

# Focus on Weddings



## True happiness depends on very careful planning

Report by Katie Macleod

It's the day that every girl dreams of – but how does she get there? The journey from 'yes' to 'I do' can be an eventful and emotional one. From cakes and cars to dresses and dining decisions, planning a wedding takes a lot of preparation, as revealed by one recently married Mrs (and her happy other half).

### Timing is everything

David and Victoria Nicolson met in 2006 and married last summer after a two-year engagement. "We did all the really big things at the start," says David, explaining that they organised the date, venue and minister early after their engagement in August 2009. "You do all that the moment you get engaged because you're so excited!" Victoria smiles, before adding that logistics do play a part. "You need to have it all tie in. I've heard of people changing the date because they couldn't get the minister or the venue." By October, the two had secured their summer wedding date and reception at Breascleate Hall.

With the basics booked, it was straight on to colour schemes and dresses – one dependent on the other. Victoria browsed bridal magazines for inspiration, but she already had some ideas. "Considering the fact I've been wanting to get married since I was three, I had a good idea of what I wanted!" she laughs.

The dress was discovered in Glasgow and kept under wraps until the big day, while the bridesmaid's dresses were handmade in America and shipped to the Nairn stockist where Victoria had spotted them online. All in all the process took six months, so as Victoria points out, "it was good to have that done in advance."

### Don't forget the little details

Details were dealt with in the second year, finalising numbers and finding finishing touches.

"It's a bit difficult, the process of elimination. We just did the amount of people we really wanted," says David of the numbers game that was choosing the guest list. "Both parents were really hands-off," adds Victoria, "and we both don't have huge families, so that was in our favour." Besides, Victoria had already bought twelve centrepieces – pretty purple feathers – and when she couldn't find any more, anywhere, the decision was made: "That was it! We couldn't have any more tables!"

Additions to the table were not your average wedding picks. The favours were mini bags of sweet-shop sweets – "Everyone could enjoy them there and then" says Victoria – and there were ice-breaker cards and disposable cameras for guests to have fun with. "I was inspired by Friends. When Monica and Chandler, two of the main characters, get married, they leave disposable cameras for their guests to take photos with. I'd always thought that was a nice idea."

### Keep it in the family (and don't forget friends)

Make the most of what you have – and who you know. David called in favours from friends, putting together some old mates for the music at the reception. "Since we got married, we've done a lot of favours for other people's weddings," he notes. The couple were lucky to have the help of both sets of parents, not to mention make-up magic from the mother-of-the-bride on the wedding day.

### Put your priorities in place

As Victoria points out, each couple weighs up what's most important for them and their big day. Some favour the venue, others the car, and many brides want the wedding dress of their dreams. One thing Victoria was sure of was the cake: "I wasn't going to spend £500 on something that's going to get eaten." They chose chocolate, a cake driven delicately from Inverness by David a mere three days before the wedding. When it comes to planning, says David, "you have to balance between what you want and what you have the means for, and I think we managed to achieve Victoria's hopes and dreams."

### Get the groom involved

You're about to be a life-long team, so it makes sense to start sharing the load before the big day. "I gave David jobs to do,"



David and Victoria Nicolson

says Victoria, turning to her husband with a grin. This groom was in charge of the legal paperwork, organising the photographer and band for the big day, and booking their honeymoon. "I was basically in charge of managing the overall budget," explains David. "We were getting married in the middle of an economic slowdown, so we were looking for deals."

### Not everything goes to plan

Helpful hubby-to-be David played a part in Victoria's one meltdown moment during the two-year planning process. Feeling organised, David decided to post the wedding invitations while Victoria was at work. "I had it all worked out in my head, we would post them together," explains Victoria. "There wasn't even one left, none!"

Invitations aside, they got their timing right when it came to the preparations; but even the best laid plans can go awry. A dog can't do much damage to a wedding, right? Wrong. Alfie, the Nicolson's pet puppy, almost cost the couple their honeymoon when he broke his leg. The cost of his recuperation – £2000 – meant their honeymoon savings were switched to support his surgery, with David selling his car to make the money back. To add insult to Alfie's injury, the Arab Spring uprisings meant their original honeymoon destination, Morocco, was also a no-go.

On the day itself, David was in charge of bringing the whisky to the West Side for the toasts, but forgot it in the rush of the day. In the event, whisky appeared in time for the toasts nonetheless. "Breascleate were pretty amazing that way," David admits.

Luckily, the bride-to-be wasn't easily fazed. "Victoria must go down in history as being remarkably un-bridezilla like," David declares, earning an approving nod from Victoria. "I enjoyed it, but that's the kind of person I am," she says. "I like organising things, I wasn't stressed at all."

### Above all, enjoy it.

"The day went by so fast. I know everyone says that, but it does," says Victoria. "The longest part was waiting to go to the church." David admits to being a little nervous. "But once you came down the aisle, I relaxed," he says, turning to Victoria. After a two-year prologue, their big day passed without any major hitches – not that they would have mattered. As the happy couple point out, it's not about a wedding, it's about a marriage.

## Isle Retreat @The White Rooms

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