



Astor Wing and Castle Wedding FAQs

The Astor Wing offers a standard of decoration and comfort that is outstanding and retains the warm, relaxed feel of a family home or peaceful country manor with a team of professional and discreet staff.

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 wedding breakfast.

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

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 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 wedding.

PLEASE ENSURE ALL YOUR GUESTS AND SUPPLIERS 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 Booking:

A provisional booking can be held for a maximum of ten working days before confirmation or release of the date is required. If we receive no communication within this time, then the provisional booking will be removed from our diary.

Confirmation:

In order to confirm your booking, we ask that you read through the Hever Castle Booking Terms and Conditions, sign and return the document back to us. After which, a non-refundable booking fee of £2,000.00 is due and will secure and confirm your wedding with us.

Payments:

Non-refundable booking fee: £2,000.00

Second deposit invoice due 9 months prior - £5,000

Third deposit invoice due 6 months prior - £5,000

Fourth deposit invoice due two months prior to the wedding date – remainder of quote balance

The above and any other costs must be settled prior to your wedding day.

Meetings:

Should you wish to re-visit the Astor Wing 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. If you require a visit on a weekend, this will still be by appointment only.

Minimum Numbers:

We have a minimum requirement of 25 adult guests on our Castle and Astor Wing Wedding Packages.

Final Numbers:

Please note that final chargeable numbers must be provided 10 working days before the Wedding 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. Postponing to another date is not an option.

Civil Ceremony information:

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

Ceremony Booking:

Upon receipt of your deposit payment, a Ceremony Booking Form will be sent to you to complete and return to us. Once returned, 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 for you to give notice of marriage. Please note payments are to be made directly by you to the Registry Office.

Civil Ceremonies in the Tudor Suite are licensed to take place on any day of the week throughout the year, between 10am and 8pm, excluding the 25th and 26th December. Castle wedding timings vary throughout the year subject to opening and closing time to the day visitors, this will be confirmed on your Booking Contract.

Room Capacities:

Tudor Suite Sitting Room: 48 guests seated + 12 standing.

Castle Inner Hall: 48 guests seated + 12 standing.

Music:

Hever Castle recommends the use of live musicians for the ceremony element of your wedding so that all your guests can focus on and enjoy the ceremony. We have a varied list of musicians on our recommended supplier list. Full details of any musicians booked must be given to us in advance.

Alternatively, there is a Sonos Sound System with Bluetooth speakers that can be connected to a smart phone, iPod or tablet. Should you opt for this, you will need to supply a 3.5mm jack aux audio adapter, we do not have any on site.

For the ceremony, Hever Castle are unable to operate any devices that you wish to play music from on your behalf, you will need to nominate a designated guest to take responsibility for this. As there are Bluetooth speakers so this guest can operate the speaker from any seat.

Please note, the Registrar will discuss what music can be played during the ceremony as no religious content is allowed.

Rehearsal:

The Kent Registration Service who conducts wedding ceremonies at Hever Castle, do not offer rehearsals. Should you feel the need for a rehearsal at Hever Castle, without a registrar, this can be arranged, bookable a month in advance of the date of your wedding, subject to venue and staff availability. A fee of £500.00 is charged at the time of booking, which covers staffing cost, set up costs and venue costs for a two-hour window, which will be determined by the availability on the date you wish to conduct a rehearsal. Hever Castle do not encourage or feel it should be necessary for you to conduct a ceremony rehearsal.

Hire period:

The venue hire charge covers a seven-hour period from arrival. After which time, a charge of £150.00 per hour is introduced for extended use of the Astor Wing or Castle (until 12 midnight). This does not apply for residential weddings or if you are having an evening reception.

Capacities:

Tudor Suite Dining Room: 60 guests

Castle Dining Room: 40 guests

Accessibility:

The Tudor Suite Dining Room within The Astor Wing is a non-accessible room as there are two steps down into this room. The Castle Dining Room is accessible as it is on ground floor level.

Table plan:

We can offer different table layouts within the above rooms. Please speak to your coordinator who will advise on the best layout for your numbers. Please let us know if you would like us to display a table plan for you.

Stationery:

Hever Castle can provide printed place cards and printed menus with Hever branding for your wedding breakfast. Speak to a coordinator for associated costs.

Set Up:

Hever Castle will provide tables, chairs, linen, glasses, crockery, and cutlery for your wedding breakfast. We are happy to set up items on your tables such as favours, place cards and menus, however any decorative items will need to be set up by an external supplier.

Chair Covers:

If you require a 'round table' set up for 55 – 60 guests in the Tudor Suite Dining Room, Hever Castle will provide complimentary chair covers for the banqueting chairs required for such set ups. If you require a 'round table' set up for less than 55 guests, beautiful, upholstered chairs can be provided which do not require chair covers.

Catering:

All catering must be provided by Hever Castle Culinary, Hever Castle's appointed sole caterer on the Hever Castle Estate. Your wedding cake however needs to be provided by an external supplier.

Menus:

A three course dining menu is available for your wedding breakfast. You must select the same menu for the entire party, along with a vegetarian/vegan option. Confirmed menus will be available in March for Spring/Summer weddings and July for Autumn/Winter weddings.

Confirmation of your chosen menu is required no later than four weeks prior to your wedding day. *Please note that all red meat on our menus is cooked 'medium'.*

Drinks Packages and Bar facility:

Drinks packages are available to compliment your wedding breakfast. A great selection of wines are available for you to enhance and upgrade. The wine list is updated annually and is shared with couples in April. Your coordinator will share a bar list with you in the planning stages. There is the option of an account or card bar facility for the evening reception.

Corkage:

We do permit corkage on wine and sparkling wine only. Please speak to your wedding planner with regards to the associated charges

Children:

We have two children's packages available, suitable for all children up to the age of 18.

Highchairs are available and should be requested in advance and noted on your table plan. Should you have babies attending the event, parents are permitted to bring baby food and you will not be charged for their attendance. They do, however, count as a guest for your table plan and must be included within the total guest numbers.

Tasting:

An invitation to a complimentary menu tasting for two is included as part of your booking. This is a group menu tasting at which other wedding couples will be present.

For Spring or Summer weddings, the menu tasting will take place in early March and the date will be confirmed in January. For Autumn or Winter weddings, the menu tasting will take place in July and the date will be confirmed in March. This event takes place on a weekday evening at 6pm.

You will be asked to choose three starters, three main courses and three desserts from the menu that you wish to taste. Should you wish to taste a vegetarian or vegan dish, these dishes need to be included in your choice of three.

A selection of still and sparkling wines will be available to taste with our compliments and our full range of sparkling and still wines will be available to purchase by the bottle to taste during the evening or to take away with a 25% discounted rate from our list price.

If you cannot make the date that the group menu tasting is on, you are welcome to nominate two people to go on your behalf. Alternatively, a date can be arranged for a weekday lunchtime, subject to availability, for £75 per person for a maximum of two people. Wines and sparkling wines will not be available to taste, however, our full range of sparkling and still wines will be available to purchase by the bottle to taste during your lunch or to take away with a 25% discounted rate from our list price.

Speeches:

Speeches must be planned with your wedding coordinator. Speeches must not be split between courses, due to the impact on food quality and service.

Alcohol License:

Hever Castle is licensed to serve alcohol until midnight to non-residential guests.

For residential guests, there is an opportunity to offer a self-service residents bar after midnight until 2am outside of the Music Room. All charges are added onto the wedding account.

Evening Reception Information

Dancing is not permitted in either the Castle or the Astor Wing due to the nature of the building. The options for an evening reception requiring dancing as part of an Astor Wing / Castle wedding are:

The Guthrie Pavilion or

A tipi / stretch tent on the Tudor Suite Lawn
(only an option if you have booked Medley Court accommodation)

The Guthrie Pavilion:

A short walk through the gardens. this venue is available for music, dancing, a buffet and bar for up to 150 guests.

An additional room hire charge will be applied for the Guthrie Pavilion.

A minimum catering charge of £1,200 inc. VAT will apply and will be added to the main wedding account when the Guthrie Pavilion is hired. This amount can cover pre-booked food and/or a bar account.

Suppliers have access from 6pm to discuss set up and removal. Everything must be removed at 1am.

All guests must depart the Guthrie Pavilion by 1am. Hever Castle will supply a shuttle service to get any residential guests back to the Astor Wing.

A tipi / stretch tent:

Although Hever Castle does not own a stretch tent or a marquee, we work with a number of suppliers who we can introduce you to supply quotes. The set-up and de-rig dates and times of a structure must be discussed and confirmed with your coordinator before you book one. Music must stop at midnight. Evening food requirements and a bar will be set up in the Tudor Suite. Medley Court must have been booked as part of your accommodation for a tipi / stretch tent evening reception.

Evening Bar Facilities:

If you would like to have a bar facility after dining in the Tudor Suite Dining Room, we can offer this from the Tudor Suite Sitting Room until midnight. This can either be on an account basis, where the cost will be

estimated in the planning stages and charged for as part of your pre-event pro-forma deposit schedule with the actual amount then being detailed on the final invoice that follows after the event; or on a card sales basis where-by your guests can pay for drinks they order as they go on a card. We do not have cash facilities at Hever Castle. The bar will be staffed and will close at midnight.

You can choose to have an account bar up to a certain amount and then switch to a card sales bar if preferred.

If a maximum spend is set, we will stop serving drinks when it is reached unless you or a designated guest sign a request to extend your tab on the evening.

We can supply a till receipt for a card sales bar, we are unable to supply a till receipt for an account bar.

If your wedding is an exclusive-use hire, should you wish to offer a resident's bar from outside the Music Room after your wedding, this can only be offered on an account basis (not card sales) and the cost will be estimated in the planning stages and a charge added to your final deposit invoice. This bar will not be staffed and will be removed at 2am. Please note that if a residential bar in the Music Room is requested, all non- residential guests need to have departed before this is opened.

We are unable to offer a resident's bar outside the Billiards Room.

With regards to drinks in the Castle, due to the nature of the building all drinks in the Castle must be pre-ordered and will be tray served, we are unable to offer a bar facility.

If you are dining in the Castle, you can have access to the Castle Great Hall until midnight after which a resident's bar can be set up outside the Music Room (if your wedding is an exclusive hire). If you wish to vacate the Castle Great Hall before midnight, a bar facility can be set up in the Tudor Suite Sitting Room until midnight. Either case, the above detailed conditions apply.

Accommodation within the Astor Wing & Anne Boleyn Wing

There are 17 en-suite bedrooms available within the Astor Wing. If bedrooms are required, a minimum of 12 bedrooms must be booked for exclusive use of the wing. The charge for this will be added onto the main account unless you would like your guests to pay for bedrooms themselves. Please speak to your coordinator if you do not require twelve bedrooms.

The Anne Boleyn Wing is a stand-alone section of the Astor Wing with nine beautifully appointed bedrooms. If you require these bedrooms in addition to the Astor Wing bedrooms, we ask that you or your guests book all nine bedrooms within this wing.

Eight weeks before the wedding, if twelve bedrooms in the Astor Wing (or the entire 9 bedrooms in the Anne Boleyn Wing) have not been booked by guests then the difference will be added onto the main wedding account.

Some bedrooms can accommodate a sofa bed, Z bed or travel cot if required. Prices for additional children's beds cover the cost of set up, linen and breakfast for the additional guest. It is not permissible for guests to bring their own additional beds for children to sleep on.

A full English and continental breakfast are included. Breakfast is served between 08.00-09.30 the following morning.

Check-in and Check-out:

Rooms are available for check-in from 3pm on arrival and check-out at 10.30am on the day of departure. It is permitted that the Bridal party may arrive from midday to check in to a maximum of three bedrooms. Breakfast is served 8am – 9.30am and check-out is by 10.30am.

Changing Rooms:

If changing rooms are required these will be charged at £175.00 per room. Arrival and departure times must be agreed in advance.

Wedding Coordination

You will have a dedicated Event Coordinator throughout the planning stage, however during the coordination process there may be the need for you to communicate with other members of the Hever Castle team. Our team works closely together and information pertaining to your wedding is accessible to all coordinators. 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.

Wedding Event Sheet:

When you confirm your wedding with us, you will be issued with a copy the Event Sheet. This document is used to conduct your wedding and during the planning process, this document will work as a central place to collate all the information pertaining to your wedding. We will ask that you return a copy of this sheet, with your annotated information on it, 6-8 weeks before your wedding which will then allow our team to begin to finalise your wedding arrangements.

Recommended Suppliers:

We have a list of recommended suppliers that have worked at the venue on many occasions. They are best placed to guide and work with you to develop your requests. You are free to source your own for any service although we do stipulate usage of our in-house catering team, firework, and marquee suppliers for these particular services. Whether you use our recommended suppliers or source your own, supplier access time to the venue / venues you have hired must be agreed with us prior to you contracting external suppliers.

Delivery & Collections:

As the Astor Wing is not open 24 hours a day, it is essential that all suppliers making deliveries or wishing to set up liaise with the events office to arrange a convenient date and time.

Suppliers Meals:

Please speak directly with your suppliers to see if they require catering during their time at Hever Castle. If they require a hot meal or sandwich these should be pre-ordered in advance. Please contact the Food and Beverage Coordinator to arrange this.

Photography:

Photographs can be arranged for areas 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.

Parking:

There is a 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 £2,000.00 will be added to the final account if used.

Fireworks:

Due to insurance limitations, we are unable to allow any fireworks around the Castle or Astor Wing. Sparklers and sparklers are only permitted outside of the venue and should be mentioned discussed with your coordinator.

Wedding Cake:

We request that your wedding cake is delivered assembled or that your cake maker sets this up for you as Hever Castle takes no responsibility for setting up or moving cakes.

We have two silver etched cake stands and accompanying silver cake knife which you're welcome to borrow on the day. The round stand is 39cm (15.5 inch) in width and the square stand is 40cm (16 inch).

Private Guided Tours:

Subject to availability, Castle tours can be included as part of your wedding, during times when the Castle is closed to the public. Tours last for one hour and are hosted by a Castle guide. Please speak to your coordinator to discuss this further.

Candles:

As we have optical smoke alarms that use light sensor and light source to detect heat and smoke, the last thing we want to happen is for alarms to go off during your wedding so for this reason and for the safety of you, your guests and our staff please adhere to the following:

Table top flame candles should be contained in votives that are higher than the flame itself.

The votive or container that the flame is in should protect the surface it is being placed on.

Flame tea lights to create walkways are not permitted.

Flame candles are permitted in tabletop candelabras (yours or ours) as the unprotected flame is then generally higher than the guest, so napkins / menus / place cards or any other easily combustible material, if thrown or knocked over, are generally lower than the flame itself.

Floor standing candelabra can be used but must be kept away from artwork and tapestries and we discourage candelabra that have lots of flame candles on, best to stick to those that have under ten progs.

Contained lanterns with flame candles in can be used if they protect the surface that they are placed on.

Oil fuelled torches / wax procession and display torches are not permitted.

When flame candles are used they must be smokeless.

We do encourage the use of battery-operated tea lights which you can use in any quantity you wish.

Flame candles are not permitted within the Moat Restaurant or in a tipi / stretch tent.

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 members of the public to ensure their safety and security and in line with 'The Drone Code' as set out by the CAA.

Please discuss with your Hever Castle coordinator prior to planning to hire a drone.

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.

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.

All operators must follow 'The Drone Code' as set out by the CAA.

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 and agreement must be made with your Wedding Coordinator before a drone will be permitted on site.