

Wine & Dine

By Charlise Grove, Executive Chef

Photo: Ryan Graham



Charlise Grove comes from a family of restaurateurs. Those of you who have ever visited Goblin's Cove, may well have met this dynamic and passionate personality. With an eye for the unusual, her attention to detail and amazing organisational skills, we are privileged to have her at Oakfield Farm in the capacity of Executive Chef.

"If the Divine Creator has taken pains to give us delicious and exquisite things to eat, the least we can do is prepare them well and serve them with ceremony."

Fernand Point 1897 – 1955

If you have just won the Oscar, you will wine and dine with good friends, to celebrate the moment. Food and good company will be at the heart of these memories for years to come. A wedding is no different. Your wedding plans will begin with a guest list of people who really want to celebrate this wonderful time with you. There are so many aspects to the wedding, so many details to consider that it is possible to lose the essence of the function. It is not enough for a wedding to look good, it must be a wonderful experience for your guests. This is a once in a lifetime event, spoil your guests and have fun together!

The Guest List

Your guest list is the soul of your function and you will discover quickly how difficult it is to make up this list. It may be helpful to consider not who you would like to have at your wedding, but rather invite those people who care so much about you, they would not miss this event for anything in the world. These are the people who are already a part of your life and will be forever. Don't make the mistake of cutting your guest list short to save money. Whether you have ten or two hundred guests, the cost of the dress, music, décor and venue will be much the same. You will look beautiful on the day, so don't deprive good friends of this pleasure.



Photo: Irene Quist

The Menu

Your menu should be as carefully considered as all the other aspects of your wedding, and if it is possible should be designed to encapsulate the personality and style of your wedding. Obviously, it must be delicious.

Even more important however, is the need to ensure that the menu compliments the procedure and answers the demands specific to wedding banqueting. Here are some considerations:

Photographs need good light and so, weddings start early. Guests may leave home at 14h00, but only eat at 19h00. Just when people are most hungry, speeches commence and these will never be appreciated to the full if people are hungry.

All people expect food and drink to arrive promptly once they have sat down at the dinner table. Most guests are intolerant of



the time taken for the photo shoot and other inevitable delays. These include queuing for the buffet or watching your neighbour enjoy their plated meal, while you are still waiting.

Most weddings are at least eight hours long and as most people fast in anticipation of this banquet, you almost need to serve two meals to keep people happy right to the end.

Most couples are paying for their own wedding, and as the wedding plans progress, more and more extras are being incorporated and when they finally get to finalising the menu, the budget is depleted and more often than not, the décor outshines the food, and you can't eat the décor! To solve these problems, even our entry level menu is a 5-course menu. Above is a sample with essential tips to help you plan your menu.

As you can see, food is an essential part of the success of your function. I encourage all our clients to meet with me personally, so we can explore exciting and appropriate options to make sure that the food is as exciting as the wedding.

Plated Menus

Weddings embrace a lot of tradition and are mostly formal events, in keeping with the importance of the occasion. Although there are some terrific laid-back options, the elegance of the occasion would call for a plated menu for most functions of this style. This is the reason we combine elegant plated options with the practicalities of a buffet main course. If you choose a fully plated menu, the challenges and the risks are greater.

The main problem is the size of the portions. Lack of choice; and the time taken to serve all guests needs to be considered. If it is done properly, and has the extra waitering staff required, it will become more costly. Before I tackle a plated menu, I have an in-depth meeting with the client to understand their theme, their style and their budget. Every plated menu will therefore be unique to the wedding.

On the following page is the menu we did for Gisella & Kean de Abreu's wedding. Not only did she have very definite ideas as to what she wanted, but I was required to reassure her that she would not be disappointed by the result. Food at Portuguese weddings is extremely important, so the food had to be wholesome and upmarket. As the function was for more than 200 guests, Gisella was very concerned as to whether we would be able to get the food out, piping hot, within an allotted time frame. She also wanted something a little different. This meant that the menu became a 5-course feast which fitted perfectly with their procedure.

The Beverages

Mostly, beverages have simply fallen off the list. In some respects, this is a complete contradiction to the idea of hospitality towards



Photo: Patrick Furter

your special friends and family. Looking after your guests means thinking about their needs and this should include beverages. It is so important that your guests are comfortable at all times. We, in fact, even include in our wedding package, at no extra cost, a welcome drink when guests arrive. It allows them to unwind, get comfortable and socialise before the ceremony.

You will always spend something on beverages, so spend it wisely! The cost of beverages at venues can differ enormously, and if you are not happy to pay those prices, don't think that your guests will be either! Wine on the tables is a waste of money. In any event, many of your guests will simply want a Coke.

The single most critical part of the function is when the guests first sit down in the venue. This is the time when you want them to relax and get to know each other. If guests have to take out their wallets at this point in the function, it will embarrass them, they will withdraw from each other and a good vibe around the table will simply not be established. This is the reason that we insist on the first round of drinks being free to the guests. In fact, we feel so strongly about this, that we have made this round of drinks free to our weekday bookings. Because we don't have to open a tab for every couple, it hastens the service and we support this by the swift delivery of food. Cocktails must never be put on the table. They will be flattened before the first toast is raised. The popping of champagne corks and the elegant serving of sparkling wine just before the speeches commence, adds flamboyance to the occasion.

All I would like to say on the matter is this. The more you spend on the venue, the dress, the décor, the cake and all the frills, the more you stand the risk of your guests resenting the fact that you were unwilling to pay towards the beverages. My advice therefore, is to put towards the bar, a limit that you can reasonably afford. Beverages are a critical part of the function and there is no doubt that weddings with an open bar simply have a different vibe! The essence of hospitality is tied in to the issue of beverages, and for this reason, we have purposefully kept our beverage prices low and also had a unique programme written which ensures that the money you pay the venue for beverages will be managed with integrity. This means that you can choose not only what's available at the bar, soft drinks or otherwise and a tab is opened for every couple, which they are required to sign. You will also not be paying for waiters' drinks, nor will your guests be inclined to abuse your hospitality.



Chef's Choice Summer Buffet Menu

GARDEN COCKTAIL PLATTERS

Mini Tomato, Mozzarella and Olive Skewers,
served in a tot glass, drizzled with Pesto,
Balsamic and Olive Oil

Artichoke and Roasted Capsicum Brochette

Herbed Cream Cheese, topped with Smoked Salmon Trout,
served on a Potato Rosti

COMPLIMENTARY APPETIZER

Sweet Chilli and Tender Chicken Strips, served on a bed of Rocket
and Spinach, with Cherry Tomatoes, Mixed Peppers and Feta Cheese

PLATED ENTRÉE

Gazpacho Soup
A Chilled Tomato and Herb Soup with a hint of Garlic,
drizzled with a fresh Basil Pesto
Served with Home Baked Bread Rolls

MAIN COURSE

Oven Roasted Sirloin, served with
a Madagascan Green Peppercorn Sauce

Sweet and Sour Roast Chicken Portions,
served with Glazed Baby Onions

Vegetable Lasagne, topped with Mozzarella and Parmesan,
and baked to perfection

ACCOMPANIMENTS

Ratatouille, a combination of Aubergines, Peppers and Baby Marrow,
in a Garlic, Herb and Tomato Sauce
Orange and Syrup Glazed Baby Carrots
Wild Rice with Fresh Herbs
Baby Potatoes, tossed in Garlic Butter and Fresh Parsley

YOUR WEDDING CAKE PLATED BY ONE OF OUR STAFF

BUFFET DESSERTS

Creamy Vanilla Icecream, served with a selection of Coulis
and a rich home made Bar One Chocolate Sauce

Menu Tips!

Cocktails

Cocktails are a prelude to the reception. They help keep guests occupied and encourage them to socialise. If you are clever, these can be stylish without being pricey. Cocktails must add elegance, so chips and peanuts are a no-no. If you anticipate lengthy photos, freshly made wraps served in a lovely garden setting is social, elegant and something a little different to be remembered!

Appetizers

Your guests have just moved in to the venue, they are hungry, irritated by the delays and feel awkward with strangers. The function can never quite get under way until people are eating and drinking so, service must be swift. We feel very strongly that this must be accompanied by 'drinks on the house'.

Entree

A plated entrée is a classy start to the formalities. We still keep this dish simple so it can be served in minutes, in order for the formalities to get under way. If you want to lift this up another notch, a choice of entrée works extremely well. Nobody must be hungry during speeches.

Main Course

As much as a plated main course suits the elegance of the occasion, a buffet main course is popular. As this is the third course, guests are in no hurry to rush to the buffet. One serving point for every sixty five guests will ensure that queues are minimal. We ensure that every table has the opportunity to come for seconds, if they so wish.

Dessert

We don't believe that a vast array of desserts is the perfect finale to the meal. This can be plated, but a buffet will allow the guests to keep coming back for more even after the dancing has started. The modern wedding cakes are very often a perfect compliment to the buffet. Please make sure that if you do this, there is enough cake for everybody.





Hi Charliise,

We really would like to say a very big thank you to you and your team.

I have never before been to a wedding where the food was so exquisite. I know I am biased, but must say that everyone has commented on the food and its splendour. The only complaint I have had is that everyone regrets being too full to enjoy every last bite of each course. lol.

You really made it special and wow, to be able to serve 200 perfectly done medium-rare fillets is amazing.

We will definitely be popping in once back from honeymoon to personally come and say thank you and relish in the great day and evening.

Thank you for making it so perfect. The parents are over the moon and extremely happy with the quality and the way everything turned out.

Thanks
Gisela and Kean

Menu

GARDEN COCKTAIL

PLATTERS

MEZE PLATTERS

A Selection of Samosas, Spring Rolls, Greek Meatballs, Feta and Olives, with a Sweet Chilli Dipping Sauce
New Zealand Mussels with a Chilli-Lime Sauce
A selection of your own eats

STARTER

Avocado and Prawn Mousse, served in a Martini Glass, garnished with a Prawn Tail, Fresh Fennel and Lemon

PLATED ENTRÉE

Roasted Butternut Soup with a hint of curry, drizzled with Fresh Cream
OR
Cream of Mushroom Soup flavoured with Pancetta and garnished with Parmesan Croutons

MAIN COURSES

Fillet of Kingklip
served on a bed of Parsley Mash and drizzled with a Creamy Lemon and Chardonnay Sauce

Fillet of Beef

Served with Sweet Carrots, Creamed Spinach in a Phyllo Basket and Potato Rosti

DESSERTS

Individually Plated Crème Brulee

*Thank you for joining us on our Special Day
Kean & Gisella.*

Menu Tips!

Cocktails

Gisella wanted something filling and because it was August, she felt that light garden snacks would not be fitting. In addition, she brought in traditional Portuguese snacks.

Appetizers

This was their personal favourite, which made the menu their very own. The martini glass added a touch of elegance.

Entree

I suggested a choice of soups. The guests made their selection before the couple entered the venue, and this was served with flair, moments after Gisella and Kean entered the venue.

Main course

Instead of the guests having a choice of main course, we decided to break the course up into two dishes, so that no one missed out. As these were to be served with only a speech in between, the portions were smaller than normal. Speeches commenced after the Kingklip and the kitchen swung into action to prepare all 200 portions of medium-rare fillet.

Dessert

Gisella and Kean's favourite dessert. The extensive meal meant that a cheese platter was not needed.