

Off Peak Weddings

- YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES -

getting
hitched
your way

ISSUE 3

WINTER

Married on Monday

p.52

Cass & Al's Country
Style Wedding

p.14

Directory of Services
- Locals Know

p.58



What's inside?

Photo: Fergusson Winery

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Destination - Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges</i> | 4 |
| <i>Cheese Wheels for Wedding Cakes</i> | 6 |
| <i>Heating up a Winter Wedding</i> | 10 |
| <i>Real Weddings - Cass & Al Get Hitched @Fondata 1872</i> | 14 |
| <i>Celebration Winter Foods from the Hearth</i> | 22 |
| <i>Emma and Peter's Later in Life Wedding</i> | 24 |
| <i>Winter Wedding Style</i> | 30 |
| <i>Winter Romance Escapes</i> | 40 |
| <i>Heartfelt Moments</i> | 46 |
| <i>Married on Monday</i> | 52 |
| <i>Non-traditional Wedding Venues in the Dandenong Ranges</i> | 54 |
| <i>Springtime Weddings</i> | 56 |
| <i>Directory of Services</i> | 58 |

ISSUE 3/WINTER 2019

This is a publication of Yarra Ranges Tourism

Copyright © Yarra Ranges Tourism 2019

Original Design by: Sonsie Studios

Cover Photo: Rick Liston

Visit: offpeakweddings.com.au

#yarravalleyweddings

#dandenongrangesweddings

#offpeakweddings

#gettinghitched

#yourhappyspace

#yourdayyourway

f offpeakweddings

ig offpeakweddings

FIND YOUR SELF | MELBOURNE'S YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES

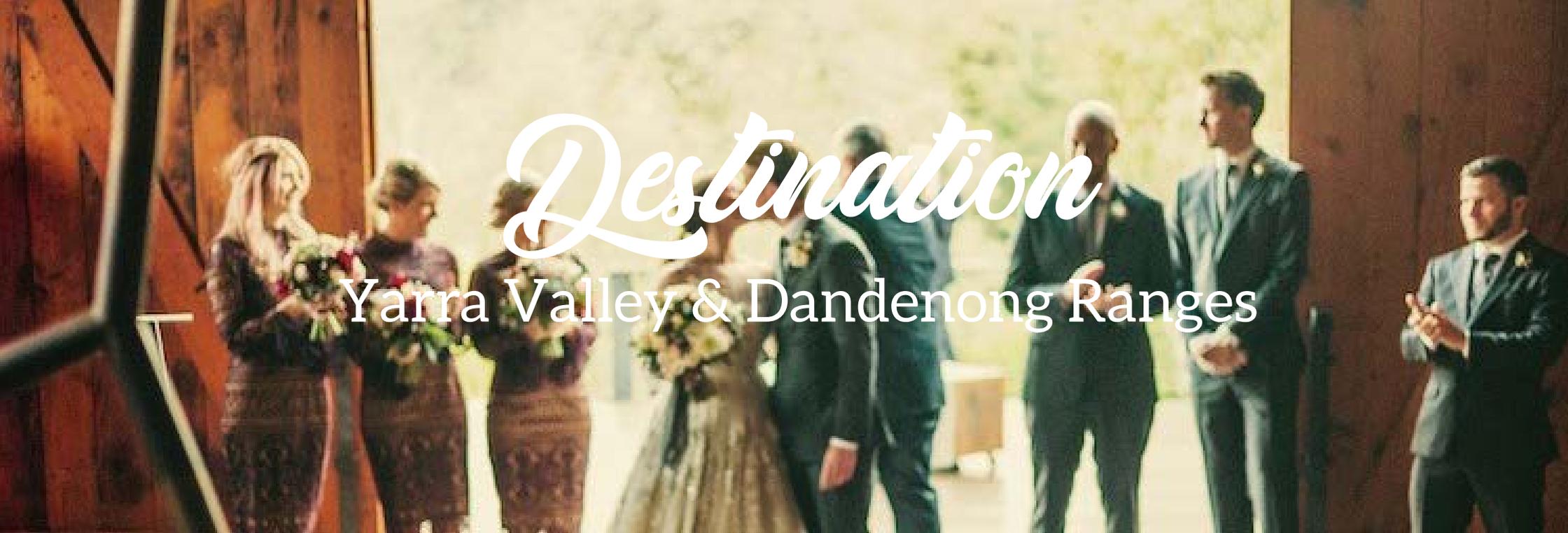


Photo: Projekt 3488

Winter love is a soft and blankety feeling that welcomes the cosy and cultivates a slowing down that other seasons pass by. Whether you Find Your Self in the Dandenong Ranges, Nillumbik or the Yarra Valley, the winter vista is one that is both charming and hauntingly beautiful. Only in winter do mists hang delicately from the tall trees of the forests and blanket the vineyards. Only in winter do we travel up mountains in search of the white expanses of snow, or wander among fragrant rainforests that rise up to meet us with the pure smell of fresh air and fresh earth.

When the sun shines in winter, we warm our backs and feel alive. We seek out fireside locations and warm our hands around steaming cups of hot chocolate, specialty house blended teas, mulled wines or heart-warming cocktails and whiskeys. Somehow even the feasts on the table in winter seem more delicious. We open the jars of preserves that we gathered over the preceding months, and discover new ways to enjoy slow cooked root vegetables and meats that fall off the bone.

In winter, this destination welcomes weddings knowing that gathering family and friends in close, dancing the night away and feeling the pure experience of nature is just what couples seek as they make their vows and celebrate a life of wedded bliss through all the seasons to come.

The cool climate wines of the Yarra Valley, the evergreen nature of the gardens of the Dandenong Ranges, the produce of Nillumbik, the people who year round want to bring you the best service, the best venue, the best experience, and the feels of being close enough to Melbourne yet away from it all, are all compelling reasons for a winter wedding. This season is one to be celebrated and your day, your way can make the most of the winter wonderland that the region offers.

Cheese Wheels

For Wedding Cakes



Photo: Courtesy of Kitchen & Butcher (by Redfish Bluefish Creative)

If finishing a great meal with a cheese platter is more your thing than a sweet dessert, there's a fresh take on tiered wedding cakes that is fabulously on trend, and lets you showcase some of the Yarra Valley's best award-winning produce - cheese.

The 'cheese wheel wedding cake' is a feast of your favourite cheeses stacked in a glorious ode to cheese and celebration. With very few rules and loads of options, creativity can run a little bit wild and the wedding cake can be a bespoke culinary invention that speaks to the heart of the couples' uniqueness.

Simple and elegant, rustic and wild, decorated with flowers, fruits, nuts, quince and fruit pastes, ribbons, or even a traditional cake topper, the cheese wheel wedding cake can be a central part of your wedding meal and a great reason for guests to gather around and share stories.

The Fromagerie, or cheese cabinet, at Kitchen and Butcher, Healesville, is a great place to start for some local inspiration. With a large selection of local and imported cheese to taste and purchase, Sophie is the queen of helping couples realise their dream cheese wheel cake and encourages people to choose what they love to eat best. “More people are seeking quality cheese rounds and it helps when they can come in and actually see the entire wheels and make choices that they can visualise as their cake,” says Sophie. “I’ve done cheese wheel cakes for couples entirely of different goats cheeses, but many people choose a variety of cheeses so there’s something to appeal to everyone.”

Jack at Stone and Crow Cheese Company, a cheesemaker located in Healesville, has also provided his cheese wheels for wedding cakes. He suggests a combination of hard and soft cheeses works well and has even engraved the wedding couples name on the outer layer of the cheese to personalise the whole experience.

“Just think about having the harder and weightier cheeses as the base and lower layers, and move towards softer and riper cheeses on the top. There may also be seasonal variations to take into account in terms of what is available or how it fits your budget,” he says. His hard cheeses, Moonshine and Annie Baxter, and soft cheeses, Night Walker and Galatic, are popular choices.

If the cutting of the cake is a custom you can’t live without, the cheese wheel cake still ticks the box for tradition. Your wedding theme can easily be incorporated into the cheese wheel decorating. It’s your choice – some cheese suppliers provide decorating services or if you’re feeling creative, then it may be something you’d enjoy doing yourself.

Serve the cheese wheel cake paired with local wines, muscatels, fruit pastes and crackers as an after-dessert or instead-of-dessert option. It is recommended to allow around 60 grams of cheese per person so your number of guests is a great place to start when designing your cake.



Photo: Courtesy of Kitchen & Butcher (by Redfish Bluefish Creative)

You can DIY if you prefer to source the cheese wheels and assemble and decorate yourself. If you have expensive tastes, then the upper end is completely up to you!

Who does cheese in the Yarra Valley?

Kitchen and Butcher | Yarra Valley Dairy



Photo Credit: From The Essential Caterer

Heating up a Winter Wedding

Winter is fresh feels, cheeks are flushed with love and the heart pumps a little faster. It's a season for the adventurous spirit to take over. Be bold, be brave and start this union as you tend to continue it – courageously! There is a quality to winter that can only be found in the coolness of the season. Imagine fireflies and magical fairy lighting, braziers with roaring fires that cast the world in dappled light. Think snuggly wraps and dramatic long coats, holding hands and keeping close. A winter wedding theme could possibly be the most romantic of all.

Winter weddings are about dancing madly to warm the toes (there's no such thing as too soppy when it comes to the wedding playlist) and the pleasure of deep velvety red wines, mulled ciders and warming spirits. Your wedding reception menu can have it all – a feast of sticky sauces, falling off the bone meats and braises, sweetly roasted vegetables, hearty grains and handmade pasta, and indulgent oozy boozy chocolate puddings and warming spicy delights that linger in the mouth and remind you of time when life was simpler.

The crackling of open fireplaces in cosy rooms brings a grand, if not elemental, feel to your celebrations. From cosy tucked away rooms through to grand ballrooms, there is an intimacy, a privacy that is unique to winter – your inner circle is right there with you and the world is yours alone. And seriously why wait any longer to get married than you have to? You've probably waited long enough already!



Mythbusting a winter wedding

1. **It will be cold** – For every person that has sweltered through a wedding in a jacket and tie, and every bride that would prefer to be covered and comfortable, the winter wedding will sound like a gift. You actually get more choice in winter – wear what you want!
2. **It will be raining and dull** – Actually 46% of days in winter have sun or partial sun. Plus the light is way more flattering in photos and dramatic winter skies can make for eye catching backdrops for your photos.
3. **We won't get good photos outside** – Your photographer will have plenty of suggestions for amazing undercover locations for photos in the Yarra Valley. If inside is your only option, choosing venues or locations that have expansive glass windows will allow you to capture a little outside inside, and there are amazing indoor settings that will be the perfect alternative backdrop for your shoot. You can even get creative with foliage and flowers. Look for huge windows and fireside photos, rural sheds to create great mood, and wineries filled with wine barrels as backdrops.
4. **We will get dirty** – Your wedding venue will have plenty of hacks to ensure you stay clean and dry. A red carpet? No worries. Umbrellas for everyone, shoe covers and covered pathways? Of course! You might be surprised how prepared they are for changes in conditions – it is Melbourne after all – regardless of the season.

And a little wet weather won't dampen YOUR fire! You'll be too busy setting the world alight with your love.



Photo Credit: BBQ at Healesville Sanctuary

*Get there
your way*

Stella Tours
&
Yarra Valley A2B

Warm Receptions

Riverstone Estate | Oakridge Wines |
Potters Receptions | Healesville Sanctuary | Projekt 3488

Cass and Al

Get Hitched

@Fondata 1872



Meet the couple

Alastair Mann is a Carpenter and Cass Troja is a Primary School Teacher. They met three and a half years ago at the Terminus in Richmond where their life-long conversation started. Cass thought Al was handsome, had great skin and very manly hands. Alastair described Cass as being unpretentious, friendly and having a beautiful smile. Over the next few months they established they had similar principles and values and they very comfortably became a couple.

Now they're husband and wife, and expecting a baby girl in May 2019!

Who proposed?

Cass: Alastair proposed to me in our Eltham home on a cold autumn evening in front of the open fire. I had chosen the ring, Al had bought it and I was patiently waiting for the proposal. Even though I knew it was imminent, I was still caught completely off guard when he got down on one knee blocking my view of Better Homes and Gardens. :)

Photo Credit: Sarah Godenzi, sarahgodenzi.com

Location: Fondata 1872, Kangaroo Ground



Photo Credit: Sarah Godenzi, sarahgodenzi.com

How did you choose your ceremony and reception venue?

Alastair and I had dinner at Fondata 1872 early in 2018 before we were engaged. The food was delicious, and we loved the setting. When leaving I cheekily said to Al, "This would be a great place to get married." Five months later we were engaged, and one year later we were married on the lawn at Fondata.

We loved the idea of having both the ceremony and reception at the same spot, and we wanted a 'rich Australian' setting. Additionally, Alastair, an Eltham boy, remembers going to Weller's Pub as a kid with his family so this added to the appeal.

What was your wedding theme or vibe?

We didn't really have a theme but rather we wanted the wedding to simply reflect us as individuals and as a couple. We incorporated some traditions (I definitely wanted my dad to walk me down the aisle), but ultimately we kept it relaxed and simple.

What made your wedding unique?

A few things. We had a lovely surprise when I fell pregnant while planning the wedding, so I was 20 weeks pregnant on our wedding day, which explains the little bump! It wasn't cake! Due to the fact I couldn't drink and because we lived five minutes from Fondata, I put white ribbons on my 2010 Ford Focus and drove Al and myself to and from our wedding. In fact, we even gave Al's brother and nephew a lift home! We didn't have a bridal party - we got married on our own Afghani rug and I wore red shoes! Why not?

Is there a story behind your dress and veil/headpiece?

I always knew I wasn't interested in a 'traditional' wedding dress. I didn't even commit to wearing white until both Al and my Mum politely said, "but how will everyone know you're the bride?" So, I took the hint. I knew as soon as I put on the Zimmermann dress that it was the one! Polka dots, pleats, room for my growing bump and uninterrupted views of my favourite red shoes!



Photo: Sarah Godenzi, sarahgodenzi.com

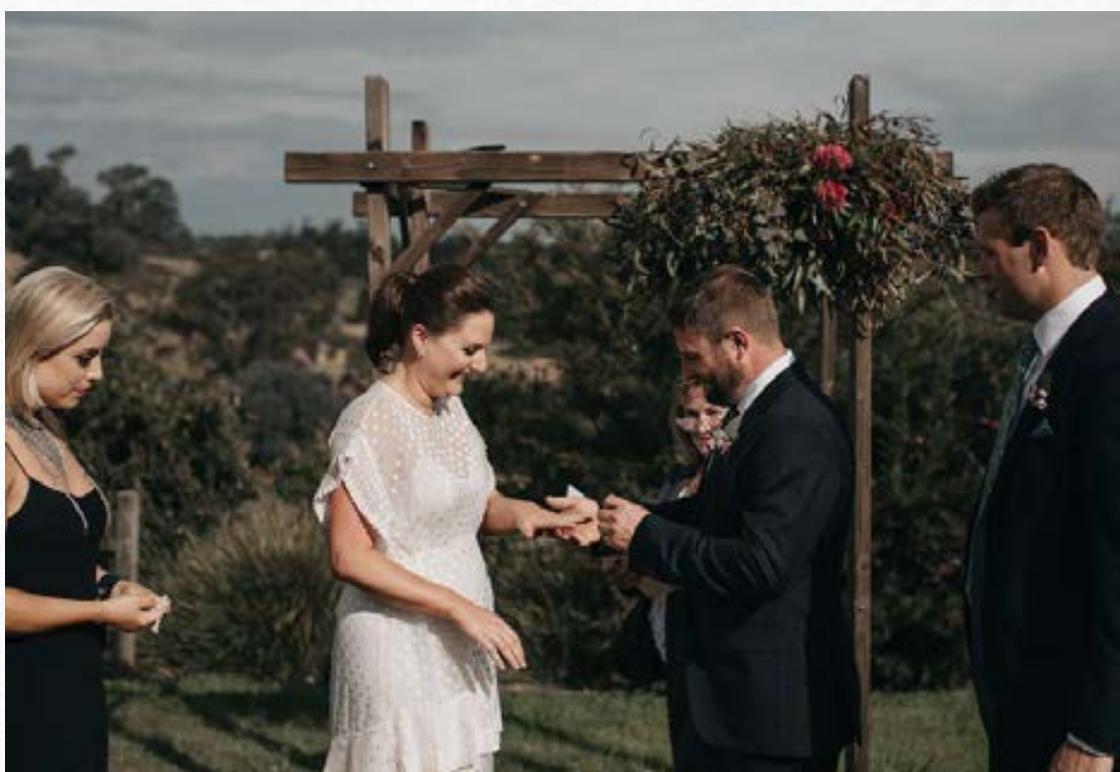




Photo: Sarah Godenzi, sarahgodenzi.com

What's your best advice for planning the perfect wedding?

I'm a real planner and I like to be organised but honestly, even with all the planning and organising, something won't go to plan! However, it will still be PERFECT! Do what you need to do prior to feel ready, then just let go and relax into the day with your loved ones.

What were the highlights?

I absolutely LOVED the ceremony. I loved seeing everyone's smiling faces and was so humbled by people's presence. Our celebrant Deb had written the most beautiful story about us. It was funny, heart-felt and celebrated our union perfectly. Some of our guests commented how nice it was to learn even more about us as a couple. Having our little girl in my tummy was also an unexpected highlight. Yes, I was a sober, bloated and exhausted bride, but we loved that our little family had already begun to blossom.

Vendor Credits

- Photographer/Videographer Sarah Godenzi @sarahgodenziphoto
- Florist Botanical Styling by Liz
- Ceremony and Reception Venue Fondata 1872, fondata1872.com
- Stationery Caitlin Wynne
- Celebrant Debra Keating, debrakeating.com
- Entertainment Dhivaan Naidoo
- Wedding/Engagement Rings Michael Wilson Jewellers
- Bridal gown designer Zimmermann
- Earrings Ruby & Sage

Number of Guests: 98 / Budget: \$25,000 / Wedding Date: 28 December 2018



"We loved the rich Australian setting."



Photo: Sarah Godenzi, sarahgodenzi.com

Celebration winter foods

from the hearth



The idea of a winter wedding in the Yarra Valley ignites my imagination, for the earthy types it's a welcome change that the season brings. The landscape transforms with pale greys on the surrounding hills and yellows as the last of the autumn leaves settle. Long shadows are cast as the sun sits low in the sky, tranquil light for an afternoon ceremony. An open fire crackles and glows with a warmth that fills our souls. The celebrations begin, as you enjoy your local choice of stunning wines or sip on a single malt whiskey from Bakery Hill.

The food opportunities during the cooler season are endless, from earthy root vegetable soups, to slow cooked hearty braises and warm local pear desserts. One of my favourite soups is a roasted Jerusalem artichoke served with sour dough. The season is ideal for slow cooked tender warming comfort food and this style of food lends itself to sharing platters, ideal for weddings due to its communal nature. One of my favourites is slow braised Yering lamb shoulder, Basque peppers & paprika jus.



Sean the Essential Caterer

Photos Courtesy of The Essential Caterer

Emma & Peter's

Later in Life Wedding

By Michael Veitch



Emma and Pete chose to be married on a Monday - exactly one year to the date of their Mt Everest engagement!

As settings go, it's hard to imagine one more spectacular than that chosen by Peter Ferguson the day he enquired as to whether his beloved Emma might care to spend the rest of her life in his company.

"Sorry," I feel compelled to butt in here, fearing I'd misheard something. "How far did you say this was from er, Mount Everest?" "As the crow flies..." replies Peter thoughtfully, "about two kilometres."

Only a couple of days earlier, Peter and Emma's Nepalese guide had told them of the soon to be visited legendary ridge of Kala Pattar, it's renowned spiritual qualities, and of course its breathtaking - literally breathtaking - views across to what they call Sagarmatha - "The Peak of Heaven", "Goddess Mother of the World": Everest. Just a couple of days for Peter to hatch his plan.

At a small village the next day, he waited till Emma was distracted writing postcards at the post office, then made his mad dash to a trinket shop where he frantically tried on ring after ring, hoping - desperately - to find one he thought might fit her delicate English finger. Eventually, bingo, and all for about four dollars.

She, a yoga instructor and he, a very fit kinesiologist, had prepared well for their Himalaya trek, but as soon as they stepped foot onto Kala Pattar to pull themselves up its rocky 400 metre backbone to the magnificent summit, Peter's legs 'felt like lead', and he began to struggle. Nerves, one supposes, played their part, but let's put it down to the far less romantic cause of oxygen sickness which can strike any mortal at these heights of 5,500 metres above sea level.

Pushing on to the top, the view was beyond imagining, but Peter wondered when the precise moment might present itself. He was prepared, of course, to go down on bended knee, but didn't like the look of those sharp rocks one little bit. Then, as Emma, video camera in hand, mounted a boulder (why she felt she needed to be even higher has never been explained), Peter seized his chance, as well the ring.

"Of course! Of course I'll marry you darling., just...let me get this shot", said Emma through the viewfinder. You don't get the chance to film Mt Everest every day of your life.

It's a story that would fit the nuptials of any pair of eager young newlyweds, except the day Peter popped the question on the top of the world he was into his sixties, and Emma, was a grandmother of four.

Fitter than fiddles the pair of them notwithstanding, why - at their time of life, I was curious to know - would you bother? With marriage long having ceased to be the obligatory harness of responsibility donned by every one of my parent's generation at age 22, why wouldn't Peter and Emma be happy enough to just keep trekking through life until they well, ran out of mountain?



Rarely 24 hours after this epiphany, Peter came into her life, and six months later he proposed at the foot of Mount Everest.

Emma had been married before, in her youth, but it was different then, and so was she. “As a little girl, I was brought up believing that I would get married and have children by a certain age, and that’s what I did. It was a ‘no-brainer’ ” she explains.

Separated at 33 and with two children, however, Emma decided “now was the time to grow up.” Only at around fifty did she come into what she calls, ‘my own true self’.

“I realised,” she says, “that as a person, I was completely fulfilled, done what I had wanted to do, and was not needing, or even wanting, anything”. Barely 24 hours after this epiphany, Peter came into her life, and six months later he proposed at the foot of Mount Everest.

“It’s no less serious than it was when I married at 21. I just didn’t get it then. Now the only reason we have for getting married is that we chose to”, says Emma

For Peter, it was more simple. Having never proposed to anyone in his life before, doing so to Emma felt like the most natural thing in the world.

Exactly a year later to the day in a lush green park at the foot of another mountain range, in Warburton, Peter gave Emma another ring, specially made to closely resemble the one he had bought in a hurry in the village in Nepal. He wouldn’t reveal how much it cost, but he assured me it was considerably more than four dollars.

Emma James runs a local Yoga Studio - yogayarrajunction.com.au
Peter Fergusson is a Kinesiologist - quantumkinesiology.com.au



Winter Wedding Style

When a Wedding Stylist brings together a team of creatives all focused on making a wedding day as dreamy and lush as possible, your wedding day can go beyond anything you imaged for yourself. Wedding Stylist Reannah Stevens shares with us this styled winter wedding shoot to take your breath away.



This photoshoot was the brain child of photographer Rick Liston, who was dying to shoot at the beautiful Lake Mountain. A scouting trip to look at potential 'ceremony' locations revealed countless stunning natural settings for an Australian winter wonderland - just inject a little romance with a splash of colour and candlelight!

What can a wedding stylist do?

The main objective of a wedding stylist is to turn a client's vision into a reality. Whether it is a wedding or special event, it is the stylist's job is to work closely with the client to deliver a cohesive look and feel.

Some stylists will provide everything you need to execute the look and feel of your big day. This may include props, decorations and florals. Others may be your eyes and ears on the ground and oversee all of the wedding vendors ensuring the desired look is achieved, tweaking and adjusting as they go.

Why engage a wedding stylist?

If aesthetics are important to you on your big day, the peace of mind of having a professional execute your vision can really take the stress out of wondering how everything will come together. It's your big day, it's time for you to take it all in and enjoy!

"Imagine a snow-covered aisle in the middle of the Australian bush with mountain views!"

Photographer: Rick Liston
 Real Couple: Lydia Acuna and Kalan Logan
 Photography: Rick Liston
 Styling: The Valley Collective

Flowers: Anouk Flowers
 Make Up: Reannah Stevens
 Dress: Kara Jade Design
 Suit: Biggins







Who do wedding stylists work with?

First and foremost, the stylist will work closely with the client. Leading on from this they will usually be in touch with the wedding venue along with any other wedding vendors that are involved in the overall aesthetic of the wedding. They may also work alongside subcontractor's or external prop hire if sourcing externally.

When should I engage a wedding stylist?

Engaging a stylist as early as possible can really help with some of the big decision making when planning your wedding. Your stylist will brainstorm ideas with you, adding suggestions and ideas when needed. Your stylist should also know where to source the elements needed to create your dream day.



Reannah's top tips for briefing your stylist



1. If you have quite a specific idea in mind, take along some images of things you like. Visual references can be very helpful when trying to explain a texture or the exact type of colour you have in mind. Think Pinterest images you have saved or things you may have seen on Instagram. This will get the ball rolling on a good brainstorming session with your stylist.
2. If you are working with a specific budget, be up front with your stylist. They will be able to work with this and prioritise what is most important for you.
3. Outline your non-negotiables – for example, your favourite flower is a hydrangea and you would like to incorporate them into your floral styling somewhere.
4. Tell your stylist a bit about you and your partner as a couple. How do you picture your day looking and feeling? How do you want guests to remember your day?

What's "On Trend" Now?

We are seeing a very classic and romantic trend in 2019. Think black and white chic with a bold colour incorporated in florals and maybe some statement metallic props to create the wow factor. We have also seen natural colours and fibres take centre stage for a more bohemian style wedding. Think pampas grass structures framing the end of the aisle with several large pillar candles either side of the couple saying "I do"....dreamy!!

Winter Romance

Escapes

by Lucia Guadagnuolo

Your guide to staying a little longer in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, after saying "I do" ...



Marysville

Planning a wedding in the stunning Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges provides the greatest backdrop any couple could ask for. Make the memories last a few days longer and discover the best of the region with local walking tracks through mountain ranges, or simply linger by an open fire with your new Mr or Mrs, and indulge in the most divine produce and award-winning wine, long after the party is over...



Kellybrook Winery

Fireside Wine and Food

The Yarra Valley is the epicentre of Victoria's finest food and wine. Pop a celebratory bottle of the region's finest Sparkling Chardonnay & Pinot Noir at the quaint and cosy Fondata 1872 in Kangaroo Ground, or Kellybrook Winery in Wonga Park. The open fires at these inviting cellar doors provide the perfect place to snack on local cheeses and charcuterie as you admire the sloping vineyards of their estates. You can also tuck in at the Cuckoo Restaurant in Olinda, and sip a red by the fire.



Unique Accommodation

One reason couples chose to marry in the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley is the truly unique surrounds. With accommodation to match, why not enjoy a few days of rest and relaxation together once the party planning is over.

Marysville Holiday & Caravan Park | Eagle's Nest Luxury Mountain Retreat |
Araluen Boutique Accommodation

Old World Charm

You'll feel like you're worlds away with the luxurious old Victorian charm of The Loft in the Mill boutique accommodation, Olinda. A replica of a 19th Century Bluestone English Flour Mill, with nine suites, each one designed to inspire and immerse you in the wonders of the era. Or how about a Tudor style mansion nestled among the forest of Sherbrooke? Marybrooke Manor has English charm and elegance that never dates.



Marybrooke Manor

Farm Life

Modern farm-stay accommodation at its finest – Wiggley Bottom Farm is located in Badger Creek with views over rolling hills, green pastures and grazing farm animals. It's a pet friendly destination that welcomes every member of the family with contemporary fashionable styling that will feel 'better than home'.



The Great Outdoors

The winter wonderlands of Mount Donna Buang in Warburton and Lake Mountain Alpine Resort in Marysville are sure to delight the avid hiker and skier, or those just looking for a fun day in the snow. Mount Donna Buang is the closest snow summit to Melbourne, with walking tracks that range from 30 minutes to 3 hours, tobogganing and a breath-taking lookout with panoramic views. Lake Mountain offers a full-service alpine resort with a whole host of snow sports, activities and an exciting calendar of events all year round.



Lake Mountain

Wine and Dine

End your day of outdoor excitement and rest your weary bones with an indulgent meal and award-winning bottle of wine from Seville Estate. Recently awarded Winery of the Year at the 2019 Halliday Wine Companion Awards, the restaurant prides itself on a constantly evolving menu that is designed to only use the best seasonal produce from the estate and local growers.



Seville Estate

Heartfelt Moments

by Rick Liston



“One of the reasons I love to shoot weddings so much and why it seldom feels like a ‘job’ is that it allows you to fall in love with humanity.

On no other days in our life do we such openly share how we truly feel about each other. Partner to partner, parents to children, best mates to best mates.

It takes a wedding for us to verbalise things we’ve perhaps never said before, and yet they have been deeply felt, in some cases all our lives. They create such heartfelt moments that are a blessing not just to photograph, but to witness.

That’s the magic of photography, that while we may never hear those words again, the emotion lives on in the photos that transport us back to that exact moment, and that exact feeling, and your heart melts all over again.”



Photo credit: Rick Liston, rickliston.com



Photos credit: Rick Liston, rickliston.com



Photos credit: Rick Liston, rickliston.com

Married on Monday

Weddings don't have to be on weekends! There we've said it. There are seven days every week and every one of them is a perfect day for love.

Getting married on a Monday is a great option for couples looking for a sooner rather than later wedding with venues offering available dates that can be 'just around the corner' for those who can't wait to tie the knot.

The Monday wedding is a popular choice for people working in the hospitality industry. The 'hospo weekend' is Monday and Tuesday for all those who work weekends and a Monday wedding is a fabulous option for guests too! What a great reason to have a long weekend.

Happy international couples that choose to get married in Australia are also choosing Monday as a magic day for a wedding. These celebrations often involve the guests flying in too, so the holiday vibe is already happening and the celebrations form part of a total wedding experience.

Weddings festivities that span several days have also found their momentum on Mondays, with three days of celebrations much easier to find in a busy calendar when the start of the week is favoured. The 3-day wedding traditions embraced by many Indian couples may have guests attending various celebrations coordinated over several venues and the early part of the week provides plenty of options and flexibility. Even if the final ceremony isn't on Monday, the prewedding activities - dinners, henna, cultural rituals and more, are all events that can draw on the best and the bespoke offers of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.



Photo Courtesy of Potters Reception by Shavan.J Photography

And if you have a budget and want to get the most beautiful wedding you can, at your dream venue, a Monday wedding may be the key to making your vision a reality. Monday weddings mean you might avoid some of the extra costs that weekend bookings attract and many venues see your wedding as an extra opportunity to make a happy occasion and give you their full attention.

Monday weddings are at the heart of Off Peak Weddings. Make your day a Monday and start the week the best way you can - married!

Non-traditional Wedding Venues

in the Dandenong Ranges

By Virginia Lawrence. Celebrant

Choosing the right venue is probably top of the list when planning your perfect wedding and is a fantastic opportunity to stamp your personality on the day. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by choice. I live in the beautiful hills village of Kallista and have at least 25 completely different wedding venues and locations within a 10-minute drive from home! Take a moment. Shut your eyes, imagine your wedding day. Capture the atmosphere, feel the vibe. The dress, the flowers, the cake – they're all important, but at the heart of the day, it's all about the feels.

I recently married a couple in one of our century-old community halls. Family and friends filled the space with hand-made decorations, provided flowers from their gardens for the bouquets, shared home-cooked food. We felt part of a long tradition of families coming together in that space over the decades. We felt surrounded by love and warmth.

Outside ceremonies are always special. Pick a lookout where you stand high up with an incredible vista. I always feel a sense of excitement, adventure and unlimited possibility at these places. Or choose one of the amazing old gardens nestled in the hills. The atmosphere changes with each season and each garden offers different opportunities to create your own magical setting. Talking of magical, our forests hold beautiful secret spaces where time stands still and beautiful bird song accompanies your words of love. Perfect for smaller weddings or elopements.

**Valley Ranges Getaways | Olinda Tea House | Elmswood Estate |
Chateau Wyuna | Marybrooke Manor**



Photo Courtesy of Virginia Lawrence

If food is your thing, we have a huge choice of quirky cafes, traditional pubs, niche restaurants, quaint tearooms, and wineries. Your favourite may not normally do weddings, but don't be afraid to ask! Think outside the square. You can get married any place at any time. Love films? What about the cinema. Art lover? Ask a local gallery or artist studio. Can't get enough curry? Have a food truck in your backyard. Adrenalin junkie? Get married on a rope course in the trees.

Give your wedding the edge. Say "I Do" in the Dandenongs. Make it your own, and don't forget those feels!

Springtime Weddings

.....

The blossoms are in full bloom and there's a hint of warmth in the air. Throughout the vineyards tiny shoots of green are the beginning of the next vintage and in the gardens, the spring bulbs are peering through the soil ready to show off in a magnificent display of colour and life.

In the Yarra Valley, Nillumbik and the Dandenong Ranges, the coming of spring is a celebration and it's a perfect time to plan a wedding! As winter shakes off the last of the cooler weather, the feels in the air are all about fresh starts, new life and true love.

Spring loves an outdoor wedding. Spring is for the romantics, the traditionalists, the nature lovers, the lovers of quirky, the blended families and the connoisseurs - it's a season for every lovebird and everyone.

The colours of the season are inspiration enough for your wedding vibe - from softly spoken pastel hues to the bold brights of tended gardens. From muted native shades to the brilliant greens of expansive lawns and pretty pathways. Picture perfect settings for jawdropping photographs that bring a unique touch to your day.

Take your heart on an adventure all the way to the Yarra Valley or Dandenong Ranges - where you will find your perfect Off Peak Wedding destination and fall in love all over again!

Love blooms in a spring wedding. And bright shiny love is easy to share.

Get hitched in spring - it's your day, your way and the perfect time to start life in wedded bliss.



Celebrants



Robynne Mauger

Rainbow Authorised Civil Marriage Celebrant

A relaxed, creative, alternative celebrant who meets your values with heart and soul and who will work with you to bring just the right amount of colour and sentiment to your special day.

P: 0417 124 814

rainbowcelebrantyarravalley.com

.....



Virginia Lawrence

Marriage, Family and Funeral Celebrant

Weddings are Virginia's specialty. Based in Kallista, she knows this area really well. She's super-organised, keeps calm under pressure, and will give you a lovely, heartfelt ceremony full of fun, happiness, joy and love. Contact her for a coffee and a chat - obligation free - and let's see if she's the one for you!

P: 0438 111 025

celebrantgin.com

.....



Soulful Ceremonies

Marriage Celebrant

Christine Pedley of Soulful Ceremonies knows what an amazing wedding in the Hills feels like. She understands your wedding day is the most important day for you. A celebrant since 2010 (and resident of the Dandenong Ranges), Christine wants "Your Day" to be exactly "Your Way". With creativity and humour, she crafts a couples' love story into a soulful ceremony.

P: 0474 128 869

soulfulceremonies.com.au

Caterers



Babaji's Kitchen, *Belgrave*

Unique. Delicious. Charming. Perfect for a relaxed festival-themed wedding with street food theatre from the land of coconut palms and spice, tropical 'Kerala' in South India. Specialising in authentic village style banquets, 'live' dosa & chaat/pani puri (street snacks), chai and Indian desserts, served from a colourful 'gypsy mobile kitchen' or vintage Indian street cart.

P: 0405 765 388

babajiskitchen.com.au

.....



Essential Caterer

Catering that's fresh, healthy and delicious, with flexible menu options that move from formal to fun - designed to suit your unique tastes. From a conference, to a wedding, to a casual meeting - we help you find the venue you've been longing for, and end-to-end management for stress-free event enjoyment.

P: 0417 527 037

essentialcaterer.com.au

.....

Photographers



Rick Liston, *Yarra Valley*

Rick Liston is a Yarra Valley wedding photographer who loves joining adventurous wild hearts on their crazy journey from lovers to lifers. Rick doesn't just take photos, he's here to help you navigate the daunting task of planning your wedding with invaluable local advice. Rick is relaxed and grounded. You'll get comfortable with him as a friend and be totally at ease on your wedding day to naturally reveal your own true, beautiful selves. Nothing awkward, he promises!

P: 0475 604 713

rickliston.com

Transport



Yarra Valley A2B

Locally owned and operated Private Small Group Luxury Tours and Transfer company in the beautiful Yarra Valley. Let Yarra Valley A2B drive you in style A2B and back again.

P: 0455 041 051
yarravalleya2b.com.au

.....

Stella Tours - Wedding Cars



A small boutique business offering a personalised wedding car service within the Dandenong Ranges & Yarra Valley regions. Imagine cruising with the top down in "Stella", a classic 1964 Chevy convertible – famed for her timeless lines and effortless class. Arrive in true 'Stella style' at your wedding in this iconic ride, and when it's time for the photos, Stella's there by your side. Drive off into the sunset together in true 'Stella style'.

P: 0476 785 356
stellatours.com.au

Accommodation / Venues



Kinglake Forest Adventures, *Kinglake*

Dreaming of a forest wedding? Let your wedding aisle be the magical forest floor. Simply hire the venue and create your own magic or let Kinglake Forest Adventures take some of the details off your hands. You can bring your own food van or they can cater a wedding feast for you. Their beautiful camp can host up to 120 guests for a sleepover. Let them cook up a morning after breakfast. Make it a wedding weekend, not just a day. And make it the most wonderful day of your life.

P: 03 5771 1287
kinglakeforestadventures.com.au/weddings



Elmswood Estate, *Wandin East*

Deriving their name from the mature Elms that line the private driveway, Elmswood Estate is situated in the renowned Yarra Valley wine country. The stunning all-glass Pavilion, complete with floor to ceiling windows, and extensive viewing deck allows you to take in the breathtaking 180 degree panoramic views overlooking 25 acres of vineyard - the perfect backdrop for your most memorable of days to say "I do".

P: 03 5964 3015
elmswoodestate.com.au

.....

Accommodation / Venues



Wiggley Bottom Farm, *Badger Creek*

A small boutique pet friendly farm stay who can host small weddings in a very attractive unique venue. Pets are welcome.

P: 0411 608 400
wiggleybottomfarm.com.au
littleweddingsyarravalley.com.au



Ezard at Levantine Hill, *Coldstream*

Levantine Hill brings together the unique skills of hatted chef Teage Ezard and renowned winemaker Paul Bridgeman to begin your journey for a perfect life together. Meticulously crafted menus that balance sumptuous flavours to complement Levantine Hill wines, ensure you and your guests are guaranteed an unforgettable experience you will never forget.

P: 03 5962 1333
levantinehill.com.au



Immerse Winery, *Dixons Creek*

Nestled in the scenic Yarra Valley, Immerse is a breathtaking wedding venue, acclaimed restaurant, boutique winery and accommodation venue all rolled into one. Rolling hills of vines, picture perfect gardens, boutique accommodation, succulent food and two beautiful chapels plus spectacular outdoor ceremony locations.

P: 03 5965 2444
immerse.com.au



Projekt 3488, *Warburton*

Boutique & owner operated, Projekt 3488 are all about the details. They create an intimate, warm & inviting atmosphere - the perfect country getaway with a twist. They offer exclusive access to the entire venue & gardens for each event plus dedicated event planning & styling.

P: 0400 215 785
projekt3488.com.au



Araluen Boutique Accommodation, *Yarra Glen*

Yarra Valley's Premier Boutique Accommodation - Araluen offers a choice of accommodation for up to 18 guests and 3 acres of picturesque gardens to stage and host your intimate outdoors DIY wedding, all at one venue. Wedding groups also love the bonus Bridal Suite. Please enquire for more information on how they can assist in making your wedding day memorable.

P: 0411 242 212
araluenlodge.com.au



Herd Bar, *Healesville*

Boasting a late licence, Herd Bar caters and is welcoming to all, offering sensational service, ambience in an unpretentious relaxed space, a must-see destination whilst meandering the glorious Yarra Valley. A perfect location for a special event, right in the heart of Healesville.

P: 03 5962 7677
herdbar.com.au

Accommodation / Venues



Valley Ranges Getaways, *Dandenong Ranges*

Stay the night before your wedding at one of Valley Ranges Getaway's beautiful properties. Your maids-of-honour might stay, or your mum and sisters? You can dress for your wedding at the property with room for photographers, hair and makeup attendants and the gardens are beautiful spaces for your photographs. Following your wedding, return for your wedding night as bride and groom or your family or bridesmaids may stay with their partners, while you sneak away to another of their gorgeous properties to be alone.

P: 1300 488 448

vrgetaways.com.au/bridgetobe



Tramonto Kitchen and Bar, *Coldstream*

Tramonto Kitchen and Bar is a picturesque venue located on the top of a hill at a working vineyard in the stunning Yarra Valley. The award-winning restaurant and 'marquee in the vines' overlooks acres of vineyards giving it 'a taste of Provence feel' with its sun-filled, north-west views over rolling hills. The lawn, backdropped with vines, is the perfect location for an intimate wedding ceremony that can be enhanced with strolls and photos in the vineyard.

P: 0413 565 781

tramontokitchenandbar.com.au



Marybrooke Manor, *Sherbrooke*

Marybrooke Manor is nestled on the edge of the majestic Sherbrooke Forest in the Dandenong Ranges. Built in 1940 and recently renovated, it offers a picturesque outdoor garden lawn area and chapel for ceremonies, as well as an elegant reception room and cosy bar. With 8 acres of manicured gardens for photos, a flexible range of all-inclusive packages tailored to your needs and 20 four-star accommodation suites, Marybrooke can be the perfect one-stop destination for your ceremony and reception.

P: 03 9755 2755

marybrooke.com.au



Chateau Wyuna, *Montrose*

Chateau Wyuna is a rustic, award winning wedding venue built around a 1920s log cabin and featuring a 1909 heritage listed country Chapel set in over 6 acres of natural Australian-style gardens. With several outdoor ceremony areas and reception rooms to choose from, all-inclusive packages, delicious comfort-style food, space for up to 150 guests and guest accommodation immediately next door, Chateau Wyuna can be exclusively yours for your wedding celebration.

P: 03 9736 2555

chateauwyuna.com.au

Accommodation / Venues



Oakridge Wines, *Coldstream*

Oakridge is a family-owned, Yarra Valley winery, restaurant and cellar door, originally established in 1978 alongside a ridge of oak trees. Located in the stunning Yarra Valley, and set among 10 hectares of vines and manicured lawns, Oakridge boasts sweeping views and one of Australia's finest food and wine offerings.

With an extensive range of award-winning wines, their sublime Hatted onsite restaurant and multiple ceremony locations, Oakridge could just be the wedding venue of your dreams.

P: 03 9738 9900
oakridgewines.com.au

Cuckoo Restaurant, *Olinda*

Australia's first ever Smorgasbord restaurant set in a Bavarian-style Chalet. The Vienna dining room is ideal for receptions with views of the gardens – great for drinks, appetisers and perfect for a garden wedding in the hills. The Cuckoo Restaurant caters to your guests with an extensive buffet, or two choices or alternate drops. Buffet guests get it all, from fresh daily made soup, seafood entrees, hot roast meats, speciality dishes, salad bar and fresh in-house baked cakes, Desserts, pancakes and ice cream. Weddings from 15 to 300 guests.

P: 03 9751 1003
cuckoorestaurant.com.au



Riverstone Estate, *Coldstream*

The Riverstone Estate offers exclusive use of the property for weddings. The Estate is set on 75 acres of vines with panoramic views of the Yarra Valley. Riverstone offers breathtaking sunsets in a relaxed setting; with stunning locally sourced menus creating the perfect Yarra Valley Wedding. Combine the opportunity to dance the night away under a starry sky with any of their wedding packages and let their dedicated staff create memories that will last a lifetime.

P . 03 5962 3947
therivertoneestate.com.au

Fergusson Winery, *Dixons Creek*

Entering the grounds at Fergusson is intoxicating. Proud, rustic and romantic and set in among the soft curls of precious vine trees, stands the award-winning Fergusson Winery and Restaurant.

This is a space for all kinds of weddings, from the classically beautiful, to the whimsical and creative, the rustic, vintage or farm style bash. The setting is lyrical, the food is sophisticated yet wholesome, and always made with love ... specially created to match a stunning wine list.

P: 03 5965 2237
fergussonwinery.com.au



Accommodation / Venues



Fondata 1872, *Kangaroo Ground*

Fondata 1872 is the contemporary revival of the iconic Weller's, originally established as a Cobb & Co circa 1872, it's a place where city style meets country hospitality. It is situated at the gateway to the beautiful Yarra Valley, approximately 45 minutes from Melbourne. The lovingly restored dining room comfortably seats 100 guests for any celebration. The stunning views create the perfect place to enjoy sumptuous food & wines, while relaxing with friends and family.

P: 03 9712 0742
fondata1872.com



Olinda Tea House, *Olinda*

Nestled in the heart of the stunning Dandenong Ranges just 50km from the Melbourne CBD, the Olinda Tea House is a place like no other. With unrivalled ambiance, it is the perfect location to host your next special event. Whether it is your wedding, engagement, anniversary or birthday, this stunning secret in the mountain will leave your event much talked about. Relax in our modern environmentally sustainable building and enjoy the peace and tranquillity nature has to offer.

P: 03 9751 0556
olindateahouse.com.au



Boat O'Craigo, *Healesville*

Boat O'Craigo are a family owned, boutique wine producer in the Yarra Valley. The beautiful property in Healesville provides a stunning location for your special day. They offer a relaxed event created by you. Call the events co-ordinator to discuss your event ideas.

P: 03 5962 6899
boatocraigo.com.au



Potters Reception, *Warrandyte*

A wedding at Potters is a truly unforgettable experience. Set amid 6 acres of native landscaped gardens with breathtaking waterfalls, chandelier-lit reception, charming chapel & garden ceremony options, a bridal retreat, alfresco bar & wisteria-draped courtyard, Potters can cater to all desires. Property exclusivity, accommodation, experienced co-ordinators, local produce menu or option of external catering. Potters is the ultimate venue just 20 minutes from the city and a gateway to Yarra Valley.

P: 03 9844 1222
potters.com.au



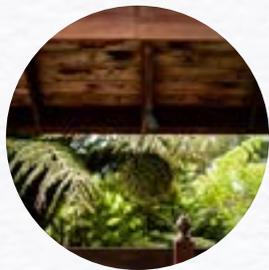
Marysville Holiday and Caravan Park, *Marysville*

Small Holiday and Caravan Park set on the banks of the Steavenson River in Marysville. Offering small weddings up to 50 people to ensure a quiet secluded event. Sunday to Thursday events preferred. Look out over the small rambling river in a quiet spot of the Park. An ideal spot for that intimate romantic event. Advice on package deals, caterers, cakes, celebrants and more. ey.

P: 03 5963 3247
marysvillecaravanpark.com.au



Accommodation / Venues



Eagles Nest Luxury Mountain Retreat, *Narbethong*

If you are after a unique intimate wedding venue with rustic charm, then Eagles Nest is for you. With a picturesque background for photos and the tranquillity of a temperate rainforest, you will truly not find anything more magical. The 10 acre private estate is suitable for weddings of up to 40 guests and can marquee several areas. Every wedding couple will have their own personal planner and your wedding will be tailored to your own needs and requirements. A true rustic experience.

P: 0418 694 332
loghomeholidays.com.au



Healesville Sanctuary, *Healesville*

Nestled in the natural bushland setting of this iconic Australian sanctuary, the Brolga room is the perfect backdrop for your special day. Newly renovated with classic stonewalls and expansive lush lawns, the Brolga Room can host wedding parties of up to 200 guests. Part of the Healesville Hotel Group, Healesville Sanctuary is proud to consistently offer the finest service, and a dedicated, professional team committed to giving you a day to remember.

P: 03 5957 2813
yarravalleyharvest.com.au



De Bortoli Wines Yarra Valley Estate, *Dixons Creek*

De Bortoli Wines Yarra Valley Estate is in one of the most beautiful corners of a region renowned for its beauty, making it a unique and memorable venue for your wedding. Beautifully landscaped gardens set against a backdrop of vineyards and distant mountains, create the perfect setting for your ceremony.

Their experienced, helpful wedding team can tailor a wine and food package to suit your needs.

P: 03 5965 2271
debortoli.com.au



Cloudehill Gardens, *Olinda*

Cloudehill's display garden includes an outdoor theatre, very appropriate for wedding ceremonies. The gardens are also perfect for wedding party photo shoots. The theatre includes a small pavilion that can either act as a soundshell for theatrical events, or as a very handsome 'arbour' for wedding ceremonies. The gardens are normally open from 9am to 5pm, however for wedding ceremonies and photo shoots, we are able to open (in summer) through to 8pm.

P: 03 9751 1009
cloudehill.com.au

Spa / Wellbeing



Miss Josie's Beauty Parlour, *Healesville*

Miss Josie's are skin treatment specialists – they've taken everything you love about the 1950s and given it a little twist to create the perfect salon for the modern woman to showcase a wide selection of treatments and specialised therapies with a focus on providing the right solution for every skin type and beauty requirements to make you feel like the best version of yourself.

P: 0428 298 098
missjosies.com.au

.....

Nourish Day Spa, *Olinda*

Nourish Day Spa specialise in massage, facials, hand and foot treatments, pamper parties, couples packages – all with a holistic approach. Take time out of your day for a morning or afternoon of pure relaxation, the perfect distraction to take your mind off of any wedding stress you or the hens may have. Have an afternoon full of laughs and chats and create some new memories with your nearest and dearest. A Couples Package is the perfect way to restore post-wedding after a big day.

P: 03 9751 1029
nourishdayspa.com.au





Coming up in the spring issue:

1. Multicultural Magic
2. High Tea Receptions Go Anywhere
3. Blossoming Ways to 'Spring Theme' Your Wedding

Off Peak Weddings

Photo Courtesy of Essential Caterer

For more information:

email: hitched@offpeakweddings.com.au

Visit: offpeakweddings.com.au

 [offpeakweddings](https://www.facebook.com/offpeakweddings)

 [offpeakweddings](https://www.instagram.com/offpeakweddings)

- YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES -