

Meet the maker

BEHIND THE SCENES WITH A TALENTED SCOTTISH WEDDING CREATIVE



BESPOKE CATERING

Kelly Naylor runs the much-loved outside catering company with her husband Chris. Here, she dishes up a few secrets of the trade

Photography by *Meale Smith*



My husband Chris and I launched Bespoke Catering & Events in 2014 after we'd

both spent more than a decade working in the hospitality industry.

Work has taken us to some really exciting places, such as Australia and Spain, and it has given the two of us a really good, wide knowledge of the industry. **We are the directors and owners of the company.**

Chris oversees the cooking while I look after the day-to-day running of the business, taking care of everything from dealing with initial enquiries, invoicing and working on menu

ideas with our clients, to setting up venues and co-ordinating the running of each wedding or event. You name it, I am probably involved in it! **The idea for the business was sparked by planning our own wedding.**

It was really difficult to find a caterer who offered flexibility and creativity without the restrictions of the typical A, B or C package - and for this reason we ended up looking after our own catering. We had previously owned a restaurant, but we decided we wanted to take things in a different direction, and so Bespoke Catering & Events was born. **Since then, we have been amazed and very grateful at how well we have been received** and how quickly the company has grown. In our first year we had the pleasure of looking after seven wonderful couples. This grew to 26 the following year, and in 2016 we have been honoured to be part of 43 couples' weddings. **To cope with the expansion in our business,** we moved to new kitchens and offices in July of this year and are now based at Manor





Loan business park in Stirling. Such a central location is brilliant, as it makes it easy to get to any venue. **We have also just launched two new parts of the business.** Bespoke Bars looks after everything drinks-related, and Bespoke On-Location caters for the film and TV industry – we have already been involved in some really exciting projects. **At its heart our company is all about outside catering.** We can go to any wedding venue that needs external caterers, we can supply a pop-up bar service via Bespoke Bars, and we offer on-the-day wedding co-ordination and planning. Oh, and we're launching a coffee shop in January! **For wedding catering,**

we work with our couples to create amazing food for their day. Once

we find out their food loves and their ideas for their wedding, we discuss the logistics of the venue – if there is a kitchen, power and catering equipment, for example, or if we are working in the middle of a field with no facilities at all. **We then play about**

with menu ideas, talking through with the couple until they have a menu they love. We then arrange to come to their home and cook the meal in all its glory. It's a chance to make any final tweaks to the menu and to give the couple confidence in us. **We'll get to the venue either on the morning of the wedding** or the day before to set up, and we'll look after the running of the day, making sure everything is flawless and runs to time.

No two days are ever the same, which is partly why I love my job so much. One day I'll be dealing with enquires, working on menu ideas and looking after the general nitty gritty of running a business (invoices, payroll, rotas etc – the not-as-exciting bit), and the next day I can be on-site setting up a wedding, or out doing a site visit of a venue we have yet to cater at. **The food served at weddings has evolved a lot in recent years.** There has been a move away from the traditional sit-down meal towards food that helps bring people together, such as sharing dishes and family-style service, where you get a more relaxed style of dining. We have also seen couples wanting their food to tell their story or to represent them – perhaps showing their love of travel or their family roots. We help to create a menu that is personal and means something to them. **I can see the relaxed and informal style of dining still being very popular in 2017.** I also think couples will be looking for alternative menus using the best of Scotland's larder. **Mother nature probably brings us our biggest challenges.** We often set up our kitchen

outside at venues with no facilities, and, as we all know, the Scottish weather can be very unkind! At one recent wedding the marquee flooded, leaving some parts of the kitchen under water. But dealing with disasters like this is all part and parcel of what we do, and how you overcome such situations is what makes us who we are. **Everyone in the wedding industry inspires me – florists, photographers and even other wedding caterers.** Knowing how hard everyone works to make that one day magical is in itself really inspiring. So much effort is put in behind the scenes that unless you're part of the industry you may not fully appreciate just how hard

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everyone works. **I am motivated simply by being a part of one of the biggest days of someone's life.** What better reason is there for giving your all than to make someone's wedding day perfect? **Spending time with my kids and husband** (in a non-work capacity) is how I unwind. I'm not sure a two-year-old and a five-year-old can be classed as relaxation, but it's how I like to spend my time away from the business! **One of the best things about my job** is that I get to work in stunning venues, in some of the most amazing parts of Scotland. I also work with some of the most talented suppliers in the business, with a team I love dearly. And I get to help make memories on the biggest day of a couple's life. It's brilliant! **But I couldn't do it without my team.** Honestly, I'd be lost without them. They all bring something unique to the table and help to make the hardest days easier. We could not have achieved what we've done without the people we have the pleasure of calling our Bespoke family. **And we've had some fantastic achievements.** We won Independent Caterer of the Year at the 2016 Confetti Awards and we are up for a VOWS award in November. But no award can beat the feeling you get when a couple express their thanks for us helping to make their day a success. **We never take for granted the opportunities we have been given,** and every wedding we are involved with is truly an honour. We look forward to seeing what crazy and wonderful ideas our future couples come up with. www.bespoke-catering.com ♥

