Doubles from £255. Call the events department for more information (020-7636 1000; london.langhamhotels.co.uk).



THE OLDE BELL BERKSHIRE The great thing about the atmospheric Olde Bell in Hurley is that there is space to accommodate gatherings of up to 180 people. This 12th-century coaching inn, beautifully re-imagined by Ilse Crawford for Dhillon Hotels, now has 47 stylish bedrooms divided among the main inn, which has a huge meadow garden behind it, and several additional buildings. Two have a licence to hold civil ceremonies: the Victorian Malt House (capacity 40) which has 14 bedrooms (five are suites with roll-top baths), five private function spaces, including a music room with a grand piano and its own private bar, and a pretty cottage garden ideal for summer cocktails; then there's the oak-beamed Tithe Barn, which also has a civil ceremony licence and a capacity of 120. The wedding menus feature local home-cooked food and cocktails such as elderflower royal or pomegranate fizz, depending on the season. The team are passionate about tailor-making the experience – whether it's finding you a string quartet or arranging an appearance by your favourite band. **The details** Doubles from £129. Call the wedding planner for more information (01628-821705; theoldebell.co.uk). **Next week: family-friendly grandes dames**