

ASIAN BRIDES CHOOSE STATELY HOMES

The stately homes of England are becoming venues of choice for a new generation of Asian brides.

Because they are among the few preferred venues that offer enough space for Asian celebrations – which are typically up to five times the size of an average UK wedding.

So the market interest is growing higher than ever - says leading wedding planner and event specialist Raj Somaiya.

Raj runs Manchester-based Payal Events specialising in large-scale fairytale marquee weddings. In the last four months he has organised receptions at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, Cliveden in Berkshire, Harewood House in Yorkshire and Knowsley Hall on Merseyside.

“Asian couples don’t just invite family and friends – they invite whole communities,” says Raj, “so a wedding becomes a get-together of almost everyone they have ever known.

“But we just can’t find enough large venues. That’s why the Asian market is moving towards country estates which have the right amount of space as well as car parks that sometimes need to take over 120 vehicles.”

The trend is welcomed by Britain’s Historic Houses Association. “We are delighted whenever we can help bridal couples and their families to find the right venue for their wedding,” said President, James Hervey-Bathurst. “It is particularly welcome that more and more Asian families see historic houses as the right place for a wedding, because of their romance, tradition, hospitality and spirit of continuity. That is the way their owners see them too.”

Places like Capesthorpe Hall - set in 100 acres of picturesque Cheshire parkland near Macclesfield and owned by the county’s Lord Lieutenant William Bromley-Davenport whose family has governed it since Domesday times.

“Couples are growing bored with the same old hotel circuit,” says Nicholas Bromley-Davenport. “They are discovering more romantic and photogenic places that offer alternative benefits of country space and exclusive privacy.”

- **Payal Events** is a Manchester-based family-run national business offering full bespoke wedding, family and corporate event production – from planning, management and venue finding to décor, theming and catering – serving Indian, Chinese, exotic Indo-Chinese fusion and modern European classics. Tel - 0161 902 0010; Web - www.payal.co.uk