

DEREK PENGELLY

# WEDDING DAY SECRETS

*Facts the industry would prefer brides didn't know*

# **Wedding Day Secrets**

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By

Derek Pengelly

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E-mail the author [info@weddingdaysecrets.co.uk](mailto:info@weddingdaysecrets.co.uk)

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Hello, we are Rich MacKinnon, Phill Makepeace, Gavin Adcroft and Stuart Pizzey.

Together we are The Celebration Roadshow. Please accept this exclusive copy of Wedding Day Secrets with our compliments.

We are Specialist wedding DJ's & Party Hosts and are delighted to recommend this book to you. The author of this book gives an insider's view of the preparation, often much unseen that goes into wedding celebrations. The facts that are revealed can be both shocking and surprising and some of the suggestions will not be to everyone's tastes. However, armed with these in-sights you will be better informed when deciding what takes priority in the planning process and which options represent best value.

We are passionate about weddings and working with Brides & Grooms to create their dream wedding day. By getting involved early in the wedding preparations we can help make your special day unique & memorable. Your enjoyment and satisfaction is our priority.

The Celebration Roadshow has established an enviable relationship with venue management and staff across the Southwest of England. Several venues have approached us, based on our reputation for customer service & satisfaction, to become their preferred Wedding DJ's. We are recommended by Old Down Manor, Tortworth Court Hotel, Almonry Barn, The Gables Hotel and The Ship Inn.

Our website hi-lights some of the testimonials from satisfied bride & grooms  
Our commitment to creating memorable celebrations and our customer service was rewarded in 2013, with The Celebration Roadshow being awarded 'Best Southwest Wedding DJ's' by the Wedding Industry Awards. This was a tremendous accolade for the team and well deserved recognition of our commitment to our clients.

Being able to share the secrets in this book with you is really exciting for us. Many of our clients have found the advice contained within it invaluable. We have also benefited, by incorporating some of the suggestions to create magical moments and memorable wedding celebrations. Whether you are looking for all-day entertainment or our services just for the evening celebration, we would love the opportunity to discuss your special day with you. Once you have read this book don't hesitate to get in touch. We would love to arrange a free, no obligation, meeting where we can discuss your special day together. Our contact details are listed below.

#### Client testimonial

*The Celebration Roadshow provided an excellent service and exceeded all our expectations as our wedding DJ's. They created a perfect wedding disco atmosphere and many guests commented on how great the DJ's were. The Celebration Roadshow could not have done a better job; they definitely know their audience and kept our wedding guests on the dance floor all night! Thank you! – Laura & Ben (Wedding – Old Down Manor)*

T: 0800 024 2492

E: [info@celebrationroadshow.co.uk](mailto:info@celebrationroadshow.co.uk)

W: [www.celebrationroadshow.co.uk](http://www.celebrationroadshow.co.uk)

# **Table of Contents**

Introduction by The Celebration Roadshow

About The Author

Introduction

Part 1: Dreams into Reality

- 1: The Best Kept Secret
- 2: Your Wedding / Your Way
- 3: The Average Wedding
- 4: The Party Host
- 5: Civil Ceremonies
- 6: The Venue
- 7: Drinks Reception & The Wedding Breakfast
- 8: The Wedding Cake

Part 2: The Evening Reception

- 9: Get the Party Started
- 10: Your First Dance
- 11: The Buffet
- 12: The Bouquet Toss
- 13: Playlists
- 14: Live Entertainment
- 15: Questions To Ask A Party Host  
Before You Hire Them
- 16: Destination Weddings – Married Abroad.

Derek Pengelly, My Thanks

## About The Author

Derek Pengelly is a Specialist Wedding DJ, Master of Ceremonies and Party Host. He is married to Carol, and currently lives and works, on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

Derek started out as a mobile DJ way back in the sixties His career in music, developed alongside his “proper job”, in high street retail management, as well as a spell in a business development role for Vauxhall Motors.

In 1998 Derek and Carol started their own DJ agency, David Summers and Co, in Cheshire, North West England. Business grew as the couple earned a reputation for providing quality entertainment at affordable price sand the company quickly established itself as a supplier of services to quality venues in the area. However after a couple of years it was evident something was missing. There was a distinct gap in the market for a more personalised service. It was obvious to Derek that certain clients wanted more than what was on offer.

February 2002 saw Carol and Derek board an airplane and head over to the USA, in search of a better way to deliver mobile entertainment, especially for a Bride and her wedding reception. This was a journey which was to be repeated many times, as the couple built professional relationships with entertainers across the pond. Armed with new ideas, new skills and a passion for weddings Derek began making some changes.

Very quickly he began to establish himself as a Specialist Wedding DJ who cared about the success of his client’s wedding reception. Together with Carol they offered a premium service. This service was tailored to their client’s needs and resulted in fun and unique wedding receptions for their Brides and Bridegrooms.

More recently Derek has devoted a great deal of his time to mentoring and training his fellow entertainers. This has involved travel throughout the United Kingdom and North America. In 2004 he helped establish The National Association of Disc Jockeys [N.A.D.J] in the UK, and became its chairman later that year. In addition to writing and presenting a series of seminars and workshops about wedding entertainment, he has also written articles for Pro-Mobile Magazine. In May 2013, Derek’s commitment to sharing his knowledge, experience and expertise was recognised, by Pro-Mobile Magazine, when he was presented with a life-time achievement award.

Derek has attended hundreds of weddings. Weddings are special. They deserve the very best standard of entertainment; alas this is not always the case. Recently it has become evident that many venues, wedding coordinators and planners, have been undervaluing the importance of exceptional, personalised wedding entertainment. Somehow, the food, drink, flowers and favors have taken precedence. This situation needs to be reversed

# Introduction

I'm passionate about weddings. In my role of Disc Jockey, Master of Ceremonies and wedding Party Host I've attended hundreds of weddings large and small. A wedding is a unique family celebration. The Wedding Ceremony and Reception are a reflection of who we are and what lies ahead for the Bride and Bridegroom. In many ways the kind of wedding, and the style of the reception, is a social statement and as such, the pressure is on to create a bigger, better and different experience for the guests to enjoy.

The title of this book, "Wedding Day Secrets – facts the industry would prefer you didn't know", is possibly being a little unkind to professional wedding suppliers and advisors in the United Kingdom. It is a sweeping statement, and I apologise to those to whom the description does not apply. They are the exception which proves the rule.

I would also like to point out that keeping a secret implies there is a fact, which is being withheld, and not divulged. In many cases there is no secret to hide, for the advisor is blissfully ignorant, and totally unaware, of much of the content in this book.

I've met thousands of Brides-to-be at wedding fairs over the past thirty years. They invariably have a vision as to how their big day should be. When I've probed them further about their vision, it often transpires that, in order to transform their vision into reality, a great deal of planning will be required. Brides will often say things like "I want everyone to enjoy themselves", "the music has to be perfect", "after our first dance I want everybody on the dance floor" or "I want everyone to be up dancing all night long". All of these are easier said than done. Achieving each of these wishes requires more than trusting to luck and careful music choices. Where entertainment is involved, staging, production and direction, are critical for success. The old adage, "it's not what you do, it's the way that you do it, which gets results", has never been more true.

Within the pages of this book, I will share with you aspects of the different elements of a successful, fun and memorable wedding day. I'll illustrate many points, with practical examples taken from my own experience, and those of my colleagues from around the country. Some of the content may appear negative at first glance. It is not my intention to dwell too much on what I believe to be wrong, however I need to "tell it like it is", in order to demonstrate how things can be so much better, given insight and a little guidance.

I get very angry when a Bride is dictated-to by a venue. For some reason choice is becoming increasingly rare. It makes my blood boil when a Bride is told, "your first dance will take place straight after you cut the wedding cake at 7.00pm". What!

Why! Who says so, and on what basis has this decision been made? In my experience this could be another of those dreaded situations, were no one joins the Bride and Bridegroom on the dance floor, or worse still, many of the evening guests have not arrived, and therefore will miss this important and special moment.

Without wanting to sound patronising, "Brides don't know what Brides don't know". It's not

their fault: they are simply being misinformed or manipulated, for the benefit and convenience of others. This book is intended to set the record straight and inform and empower Brides to stand firm and enjoy the wedding of their dreams. I only know what I know because I've seen or heard about hundreds of examples of Brides being badly advised, to the detriment of their guests' enjoyment of this very special day.

### **The way weddings used to be**

I can remember when weddings tended to be smaller and more intimate. Traditionally, all of the guests were invited to the ceremony and joined the Bride and Bridegroom for the wedding breakfast and stayed on for the evening party. This all-inclusive wedding ensured everyone was involved, and were a part of the celebration. The whole day flowed seamlessly and all of the guests were able to absorb the events of the day without interruption. The newlyweds would often depart before the end of the party, and guests would gather to "send them off" to a secret location where they would spend their first night together as husband and wife.

Changing times and economic pressure have created a totally different template for most Brides to follow in twenty first century Britain. Some weddings still follow the example above, but most do not. Nowadays, the celebration is often divided into two halves, the daytime and the evening. I can understand how this has developed, especially when you see how much the cost of feeding people has risen over the years. This new template for a wedding reception has also created a number of challenges. The time-line has now expanded. Formerly a wedding would, on average, be six to eight hours in duration. Today, a wedding may well be something in excess of twelve hours. This creates new challenges with regard to keeping guests engaged, and entertained, throughout the day. It also means that the guests who attend only the evening party are disadvantaged, because they lack the emotional connection generated earlier in the day.

The emergence of the evening reception has created a disjointed event. The addition of an evening buffet meal has also produced a number of challenges, especially from a logistical and entertainment perspective. There is a need for someone to take control, and his or her role is to join all of the segments together, in such a way as to engage the guests, and help them transition from one stage of the proceedings to another.

Recently, a growing number of professional DJs have been retraining, and seeking ideas and methods to unite the party, and entertain in more ways than simply playing music. Filling a dance floor is the least of their challenges. They have chosen to take responsibility, to ensure a first dance is well received, and that all guests are encouraged to join the newlyweds when required to do so. More importantly, the new DJ / Master of Ceremonies / Party Host, will suggest ways other members of the bridal party can contribute to the memories of the day. He or she will also strive to reduce the effect of stopping for the buffet meal, at the very time the party is just getting started.

I have been working very closely with over a hundred wedding Party Hosts over the last five to ten years. Together we have looked at the way wedding receptions are celebrated in other parts of the world, most noticeably in North America and Canada.

Their wedding receptions are very much like ours used to be. This is not surprising when you

consider that most of their population originated from Europe. Some of the American weddings can be over the top, and a little too brash, for our tastes over here, however the concepts behind them hold substance. The challenge has been for me and my colleagues to adapt their ideas, and produce interactive introductions, and spotlight moments, which British people can embrace and enjoy. Fortunately, a lot of what goes into an American wedding, consists of ceremonies which originated right here in the UK and central Europe. It appears we simply forgot about them!

Read on and explore what really makes a wedding ceremony and reception truly fun, unique and memorable. It's not about us the DJ / Master of Ceremonies / Party Host; it's all about you, the Bride and Bridegroom, and the enjoyment of your guests. A friend and colleague, Dave Windsor, once said, "**Without memorable entertainment a wedding reception is little more than a very expensive dinner party**".

Thank you for buying this book and being receptive to the ideas and suggestions within its pages. Congratulations and good luck. I wish you good health, wealth and happiness in your married life".

Enjoy!

Derek Pengelly [Also known as] DJ David Summers

## **Part 1: Dreams Into Reality**

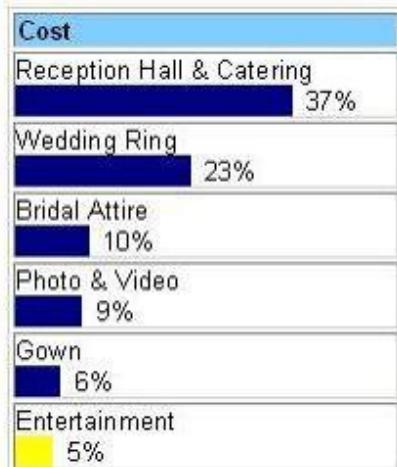
# 1: The Best Kept Secret

What would you say was the most important item in your budget? Your bridal gown, the flowers, the venue hire, the food, the chair covers, the favours? The average cost of a wedding varies, so it is little wonder that so many figures are banded about. What is the average cost of a wedding in 2013? Recently I have seen figures suggested for an average wedding of £10,000, £15,000 and £20,000, but who wants an average wedding?

No matter what your budget may be, it is important that you spend your money wisely. These days there is increasing pressure to go one step further, and to out-do, or be better than, the previous wedding you may have attended.

Many of today's weddings concentrate on "the look", and a great deal of the budget is spent on venue dressing, especially as more and more innovations are being offered by way of decorations and lighting. There are more and more service providers clamoring for a slice of the budget, and all of them suggest you must have the latest this, that or the other. It's very easy for the budget to run out of control, and to end up with money spent on items which will actually have very little impact on your guests.

**Take a look at these statistics.**

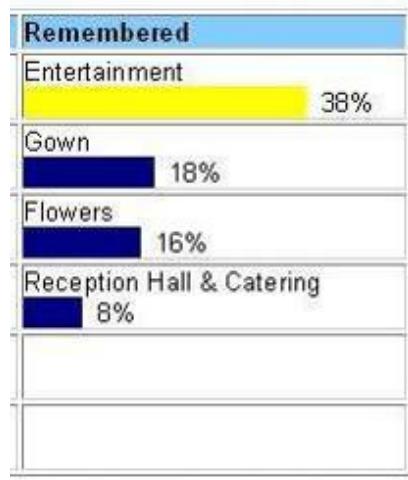


The above percentages are taken from real Brides after following "advice" from wedding planners, venue event coordinators and service providers. This represents 90% of the budget. The other 10% was spent on other items, including the honeymoon. The biggest slice of the cake went to the reception venue and catering.

Below is another break-down of how real Brides wished they had spent their money after their wedding day. You will note that the reference to entertainment is the largest percentage appreciated or remembered by the guests. Entertainment includes things like string quartets for

ceremony music, piano players for drinks receptions, wedding singers, Bands, DJs, chocolate fountains, casino tables, photo booths, etc etc.

### **After the vows**



### **When surveyed;**

72 % of Brides said they would have spent more time choosing their wedding entertainment,

Almost 100% said they would have spent more of their budget on entertainment,

During wedding planning, Brides said that their highest priority is their wedding attire, followed by the reception venue and the catering. Reception entertainment is among the least of their priorities.

Within one week of the reception, 78% said they would have made entertainment their highest priority,

65% of couples who chose a Band to entertain at their wedding said, if they had to do it again, they would hire a Disc Jockey,

Entertainment is 5% of the wedding budget, but 38% of the guests will remember the entertainment more than anything else.

**When guests were asked what they remembered most about a wedding after the Bride's gown and the wedding ceremony, 81% said entertainment!**

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I appreciate these are American statistics; however my own research, and personal experience as a wedding entertainer, is that there is no difference in the UK. To all intents and purposes, a wedding, especially one held in a multi-chain hotel, is little more than a very expensive meal. A wedding reception should be so much more than a fine meal.

A good friend of mine, wedding entertainer DJ/MC trainer and mentor of many wedding professionals, Mark Ferrell [[www.markferrell.com](http://www.markferrell.com)] believes;

*“A talented wedding entertainer is vital to the success of a wedding reception because a wedding reception is a party – and a party is, by definition, a function of entertainment. The duty of a qualified entertainer such as a wedding DJ/ MC is not only to keep guests engaged, included, and having fun, but also to capture imaginations, touch hearts, and skilfully remind them of the true meaning and purpose of the event.”*

So there you have it in a nutshell. The biggest kept secret in the wedding industry is that entertainment is vital to the success of a wedding reception. Yet official advice and information places this way down the list of priorities. Why is this? Why should such an obvious fact be overlooked by so many advisors? In my opinion it's because other service providers seldom see the whole picture. They concentrate on their product or service. More importantly they do not attend the wedding, and even if they do, they are not present for the entire event.

Think about this for a moment; most of the wedding budget is spent on presentation. The “look” of the venue, the table decorations, the flowers, colour schemes etc. How much importance is placed on the way you and your guests will “feel” on your wedding day? How much emotion will there be in the room? Will your guests laugh? Will they cry?

Entertainment is subjective and entertainment takes many forms. A wedding reception can often last twelve hours or more. Choosing the right entertainment to suit your style and personality is not easy. Maintaining interest and enjoyment throughout your wedding ceremony, drinks reception, wedding breakfast and on into the evening can be daunting. I don't wish to be patronising. If the industry is withholding essential facts, then you, as a Bride-to-be, need help, and finding the right help is not easy.

Now before I go on, let me make one point very clear. Some venues, management and staff, and many wedding planners and coordinators, understand the importance of entertainment. Alas they are the exception to the rule. Most do not. In fact many are so stuck in their ways that any mention of new ideas, interaction or bringing in a specialist wedding DJ/Party Host will be like a foreign language to them.

This book will illustrate current thinking, and will provide typical examples, of what actually takes place at hundreds of wedding receptions up and down the UK every week. I will explain what is on offer, and more importantly, I will demonstrate a better way, and the reasoning behind the emergence of a new breed of wedding entertainer.

Over the last ten years a quiet revolution has taken place. You will have noted from the previous statistics that the majority of Brides believe that a Specialist Wedding DJ would have been the best option for their wedding entertainment, yet they chose not to employ one. Hindsight has proved to be perfect vision. Why wasn't the DJ an obvious choice?

Upon reflection I can see why a specialist wedding DJ would not be your first consideration. A DJ just plays music right? How would a DJ be able to engage with my guests and keep them entertained throughout the day? You only need a DJ for the dancing later in the day don't you? Well yes, that used to be the case, but in the last few years the Specialist Wedding DJ has evolved into something more than just music. He has re-trained and is using his knowledge of all genres of music, his public speaking ability, his technical expertise, and experience of attending hundreds of weddings, to create a new role as a Specialist Wedding DJ, Master of Ceremonies and Party Host.

All over the country, Brides are being empowered to sit down with this new breed of wedding entertainer; together they can create a fun, unique and memorable wedding reception, which their guests will be talking about long after the event.

A wedding ceremony, and the reception which follows, should be a celebration of the marriage. In my opinion, the joy and fun should start with the arrival of the Bride, and continue throughout the day and beyond. Why is it, that sometimes, the loudest noise in the room at a wedding breakfast is the clatter of the cutlery? How come we have to wait to the end of the meal, before we hear the toasts and speeches which contain the love, emotion and humour which touch the hearts and minds of everyone in the room?

In the rear of this book, and on the dedicated web site, [www.weddingdaysecrets.co.uk](http://www.weddingdaysecrets.co.uk) you will find a list of suitably trained Party Hosts. They would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and be given the chance to demonstrate exactly how they can make a difference to your special day. Please pay particular attention to their testimonials.

However before you go thumbing through the back pages, let me take some time to examine what you, as a Bride may experience in the planning stages of your wedding. Let's take a look at what venues and event planners are saying, and what that actually means in reality. What follows is, in my experience, typical but not always the case. Some venues and planners care about entertainment and understand the importance of it, alas many do not.

At the very least, at the end of the day, reading this book and being armed with its contents, will enable and empower you, to ask searching questions of your venue and service providers.

Forewarned is forearmed as they say. Good venues will be open-minded and flexible with their clients. Others may be more rigid and totally oblivious to some of the subject matter in this book. In the past I have struggled to convince venue management that the concepts in this book will work, and that wedding receptions will be so much better for it. I'm happy to report that after the event, the management were convinced and not only liked what they saw, but positively encouraged their clients to use my services.

In the remaining pages of this book, wedding day secrets are revealed, together with hints and tips for a great wedding. I hope you find them as enlightening and rewarding as my Brides did. This is how my clients remembered their wedding day. Is this how you would like to remember yours?

### **Karen & Peter Woodall**

*“From our first contact with you, through to the last thing on Saturday evening, you could not have done more to ensure the success of our special day. The music at all stages of the event was exactly right. The changing moods of the day’s ceremony, through to the evening disco, were all captured perfectly. The formal and informal parts of the day were handled expertly and with good humour by Derek while Carol worked tirelessly, and with tremendous patience to ensure that the day went smoothly. As a consequence, we have been overwhelmed by the comments of guests, both at the event, and subsequently, many of whom have said categorically, that it was the best “do” they have ever been to”.*