

All about Weddings

Andalucia & Gibraltar

Dream come true



VIP WEDDINGS: Include (from left) Status Quo's Rick Parfitt, opera star Russell Watson and John Lennon and Yoko Ono



ROCK-SOLID LOVE: Newly weds enjoy a quiet moment in stunning spot overlooking Gibraltar, while (right) James Blunt's Ibiza wedding



Photo by Jon Segui

WITH its enviable sunshine record, a nice day for a white wedding is virtually guaranteed in Spain.

Or indeed, any kind of wedding, since gay marriage was legalised in 2005.

In fact, more blushing brides, grooms and same-sex partners tied the knot in Andalucia than in any other part of Spain in the first half of last year.

The 12,078 happy couples know what we know: this part of the country is a magical place for any party, so where better to celebrate the most momentous occasion in your life?

Destination weddings have worked their way to the top of courting couples' wish lists. And with its reliable weather, swanky hotels and villas, at budget-friendly prices, Spain is well-placed to cash in.

Celebrities already know it as a place where you can walk down the aisle in style.

Opera singer Russell Watson wed in an extravagant Benahavis ceremony last August; while

Spain is fast becoming the destination wedding capital of Europe as Andalucia and Gibraltar corner the market with bells on, writes Iona Napier

James Blunt tied the knot with socialite Sofia Wellesley in Ibiza in 2014. Following in the footsteps of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Status Quo's Rick Parfitt popped over the border to Gibraltar in 2007 to marry wife Lyndsay in a nifty and thrifty €60 ceremony; seven years later, Parfitt's son Rick Jnr. pushed the boat out with an extravagant ceremony in Malaga's stunning Castillo de Santa Catalina, last year.

Celebrity weddings have set the tone for a booming industry in Andalucia, which boasts several European 'love capi-

tals' in its trousseau: gorgeous Granada, sultry Sevilla, romantic Ronda, charismatic Cadiz as well as the glitzy Costa del Sol. With 320 days of sunshine a year and post-crisis prices still

competitively low, there are some great deals around. Sevilla was third only to Madrid and Barcelona for the number of weddings held last year according to Spain's National

Statistics Institute. Wedding tourism is a growth industry, internationally worth around €14.9 billion, although not all the 60.8 million visitors flocking to Spain annually have

cottoned on.

British wedding planner Laura Charles has seen the market pick up impressively over the last three years.

"Destination weddings are 99% of our business now, and we are seeing a huge amount of people coming to Spain from all over the world to get married," the owner of Reviva weddings told *the Olive Press*.

"I have planned weddings for people living and working in America, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai, many of whom had family in the UK and wanted to guarantee good weather - Spain is such a central destination.

"And there are so many beautiful places here and some fabulous suppliers, so who can blame them?"

True, the legal niceties of getting spliced in Spain can be a tangle of red tape for non-residents. For this reason, many 'destination wedding' couples do the official bit at home or

Wedding tourism is a growing trade, internationally worth €14.9 billion

Continues on next page



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March 2nd - March 15th 2016

From Page 19

Special day

where they were born, then head to Spain for the dream ceremony, whether at a gala dinner under the stars or beneath a floral bower on the beach.

Sandy feet aside, it is worth knowing that civil partnerships are only available to couples where one member has lived in Spain for at least two years. But whereas new arrivals may struggle to get a civil partnership at the drop of a top hat, there are no such legal stipulations for Roman Catholic ceremonies.

Irish wedding planners in particular have cashed in on this loophole, Charles reveals. No less than 250 Irish people tied the knot in the first half of last year.

Blessings are another option popular with those who don't want the religious pomp and circumstance but find a registry office ceremony about as exciting as going to the dentist. There are several priests and officiators along the coast who offer blessings, among them local holyman Padre Peter, who already has 57 weddings booked in for this year alone.

"For many couples, the ceremony I perform is far more valid than the dry legal formality of the civic registry," Padre Peter told *the Olive Press*.

A working priest who has taught religion at university, he has also provided Hindu, Jewish and Muslim ceremonies, and is nothing if not flexible and accommodating.

Other British expats in search of a more traditional experience opt to wed in Gibraltar, 'a la John and Yoko - quick and convenient - or fly to Blighty for the 'legals' and hold the after-party

back here. In fact, with budget travel companies offering better deals than ever, your guests can likely fly to Malaga more cheaply than they can take a

train to Gretna Green at certain times of year! And with most obstacles that made a foreign tryst taboo swept aside, there are many more ways to get hitched in Spain, from a discreet



IDYLLIC: Seamus and Alena in Estepona, while (left) Russell Watson's bride arrives at Benahavis church and (inset) the happy couple




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Photo courtesy of Anna Gazda



AUTHENTIC CHARM: Nuptials at Hacienda San Rafael in Jerez and (right) at Rancho del Ingles in Alhaurin and (inset) Hepburn

poolside ceremony in a private villa to the full church Monty with all the bells and whistles. A swanky hotel wedding is another way to go and Marbella's are renowned for their knock-out nuptials, such as The Marbella Club, Finca Cortesin or the Castillo de Santa Catalina in Malaga, where Rick Parfitt

Jnr plighted his troth under the auspices of Padre Peter (see interview pX). A wedding planner like Reviva can take care of the logistics, from organising the photography to flying out guests and extended families for a full-blown three-day affair. The average wedding bud-

get racks up an eye-watering €30,000, although many couples prefer to spend less on a more intimate, low-key event. Low-key and low-budget may well have been what Audrey Hepburn's son Sean was after when he rented out Granada's Alhambra Palace for a concert in 2014, and allegedly got married in the middle of it.

The palace's board accused him of using the concert to clandestinely stage the ceremony at the palace, which is not allowed, and which he denied. It was not the only 'first' for Spanish weddings in recent history. Spanish bobbies Chema and Jonathan made history when they got hitched in full uniform at the country's first ever gay police wedding in Jerez last September. Spain's wedding scene is certainly diverse. But that's to be expected of a country celebrating 11 years of legalised gay marriage and touting itself as the LGBT fun capital of Europe.

67,869 people married in Spain during the first half of last year, 1,803 were gay

Of the 67,869 people who married in Spain during the first half of last year, 1,803 were gay - still a minority, but a growing one. Although 2006 was the busiest year for same-sex weddings, when uncertainty over whether the law might be repealed set off a stampede, the figures have averaged over 3,000 a year ever since.



WHAT YOU NEED

Civil marriage (non-Catholic): In Andalucia the following are generally required, but do vary from town to town

1. Birth certificate (with sworn translation)
2. Passport
3. Consular registration certificate
4. Consular 'no impediment' to marriage certificate
5. Proof of Spanish residency: through copy proving empadronamiento

Catholic: The Archbishop has the final say but, generally required

1. Baptism certificate
2. Sworn declaration by parents that son/daughter is single



NEW VENUE: Madrid's Finca Torre Arias

Bouquet for the virgin

WEDDING customs vary across Spain and in some areas, for example, the bride offers her bouquet to the Virgin Mary; while in others it's given to a best friend or thrown into the crowd. It is also common to throw rice, not confetti, over the bride and groom.



But the marriage business in Spain is booming across the board.

And with Madrid Ciudadanos councillor Sofia Miranda pushing for weddings to be held at the magnificent Finca Torre Arias, recently gifted to the town hall, Madrid will be able to compete with top destinations, like Florence, which raked in €100 million in weddings alone last year.

And no wonder, when couples can marry in settings as stunning as the Uffizi gallery. Gay or straight, church or registry office, beach or banqueting suite, there's never been a better time to get married in Spain.

Over twice as many people come from abroad to marry here as Spaniards go elsewhere to get wed, which rather speaks for itself!



Plan for the heat

IN Andalucia, summer weddings unsurprisingly take place at around 7 or 8pm, after the oppressive heat of the day has subsided. After a short wedding ceremony it's usually off to a local restaurant - or 'celebrations' venue - for the set meal or buffet with plenty of wine that flows until the early hours until no guests are left!

Photo courtesy of Anna Gazda



BEACHSIDE: Wedding set up at the Marbella Club Hotel

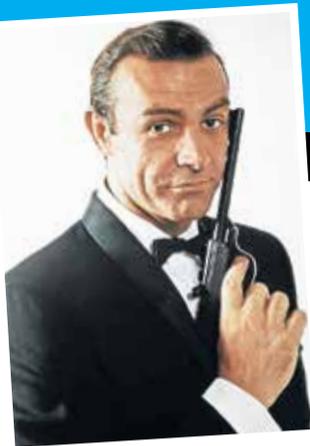
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March 2nd - March 15th 2016



Solid as a Rock

(solid marriage)

WHEN John Lennon and Yoko Ono got married in Gibraltar 47 years ago this month, they barely stayed an hour. That's not to say they didn't fall in love with the Rock - Lennon called it 'a little sunny dream' and even wrote a song about it - they were simply in a hurry to get to their honeymoon (a week-long and rather public Bed-in for Peace at the Amsterdam Hilton, some may recall). In fact, John and Yoko's whistle-stop marriage isn't possible now; a change of law dictates couples must spend at least one night in Gibraltar, before or after the ceremony, in order to marry. But as you can still get married with 24-hours notice it's certainly quick, simple and recognised worldwide. The greatest allure for courting couples is the symbolism of the Rock - as solid, unwavering and powerful as enduring love - and plans to introduce legislation for same-sex marriage will increase its appeal. And although James Bond actor Sean Connery's 1962 Gibraltar

wedding to actress Diane Cilento ended in divorce, he was sufficiently shaken and stirred to return in 1975 to marry present wife Micheline Boglio Roquebrune. Other celebrity Rock weddings include Hollywood couple Lawrence Harvey and Margaret Leighton, best-selling crime writer Frederick Forsyth, Status Quo frontman Rick Parfitt and comedian Des O'Connor. Of course, there are also thousands who descend on Gibraltar every year to celebrate the happiest day of their life who aren't famous. Interestingly, only around one third of couples are from the UK. The other two thirds come from America, Canada and the world over. In terms of swanky wedding venues, Gibraltar is spoilt for choice. Some four hotels - the Caleta in Catalan Bay, the O'Callaghan Elliott in the town centre, the Sunborn and the Rock Hotel - are approved for weddings. For a more natural and tranquil setting, head to Alameda Botanical Gardens. First developed in

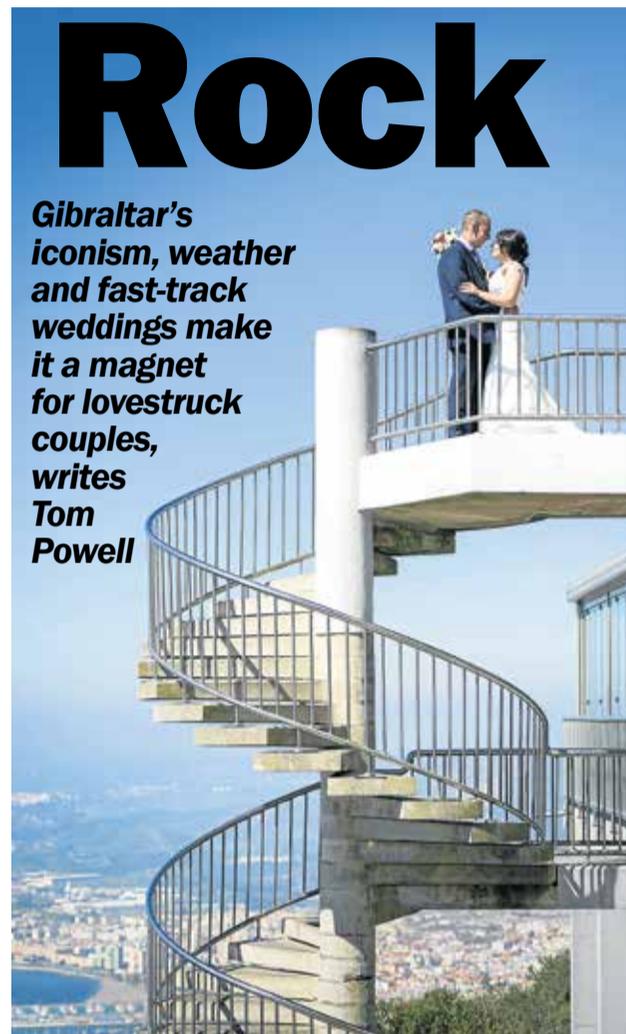


FAMOUS WEDDINGS: For Des O'Connor and (left) Sean Connery who married twice in Gibraltar

1816 to provide Gibraltar's residents with a green space to rest and relax, they have grown into a place of serene beauty. At their heart is the Dell, an Italian-style garden designed in 1842, where weddings are also permitted. If it's unbeatable views you're after, Mons Calpe Suite is located within the cable car's top station. The unique spot won the prestigious award of Best Mediterranean Wedding Venue last year, chosen by *Destination Wedding & Honeymoons Abroad* magazine.

"It is a very special venue which has now been recognised by a leading wedding magazine, which is a fitting tribute to my entire team," said manager Fernando Valdivielso Gomez. Finally there is the Mount, a former residence of the Royal Navy's senior officer, which boasts wonderful gardens. Weddings in Gibraltar have become a significant part of the tourist trade, and thus services have blossomed to cater for that. Professional photographers, makeup artists and florists can be easily arranged, either through the venue or externally, while there is no shortage of wonderful restaurants for receptions. Most couples, particularly those who marry in Alameda Gardens, opt for the nearby, tranquil Queensway Quay, home to top restaurants such as the Waterfront which sits right on the quay. The government website offers information on marriage in Gibraltar and the requirements, while enquiries can also be addressed to the Registration Office or recognised travel agents and wedding planners.

Gibraltar's iconism, weather and fast-track weddings make it a magnet for lovestruck couples, writes Tom Powell



PICTURE PERFECT: Atop the Rock

Photo by Jon Segui

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Ballad of John



EXCLUSIVE: The photographer at rock and roll's most famous wedding reveals all about his secret assignment for the first time

Special report by Joe Duggan

THE private jet takes off from Gibraltar to Paris and John Lennon lets out a roar of laughter as he cracks open an ice-cold bottle of champagne.

Next to the Beatle is his new wife, Yoko Ono. Both are dressed in angelic white, Lennon sporting plimsolls and corduroys, a wide-brimmed hat and mini-skirt for Ono.

Opposite, photographer and friend David Nutter clicks the newly-weds' glasses. A day before, the 30-year-old Londoner had been dispatched to Gibraltar in the dead of night on a top-secret mission.

The following morning, he was on the Rock taking the iconic images that captured the most famous wedding in rock and roll history. "We couldn't stop laughing about the whole thing," he tells *the Olive Press* from New York City.

"Especially John, he liked a good laugh. All we did was tell jokes on the plane. John was very English. He seemed very casual about the whole thing.

"But I had had no idea what was going to happen," he recalls. "It

was a complete secret."

Of course, the day would end up immortalised in song through The Beatles' *The Ballad of John and Yoko*.

But how did David end up heading to Gibraltar on a clandestine mission to photograph a Beatles wedding?

Back in London, David's brother Tommy ran a tailors opposite The Beatles' record company, Apple, on stylish Savile Row. Tommy Nutter was the man who dressed the swinging sixties. London's glitterati from Mick Jagger to Elton John, from Twiggy to Eric Clapton and, of course, The Beatles, were all clad in the flamboyant tailor's finery.

John and I couldn't stop laughing about the whole situation en route

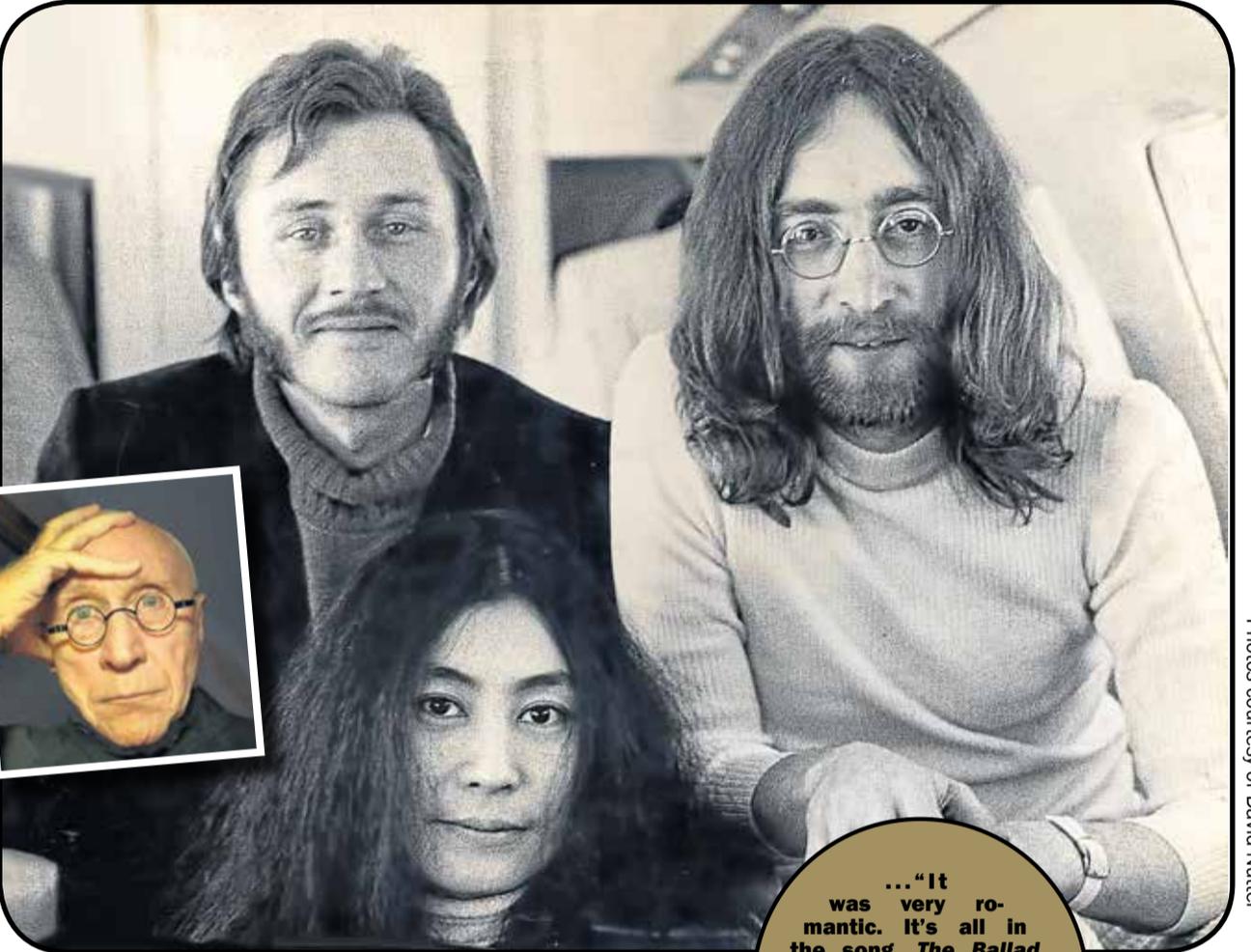
David, who had worked on scandalous satirical magazine *Oz*, slipped easily into this rarefied company. "I got to do some nice jobs because my brother made

clothes for the Beatles," David tells *the Olive Press*. "But I only got involved towards the end when the band was breaking up. You could sense the atmosphere around them was not right. I could sense it at Apple.

"At one point they asked me to photograph them signing some kind of contract on a napkin. It was all crazy. But I was always more friends with John than Paul or the others."

When McCartney married Linda Eastman in Marylebone on March 12, 1969, the attention sparked by his fellow Beatle's nuptials seemed to stir Lennon's competitive spirit.

Lennon had divorced teenage sweetheart Cynthia Powell the previous year to be with Ono, who had herself recently split



FLYING HIGH: Nutter with Lennon and Ono on jet after wedding and (inset) Nutter today

from her husband. Now marriage was on the cards once more.

"They didn't want a big fuss," says David. "Apparently McCartney's wedding was a bit of a circus. There were hundreds of people there and a huge media scrum. Gibraltar was chosen because it was one of the few places you could get married instantly and the press wouldn't find out."

But their route to Gibraltar was a circuitous one.

On McCartney's wedding day, Lennon was travelling to Dorset with Ono to introduce her to his much loved aunt Mimi, the stern disciplinarian who had brought him up.

Opening his limo's partition in Poole, he began to talk weddings to his chauffeur, Les Anthony. And Lennon, the son of a sailor, had a novel venue in mind.

"When we went to Mimi's house, John said he wanted to get married on the high seas," recalled Anthony in Philip Norman's biography *John Lennon*.

"He said to me, 'Can you put us on a boat, Les?' I don't mind where. And don't say anything to Mimi."

So John, Yoko and Les headed to Southampton.

... "It was very romantic. It's all in the song, *The Ballad Of John And Yoko*. If you want to know how it happened, it's in there. Gibraltar was like a little sunny dream." John Lennon

So John, Yoko and Les headed to Southampton.

"When we went to Mimi's house, John said he wanted to get married on the high seas," recalled Anthony in Philip Norman's biography *John Lennon*.

"He said to me, 'Can you put us on a boat, Les?' I don't mind where. And don't say anything to Mimi."

So John, Yoko and Les headed to Southampton.

Standing in the Dock in Southampton Trying to get to Holland or France
The man in the mac said, 'You gotta go back You know they didn't even give us a chance!'

Their amorous intentions soon fell foul of officialdom. Irregularities on Ono's passport meant they couldn't board.

"We wanted to get married on a cross-channel ferry. That was the romantic part," said Lennon in a 1980 interview.

"We went to Southampton but we couldn't get on because she wasn't English and she couldn't get the day visa to go across. And they said, 'Anyway, you can't get married. The Captain's not allowed to do it any more.'"

Undeterred, the couple flew by private jet to Paris on March 16, checking in at the luxury Plaza Athenee hotel.

But not even the city of romance was ready to accommodate them.

Apple records manager Peter Brown informed Lennon and



ROCK SOLID: Lennon on the runway in Gibraltar



March 2nd - March 15th 2016

and Yoko

Ono they couldn't marry in France as they had not been resident long enough. But he continued to dig and discovered there was one place they could get married in immediately.

Peter Brown called to say, 'You can make it ok 'You can get married in Gibraltar near Spain'

As a British citizen, Lennon could marry on the Rock. Suddenly David's phone was ringing.

"Peter Brown called me at my studio and asked me if I would come to Gibraltar with him," recalls Nutter.

"But he wouldn't tell me why. He just said, 'Bring your camera'. So I got to Gibraltar and I stayed the night."

Packing his Nikon and some rolls of film, David jumped on the next domestic flight to the Rock.

By the next morning, Brown had confided his secret and David was duly waiting at Gibraltar airport. Lennon and Ono's private jet landed at 8.30 am on March 20. Out into the sunshine stepped the most famous couple in the world, dressed in Tommy Nutter's radiant-white designs.

"It was a lovely warm day," said David. "It was amazing how laid back and casual they were. Most people would have made a big fuss but they didn't."

Driving from Gibraltar airport, the party, which included Brown, arrived at the British Consulate Office at 9am. Here, they were met by registrar Cecil Wheeler.

"They obviously knew who it was but there weren't big crowds of people there," says David.

"The ceremony was very short, about 10 minutes, and matter of fact. I don't remember it being too emotional. I don't think Yoko shows much emotion."

Despite being the exclusive photographer, he had been given no precise instructions from the bride and groom.

"They let me do whatever I wanted," he says. "The important picture would be in the registry office. That was the main thing. Them standing there and doing the vows."



HAPPY COUPLE: John and Yoko's Gib joy

"John was very easy to photograph. No vanity."

After the brisk service, they were whisked back to the airport. By now, word had got out and a phalanx of press awaited them.

But after just an hour and a half in Gibraltar, Lennon, Ono, Brown and David were on board a private jet and headed for Paris. A fleeting, but unforgettable, visit.

"It's the Pillar of Hercules, and also symbolically they called it the End of the World at one period,"

said Lennon of Gibraltar in 1980.

"So we liked it in the symbolic sense, and the Rock foundation of our relationship."

While the drink flowed on the flight back home, Lennon was in typically jocular mood.

"We had champagne, we had a good time and had a few jokes," said David.

"John was talking about all the old English TV shows that we liked."

"When got off the plane in Paris it was a mob scene. One woman from the English papers came up to me and said, 'I've been told I can take all your rolls of film back to the paper'. She

must have thought I was stupid. Back in those days it was so haphazard. There were no contracts or anything, I was just doing it for Peter Brown."

And while Lennon and Ono headed off to the massed ranks of the world's press in Paris and a lunch date with Salvador Dali, David had more pressing concerns.

"I flew back on the jet to London, but I was worried that I didn't have enough money to get back into London. Luckily the pilot took me back in his car," he says.

"One minute I'm on a private jet with John Lennon and champagne and the next minute I can't afford to get back into town."

Following the wedding, Brown carried on photographing John, Yoko and the other Beatles, but never as a group.

"At the end of The Beatles, Peter Brown wanted me to photograph everything that happened. But then the Beatles folded and I lost the best job I'd ever had," he says.

David moved to New York City in the winter of 1971, where he would occasionally see Ono and Lennon. He recalls seeing John carrying their newly-born son Sean in a shoe box at the Dakota Building after his early birth caught him by surprise and without a pram.

But it's clear, despite those glorious sun-kissed images of marital bliss in Gibraltar, he had reservations about Ono's influence on his friend.

"I had mixed feelings about Yoko. I had a few bad experiences with her after John died," he says.

"I knew May Pang [John Lennon's personal assistant whom he had an 18-month relationship with] when John was in New York. He was much more relaxed and fun when he was with May Pang."

"He was much more tense when he was with Yoko. I think she had a lot of power over him."



ROCK STARS: Wedding vows



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March 2nd - March 15th 2016

Don't hit the wedding wall!

Something old, something new, something Spanish, something blue... Laura Charles' bespoke wedding company Reviva is perfect for organising your nuptials, writes Iona Napier

Jeremy Standley at Homepage - Wedding Photography - Spain



WHAT Laura Charles doesn't know about organising weddings in Spain is simply not worth knowing.

The former interior designer and stylist, from Surrey, has had an exciting decade-long journey to become one of Spain's leading wedding planners.

Via her company Reviva Weddings, Laura and her team can organise everything from the ceremony to the sparkly cocktail sticks and from the catering to the flowers.

"The wedding market here in Spain has grown massively over the last three years and is practically unrecognisable from a decade ago when I started," she says.

"Nowadays, 99% of the clients I work for are Destination Weddings, and we have planned and executed hundreds of weddings for clients from all over the world.

"Spain is a great central point for guests flying in to join them in their celebrations, and our clients love the culture, vibrancy of our country, tapas and of course good weather," adds Laura, whose team works all over Spain from Malaga and Marbella to Barcelona and Sevilla.

When Laura started organising weddings a decade ago from her office in Marbella things were very behind and you could not even hire a chair!

Nowadays, there are hundreds



THE WEDDING PLANNER: Laura Charles

of venues and a brilliant selection of caterers and photographers to choose from and the devil is in the detail for Laura who is also known as the 'Martha Stewart of Spain'.

She estimates the average budget currently stands at around €30,000 for a wedding here, but it can vary wildly from an intimate rustic villa setting to something much more extravagant.

Whether you've organised your own wedding but need to hire

some final details or whether you need her to take on the entire project she can help.

Laura has a wealth of experience and, best of all, has a fabulous array of decorations, props, table linens and wedding accessories, all available to be hired and her creative team can create fabulous stationery, signs and other bespoke orders for her clients requests.

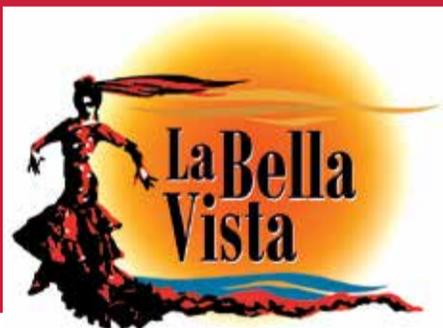
"Aside from organising the entire event which I love, a lot of

brides come to me when they hit the 'wedding wall,'" she explains.

"Maybe they have organised the key elements of their day but need extra help with certain things, and are not sure how to progress to organising the actual day, they want to hand it all over to an expert and turn off their mobiles. Thanks to my contacts, fabulous suppliers and our planning experience, I am in a great position to help and take over the wedding logistics.

"Reviva has steadily grown and is renowned for its elegant style, keeping up with the latest trends and it has been a roaring success," explains the 51-year-old Marbella mother-of-three – and recent grandmother – who cut her teeth in the display industry in London before moving into organising and styling large, corporate events in the UK and then dragging Spain into the stylish wedding world!

For more information visit www.revivaweddings.com or popular blog theweddingdecorator.blogspot.com



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Happy at the hacienda



WHEN her daughter was looking for the perfect venue to get married, it was perhaps obvious she would choose Karen Hoyle's stunning *cortijo* in Andalucía.

A fairly low-key affair with around 70 guests, it proved to be just another soaring

success in the story of Hacienda San Jose, in Entrerrios, Mijas Costa.

Feeling like an authentic Andalucía cortijo from two centuries ago, it is amazing to discover that the former boutique hotel was only built in year 2000.

Bought by Karen and her partner Chug, eight years ago, the 10-bedroom property is now one of the Costa del Sol's leading wedding venues, hosting an incredible average of 36 nuptials a year.

And this is no surprise with Karen and her team working extremely hard to create the most amazing service for brides and grooms.

"We are constantly decorating it and renovating it," explains Karen. "The upkeep is huge and we never stand still."

"Each wedding is completely different. We offer a bespoke service and can cater to up to 200 guests."

As well as sorting out accommodation for all other guests, all aspects of getting married from car hire to wedding planning can be arranged.

The villa sleeps up to 28 guests and can be rented for weddings from three-nights for just €5,000.

Visit www.villawedding-spain.com for more information



IDYLLIC: Hacienda San Jose in Mijas

Light up your LOVE...



ORIGINAL: Words in light

IF you have always wanted to add extra sparkle to your engagement, wedding, birthday or special event then look no further than Name in Lights.

The company produces a range of free-standing letters and words inset with lights. Sometimes called marquee letters and based on old-fashioned cinema, fairground and shop signs, the team has updated the idea and brought them to the Costa Del Sol.

They offer a range of letter styles. Classic LOVE (0.75m) is in vintage font with delicate warm glow bulbs. The giant LOVE is a stunning 1.5m in height, in modern font with diamante, light scattering feria bulbs.

Couples can also order their initials such as C & L, an eye catching 1.2 m high with bright white diamanté bulbs.

New for the 2016 season is a huge 1.5m high love heart with dazzling white lights and the bride and groom initials hanging from each arch of the heart, inset with their own twinkling fairy lights.

You can even order your full names or words such as 'party' or 'dance', which are also very popular for children's birthdays.

Delivery is available from Gibraltar to Benalmadena. Call 640628641 or visit www.nameinlights.eu

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* Conditions apply



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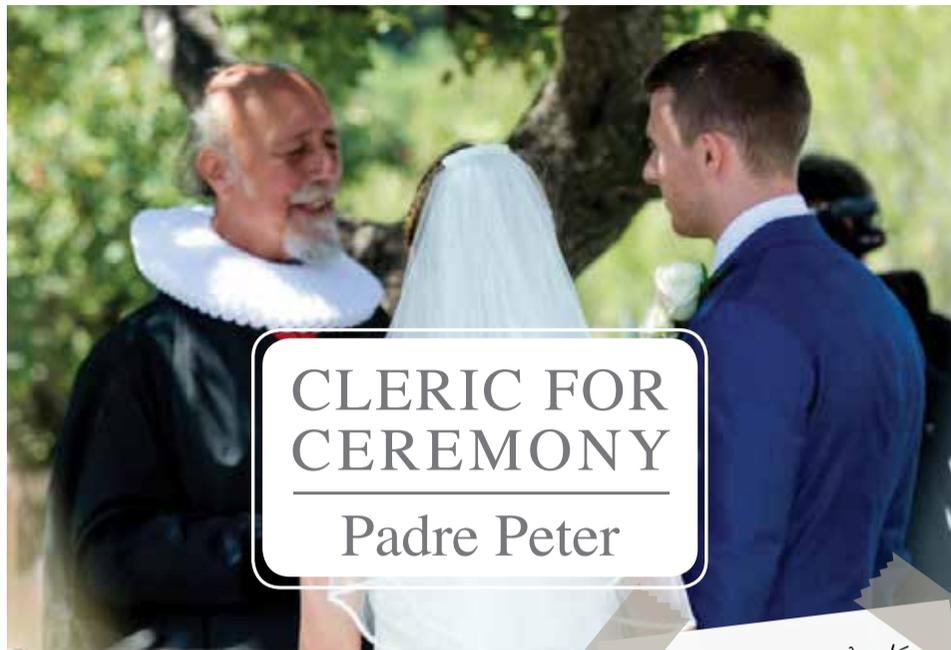
FBD Hotels & Resorts

Wedding special

March 2nd - March 15th 2016

Purple patch

Having cooked for princes to rock stars, it is no surprise that Purple Pepper's bespoke catering service is all about attention to detail, writes Iona Napier



CLERIC FOR CEREMONY

Padre Peter

Don't take Lorna's word for it! Why not get in touch with him on padrepeter1@gmail.com and see what he can do for you? Then you might agree with Lorna.

Padre Peter - Words can't describe him, just fantastic and guests are still raving about the ceremony. My mum said it was one of the most romantic ceremonies she had ever seen. Brilliant... Lorna



FROM Prince Charles to Roger Moore and from Roger Taylor to Anita Roddick, Peter Cannon has catered for the lot.

But, when it comes to funny stories make sure to ask the former Michelin-starred chef what it was like cooking for the Duke of Edinburgh.

A crashingly comical tale, it is one of many colourful episodes in the life of the boss of company Purple Pepper, who has catered at hundreds of weddings in Spain.

The former chef of UK restaurants Manley's, Goodwood Park and Oakley Court, Cannon moved from Sussex to Spain with his wife Sally and their four children 17 years ago.

Looking for a 'change of lifestyle', he initially ran the restaurant at Estepona Golf before setting up his catering company

six years ago.

"I wanted a change. The environment here is superb and if you know where to get the right produce, you can create something magnificent," he explains.

These days his company caters for everything, from small canapé receptions - which are currently in high demand - to summer barbecues, including their famous hog roast.

And then, of course, there are the weddings which have varied from a small six-person affair to a grand 180-person event in three different locations along the coast including leading hotel Villa Padierna Spa.

It is a bespoke, mobile service where attention to detail and the client's needs is key.

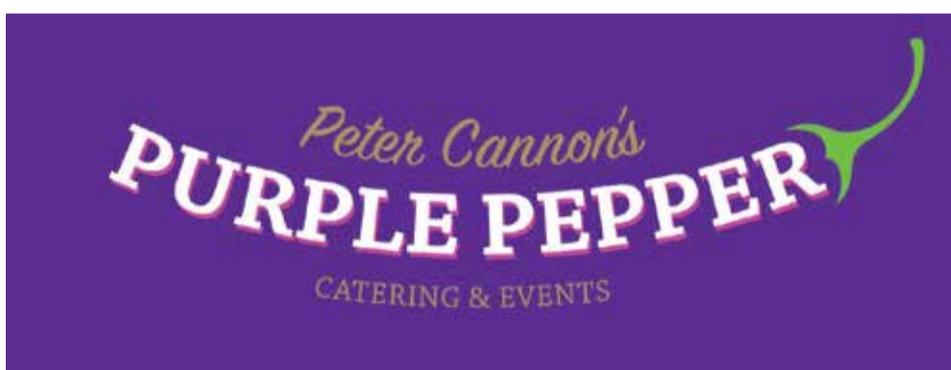
"If people had a glimpse of the care and attention that we put into every single dish they would understand why we're so special," Peter tells *the Olive Press*.

Their most popular dishes range from whole roasted fillet of beef on the barbecue to their unique take on chicken Wellington served with Madeira and thyme jus. Not forgetting the ever-popular hog roast served with crackling, apricot and almond stuffing to their paella show cooking, with prices starting from as little as €25 per person.

The company offers a completely free initial tasting session 'with no hidden agenda' and so far not one of these sessions has failed to lead to a booking. www.purplepeppercatering.com, or call 660 357 107



HAPPY CUSTOMERS: Prince Charles, Queen, Roger Moore and (top, right) Cannon and chef



Whether it's a small reception of canapés, BBQ or a full wedding menu, we promise a first class service and delicious food to ensure that your event is a complete success. Our ever popular hog roasts with apricot and almond stuffing are only €25 per person with a selection of five salads.

Contact: Katie Boardman | Telephone: +34 660 357 107

Email: katie@purplepeppercatering.com | Web: www.purplepeppercatering.com



TRUE BLESSING: Padre Peter and happy bride

Father figure

THE very reverend Dr Peter Miln - or Padre Peter as he is affectionately known on the coast - is no ordinary priest. The charismatic 72-year-old cleric, originally from London, officiates over weddings for people of all faiths, or none, across Spain.

From Barcelona to Santiago de Compostela, and even as far away as Florida, Padre Peter has created unforgettable ceremonies for couples for decades.

He has also officiated at many exclusive weddings, such as at the son of Status Quo rockstar Rick Parfitt's in a 'stunning' ceremony in Malaga in 2014.

But he is very discreet about the other big names he has dealt with.

The retired Christian Orthodox priest is known for his bright and witty style, allowing couples to play an active part in planning the ceremony, and has already been booked up to officiate at 57 blessings this year.

Peter who lives with his wife of 49 years in Campanillas near Malaga believes 'If the Church is going anywhere, we have to meet people on their own ground'.

His amazingly inclusive style means he has married mixed religion couples with his 'blessings' rather than legal ceremonies.

"I am very comfortable with celebrating two different traditions within one ceremony - there's only one God after all," he explains.

"And equally, I am quite happy if people want no mention of God, the ceremony can still be deeply spiritual and uplifting."

Contact him on padrepeter1@gmail.com for more information.

He has taken some of the most emblematic wedding shots in Spain and Gibraltar, now Jon Segui tells Rob Horgan how he went from army medic to top photographer

“WEDDING photography is a dying art. It's a shame, but that's the way it's going,” explains Gibraltar-based photographer Jon Segui.

“Weeks and weeks of preparation are needed and everything must be planned in advance to get the best photos from the time the sun rises to the time the sun sets.”

He adds: “A wedding may only last one day, but for the photographer it goes on much longer with weeks of editing needed after the big day.” Jon's refreshingly honest attitude towards shooting a wedding is no doubt why he has been so successful.

With a good reputation for shooting emblematic wedding albums in Gibraltar and Spain, it is no surprise Jon is highly sought after.

His commitment to taking the best possible photographs comes across in the pride he takes in each shoot.

And he is so dedicated to putting all his energy into each special day that he is incredibly picky and only takes on six wedding jobs a year.

“I limit myself to six clients a year so I have enough time to put everything into each shoot,”



CHEMISTRY: Segui's wedding shots and (below, inset) Segui

A life behind the lens

The chemistry between bride, groom and photographer will show in the photos

explains the former army medic, who moved from Hertfordshire to Gibraltar at the age of 16. “Each wedding is unique and deserves the utmost in preparation from the photographer.”

He explains that there are two main things he considers before taking on commissions.

“Firstly, the client has to be familiar with my style of photography, it always helps if they have visited the website.

“If you like the way I shoot then hire me and I will give it everything. This avoids price hunters who are not really interested in the quality of work.

“Secondly, the relationship between the bride, groom and photographer is paramount.

“I need to get a good feeling from the couple...”

the chemistry between bride, groom

and photographer will show in the photos.” And when it comes to weddings on his beloved Rock, he goes one step further.

Taking the bride and groom on a whistlestop tour to get the most iconic photos is a given and the light has to be perfect so timing is important.

Much like his photographs, Jon's personal path to photography is unique.

After leaving the British Armed forces, where he worked as a medic, he worked in hospitality in Marbella, before turning his hand to photography.

“It was something I always wanted to do”, explains Jon, who has been working as a freelancer



on numerous jobs around the world, particularly in motor racing, for the last six years.

Working for international publications from the Daily Mail to Sky Sports F1, Jon has quickly established himself as one of the region's top snappers... so you better snap him up fast, if you want him for your big day!

To view his portfolio visit www.jonseguiphotography.com or email jon.segui@yahoo.com for more information.



DASHING DISPLAY

BRIDES and grooms stuck for inspiration for the big day are in luck.

Alcaidesa Links Golf Resort is hosting a wedding showroom from 11am to 7pm on Sunday, March 6.

The rooms will be decorated in style, with a variety of lights and fabrics on show.

There will be a tantalising display of wedding treats to set the heart racing, from various florists to fountains and other decorations.

There will also be a saxophonist on hand, as well as a pianist, a violin duo and a singer in English and Spanish, plus a DJ for the late-night boogiers.

Not to be missed is the equestrian show which involves a human dancer.

In terms of refreshments, a honeymoon cakes station will take pride of place, as well as tables for cheese, cava, jamon and – of course – sweets.

Everything is in place to inspire a romantic, sophisticated and original wedding.



PICTURE PERFECT: At Alcaidesa Links Golf Resort



“We want to know your needs and aspirations for the happiest day of your life, and then we will make it happen,” said a spokesman. Admission is free and more information, including how to register, can be found on the Alcaidesa Events Facebook page.

You can also register online at www.alcaidesaeventos.com or by emailing eventos@alcaidesa.com mail

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