

WEDDING

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◀ The Grand Hotel, East Sussex

Setting Overlooking Eastbourne's seafront, the majestic Grand might have an air of old-fashioned romance, but there's a thoroughly modern outdoor pool for you to relax next to in five-star style. Being beside the seaside has never been so chic!

Need to know Rooms are traditional in style, but beautifully appointed. The best ones have four-poster beds and views across Eastbourne's golden sands.

Wow-factor Splash out on dinner in The Grand Hotel's elegant restaurant, Mirabelle, which serves French cuisine in traditional surroundings. Booking is essential. Rooms from £190 per night. **01232 412345, www.elitehotels.co.uk**

Mr & Mrs

Look no further for your first night, a pre-wedding getaway or even a honeymoon close to home



◀ Velvet, Manchester

Setting Situated at one end of Manchester's colourful Canal Street, you're certainly in the heart of the action at Velvet. Luckily, once you've climbed the steep-staired entrance you'll feel like you've entered an oasis of calm.

Need to know Rooms are immaculately designed, with every one unique in character, from the feature beds (black leather sleigh, modern four-poster or French ornate fairytale, for example) to the quirky tartan, red brick or flock wall coverings.

Wow-factor The hotel's restaurant and bar are famed as the most chic hangouts in Manchester. But the service at Velvet is the one thing that shines out, even above the food. Wow indeed. Rooms from £109 per night.

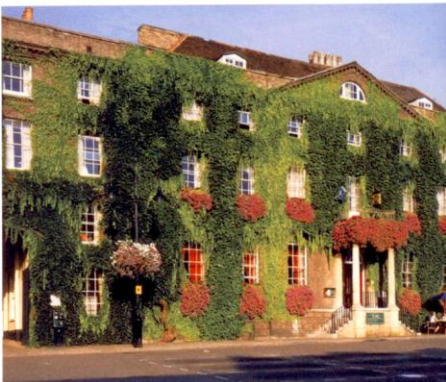
0161 236 9003, www.velvetmanchester.com

▶ The Angel Hotel, Suffolk

Setting This former coaching inn in Bury St Edmunds offers a blend of contemporary design coupled with Georgian elegance. From the ivy-covered façade to the welcoming log fires, the vibe is cosy and traditional, but with all the modern luxuries discerning couples will expect.

Need to know All 75 rooms have recently benefitted from a makeover, with muted tones, minimalist furnishings, flat-screen TVs and Bose sound systems sitting alongside original fittings, four-poster beds and antique furniture.

Wow-factor Dinner in the restaurant, with its locally sourced produce, will be a highlight of your stay. Standard rooms from £90 per night; prestige rooms from £150. **01284 714000, www.theangel.co.uk**

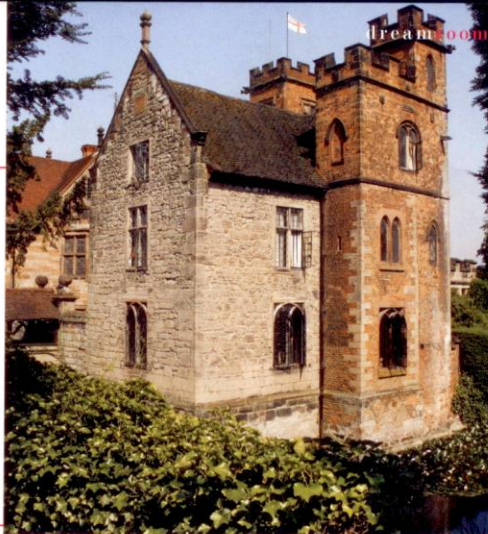


▶ New Hall Hotel & Spa, Birmingham

Setting Lovers of historical grandeur should look no further than this imposing country house hotel, set in 24 acres of manicured grounds. This is as quintessentially English as it gets, with open fires, wood panelling, stained glass and even a moat.

Need to know Choose from classic rooms, junior suites or the superior feature suites, which offer luxurious extras such as four-poster beds, designer sofas and the best views of the beautiful grounds. When it comes to dining, take your pick from an informal dinner in the Terrace Brasserie, or get dressed up for a meal in The Bridge Restaurant.

Wow-factor Spa fans will love the pampering facilities, which include an indoor pool, sauna and steam rooms plus an array of Decléor face and body treatments. Rooms from £129 per night. **0121 378 2442, www.handpickedhotels.co.uk**



◀ Stoke Place, Buckinghamshire

Setting If your idea of a romantic break in the country involves total privacy in a laidback setting, this hotel will be the place for you. The modern, shabby chic decor just adds to the charm.

Need to know The welcome you'll receive as you walk through an entrance littered with boules sets, croquet mallets and even the odd cricket bat will immediately put you at ease. The rooms are equally inviting, with decadent queen-sized beds and large windows making for fabulously lit spaces. All meals are served in the uber-cool and light Vyse Rooms, with a limited but tasty menu of trendy British classics to choose from.

Wow-factor The hotel's cosy bar has a fabulously private nook to snuggle up in for pre-dinner cocktails, with views out to the gardens and the private lake. Rooms from £225 per night.

01753 534790, www.stokeplace.co.uk



▶ Pennyhill Park Hotel, Surrey

Setting Blink and you'll miss the turning for this rambling country pile. However, once inside the gates, you can't fail to be impressed by the tree-flanked drive leading up to the house.

Need to know Whichever room you choose, comfort and style are the order of the day, with handmade beds, traditional wingback armchairs and generous proportions. If you like your country hotels brimming with characterful creaking floorboards and crackling log fires, then book a room in the original house rather than the modern wing.

Wow-factor You could easily spend an entire weekend in the spa, sampling the award-winning treatments. Foodies are also in for a treat with a choice between the Michelin-starred Latymer restaurant and the more relaxed brasserie. Rooms from £175 per night. **W**

01276 471774, www.pennyhillpark.co.uk



STOKELWOOD/SARAH WILLIAMS; PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE GRAND, JONATHAN WEBLEY