

# FAQs – Weddings & Social Events

In order to save you time, please scan through the below frequently asked questions as we may have an answer for you already!

## **May I use my own caterer?**

Unfortunately not. This is because we have an exclusive on-site event specialist caterer who is contracted for all Food & Beverage. This ensures efficiency as the layout and logistics of our venue is quite unique. They have some set menus which are popular, but can be flexible in customizing a menu to your taste, budget and vision.

## **Is there a Food & Beverage minimum spend?**

On Saturdays during wedding season (April, May, Sept, Oct), we ask for a minimum on food & beverage. An example could be a minimum of 100 guests @ \$45 per person (exc service charge and tax) or simply achieving a spend of \$4,500. On other days of the week in wedding season or in 'off peak' months of the year on any day, we can certainly be more flexible!

## **Do you host menu tastings?**

Our executive chef hosts group tastings twice a year which are free to attend. Alternatively we can set up a private tasting for a small fee, to cover our catering costs.

## **When can my wedding begin?**

We recommend that guests arrive at least one hour after the Zoo closes to the public. In Fall and Winter months guests should arrive from 6:00pm (with a 6:30pm ceremony). In the Spring and Summer this will change to 7:00pm (with a 7:30pm ceremony).

## **When must my wedding end?**

At Magnolia Room the standard is a 4 hour rental as music must be turned off by 11pm at the latest, due to local residents. We recommend the bar end by 10:30pm. The two suites of Ndoki Lodge and Tuskers however, may be hired a little further into the night.

## **Can I have a ceremony without booking a reception?**

Unfortunately not as all events at Riverbanks require a Food & Beverage minimum spend. A solution would be to have a cocktail hour or cocktail party immediately after such a ceremony.

## **How many chairs does the ceremony area hold and where can I rent them?**

The Botanical Garden's ceremony area will hold a maximum of 150 chairs. Chairs can be rented through your event sales representative and styles start from \$2.00 per chair.

## **Can I bring in my own decorations?**

Yes, however decorations other than centerpieces must be pre-approved by your event sales representative in writing (email is fine) prior to your wedding day. Decorating (indoors or outdoors) cannot begin before 5:00pm, unless pre-approved in writing.

## **What is included in my Facility Rental?**

You have exclusive use of the event space for an agreed timeframe. In addition, furniture of indoor chairs, banquet tables and cocktail tables are included. Black or white linens and napkins are also included. Any quantities other than what are owned by the venue must be rented at your own cost.

## **What will be blooming in the Botanical Garden?**

Our dedicated horticulture dept works year round to provide an exquisite exhibit of flowers and greenery throughout the Botanical Garden. Feel free to ask your event sales representative to check what will be blooming on your wedding date.

## **May I bring in my own vendor(s)?**

Yes, although if you do not choose a vendor from Riverbanks' list of 'Preferred Vendors', then you must seek written approval from your event sales representative. Your new vendor must agree to Riverbanks' 'Vendor Procedures' in order to receive such approval or unfortunately they will not be allowed to enter the premises.

## **Is there a changing facility for the bride?**

Dependent on your chosen wedding space, we will be able to recommend the best place to change, at no extra cost. For example, at Magnolia Room we have a small private boardroom close by.

## **Can you recommend a wedding planner and do you recommend having one?**

It's of course up to you. We can recommend a couple of great planners that we enjoy working with and that know our premises and policies well. We do provide an event manager on your wedding day, however this person's key duties are a.) to oversee the set up and clean up any rentals or catering that we have provided/booked, b.) to expedite kitchen production and oversee staff for bar and meal service, c.) be the primary contact to you and any booked vendors for queries, and d.) be responsible for the safety of guests, staff and Zoo property. The event manager is not responsible for setting up personal decorations, helping the set up of other vendors, helping the bride get ready, and so on. These are more event planner responsibilities.

# FAQs cont...

## **Can I tentatively hold a date?**

Yes, we will be happy to place a temporary 14-day hold on your date and space(s) and during this time no other parties can hold it. After 14 days, and possibly without notification, we must be fair and accept other offers.

## **How can I confirm my event?**

To confirm your event we require 1.) a signed contract, and 2.) a deposit which is the value of your Facility Rental. If booking less than 3 months out from your event, then your deposit will include some of your catering value too. When we receive both items, your event is firmly secured in our event calendar, and until then we reserve the right to accept other offers for the date and space(s) that you are interested in.