

A GUIDE TO RURAL WEDDINGS IN SOUTH ENGLAND

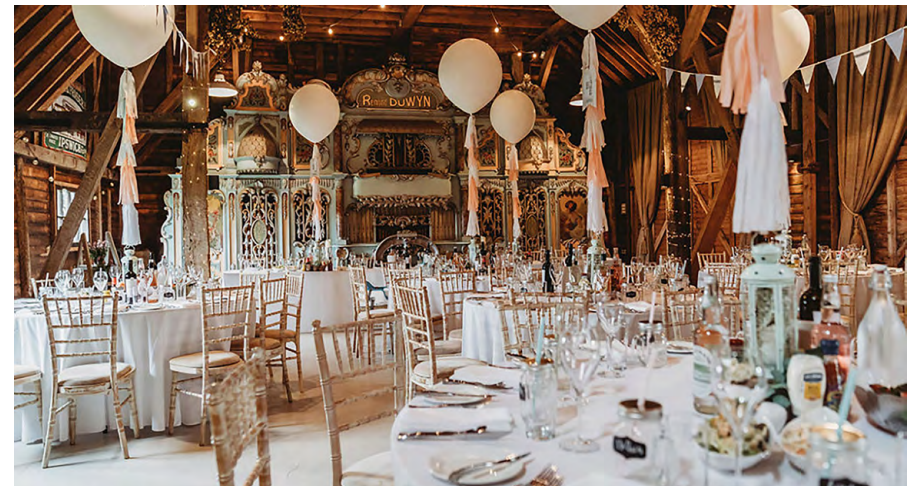
With a countryside made up of ancient woodlands, magical national parks, sweeping vineyards and heritage gardens, as well as a coastline teeming with miles and miles of sandy beaches giving way to aquamarine waters, South England stuns with its exceptional natural beauty. The ideal destination for a rural wedding, this idyllic section of the UK is adorned in luxurious country estates, rustic barns and a whole host of marquees and tipis, grounded to your choice of orchard, lawn, beach or even moat island. Here we take a look at four regions in South England to find out what they have to offer couples, with a spotlight on a specific venue for each one.

KENT

Described as the garden of England, Kent truly amazes with its exceptional landscapes ranging from the majestic White Cliffs of Dover to fertile farmlands and rolling green hills. Within its sea-lined borders, you will find beautiful coastal stretches dotted with charming beach towns, cultivated country estates housing fruit-laden orchards, and numerous vineyards responsible for some of the nation's finest ales and wines. Whether it's a quintessential wedding on the coast, a charming barn affair within expansive manor grounds, or nuptials in the heart of cathedral city Canterbury, Kent is sure to deliver, and then some.

PRESTON COURT

Historic Preston Court is a 600-acre secluded private estate and farm offering three incredibly unique venues: a 17th century barn, a magical moated island, and a 12th century rural church. Surrounded by glistening lakes and meticulously manicured gardens, Preston Court houses many eclectic features within its grounds, including vintage mechanical organs, carousel rides and steam engines. The enchanting Kent Barn seats up to 120 and is very versatile, decorated to suit a variety of themes and styles. Its mighty oak doors expand along its front, opening to the south-facing barnyard, which is transformed at night with fairy lights, a whirling carousel, music and dancing. Those who opt for a ceremony on the stunning lake island can expect vows exchanged beneath an ancient yew tree and weeping birch, followed by champagne served right on the lawn. Packages begin at £7,200 and include a dedicated and experienced wedding day coordinator.



HAMPSHIRE

The perfect blend of city, coast and country, Hampshire is blessed with the beauty of two national parks (South Downs and New Forest), is steeped in history and heritage, and boasts a thriving culture. Once the home of the regal and rich, this south-eastern county played host to Kings Alfred the Great, Knut and William the Conqueror, each of whom left their mark in the number of historic buildings and estates that adorn the region. In Portsmouth's harbour, visitors will find Lord Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar. While the HMS Victory is not available for wedding hire, its close neighbour HMS Warrior is licensed for civil ceremonies and all-day celebrations, with both historic ships providing the ultimate photo opportunities.

RHINEFIELD HOUSE

Set deep within the ever-green New Forest on 40 acres of private grounds, Rhinefield House is a stunning 19th century country estate blending Tudor and Gothic architecture expertly. The property's Grand Hall offers a replica of London's Westminster Hall, complete with intricate carvings, golden chandeliers, and impressive 20ft windows providing unparalleled views across the grounds. Hurst Castle offers an alternative venue, overlooking the topiary orchard, or for those who prefer to immerse themselves in the alluring environs entirely, the Forest Garden Doric Temple is the ideal choice. Understanding that this special celebration is more than just about one day, Rhinefield House accommodates multi-day visits providing sparkling afternoon teas, relaxing pool days and elaborate dinners for the happy couple and their nearest and dearest to enjoy.

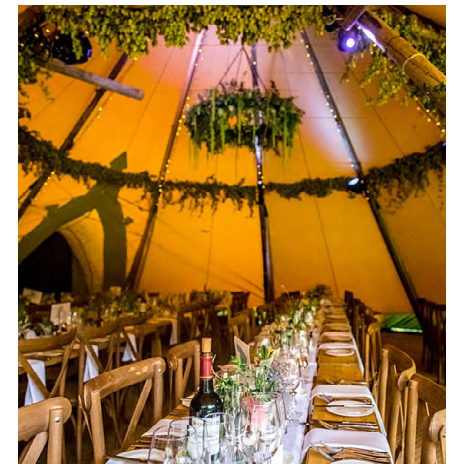


SURREY

The large proportion of Surrey's magical landscape is made up of enchanting forests and woodlands, as well as acres and acres of rolling hills and valleys. It further houses many of the nation's best gardens, the result of some of England's most esteemed landscapers, along with charming market towns full of quaint pubs, restaurants and boutiques. Couples can tie the knot in a number of grand Georgian manors and Victorian mansions, or head to the cluster of beautiful vineyards situated in the Surrey Hills (a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) for a celebration filled with endless glasses of award-winning wine and (often) premium spa therapies.

BUSBRIDGE LAKES

Set across 40 acres of parkland, Busbridge Lakes is a Grade II heritage garden renowned for its follies, grottoes and magnificent specimen trees. Hidden in its own private valley, this space of exquisite natural beauty boasts three lakes, ample nature trails and plenty of flora and fauna – including one of the largest collections of waterbirds in the country. Busbridge Lakes offers a stunning marquee/tipi wedding venue sited on the main lawn of Canal Lake within its exquisite bird sanctuary. With panoramic views no matter where you turn, the venue promises photos to be cherished for a lifetime. Both the marquee and tipi seat up to 200 guests, and while there is no accommodation available on-site, several hotels and B&Bs are located nearby, ensuring the perfect option according to individual budgets and needs.





EAST SUSSEX

Whether you're after a vibrant and lively celebration amidst unique settings such as King George IV's opulent seaside retreat in Brighton, or a more private ceremony set in the cobbled citadel of Rye or on the serene boating lakes of Eastbourne, East Sussex promises an endless list of options, perfectly suited to individual budgets and needs. The county wows with its painting-like vistas and wealth of activity options – ideal for keeping the wedding party busy in the lead up to the special day. World-class spas further adorn the area, offering an array of treatments and facilities for the ultimate pamper session.



THE GALLIVANT

Finalist in the Beautiful South Awards 'Best Wedding Venue' 2020 and The Guardian's Top 10 Seaside Hotels, The Gallivant is the ultimate coastal venue, offering a blast of fresh air, a breathtaking beach, and a dream team dedicated to coordinating the perfect wedding. The Camber-based venue is licensed for both marriages and civil partnerships, and can host between 20 and 80 guests for a more intimate ceremony and celebration. Larger groups can opt to exclusively book the entire hotel, including its 20 bedrooms and Beach Hut mini spa, while smaller ones can choose between the Cabin or Summer House, complete with stylish, modern décor and stunning views over the towering sand dunes. The Gallivant also provides a mouthwatering three-course meal, curated using premium, locally-sourced ingredients.

