



OUR WEDDING STORY



★ BRIDGE HOUSE
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We decided to get married in 2013 and as we live in Australia, we could take advantage of the holidays and have our wedding over Christmas in 2014. The only thing I was certain about was the venue. Being from Offaly, I know the food and service at the Bridge House are always to the highest standard. I also felt like with a winter wedding, I did not want to choose a hotel based on grounds and then the good old Irish weather kicks in. The Bridge has an amazing interior and if we were lucky enough to get good weather, they have many photo opportunities in the secret garden or the surrounding Charleville Castle and Town Park. We booked the Millennium room for the 27th of December 2014.

From the moment I met the wedding planner, I knew I made the right decision. I can be indecisive but also love organisation so I went in with a million ideas as to how we wanted our day to be a reflection of us. Stella was always so open to ideas and nothing was too much trouble but the real work didn't start until we went back to Australia.





We had to organise our entire wedding in the 3 weeks we were at home. That included the dress, bridesmaids, suits, photographers - the lot. It was such a stressful time and then during the year we began second guessing our choices as we had made them in such a rush. The Bridge was always on hand. Within 8 weeks of returning to Australia, Stella and Catriona made contact so see how we were getting on and if they could help in any way being on the ground in Ireland. For the remainder of the year, we got an email every 6-8 weeks checking in with us. When we made numerous changes, including the wedding date to New Year's Eve the Bridge House could not have been more flexible and willing to help when they could.

We arrived in Ireland 3 weeks before our wedding. I was eager to go to the hotel and confirm all our arrangements, being the control freak that I am I was also very nervous that some of the brilliant ideas I had during the year may not have crossed over. I wanted a vintage feel to the reception but also modern. As it was a New Year's Eve wedding I wanted to create a party atmosphere and purchased lots of New Year Eve props for the guests to create photos with. I was very hesitant to have a photo booth as they are so expensive and Stella had said not to worry that she could give me the same feeling without the price tag.

Upon arriving at the Bridge House, we were so pleased with the wonderful welcome we received. When I approached the reception for our appointment the ladies and gentlemen at the desk could not have been more pleasant. You felt more like a family member than a paying guest. Nothing was too much, tea and coffee whilst you wait, how about a scone! Whilst we were waiting another wedding was taking place and again I was so pleased with our venue choice. Weddings really are the hotel's speciality and they make it all look so easy.

Stella was so professional and efficient that my nerves started to calm after our first meeting. She had every idea I had given to her during the year written down in our file. We spoke for hours as to what we wanted and what we were hoping to achieve. I loved her openness and willingness to be honest. Often times when you are planning a wedding, suppliers will tell you what they think you want to hear. For weeks I would drop in bags of props and decorations in, each time ringing Stella as to what new idea had popped into my head that day.

About 2 weeks before the wedding, we went to the Bridge House to taste our wedding menu and ensure we were happy with our choices. Again we were so taken aback with the reception we received. As soon as we mentioned our name the staff knew we were the couple getting married on New Year's Eve. Our concierge, who would welcome us on the day of our wedding, came over and introduced himself. Noel McCann popped in to say hello to us and another couple who were having their tasting for their wedding in May.





About 2 days before the wedding, we popped in and seen another wedding at the hotel. As it was a civil ceremony, the wedding party moved up stairs. Stella quickly grabbed us and brought us to the ball room where the wedding would be sitting down afterward to dinner. It was still mid set up but it looked beautiful. We had originally booked the Millennium room, as we had a wedding of 120 and we were nervous that the ballroom would swallow the crowd but this wedding was approximately the same size. The glamour and decadence of the ballroom is indescribable and that's before you even put up any decorations. The room was still available for New Year's Eve, so we quickly asked if we could make the swap. Again, nothing was too much trouble. We were so excited for our guests to see the room. We had imagined the Millennium room ourselves throughout the year, so for us this added more excitement and expectation.

The night before the wedding had finally arrived and there was calmness about the house that all we had to do was wait. Stella called to wish me well and confirm the seating arrangements. It also gave me peace of mind to know that she was on it and I didn't have to worry. Our wedding was truly the best day of our lives. The church looked magical and it felt like our fairy-tale was coming true. However like all weddings, they go by so fast and we were running slightly late. When we went to the castle for photos, we were about an hour behind. I need not have worried. When my bridesmaid called Stella, all was under control.



One of our best memories of our wedding day is our arrival at the Bridge House. The bagpipes, the concierge and again Stella was on hand to greet us. She has a calmness about her that just enables you to stop worrying and enjoy your day. Not to mention she's a girl, so she knows when you need a toilet break, a touch up or just 5 minutes to catch your breath. After our initial pictures Stella took us away to view our room before the guests arrived. Words cannot describe how we felt when we entered the room. Even though I had seen a wedding in the room days before, it was like I was seeing the room for the first time. It was beyond my wildest dreams, better than anything I had seen in magazines in the previous year and was trying to recreate. The candles complimented my bridesmaid's colours; the white chairs with white ribbons, which I had requested, were so elegant and classy. Each table had a mini blackboard with the table number on it as I am a teacher. Each candelabra had pearls draped around them and the wicker love hearts we have brought from the church were elegantly placed around the room. As we walked in our initials were placed on a table with candles surrounding them and our props table was discreetly but beautifully placed to the right. It looked amazing!! The cake table was breathtaking, the chiffon perfectly matched our bridesmaids and the surrounding candlelight added to the mood. The pictures of our parents on their wedding day were a nice touch.





From the decorations to the procession of the bridesmaids, our surprise entrance into the room and the food our guests are still talking about our wedding and it is now February! We had guests from England and Australia who had never seen a venue like the Bridge House ballroom. We also had local people who felt like they were seeing it for the first time because Stella had done such a good job of making the room unique. The staff were on hand the entire day to ensure we enjoyed ourselves and worried about nothing. In fact the next morning, when we were due to move to another room, as we had booked to stay the following night, they allowed us to stay in the Bridal Suite with their compliments. Upon finally leaving, we were invited to sit down with the General Manager for tea and scones and discuss how our day went. It really felt like even though our wedding was over and we are one of many, we were special and unique.

Thank you so much Noel, Stella, Catriona, Geraldine on the front desk and everyone at the Bridge House for making our wedding day so special and one we will remember for the rest of lives. Our guests were so impressed that 2 couples have booked their weddings with the Bridge for next year, the biggest compliment we could have got for our wedding.

We will definitely be returning to renew our vows in 10 years!



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