

Astor Wing and Castle Ceremony Only Wedding Booking Procedures, Info & FAQs

The private and exclusive-use area of the Astor Wing, where we are able to accommodate wedding ceremonies followed by drinks receptions, has a standard of decoration and comfort that retains the warm, relaxed feel of a family home.

The Tudor Suite, located within The Astor Wing, is a series of three inter-connecting rooms all of which have impressive wood paneling, leaded windows with views of the Castle, Moat, and Gardens. These rooms are licensed for Civil Wedding Ceremonies and can also accommodate the drinks reception.

During the winter months when we are closed to the general public and from 6:30pm throughout the year, wedding ceremonies can be held in the Castle itself with the ceremony taking place in the magnificent and atmospheric Castle Inner Hall.

These venues offer unsurpassable photo opportunities both inside as well as in the magnificent award-winning gardens.

The atmosphere is that of a cosy and peaceful country manor with a team of professional and discreet staff. We ask clients to note the importance of working closely with your Event Coordinator to establish arrival and departure times, pre-selected menus, wines/champagnes, timings etc. and we ask that all the above details are confirmed at least two months prior to the function.

We ask guests to note that for a Ceremony only wedding, the Astor Wing will not be offered on an exclusive use basis, and therefore bedrooms in the Astor Wing may be open for to B&B guests to book and stay and their check in time will be from 3.00pm.

We take pride in offering outstanding service to each and every one of our clients from the first contact through to departure at the end of your function.

PLEASE ENSURE ALL YOUR GUESTS ARE AWARE OF OUR OUT OF HOURS TELEPHONE NUMBER:
01732 861 703.

Should they encounter any problems with arrival or access on the day of your wedding the Event Manager can be reached on the above telephone number.

What is the booking procedure?

Provisional:

A provisional booking can be held for a maximum of ten working days before confirmation. If no communication is made by the client within this time the provisional booking will be removed from the diary.

Confirmation:

In order to confirm your provisional booking, we ask that the Hever Castle Booking Terms and Conditions are read, signed and returned along with a non-refundable confirmation deposit of £2,000.00.

Payments:

Any remaining balance is due in a final deposit invoice eight weeks / 2 months prior to your day.

Meetings:

Should you wish to re-visit the venue with any of your suppliers, this should be conducted during the week and is by appointment only. Naturally this can only take place when we do not have another event in-house. You will have a final meeting with your wedding coordinator approximately eight weeks prior to your wedding date. This must take place Monday – Friday between the hours of 10:30am – 3:00pm.

Min Numbers:

We have a minimum catering requirement of 25 adult guests at £20.00 + VAT per person.

Final Numbers:

Please note that final chargeable numbers must be provided 5 clear working days before the event, and this will be the minimum number of guests that will be charged for on the day.

Cancellation:

Any cancellations received after confirmation will be processed as detailed in the Booking Terms and Conditions.

Civil Ceremony information

Kent County Council has granted Hever Castle a license permitting the regular solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships.

Booking:

Once the event coordinator has received copy of the signed Booking Terms and Conditions and confirmation deposit, a Ceremony Booking Form will be sent to you which you will need to complete and return back to Hever Castle. Hever Castle will reserve the registrars for the date, time, and location with Tunbridge Wells Registry Office. Having received the request from Hever Castle, the Registry Office will contact you directly to take a deposit and arrange a meeting where you will give Notice of Marriage and discuss the content of the ceremony. Please note payments are to be made directly, by you, to the Registry Office.

Ceremony:

Civil Ceremonies are licensed to take place on any day of the week throughout the year except on the 25th & 26th December between 10.00am and 8.00pm.

Room Hire:

The Ceremony Only room hire is for a 3 hour duration only, between the hours of 12.00pm midday and 3.00pm. It is only possible to hold a ceremony only in the Tudor Suite on a Sunday or Monday, any time of the year. Bookings can be taken up to a year in advance on a Sunday or Monday and four months in advance for a Saturday. Please note the maximum capacity for the ceremony room is 48 guests seated and 12 standing.

Music:

We are happy to provide a CD system or IPOD docking station in the ceremony room, free of charge, however we do ask that one of the wedding guests operates the IPOD during the ceremony. If you would like any live music such as a Harpist or String Quartet, please refer to our recommended suppliers list for musicians that have previously performed at Hever Castle. Full details of any musicians booked by the client must be given to the venue in advance e.g. number of musicians, instruments, and times they are booked to play. Please note the registrar will discuss what music can be played during the ceremony as no religious content is allowed.

Other Information

Accessibility:

The Tudor Suite Dining Room within The Astor Wing is a non-accessible room as there are two steps down into this room.

Stationary:

Hever Castle can provide 'Reserved' signs with Hever branding for your wedding ceremony should you need to reserve a few seats. Your Ushers or other members of the wedding party are traditionally responsible for ensuring people are seated correctly.

Set Up:

Hever Castle will provide tables, chairs, linen, glasses, crockery and cutlery for your ceremony and drinks reception.

Chair Covers:

Hever Castle do not provide chair covers however you are welcome to have an external supplier supply these for you if required. Please refer to our recommended suppliers list for contact information.

Catering:

A selection of Canapés can be tray served with Champagne or you can choose a light finger buffet with wine and soft drinks. We require a minimum spend of £20.00 inc VAT per person based on a minimum of 25 persons. Your event coordinator can provide you with current menus so you can make your choices.

Beverages:

All additional beverages ordered on the wedding day within the Astor Wing will be added to the Bride & Groom's main wedding account. There are no facilities for a cash/card bar for guests to settle their own drinks.

Alcohol License:

Hever Castle is licensed to serve alcohol until 12 midnight throughout the week and weekends to non-residential guests.

Accommodation within the Astor Wing + Anne Boleyn's Wing

Bedrooms:

Within the private, residential area of the Astor Wing we have 18 en-suite bedrooms. We also have a number of z-beds/sofa beds/travel cots. Prices for these are available on request. It is not permissible for guests to bring additional z-beds/camp beds for children to sleep on.

After your exclusive use has finished (12.00-3.00pm), should you require bedrooms, provided they are available to book, rooms can be booked via our B&B coordinators, however you will not have exclusive use of the wing and there may be other residential guests in house and check in will be available from 3.00pm. It will not be possible to arrive earlier to get ready. Any preparations must be done 'off-site' with an arrival time of 12.00pm midday.

Room Rates:

Our B&B tariff is available online, via the Hever Castle website. A full English or continental breakfast is included within the accommodation rate. This will take place from 08.00-09.30 the following morning.

Check-in:

Rooms are available for check-in from 3.00pm on arrival and check-out at 10.30am on the day of departure.

Changing Rooms:

If changing rooms are required these will be charged at £175.00 per room. Arrival and departure times must be agreed with the venue prior to your event taking place.

Wedding Co-ordination

Wedding Coordinator:

You will have a dedicated wedding coordinator throughout the planning stage. During the coordination process there may be the need for you to communicate with other members of the Hever Castle coordination team. Our team work closely together and information pertaining to your event is accessible to all coordinators. Given the time period of some booking journeys it is a realistic expectation that a new coordinator may be introduced during your booking journey. At such times a detailed handover is carried out and an opportunity to meet with the new coordinator will be arranged. When the day arrives, your wedding will be managed by one of our Event Managers who will be fully briefed on your requirements.

Function sheet:

In line with your confirmation pack from Hever Castle, you will be issued a 'Function Sheet' document. This should be returned to your coordinator 8 weeks before your wedding to allow our team to begin to finalise your wedding arrangements.

Suppliers

Recommended Suppliers:

We offer a list of recommended suppliers as a helping hand to you. These are suppliers that have worked at the venue on many occasions and understand our operational requirements. They are best placed to guide you and work with you to develop your requests. You are free to source your own if you wish too for any service although we do stipulate usage of our in-house catering team, firework, and marquee suppliers for these particular services.

Delivery & Collections:

As the Astor Wing is not open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it is essential that all suppliers making deliveries or wishing to set up liaise with the Event Coordinators to arrange a convenient day and time.

Suppliers Meals:

Please speak directly with your suppliers to see if they require catering during their time at Hever Castle. Often musicians and photographers will ask for a hot meal or sandwich which we can provide as long as they are pre-ordered in advance. Please speak to your coordinator for the associated charges.

Photography:

It is permissible for you to take photographs within the Italian Garden area however this should be discussed with your coordinator. If there is an Italian Garden Wedding taking place on the same day as your wedding, they will have priority of that area. This will be discussed with you prior to your day.

Flowers:

Pamela Brise is employed by Hever Castle on a freelance basis and looks after all the floral arrangements in Astor Wing and Castle. We have four permanent flower arrangements in the corridors of the Astor Wing all arranged using green/cream/white flowers and foliage. If you would like to discuss any further arrangements with Pamela, her telephone number is 01732 823 890.

Additional Items

Catering:

All catering must be provided by Restaurant Associates, Hever Castle's appointed and sole caterer on the Hever Castle Estate. Your wedding cake, however, would need to be provided by an external supplier.

Corkage:

The general rule of thumb is corkage is not permitted. We do, however, understand that there may be occasions when a particular beverage is desired that is not on our list. In these instances, Restaurant Associates will endeavor to source this particular beverage for you and will quote a price per bottle for the amount required. If Restaurant Associates are unable to source your preferred wine, the following corkage fees will be applied: £15.00 + VAT per 75cl bottle of still wine and £20.00 + VAT per 75 cl bottle of Champagne/Prosecco/Cava or sparkling wine. Any bottles over 75cl will be priced according to size. This same rule applies to spirits, if you require a spirit not on our bar list, we will source it and confirm a price per single measure and the number of bottles you need to purchase from Restaurant Associates in order for it to be supplied, you will then need to pay for the number of bottles we need to order. Should we be unable to source a

requested spirit, we will quote a per measure corkage rate and you will be charged per full bottle based on that rate for all bottles opened. In all instances, if we have sourced an item for you, any bottles charged for and not consumed can be taken away with you.

Parking:

There is a private car parking area available for guests to use free of charge during your stay. Overnight parking is strictly not permitted for non-residential guests.

Confetti:

The use of confetti, rose petals and rice is not permitted anywhere within the Astor Wing, Castle, and Grounds. This includes the use of a confetti cannon. A clean-up fee of £1,000.00 will be added to the final account if used.

Cakes:

A traditional or sweet wedding cake can be provided which we can display. We request that your cake is delivered assembled. Should it need assembling on site we request that you provide someone to do so. We have two beautiful silver etched cake stands and accompanying silver cake knife which we are happy to lend out. The round one is 39cm (15.5 inch) in width and the square 40cm (16 inch). Please note that Hever Castle will not take on the responsibility of moving cakes from one location to another on the day of your wedding.

Candles:

Real candle sticks are permitted in candelabras. Tea light style candles are permitted however they must be in a candle votive tall enough to cover the naked flame.

Drones:

The use of UAV's (unmanned aerial vehicles) or drones are not permitted on or over Hever Castle without prior approval. If approved, this would only be permitted at times when the Estate is closed to and clear of member of the public to ensure their safety and security.

CONDITIONS FOR DRONE FLYING

Current CAA legislation states that drones are not permitted to be flown within 50 meters of any vessel, vehicle or structure which is not under the control of the person in charge of the aircraft. The aircraft should not be flown within 50 meters of any person except during take-off or landing or within 30 meters of any person except for the person in charge of the aircraft.

All operators must hold the following:

- a current and valid CAA 'Permission for Aerial Work' (PFAW).
 - evidence of valid insurance cover.
 - a risk assessment for the proposed flight

- a method statement outlining what equipment will be used and a flight plan outlining where flying is proposed.

Failure to provide all of these documents at least one week in advance of the event date, the drone will not be allowed. Prior arrangement must be communicated with your Wedding Coordinator who will request details of the Drone Company you will be using and let you know if it would be possible for a drone to be used.