

WEDDING PARTIES

APRIL: LONDON

Kate Middleton & Prince William

This was THE event that made us proud to be British. For a whole day the nation stood together, waved flags, clinked glasses, strung bunting and shed a tear – the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge saying ‘I will’ was rather more significant than the average ceremony. She looked wonderful. In fact, she couldn’t have looked better in her Princess Grace-inspired Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen lace and chiffon scalloped dress. Not only did it feed our fairytale fantasy, but you can bet it was the reason half of the two billion people from 180 countries tuned in to watch the proceedings. William was the archetypal Prince Charming and little Grace Van Cutsem the most delightful of naughty bridesmaids. After the balcony kiss, there was a lunch reception at Buckingham Palace and then a proper party (with dancing) for the Cambridges’ young friends. Ellie Goulding performed. As did Prince Harry.



Top, Emilia Wickstead; Centre, the garden reception; Bottom, Emilia and Daniel Gargiulo

JULY: TUSCANY

Emilia Wickstead & Daniel Gargiulo

On the Monday morning after Emilia Wickstead married the half-Italian half-Brazilian Daniel Gargiulo, her 200 guests must have felt very rough indeed, because this wasn’t just a wedding, but a three-day extravaganza. And it was beautiful – almost as beautiful as the dress that she designed for herself. It all began on the Friday night, with an Italian-as-it-gets welcome dinner, to acclimatise the international crowd. Then at 5pm on Saturday evening, it was the main event, on the hillside of Montepulciano in the Madonna di San Biagio church. The reception was at the Villa La Foce, with champagne, dinner and so much dancing that the bride changed out of her dress into something short and lacy.

The final day only got better – a brunch and a pool party, where hangovers were washed away in the water (and with a lot more wine).



Top, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in Westminster Abbey; Above, David and Victoria Beckham; Right, Ginnie Fraser and Oliver Chadwyck-Healey



SEPTEMBER: GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Mary-Clare Winwood & Ben Elliot

It takes the nephew of the Duchess of Cornwall plus the daughter of the rock star Steve Winwood to make the most perfect of country weddings. Ben Elliot and Mary-Clare-no-longer-Winwood walked down the aisle of St Peter and St Paul in Northleach, Gloucestershire, just a few fields away from where their reception lay in wait on MC’s father’s estate. That evening, beneath a turreted tent decorated with hops and ivy, an exuberant 300-strong throng, including the Prince of Wales, Zac Goldsmith and Sophie Dahl, ate steak and chips, danced to Steve Winwood (singing ‘Georgia on My Mind’) and drank an awful lot of lychee martinis. Best man Tom Parker Bowles took to the stage to compete against Christopher Sykes – who played his latest song, ‘Benny Benina’, on the piano – for the most laughs. The outcome was blurry (something to do with those martinis) and immensely good fun.



Right, Mary-Clare Winwood and Ben Elliot and, top, with the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall; Above, Lord Tom Anson and his wife Henrietta



Top, from left, Andrea Gelardin, Alexandra Eagle, Sophia Rogge and Ellie Shepherd; Left, Tom and Alice Naylor-Leyland; Below, Robbie Furze and Lady Mary Charteris



MARCH: WILTSHIRE

Alice Dawson & Tom Naylor-Leyland

When Alice Dawson announced her engagement to the immaculately dressed Tom Naylor-Leyland, everyone crossed their fingers hoping that they would be invited. And so they should have, because this was the happiest of weddings. The groom went hunting in the morning, while Alice and her far-prettier-than-average best friends, including Poppy Delevingne, Nina Flohr and Olivia Buckingham, helped her get ready (with champagne) in her mother Serena and stepfather Michael Fresson’s Wiltshire home.

While the 300 guests marvelled at the church flowers, they were dumbstruck by the hanging gardens of Babylon in the marquee. After dinner, which included lobster risotto, Tom’s brothers and sisters sang the first verse of the bride and groom’s signature song, Old Crow Medicine Show’s ‘Wagon Wheel’, before Mr and Mrs Naylor-Leyland leapt on stage to sing the rest and give everyone else a chance to twirl and sway.