

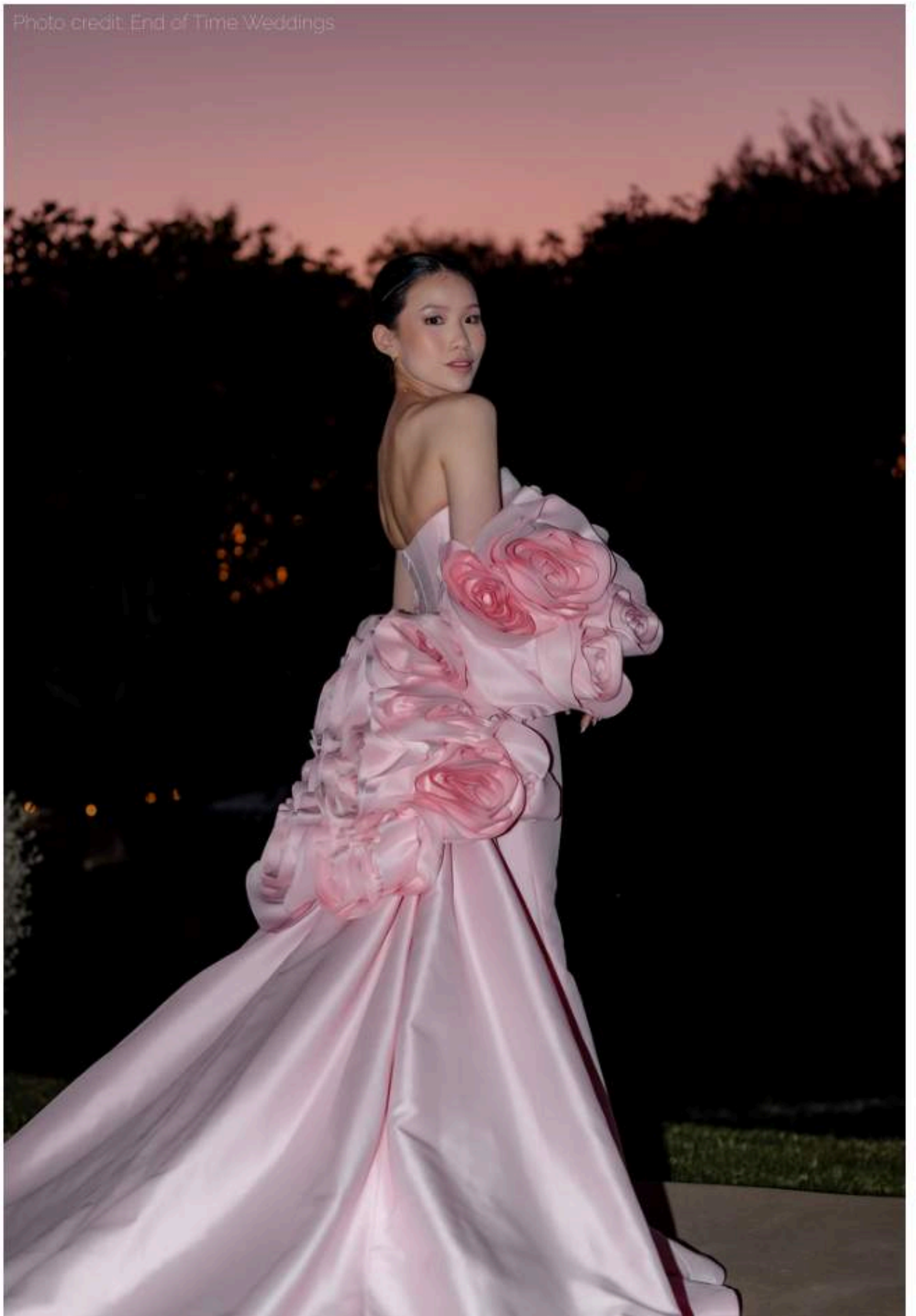
# BLANC.

By HWTM



HWTM.ORG

Photo credit: End of Time Weddings



# Your exclusive invitation to the Blanc. by HWTM

This magazine was born not from a single spark, but from silken threads of intention, woven across years of considered creation. Weddings. Events. Hosting. Wellness. Travel. Each has been a chapter in my work—celebrations choreographed at life's turning points, spaces curated for gathering, retreats sculpted for restoration, journeys that privilege beauty, presence, and immersion over haste. They all circle one eternal question: How do we live, mark moments, and connect with deeper intent?

These realms do not exist in isolation; they illuminate one another. The quiet elegance of a honed home echoes the seamlessness of a masterfully orchestrated wedding. Wellness rituals inform how we receive and reveal ourselves to others. Travel reimagines gathering—slowed, savoured, attuned to beauty in the everyday. One feeds the next, endlessly. Blanc. by HWTM gathers them into one rarefied space.

Here, weddings intersect with lived reality. Hosting becomes an act of devotion. Wellness threads through our gatherings, our voyages, our rites of passage. Stories arrive not merely to dazzle, but to impart. Expect precise guidance amid arresting visuals—ideas to claim, rituals to inhabit, insights distilled from decades of craft across my enterprises. This is not the pursuit of flawlessness or fanfare. It is the quiet mastery of confidence, warmth, and purpose.

In an era of ephemera, this is designed for permanence. For coffee tables. For return visits. For conversations that linger beyond the final page. It exists because these worlds—weddings, entertaining, wellness, travel, purposeful endeavour—deserve to converge without compromise. Where beauty and utility are not at odds. Where narratives feel intimate yet anchored in lived authority.

This is the natural extension of how I inhabit the world: my philosophy made manifest.

**An invitation to linger. To assemble.  
To live and lead with intention and purpose.**



To open your door sans occasion.  
To honour milestones—nuptials, odysseys, thresholds—with grace and  
attendance.

To nurture your wellbeing as you would a table, a tableau, a roster of souls: with  
discernment, sans frenzy.

*Blanc.* isn't about keeping up or doing more. It guides you back to what lasts—  
crafted with beauty and intention.

Each issue interlaces weddings, hosting, wellness, and wanderlust through  
human stories—tactile, inhabited—paired with counsel from the front lines:  
orchestrate without exhaustion; receive with fluency; roam with intent; craft  
sanctuaries of poise and pull.

The ambition? Not to prescribe, but to empower. To affirm that elegance is not  
gated, that the art of receiving—be it duo or dozens—is yours to master.

This publication mirrors my constellation of pursuits: event architect and  
wedding auteur; retreat convener; eternal apprentice to hospitality and harmony.

Rather than silos, it fuses them—a nexus where private revelation meets  
professional precision, backstage wisdom goes public, and inspiration stays  
tethered to truth.

In our age of ceaseless scrolls, this is print's reclamation: pages turned  
deliberately, read undistracted, permitted to root. Like hosting itself, it demands  
presence—to pause, perceive, partake rather than plunder.

If these years have etched one truth, it is this: connection endures. Assembly  
endures. Hearth endures. *Blanc.* is its hushed manifesto—and your summons to  
reclaim it, authentically yours.

*Welcome in.*

**Carissa Webster**  
**Editor-in-Chief**



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# HWTM

Hostess with the Mostest



## About the founder

*Carissa Webster*

Carissa Webster redefines modern hosting with a signature blend of restraint, romance, and understated luxury.

Carissa is an award-winning event manager, wedding planner, and creative director based in Australia, renowned for curating elevated celebrations with considered detail and quiet confidence. With a portfolio spanning hundreds of weddings and events, she is known for her composed presence, meticulous organisation, and instinctive ability to design experiences that feel both effortlessly refined and profoundly meaningful.

Alongside her work in weddings and events, Carissa is the founder of Hostess with the Mostest, a lifestyle brand devoted to the art of entertaining, intentional living, wellness, and beautifully curated experiences.

Through this platform, she weaves together education and storytelling across hosting, events, retreats, and travel, empowering people to create spaces and moments that feel layered, intimate, and impeccably composed.

Carissa's philosophy is shaped as much by her professional expertise as by her personal life. As a mother raising girls, she is deeply values-led, holding the belief that beauty, ambition, and warmth can coexist, and that our homes play a powerful role in how we live, gather, and care for one another.



Her work has been recognised across the events and wedding industry through multiple awards, and she is widely regarded for her ability to guide clients through emotionally charged, highly personal milestones with grace, discretion, and unwavering intention.

Through her businesses, retreats, and now this magazine, Carissa continues to champion a slower, more thoughtful way of living—one that prioritises presence, wellbeing, and the simple luxury of opening your door, setting the table, and welcoming others in.



# WEDDINGS

Weddings are where beauty meets intention — where every detail, every glance, every quiet moment comes together to tell a shared story. This section celebrates love in all its forms: the joy, the calm, the elegance, and the emotion that stays long after the day has passed. Here, we linger on the art of celebration — thoughtfully, tenderly, beautifully.





M Southam Photo

## **WEDDING TRENDS 2026**

*Where nostalgia, intention & experience collide*

Weddings in 2026 are not about spectacle for spectacle's sake. They are slower, more intentional, deeply personal—and designed with feeling at the forefront. This new era of celebration draws from nostalgia, old-world romance, and modern self-expression, creating events that feel less like a production and more like a beautifully curated experience.

Something old is something new again—but reimagined through the lens of individuality, intimacy, and elevated design.

### **Supper Club Celebrations**

Formal plated dinners are giving way to supper-club-style receptions—think progressive dining, chef-led tasting menus, oyster bars, late-night snacks, and global flavours served in relaxed, lounge-style settings. Tables are styled like intimate dinner parties rather than banquet halls, inviting guests to linger, share, and connect.

The focus: food as journey, not just nourishment.

### **Deconstructed Wedding Timelines**

The traditional ceremony-cocktails-dinner-dance formula is being rewritten. Couples are designing timelines around vibe and movement rather than rules—cocktails first, dancing before dinner, roaming food stations, live entertainment woven throughout the evening.

Weddings now unfold organically, creating energy from the moment guests arrive.

### **Introverted 'I Dos'**

Not every couple wants the spotlight. In 2026, quieter, more private moments are just as celebrated: private vow exchanges, intimate cake cuttings, or slipping away together before the reception begins. Even classic moments like the first dance are being softened—guests invited to join, dissolving the pressure of performance.

Luxury, redefined: comfort and authenticity.

## DESIGN, COLOUR & MOOD



### Meadowcore Narratives

Florals are no longer just décor—they're storytelling tools. The meadowcore movement brings organic, loosely gathered florals into the spotlight, with installations that feel as though they've grown naturally into the space.

Think cascading arrangements, asymmetry, sculptural shapes, and blooms chosen for symbolism as much as beauty.



### Paloma Palettes & Bold Colour

After years of neutral minimalism, colour has returned—with confidence. Sunset-inspired hues of pink, red, orange and coral are paired with rich textures like velvet, lacquer, chrome and metallic accents. These palettes are extending beyond florals into linens, lighting, fashion, and even engagement rings.

Colour is no longer an accent—it's a statement.

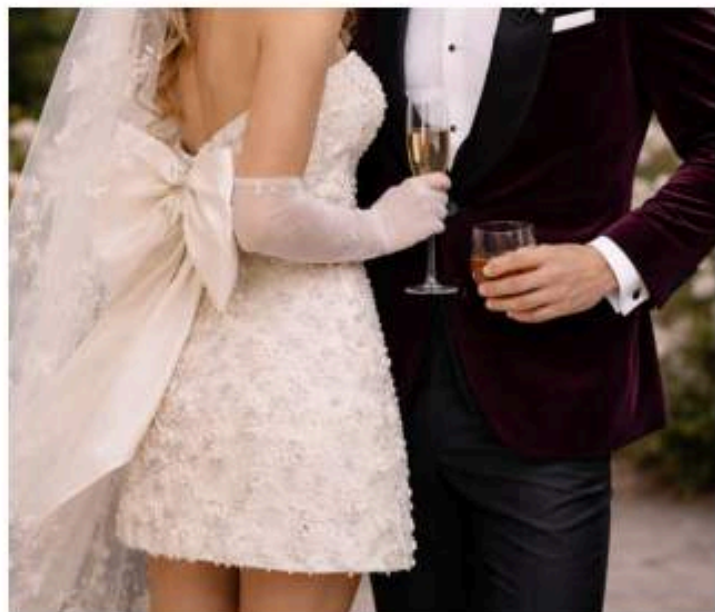


### Extravagant Draping & Statement Lighting

Fabric and light are shaping spaces like never before. Layered draping softens ballrooms and transforms interiors, while bold lighting designs—colour-blocked washes, chandeliers in unexpected places, candle-heavy installations—set mood and drama.

The rule: fewer 'wow' moments, executed impeccably.

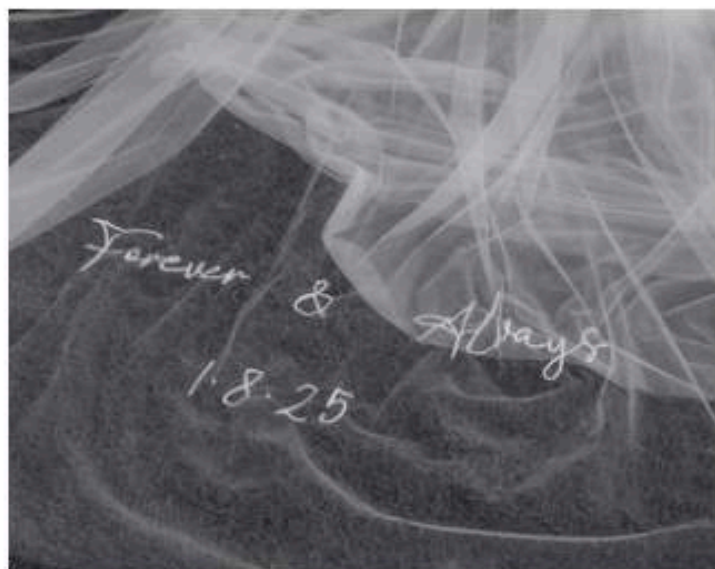
## FASHION, DETAIL & PERSONALISATION



### Bridal & Groom Fashion Freedom

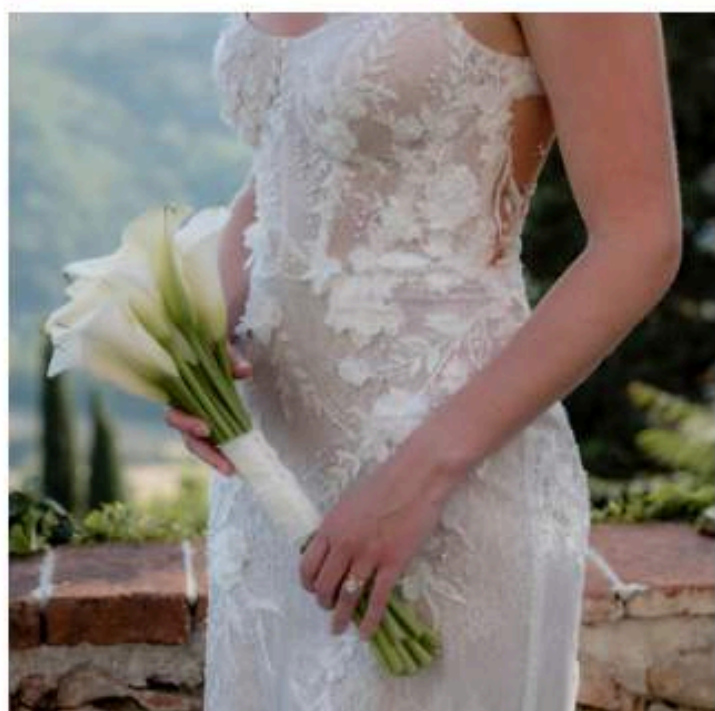
Wedding fashion in 2026 is expressive and multi-layered. Brides are embracing second (and third) looks—short dresses for after-parties, pantsuits, corsetry, bows, gloves and embroidered veils. Grooms are stepping forward with jewel-toned suits, textured jackets, playful linings and bold footwear.

Fashion is no longer prescriptive—it's personal.



### Embroidery Everywhere

Stitching has become the new signature detail. From cocktail napkins and stationery to veils and even cakes, embroidered motifs add a handcrafted, sentimental layer to celebrations. Monograms, symbols, and meaningful icons appear subtly across the day, tying the story together.



### Elongated Stem Bouquets

Bouquets have been stripped back and refined. Long-stem calla lilies, tulips and "stemmy" arrangements create clean, editorial silhouettes, while mini bouquets offer a charming counterpoint for those craving softness and nostalgia.

## MOMENTS, ENTERTAINMENT & WHAT'S NEXT



### Editorial Candids & Content Creators

Photography has shifted toward fashion-meets-documentary storytelling. Couples are prioritising atmosphere over poses—film photography, slow-motion reels, quiet emotional frames. Dedicated wedding content creators capture candid, social-first moments, allowing guests (and couples) to stay present while memories are preserved.



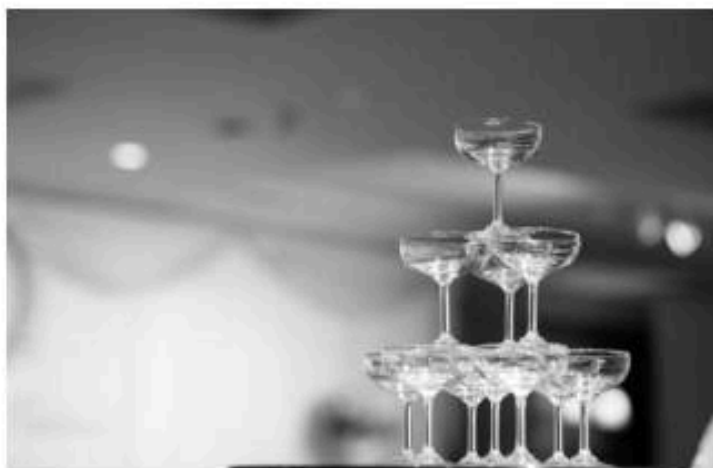
### Throwback Guest Experiences

Nostalgia is playful again. Arcade games, claw machines, custom sticker booths and retro amusements nod to '90s childhoods and shared cultural memory—adding joy without irony.



### The Witching Hour

Mysticism has found its way into weddings, softly and playfully. Tarot readers, aura photography, astrology corners and even "weather witches" offer guests moments of wonder, humour and curiosity—often styled into candlelit, velvet-draped corners.



### Shared Cocktails, Dry Options & Modern Rituals

Traditional cake cuttings are being replaced—or complemented—by shared cocktail moments, champagne towers or signature pours. At the same time, non-alcoholic options are being elevated with bespoke mocktail menus and thoughtful pairings.

Rituals remain—but they evolve.

## The Takeaway

2026 weddings are soulful, nostalgic and intentional.  
They honour the past while embracing modern freedom.  
They prioritise experience over excess.  
And above all, they feel unmistakably personal.

This is not about following trends—it's about creating a celebration that feels like home, elevated.



## Real Bride: Sarah & Quinton

*An elegant estate celebration built on love, community, and quiet luxury*

Set on her parents' private property, Sarah and Quinton's wedding was not just a celebration, it was a coming together of people, purpose, and deeply personal detail. What unfolded was an effortlessly elegant backyard wedding, layered with meaning, intention, and the kind of love that feels both grounded and extraordinary.

### A Love Story That Grew Organically

Sarah and Quinton's story began at work...a professional connection that slowly, organically evolved into something more. What started as friendship became partnership, both in life and in business.

"We used to spend 24 hours together," Sarah reflects. "It just... happened."

Their relationship has always been rooted in ease, a natural unfolding rather than a forced timeline. That same philosophy carried through to their engagement.

Quinton knew Sarah's love for Tiffany & Co. long before the proposal. Sarah had purchased herself a beautiful forever ring with the attitude 'I won't rely on a man to buy me a ring!' which glistened proudly on her finger. So their story with the iconic jeweller became something of a thread woven through their relationship. From gifting her Tiffany pieces early on, to choosing the engagement ring together, to forming genuine relationships with the boutique team, Breakfast at Tiffany's truly became part of their world. What began as a shared appreciation turned into unforgettable experiences, including VIP treatment and travel moments that felt almost cinematic.

"It was never just about the ring," Sarah says. "It became part of our story."



### The Vision: Feeling Over Perfection

While many weddings begin with aesthetics, Sarah and Quinton started with a feeling. "We wanted it to feel down-to-earth. No pressure. No over-the-top fuss."

The result was a refined yet relaxed home felt celebration-where elegance met warmth, and luxury was expressed through intention rather than excess.

The entire wedding became a community effort. Local trades, family, and friends all played a role, excavating, building, creating, and contributing to bring the day to life.

"It wasn't just our wedding. Everyone was involved. That's what made it so special."

### The Fashion: A Statement of Self

Sarah's bridal look was nothing short of extraordinary- bold yet feminine, dramatic yet deeply personal.

She chose two exquisite gowns...one by Nicole + Felicia (known for their couture craftsmanship and striking silhouettes) and the other by Raffaele Ciuca Bridal.

The first dress incorporated flowers, veil and a voluminous skirt, delicate detailing, and a softness that balanced its impact — perfectly suited to Sarah's petite frame.

"I wanted something bold, but not overdone. Something that still felt like me."

In a nod to her love of colour and florals, her second dress featured her favourite colour, looking pretty in pink with a removable cape she could re-wear both dresses provided a deeply personal detail reflecting her background and aesthetic.

Her look was completed with custom red Louis Vuitton shoes, created during a dream trip to Milan, another layer of storytelling woven into the day.

### The Moment That Stays With You

When asked what moment still gives her a lump in her throat, Sarah doesn't hesitate. "After the vows... I looked out at everyone. That feeling, having all your people there, it hits you." And for Quinton, it was the moment he saw Sarah in her dress.

Simple. Powerful. Unforgettable.





### The Reality Behind The Magic

While the day felt seamless to guests, Sarah is quick to acknowledge what was happening behind the scenes, and who made that possible.

"Sometimes you see weddings online and think everything just... happens. It doesn't."

From last-minute runs to the shops, to managing logistics like power cables and food shortages, to quietly solving problems without the couple ever knowing, the reality of wedding execution is far from effortless.

"Can you imagine if we didn't have Carissa?" she says.

"Honestly, people don't realise how much is being mitigated in the background."

Carissa teared up from hearing Sarah's beautiful words of unwavering gratitude: "In case no one tells you enough, you are admired for what you do. You are worth so much more than what you charge. I tell everyone: you don't just need a coordinator -you need Carissa! She is the best!"

### The Beauty Of Letting Go

Despite being hands-on during planning, Sarah reflects on one key lesson:

"If I could do anything differently... I would have let go a little more."

Like many brides, she carried the weight of wanting everything to be perfect, but in hindsight, the magic came from the moments in between.

"There were things that went wrong, but no one knew. Everyone had the best time. That's what matters."

## Love, Partnership & Balance

Through the process, Sarah and Quinton's relationship only strengthened.

"Happy wife, happy life," she laughs. "But really, he just wants me to be happy."

Quinton's calm presence balanced Sarah's natural tendency to carry the mental load.

"If I got stressed, he grounded me. He still does. He has this beautiful way of calming me down, at work, with the wedding and now in motherhood."

It's a partnership built on trust, compromise, and deep emotional support, the kind that extends far beyond the wedding day.

## A Celebration of What Matters Most

At its heart, Sarah and Quinton's wedding wasn't about perfection, trends, or performance.

It was about:

- Family
- Community
- Love
- And creating something meaningful together

From a marquee on private land to a honeymoon in the Maldives just days later (with a touch of real-life chaos in the form of unexpected morning sickness), their story is a reminder that weddings are not just events, they are lived experiences.

Beautiful, imperfect, emotional, and unforgettable.

## Final Reflection

"When you strip it all back," Sarah says.

"It was just about being together. Celebrating our love. And having everyone we care about in one place." And really - what could be more beautiful than that?





## Everything Taken Care Of: The Beauty of an All-Inclusive Overseas Wedding

*Discover your overseas dream with Carissa Webster*

One of the most common things couples say when they dream about an intimate overseas wedding is this: "It sounds incredible... but how would we organise it all?"

And it's a fair question.

Because while the idea of getting married somewhere breathtaking — surrounded by your nearest and dearest — feels magical, the logistics can feel overwhelming if you're trying to piece it together yourself. That's where a beautifully curated wedding package changes everything.

### **A Dream Team You Can Trust**

Imagine this instead.

A warm, experienced celebrant who takes the time to truly know you — your story, your values, your tone — and crafts a ceremony that feels deeply personal, heartfelt, and meaningful.

A photographer whose work you already love — someone whose images have been chosen and trusted for their ability to capture emotion with ease; someone who blends into the day, documents each moment naturally, and delivers imagery that feels timeless and editorial.

And a planner who brings it all together.

Someone who manages every moving part quietly and confidently — from the big picture right down to the smallest detail — so nothing feels rushed, missed, or stressful.

That's the foundation of an overseas wedding done well.

## From Start to Finish — We've Got You

Our destination wedding packages are designed to remove the pressure of "project managing" your own wedding.

From the moment you book, you're supported every step of the way.

We take care of:

- planning and coordination from start to finish
- sourcing and managing trusted local vendors
- florals and styling that reflect your vision
- ceremony and reception set-up with precision
- accommodation options for you and your guests
- connecting you and your guests with a travel agent
- thoughtful recommendations for things to do, see, and enjoy in the area
- timelines, logistics, and all the behind-the-scenes details

Nothing is left to chance.

Nothing is left for you to worry about.



## A Wedding That Feels Like a Holiday

The true luxury of an intimate overseas wedding isn't just the location — it's the experience. You're not juggling appointments, deliveries, or schedules.

You arrive.

You exhale.

You enjoy.

You spend unhurried time with your nearest and dearest. You share meals. You explore. You unwind. You celebrate slowly.

And all the while, you have complete peace of mind knowing everything is being handled with care, professionalism, and intention.



### **For You — and For Your Guests**

Your guests feel it too.

They're not rushing in and out of venues or navigating complex logistics. They're enjoying a holiday — one that just happens to include the most beautiful wedding they've ever attended.

They feel relaxed. Included. Looked after.

And that ease becomes part of the memory.

### **The Gift of Presence**

When the details are taken care of, something genuinely special happens.

You're present.

You're not thinking about what's next, who needs what, or whether everything is running on time.

You're simply there — soaking up the moments, the laughter, the emotion, the beauty.

And that is what your wedding day should feel like.

### **Leave the Details to Us**

If the idea of planning an overseas wedding feels daunting — let it be simple instead.

With the right team, the right structure, and the right support, your dream destination wedding becomes exactly that... a dream.

Arrive.

Enjoy the holiday.

Spend quality time with your favourite people.

And rest easy knowing that everything will run smoothly — beautifully, seamlessly, and just as it should.



# Passport Ready: Capturing Love Stories Around the World

## *Destination & Elopement Photography with End of Time Weddings*

Some people collect souvenirs. Others collect moments. For the team behind End of Time Weddings, it's always been the latter.

Long before photography, they were the kind of people who kept old plane tickets, handwritten notes, and well-worn clothing—anything that could pull them back into a specific, fleeting moment. That instinct to hold onto feeling naturally evolved into a love for photography: the power to freeze what can never be recreated, yet can be relived again and again.

Photography, for them, has always been about emotion. It transcends cultures, borders, languages, and beliefs, and connects people through something much deeper: how a moment feels. Destination weddings and elopements once felt like a distant, almost impossible dream—something other people did, in faraway places. There was no roadmap, no clear path into that world. And then, four years ago, everything quietly shifted.

A close friend asked them to photograph her wedding at the InterContinental in Fiji. It felt like a huge leap of faith and a beautiful honour. Through what they still describe as divine timing, those photographs were picked up by publications and shared widely online. Almost overnight, new doors opened into the destination wedding space.

"It wasn't planned and it wasn't strategic," they reflect. "It felt like it found us."

Fast forward a few years, and they've now had the privilege of documenting love across Australia, Europe, Asia, Fiji, and the United States. What once felt out of reach is now at the heart of their work.



## The Season That Changed Everything

If there was a moment that truly changed the trajectory of their work, it was their Europe 2024 season.

That period stretched them creatively and allowed them to redefine what's possible for destination couples—whether it's an intimate elopement, a micro wedding, or a full three-day wedding weekend.

Across Italy, they experienced all three facets of destination celebrations:

An elopement at the iconic Villa del Balbianello on Lake Como, where they spent an entire day with their couple, witnessing countless firsts and giving the pair space to soak in every moment together.

A micro wedding in Puglia for a French couple living in Canada, who chose Italy precisely because neither of their families had ever visited. The destination itself became a shared discovery—deeply meaningful and woven into their story. A three-day wedding extravaganza in Tuscany, their highest-calibre event at the time, bringing together world-class vendors from across the globe to create an extraordinary, immersive celebration.

Experiencing all three revealed just how personal and unique the destination space really is. They witnessed the intention, time, and care couples pour into their celebrations, and the magic that happens when like-minded creatives come together around a shared vision.

"It only deepened our love for destination weddings," they say. "It reaffirmed why this work feels so special to us."

## Why Elopements Feel So Different

Traditional weddings will always have their place but elopements unlock something else entirely. "Elopements offer an atmosphere that's completely different," they explain. Without the weight of timelines, expectations, or obligations, couples get to slow down, breathe, and actually be with one another.

Rather than simply documenting a day, they feel like they're co-creating the experience with their couples. There is a freedom—not just creatively, but emotionally. Space for real connection to unfold, unhurried and uninterrupted.

Their most emotive work almost always comes from elopements: "In those moments, it's just the two of them—fully immersed, deeply connected, and soaking it all in."

If they had to describe their destination style in a few words, they'd choose: soft, personal, emotive, refined, and elegant.

## The Heart of an Elopement Day

When they think about the most meaningful parts of an elopement, one thing always comes first. "The vows," they say, without hesitation. "Always the vows."

Without an audience to perform to, couples speak differently. They are free to be raw, honest, and utterly vulnerable. Some of the most powerful vows they've heard—tear-inducing, unfiltered, and deeply personal—have been spoken in those quiet elopement moments.

Another favourite is when couples see their location for the first time. Many destination elopements are planned online or entrusted fully to a planner. That first step into the space—the view, the air, the stillness or buzz of the environment—is electric.

"Watching our couples take it all in is incredibly moving," they share. "It's just the two of them, choosing each other, surrounded by a breathtaking backdrop. In that moment, nothing else in the world matters."

Afterwards, couples tend to say the same thing: that eloping was the best decision they could have made, and that they couldn't imagine the experience without the team beside them—not just behind the camera, but as guides and companions through what can feel like a daunting process.



EOT



What stays with the photographers most, though, is what happens after. Many of their destination couples become friends. They keep in touch long after the day is over, carrying those memories—and connections—forward.

"It's hard to choose 'one' unforgettable love story," they admit. "We genuinely remember every single one. Each couple's love becomes forever intertwined with a place—for them, and for us."

### Places That Steal Their Hearts

Ask them for a favourite destination and the answer comes easily: Lake Como.

"The atmosphere and sheer grandeur of the landscape are unlike anything we've ever experienced," they say. The scale, the stillness, the way the light moves between the mountains—it leaves couples and creatives equally in awe.

Creatively, it's a dream. Historic villas, vintage Italian boats, reflective water, centuries-old architecture, and soft, shifting light combine to create something almost cinematic. "Every element works together so effortlessly," they explain. "It's an unforgettable place to document love."

If they could photograph an elopement anywhere tomorrow, they'd choose Ville de Mont in Sapa, Vietnam. Perched 1,550 metres above sea level and wrapped in clouds, the landscape is dramatic and otherworldly. Endless mountain ranges unfurl in every direction, while the town itself is often compared to the Alps—with similar peaks and mist, but a softness and serenity that feels uniquely its own. It's quiet, grounding, and deeply intimate: a perfect canvas for an elopement.

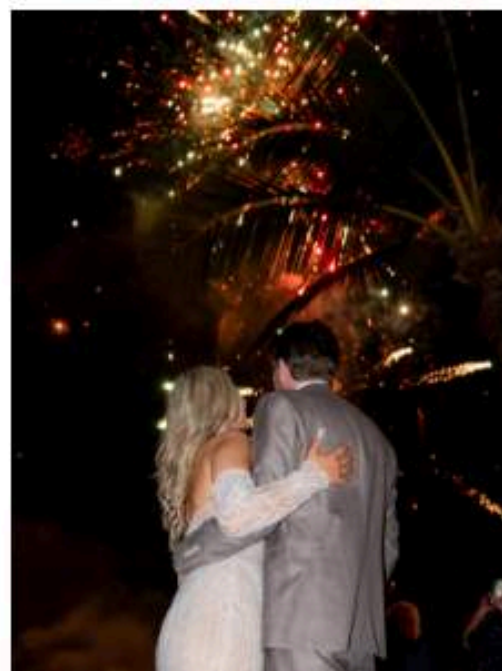
As for hidden gems, they look beyond the most talked-about spots. Much of Oceania and South-East Asia remains relatively untapped in the destination wedding space yet offers remarkable diversity—beaches, mountains, lush jungles, rich culture, incredible food, and a sense of adventure.

"While Bali is well-loved, places in Thailand and Vietnam, for example, offer the same beauty with a fresh, less overdone feel," they share. "For couples seeking something meaningful and different, these regions have endless potential."

### More Than a Pretty Feed: Choosing a Destination Photographer

In a world where Instagram often leads the way, they encourage couples to look beyond the grid.

"You'll spend your entire day with your photographer," they remind couples. "Sometimes multiple days. Trust and genuine alignment are everything."



Loving a portfolio matters, but so does feeling comfortable with the person holding the camera. Communication is key. Couples should feel heard, supported, and understood. The right photographer should feel like a calming, grounding presence—especially in high-emotion, high-intimacy settings like elopements.

Experience with travel is just as important. Couples can ask how a photographer: Plans timelines around flights, travel days, and jet lag, approaches location scouting in unfamiliar places, navigates logistics like light, terrain, crowds, and permits.

"A photographer who understands logistics and light in new environments lets you relax and fully enjoy the experience," they say. Planning for the Unpredictable Destination weddings and elopements come with a unique set of variables: weather, crowds, permits, timelines, and tricky terrain. Managing those starts long before the day.

"For us, it all comes down to research, preparation, and being a good traveller," they explain. Respect for local culture, customs, and environments is non-negotiable. Awareness isn't just professional—it's ethical.

Trust plays a huge role. Couples chose their photographer for a reason, and letting go of control allows that vision to come to life. Surrounding themselves with vendors they genuinely connect with also creates a feeling of safety and ease.

Their own approach is intentionally gentle. "We aim to feel like a fly on the wall," they explain. Before the day, they take time to understand who their couples are, how they interact, and what matters most to them. On the day, they guide rather than direct—focusing on simple, natural movements and real moments.

That might look like:

- Wandering through a village or garden together
- Holding hands and pausing to take in a view
- Laughing over a shared joke away from the crowds

By creating space instead of forcing poses, they allow each couple's dynamic to lead. The result is imagery that feels effortless, cinematic, and deeply authentic.

When it comes to timing, light is their favourite collaborator. Afternoons can offer warm, soft light; sunrise brings quiet, ethereal stillness; even daytime in a busy city has its own energy and joy. "We prioritise portraits in the best natural light for the couple's vision," they say, "but we stay flexible, shifting locations or timing as the light changes. Flexibility is everything."



## The Real Talk on Eloping

One of the biggest misconceptions they see is the idea that elopements or destination weddings are just a passing trend.

"With their rise post-COVID, people sometimes see them as a 'shortcut' or aesthetic choice," they explain. "But for our couples, eloping is a conscious decision to centre their love and experience."

Instead of spending most of the day hosting others, eloping couples spend the day with each other. They slow down, breathe, and inhabit their own story in a way that's deeply personal and tailored to who they are—their personalities, interests, and the way they love.

For the photographers, it offers the unique privilege of stepping back, giving breathing room, and capturing connection as it genuinely unfolds—no performance, no distractions.

"It's intentional, it's intimate, and for so many of our couples, it's the best decision they've ever made," they say.

## Where to Find Them

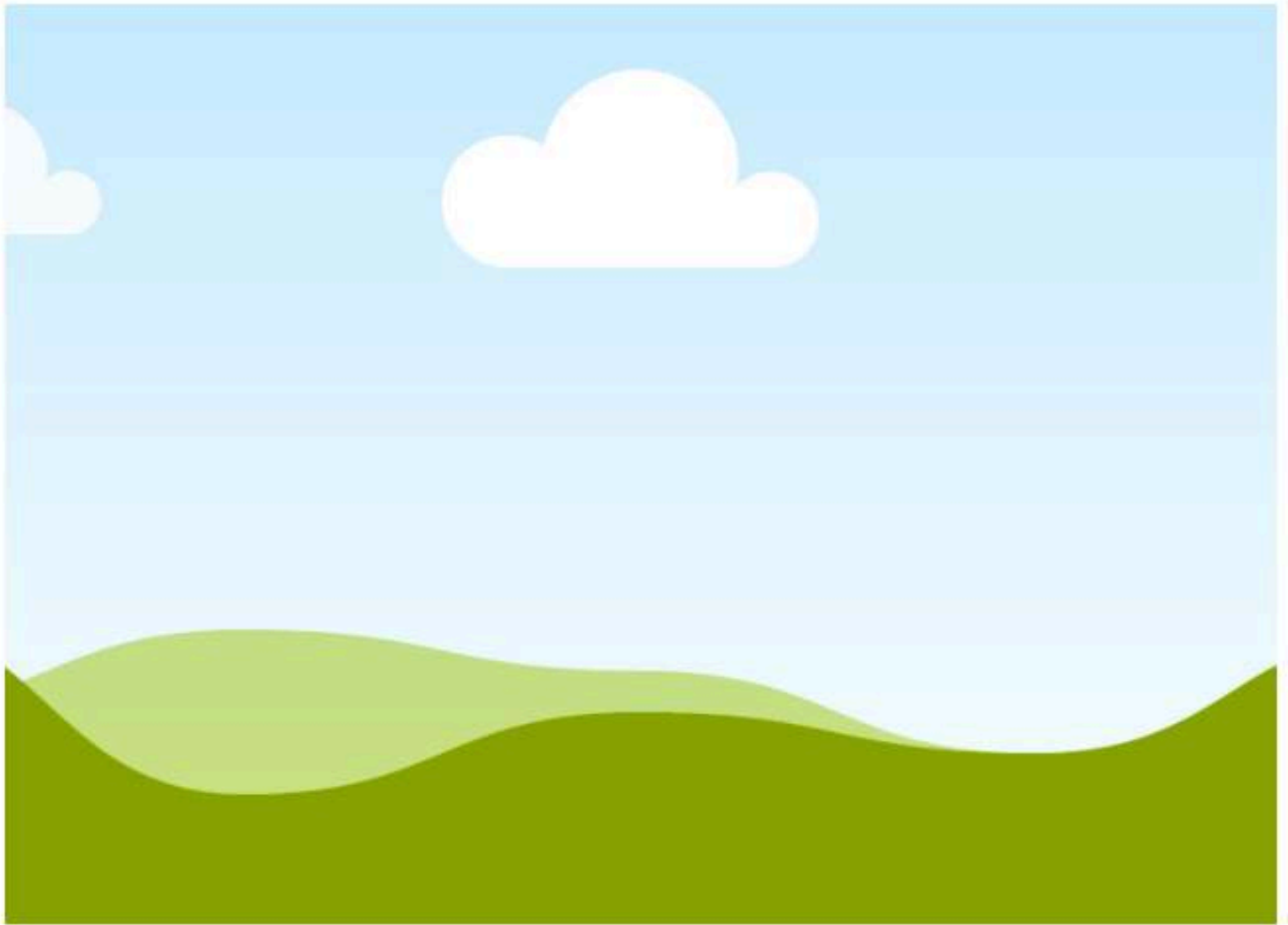
Readers can explore more of their destination and elopement work, follow along with love stories from around the world, and peek behind the scenes on Instagram at [@endoftimeweddings](https://www.instagram.com/endoftimeweddings).

There, they share a mix of:

- Destination galleries
- Real couple stories
- Practical tips for travelling and eloping
- Honest behind-the-scenes moments from life on the road

If your passports are ready and your hearts are set on a love story somewhere out in the world, they'd love to hear from you.





## Eloping & Destination Weddings:

### *The Romance - and the Reality*

The idea is irresistible: a cliffside ceremony in Italy, a beach in Bali, a mountain in New Zealand. Just the two of you (or a handful of guests), far away from seating charts and timelines.

But there is one important truth many couples don't realise:

A destination wedding does not automatically mean you're legally married.

"Every country has different marriage laws," says celebrant Pat Coelho. "Some are far more complex than couples expect."

### **The One Rule Couples Get Caught By**

In Australia, couples must lodge a Notice of Intended Marriage (NOIM) at least one calendar month before the wedding. It can be submitted up to 18 months in advance, but not less than one month unless a rare legal shortening is granted.

And the countdown doesn't start when you pick a date.

It starts when the celebrant receives the completed paperwork.

Both partners must also provide identification and, if previously married, divorce or death certificates.

"The one-month rule catches couples out more than anything else, especially with spontaneous elopements," Pat explains. "My advice is always: lodge early. Even if plans change, you're protected."

## Why Many Couples Marry Twice (On Purpose)

Many couples planning overseas weddings choose a different approach: they legally marry in Australia first and hold a symbolic ceremony abroad.

Yes — you can even get legally married at the airport before your flight.

It removes stress, avoids language barriers, and allows the overseas ceremony to focus purely on experience rather than compliance.

## The Destination Wedding Checklist

Pat recommends couples prepare across four areas:

### Legalities

- Confirm whether you're legally marrying or symbolically celebrating
- Understand residency or visa requirements
- Check translation or authentication of documents
- Confirm recognition of the marriage back home
- Paperwork
- Passports valid 6+ months
- Certified document copies
- Travel insurance covering the wedding

### Logistics

- Backup weather plan
- Written supplier confirmations
- Time zone coordination
- International payment methods

### Emotional Preparation

- Discuss expectations
- Decide on livestreaming or privacy
- Plan how to include loved ones not attending

"When couples prepare both legally and emotionally, the experience feels intentional rather than rushed."

## Elopement vs Traditional Wedding: The Emotional Difference

Large weddings carry communal energy — the joy of family and friends sharing the moment.

Eloperments feel entirely different.

"They're quieter. There's more stillness, more eye contact, fewer distractions. The focus narrows completely to the relationship."

Neither is better. They are simply different emotional landscapes.

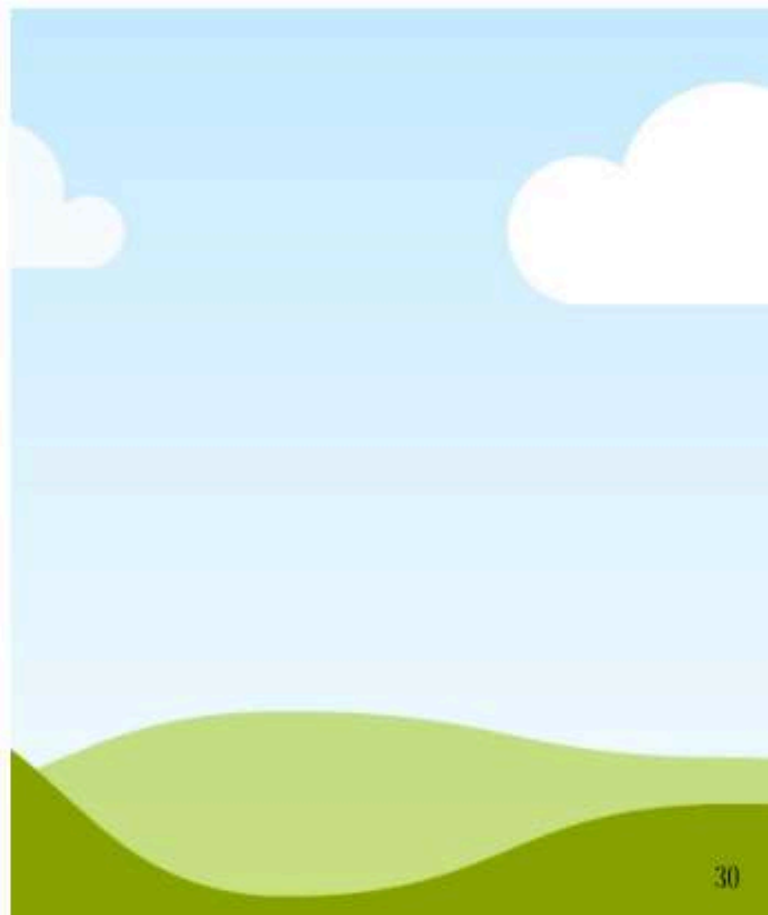
## Making an Intimate Ceremony Feel Powerful

In intimate ceremonies, every word matters.

Pat slows the pace intentionally, creating space for couples to breathe, look at one another and absorb the moment. Sometimes she asks reflective questions before vows, anchoring them emotionally.

Without the production of a large wedding, the magic comes from presence.

"Intimate ceremonies aren't smaller," she says. "They're more focused. And often, they're the ones couples remember most vividly for the rest of their lives."





## A destination wedding sounds romantic...

*...until you try to plan one.  
You find the perfect place.  
You imagine the photos.*

*You picture your closest people flying  
in from around the world.*

*Then reality arrives.*

*Different time zones.*

*Vendors you've never met.*

*Contracts in another country.*

*Not knowing the laws.*

*Not knowing who to trust.*

*And one quiet thought:*

*"What if it doesn't come together?"*

*This is where our couples find us.*

*Instead of planning a wedding overseas alone,  
you take your wedding team with you.*

## DESTINATION WEDDING EXPERIENCES

*A high-end Australian wedding team you can take anywhere in the world*

*"An experienced Australian wedding team who travel with you and manage everything together calmly, professionally and personally."*

*You don't arrive hoping it works.  
You arrive knowing it will.*

### **What's Included**

*A complete wedding team, not separate suppliers.*

*You'll receive:*

- Personalised ceremony by Australian celebrant
- Legal marriage paperwork completed in Australia
- Award-winning wedding planner & on-day coordinator
- Professional destination wedding photography
- Pre-wedding discovery & planning guidance
- Planning tools, templates & checklists
- Assistance sourcing and choosing your venue
- Support communicating with overseas venues & suppliers

*This is full support - not just a ceremony booking.*

### **What This Means For You**

*You're not managing a wedding across time zones and contracts.*

*You have:*

- Someone managing the schedule
- Someone guiding decisions
- Someone capturing it beautifully
- Someone legally marrying you

*Your day feels calm, organised and intentional even on the other side of the world.*

**Carissa Webster** – *Hostess with the Mostest*

**Pat Coelho** – *Celebrant*

**End of Time Weddings** – *Featured Photographer*

**Bring your wedding team with you!**

**Get In Touch | Carissa Webster**

*Hostess with the Mostest | HWTM.ORG*

*Destination Weddings Australia, Asia & Europe*

**EOT**

**HWTM**  
Hostess with the Mostest

Enquire Now





### What We Do Differently

Before you leave Australia, your wedding already has structure.

We help you:

- Choose the right location & venue
- Prepare your ceremony
- Complete legal paperwork in Australia
- Build your timeline
- Communicate with your venue
- Coordinate everything on the day

### AUSTRALIA / ASIA / PACIFIC PACKAGES

*Costings External*

#### HAWAII \$11,530 AUD

Upgrades

- Videography \$5240
- Wedding planning essentials \$3790
- Wedding planning deluxe \$5999

#### Philippines / Bali - \$10,680 AUD

Upgrades

- Videography \$4290
- Wedding planning essentials \$3790
- Wedding planning deluxe \$5999

#### FIJI - \$9,480 AUD

Upgrades

- Videography \$3790
- Wedding planning essentials \$3790
- Wedding planning deluxe \$5999

#### New Zealand \$8,580 AUD

Upgrades

- Videography \$3390
- Wedding planning essentials \$3790
- Wedding planning deluxe \$5999

Then we meet you there — and run it seamlessly. Your morning feels relaxed. Your ceremony feels personal. Your photos are captured by someone you know. You're not coordinating a wedding overseas. You're being married overseas.

### Included in your experience

- Award-winning wedding coordinator on the day
- Professional celebrant and Australian legal paperwork
- Featured destination wedding photographer
- Planning guidance and discovery meeting
- Wedding planning tools and templates
- Assistance finding your dream venue

### Optional Upgrades

- Full wedding planning
- Cinematic wedding film
- Multi-day wedding weekend experience

### This isn't a package of suppliers.

It's a team who already work together. That's why our weddings feel calm.

### EUROPE PACKAGES

*(Scotland Highlands • Lake Como • Lake Garda  
• France – Italy +anywhere you're dreaming of)*

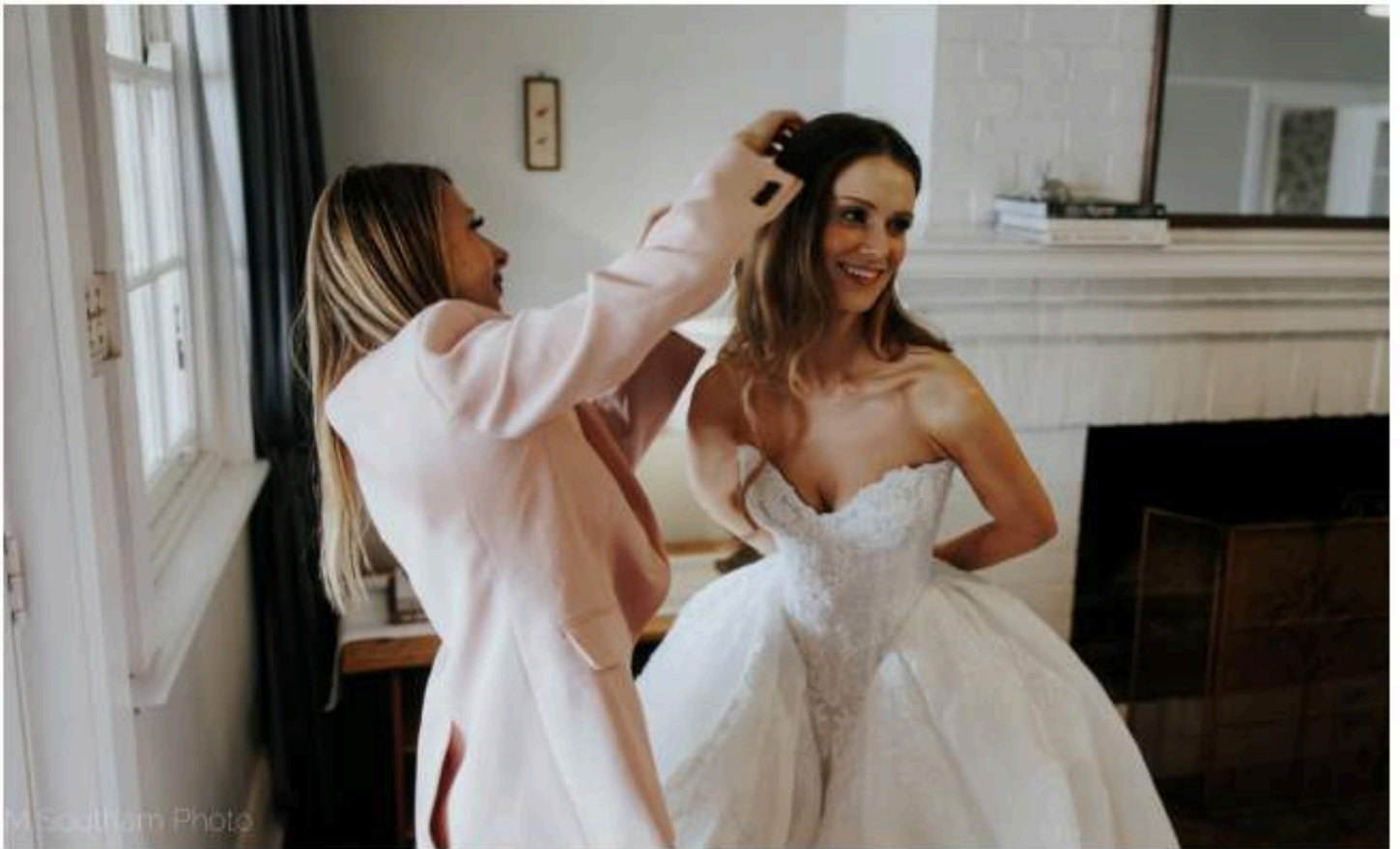
Price €13,728

#### Europe upgrades

- €2,150 – cinematography
- €2,900 – wedding planning
  - sourcing venues
  - vendor negotiation
  - guest logistics
  - styling assistance
  - full timeline
  - planning meetings
  - full wedding day management

€6,400 – full multi day wedding planning including:

- design concept
- supplier sourcing & contracting
- production management
- travel management
- budget management
- family handling (very important in destination weddings)
- rehearsal management
- multi-day events



## Why Your Wedding Planner Should Be One of Your Biggest Investments

*A Great Wedding Planner Does Much More Than People Realise*

Statistically, wedding planning is incredibly stressful, with surveys showing 94% of couples find it stressful or overwhelming, with 40% calling it 'very' or 'extremely' stressful. Many compare it to buying a home or finding a job. While it doesn't match the trauma of losing a loved one, it often ranks higher than significant life events like job hunting. The intensity of budgeting, logistics, family pressure and expectations can even result in insomnia, headaches, anxiety, relationship strain and sometimes couples questioning whether to postpone or elope altogether.

So, when we talk about investing in a wedding planner, it's not just about having a pretty day. It's about:

- protecting your mental and emotional wellbeing
- safeguarding your financial investment
- ensuring your wedding is well-executed, calm and joyful
- and giving yourselves the best chance to actually enjoy the experience

And that's why your wedding planner should absolutely be one of your biggest and smartest investments.

***"You've Probably Never Planned a Wedding Before... But They've Planned Hundreds."***

Most couples are experiencing this for the very first time. They've never had to:

- manage dozens of vendors
- negotiate contracts
- coordinate timelines down to the minute
- consider guest logistics, weather plans, access, styling execution, budgets, and legalities
- handle family emotions, expectations, pressure and opinions

A professional wedding planner does this every week. They have planned hundreds of weddings. They know what works. They know what fails.

They know what people regret, and what they're eternally grateful they invested in. This level of experience isn't something that can be "Googled" or "winged."

It's earned. Over years. In real wedding environments. With real money, real families and real consequences if things go wrong.

### **You Get What You Pay For**

There are a lot of wedding planners in the industry right now. Some are incredible. Some are experienced professionals.

Some are strategic, organised, resilient and truly understand logistics, hospitality, risk management and people. And some have coordinated a handful of weddings, purchased a Canva logo and started calling themselves "planners." Like anything in life:

- cheap usually means inexperienced
- low-cost generally means low support
- a "bargain" often means you become the backup plan, admin assistant, or problem-solver yourself if the price feels unbelievably cheap..

That's almost always the experience you'll receive. Wedding planning is a HUGE project management exercise.



There are thousands of micro-tasks wrapped inside dozens of big-picture responsibilities. You're not paying someone just to "be nice" or "hold your clipboard". You're paying for:

- professional expertise
- strategic thinking
- crisis management skills
- vendor knowledge
- problem solving
- emotional support
- execution excellence

Paying premium generally means you get premium.

Premium planning.

Premium service.

Premium calm.

Premium outcomes.



## **A Great Wedding Planner Does MUCH More Than People Realise**

A wedding planner isn't just someone who loves weddings.

They are your personal project manager, logistics coordinator, negotiator, stylist, designer, communicator, mediator, family peace-keeper, calm in the chaos, and the person who will quietly absorb stress so you don't have to.

Wedding planners juggle vendors, timelines, weather changes, delayed guests, emotional family dynamics, venue constraints, last minute curveballs, extra chairs that appear out of nowhere, speeches running overtime, flowers arriving late, bridal party delays, wardrobe malfunctions

All while smiling, managing everything behind-the-scenes, and ensuring YOU remain blissfully unaware of most of it. Friendly and bubbly is lovely.

But friendly alone does not manage a wedding. You need someone composed, experienced and strategic while assertive when necessary and amazingly graceful under pressure and deeply capable.

## **They Know the Industry and Save You Money**

A premium planner has relationships. They know which vendors are reliable, professional, genuinely talented, properly insured, respectful, consistent and incredible to work with. And they know who to avoid too.

A good planner can also negotiate on your behalf which saves you time, money and stress. They will also review and ensure contracts are fair, prevent you from being overcharged and stop you from booking vendors who might risk your day. Protect you from costly mistakes and save you weeks (or months) of time researching in the process.

Often, couples think planning their own wedding saves money but in reality a great planner can save you thousands, in time, stress, wrong decisions, and bad investments.

In The End.. A Good Planner Changes Everything  
Your wedding should feel magical, connected, joyful and meaningful, not like the most stressful project of your life.

Choose well. Choose experience and the person who truly knows what they're doing.  
Your wedding, and your sanity, deserve it.

***“Every wedding begins with a vision, but it is love that turns it into something unforgettable.”***



# THE ARCHITECTURE OF SILK



## Giant Silk Art

*Monumental, handcrafted silk sculptures & interior objects*

Giant Silk Art is a Sydney-based studio creating large-scale sculptural silk installations for weddings, brand activations, and interior spaces.

Founded by Daria, whose background spans over a decade in engineering, the studio approaches silk as both a material and a structure — combining technical precision with a highly artistic, editorial aesthetic. Each piece is handcrafted using natural silk, designed to interact with light, movement, and space. From monumental floral forms to ceiling installations and immersive environments, the work is created to transform spaces into visual experiences.

Positioned between art, fashion, and spatial design, Giant Silk Art offers both ready-to-hire installations and bespoke commissions across Australia.



Studio Name: Giant Silk Art

Founder: Daria

Location: Sydney, Australia (available Australia-wide)

Instagram: @giantsilkart

Website: [www.giantsilkart.com.au](http://www.giantsilkart.com.au)


Enquiries: DM via Instagram or website contact form



# HWTM

Hostess with the Mostest





**For the moments that  
deserve more than ordinary.**

At Hostess with the Mostest, we believe the most meaningful occasions are never just events. They are experiences that stay with you long after the moment has passed.

Led by award-winning planner Carissa Webster, HWTM is known for a refined, deeply personal approach to weddings, elopements, retreats, corporate gatherings and celebrations across Australia and around the world.

Whether it is an intimate ceremony on private land, a destination wedding in an extraordinary setting, or a thoughtfully curated event designed to leave a lasting impression, every experience is shaped with intention, care and creative vision.

With calm leadership and seamless execution, HWTM guides each step with clarity and confidence, so you can be fully present for what matters most.

*Because true luxury is feeling completely at ease.*

**Enquire now to begin your planning journey**



0414 195 202



carissa@hwtm.org



hwtm.org



hostesswiththemostest.au





## A Quiet Kind of Forever

*An intimate elopement that feels like home*

*They were never the couple who craved the spotlight. Dinner at home trumped parties. Long walks outshone loud rooms. Deep conversations that lingered for hours, not small talk filling space. Their love lived in the quiet places—shared glances, comfortable silences, understanding without words.*

*So when wedding dreams took shape, tradition never quite fit. Guest lists felt overwhelming. The spotlight, heavy. A room of watching eyes made their shoulders tense.*

*One evening, curled on the couch with wine glasses half-empty between them, she said softly:*

*"I don't want to feel like I'm performing."*

*He reached for her hand, already nodding.*

*"I just want it to feel like us."*

*That was it. The seed of a secret escape took root.*

*They didn't announce it. Didn't debate endlessly. The idea grew quietly between them: somewhere warm, beautiful, theirs alone. A place to disappear, marry, return changed.*

*They planned gently, thoughtfully—not rushed rebellion, but intention. A small ceremony. A celebrant who understood softness. A photographer who knew when to fade back. A setting calm, not crowded.*

*On their wedding morning, they woke early—not nervous, but with peaceful excitement. Air felt lighter. Sun filtered through curtains. The world held its breath.*

*They got ready together. No separate rooms. No waiting. Just them—moving slowly, helping each other, laughing when nerves flickered then settled.*

*Outside, simplicity perfected the moment. Flowers swayed in breeze. Everything ready. No one watching. Vows spoken softly, like secrets only for each other. Promises without performance or pressure.*

*Afterwards, no rush. No schedule. They wandered hand in hand, captured golden-hour portraits, paused often to breathe it in.*

*A long lunch followed. Talks of past, future, the small moments they loved most. Laughter—quiet, deep, safe. As sun slipped away, they realised: this wasn't avoidance. This honoured who they truly were.*

*Later, sharing the story, those who knew them best smiled:  
"That makes perfect sense."*

*Because real love needs no audience.  
Sometimes, the most powerful forever begins as a secret—chosen in the quietest, truest way.*



## Overseas Intimate Weddings 2026

The dreamy way to say 'I do'

Intimate overseas weddings are trending—and it's not hard to see why.

There's something incredibly romantic about taking your nearest and dearest away—not just for a wedding, but for an experience. A celebration that feels like a holiday. A few days (or even a week) where your love story brings everyone together—intentional, relaxed, deeply personal.

When you strip away obligation, guest list politics, and traditional pressure, what's left is pure magic.

**Dreaming of a Wedding That Feels Like You**

Imagine this: you and your favourite people travelling somewhere beautiful. No running between venues. No strict timelines. No pressure to invite people out of obligation.

You're surrounded only by those who truly matter.

An intimate destination wedding lets you focus on connection, not coordination. Less about hosting a crowd, more about celebrating your love—authentic, calm, aligned.

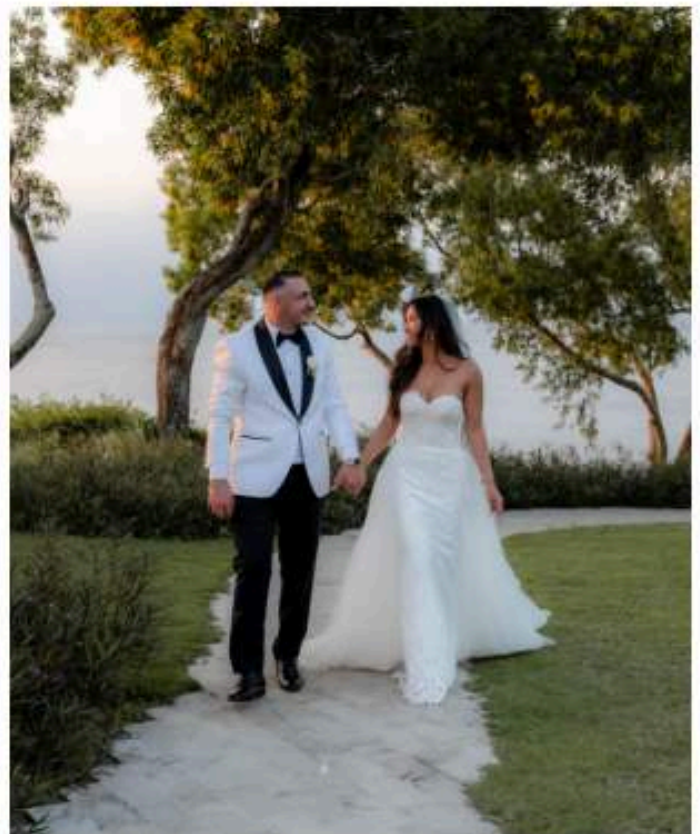
No performance.  
No expectation.  
Just presence.

### Less Pressure, More Meaning

The greatest gift of an overseas intimate wedding is released pressure. No distant relatives you barely see. No expanding the guest list beyond what feels right.

Decisions come down to one question: Does this feel like us?

When planned from this place, the energy shifts softer, more joyful, far more memorable for everyone.



### A Celebration That Unfolds

Destination weddings aren't confined to one day, they unfold beautifully over time.

A relaxed rehearsal dinner the night before. Candlelight, beautiful food, laughter, quiet excitement. No rushing. No stress. Just time to connect.

This isn't a whirlwind. It's luxury.

**Wedding Morning in Paradise**

You wake in breathtaking surroundings. Sunlight filters through. Ocean, mountains, or countryside waits outside.

No travel. No chaos. You're already there.

Getting ready in paradise—surrounded by favourite people. Music playing. Champagne poured. Breakfast shared. Calm excitement wrapped into one.

Behind the scenes, your team sets up with precision: ceremony space, florals, reception tables, styling, personal touches that make it unmistakably yours.

### **A Day That Feels Effortless**

Your guests enjoy slow mornings—swimming, coffee, wandering—before gathering for something special. Then they see you, walking the aisle in a picture-perfect setting that feels unreal. One of those moments where everything goes quiet—and then you hear it: Wow.

### **Sunlit Moments & Joy**

Family portraits happen onsite during cocktail hour—outdoors, under sun, breathtaking views. Guests mingle, sip drinks, soak it in.

No location rushing. No logistics stress. Just joy.

The reception reflects you—your style, energy, story. Every detail intentional. Every moment meaningful. Because it's intimate, nothing feels diluted. Speeches land heartfelt. Laughter rings loud. Dancing flows free. You're not working the room—you're living the moment.

### **The Luxury of Staying Put**

No long drive or transport shuffle at night's end. You wander back to your room—metres away. Next morning? Luxurious recovery breakfast with those you love most. Still glowing. Still smiling.

### **"But What About Logistics?"**

It's normal to feel overwhelmed by overseas wedding planning—travel, accommodation, vendors, timelines, guest experience.

That's where the right support changes everything.

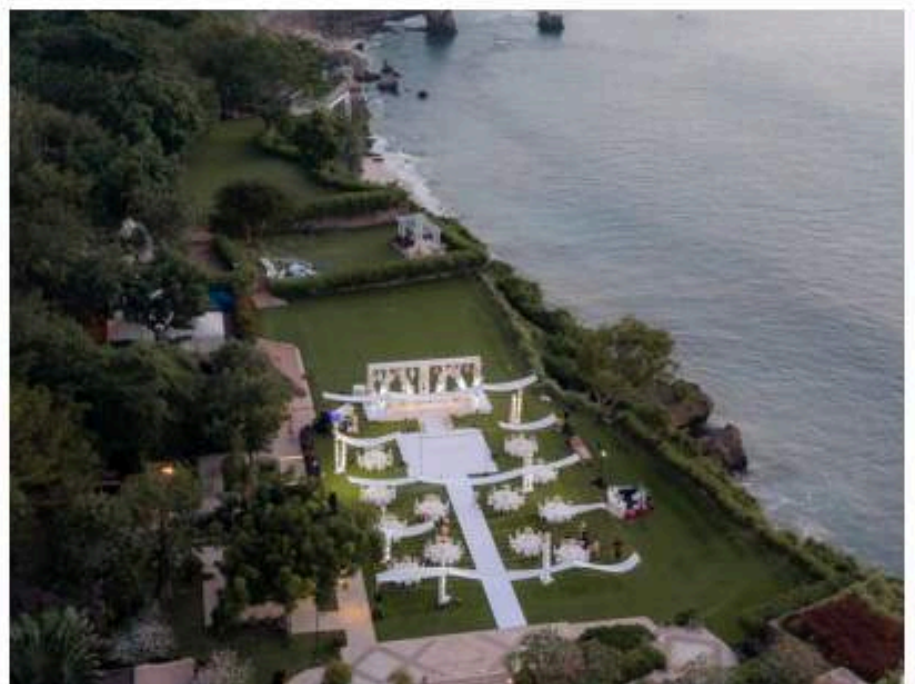
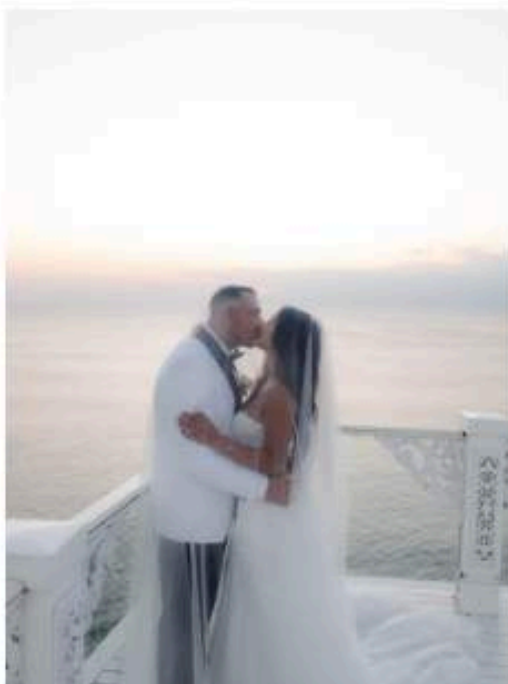
Fixed-fee destination packages handle logistics—from planning and coordination to venue support and guest accommodation guidance. The stress of project managing disappears. You simply enjoy.

### **A Wedding Worth Travelling For**

Your dream wedding might not wait in a traditional venue with endless obligations.

It might be sun-drenched and beautiful. A holiday with those you love most. Effortless celebration. Deeply personal experience.

Where your wedding doesn't just look incredible—it feels like you.







## **From Waroo With Love**

*Welcome to Waroo Homestead*

There are some places that feel like they have been waiting for love stories long before any of us arrived. Waroo Homestead is one of those places.

Perched above the Murrumbidgee River with sweeping views across rolling hills, Waroo's story begins well over a century ago, before the First World War. Originally built by Mr Bennett of the prominent Bennett family—owners of the Evening Star newspaper in Sydney—the homestead was crafted with remarkable care. Bricks were reportedly handmade on the property, and a concrete swimming pool was poured to face the river, framing a view that still takes your breath away today.

For the past 50 years, Waroo has been home to the Smith family. In 2018, Cyrus Smith and his partner, April, began a loving restoration of the homestead, honouring its original character while gently layering in modern comforts. Their work is less about reinvention and more about continuation—preserving a way of Australian country living that feels both nostalgic and quietly luxurious. In 2026, a new purpose-built wedding venue, sitting beside the original homestead and sharing those same cinematic river views, will open its doors to couples ready to write their own chapters into Waroo's story.

### **A First Impression of Awe and Stillness**

The moment you arrive at Waroo, the landscape does the talking. The view stretches across the Murrumbidgee and the surrounding hills in a way that makes time slow down. It's the kind of outlook that invites you to exhale without realising you've been holding your breath.

Cyrus and April hope couples feel two things as they step out onto the grounds for the first time: awe and tranquillity. There is a quietness here—not empty, but full. Of history, of memories, of possibility. Waroo encourages people to soften their shoulders, open their hearts, and allow the celebration to unfold at a gentler, more intentional pace. If they had to describe the property in a handful of words, they would choose: authentic, captivating, breathtaking views.

### **Heritage, Preserved with Heart**

Inside the homestead, the past has been carefully protected. Fourteen-foot ceilings run throughout, with the lounge and dining rooms still crowned in rare horsehair ceilings—an extraordinary detail from another era. In the kitchen, the original wood-fired stove remains in place as a quiet tribute to generations who cooked and gathered there, even though it is no longer in use.

All five original fireplaces are still part of the home; two continue to be used, adding warmth to winter evenings. During the renovation, the original floorboards were uncovered and painstakingly restored. Today, the lounge and dining areas showcase beautiful spotted gum underfoot, glowing softly in the light that pours in from the verandas.

For Cyrus and April, these elements are not decorative—they are essential.

Preserving Warroo's heritage is about giving guests a genuine sense of place. Every ceiling, floorboard, and brick carries a story. The homestead and the original venue structures are built from bricks handmade on the property itself. And at the base of the land, near the river's edge, lies a fossil belt from what was once an inland sea, dating back to the Devonian period some 420–360 million years ago. Embedded in that strip are plant fossils, sea shells, and trilobites—a deep-time reminder that Warroo is part of a much larger story.

Family stories are woven in too. Cyrus's sister was married here, celebrating her reception on the grounds long before the new venue was envisioned. It makes sense that Warroo is now opening its doors more widely to couples; the property has always quietly held love.

### **Spaces That Hold a Celebration**

Warroo is a venue made up of moments, not just rooms. For ceremonies and photography, the Murrumbidgee River and surrounding hills create a natural amphitheatre of light and colour. Couples can choose from multiple vantage points: the vista from the new reception space, the shade of the expansive gumtree, or the dramatic line of the pool looking out over the valley.

The wide, undercover house veranda offers an elevated viewpoint—perfect for golden-hour portraits or relaxed drinks as the sky shifts through pink and amber. Inside, the character-filled interiors of the homestead lend depth and warmth to photographs, with heritage textures and glimpses of the view framed in the background.

Beyond the main house, the wool shed and the homestead façade, viewed from the front lawn, become striking backdrops that echo Warroo's agricultural roots. The result is a venue where every turn reveals a new frame—each one as “wow” as the last, but in a way that feels organic rather than staged.

Warroo is especially well suited to couples seeking an intimate, romantic, and classic wedding in a private rural setting. It's a place for those who value authenticity, story, and a strong sense of atmosphere over spectacle.

### **Behind the Scenes: Restoration and Care**

What couples don't always see is the years of quiet work that have gone into making Warroo what it is today.

Cyrus and April have lovingly restored and reimaged one of the original outbuildings, once used as a ceramic studio and additional accommodation, into the new venue space. Designed with expansive windows that frame the river and hills, the venue sits in conversation with the landscape rather than competing with it. Inside, historic character is layered with contemporary comfort, creating a space that feels both refined and deeply grounded. Throughout the process, they have been meticulous about honouring the fabric of the original buildings. This is not a shiny new venue dropped into the countryside; it is a continuation of the homestead's story, carefully adapted for modern celebrations.

To ensure every wedding feels seamlessly held, Cyrus and April have partnered with Carissa Webster of Hostess with the Mostest. Together, they combine Carissa's expertise in intentional, editorial-style hosting with Warroo's heritage and hospitality, creating an experience where every detail—from logistics to tablescapes—feels considered.

### Light, Time, and the Magic Hour

Guests often speak about the light at Warroo as if it's a character in its own right. Throughout the day, the property shifts with the sun, but it is at sunset that Warroo becomes unforgettable. Watching the sun drop over the river and hills, colours washing across the sky and landscape, is an experience couples and guests carry with them long after the weekend ends.

One guest, Karen, captured it perfectly in a review from March 2025: "We kept pinching ourselves when we sat on the back veranda and looked out over the pool to the rolling hills, our own little piece of paradise for a very enjoyable long weekend."

It's that "little piece of paradise" feeling that Cyrus and April love witnessing on a wedding day, the moment when guests spill onto the veranda or gather near the pool and collectively realise just how special this place is.

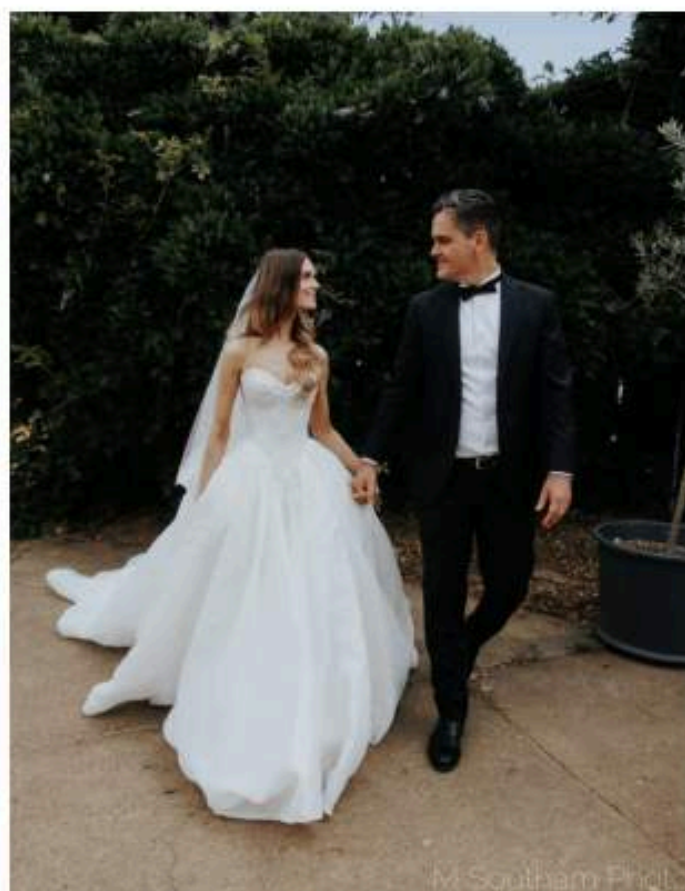
### Values at the Heart of Warroo

At its core, Warroo Homestead is built on a few simple but powerful values:

- Authenticity – preserving the character and history of the homestead so guests experience something real, not recreated.
- Warm country hospitality – making every guest feel genuinely welcome, cared for, and at ease.
- Respect & collaboration – working closely with couples and trusted partners to bring each vision to life with integrity.
- Trust – ensuring that from the first enquiry to the final farewell, couples feel held, supported, and understood.

These values don't just live in brochures—they show up in the reviews. Warroo has never received less than a five-star rating in any of the six guest categories, with over 50 five-star reviews to date.

In 2025, Cyrus and April became eligible for the Australian Host of the Year award through Airbnb, and Warroo was a finalist in the Yass Valley Business Chamber Awards. Guests consistently comment that photographs cannot do the property justice; its tranquillity and sense of peace can only truly be felt in person.



### Where Love Lives

For Cyrus, Warroo is not just a venue—it's home. It's where he grew up, where his family memories live, and now, where new stories are constantly unfolding. Sharing that with couples is more than a business decision; it's a privilege.

Every wedding adds another layer of joy to the homestead. Laughter on the veranda, vows carried on the wind, music drifting across the hills—each celebration becomes part of the landscape, part of the home.

Warroo Homestead is for couples who want their wedding to feel less like a production and more like a profoundly beautiful weekend at a place that feels like it has always known love. A place where heritage, landscape, and hospitality meet.

### Enquire, Visit, or Book

Couples can enquire, arrange a viewing, or book a site tour directly with the venue or via the wedding coordinator:

**Warroo Homestead**  
April McFadden · 0427 906 546

**Hostess With The Mostest**  
Carissa Webster · 0414 119 5202



## Sanctuary: A Place That Holds People

*Tucked quietly into Narrabundah, Sanctuary is not simply a venue. It is a space with memory.*

Long before its doors reopened as a gathering place, the building stood as St Aidan's Uniting Church — a home for prayer, shared meals, celebration and care. When Lauren first encountered it, she didn't see an empty hall. She felt something waiting. Not a business opportunity, but a calling.

*"I felt drawn to it," she explains. "As if the space was waiting to be noticed again."*

Rather than transforming the church into a conventional events venue, Lauren approached the restoration as an act of listening. The intention was never to erase its history, but to honour it — to gently turn the lights back on and allow the building to continue doing what it had always done: gather people.

The result is Sanctuary — a lovingly restored heritage church that now hosts weddings, workshops, memorials and community gatherings. It's a living example of placemaking: a space shaped not just by design, but by meaning.

For Lauren, the connection is deeply personal. Growing up within the Uniting Church community, her earliest memories are of long conversations, shared meals and being held by people who cared for one another. Preserving that feeling became central to the restoration.

*"This building carries decades of joy, grief, prayer and connection," she says. "I felt a responsibility to respect that legacy."*

And the moment guests step inside, they feel it.

More than elegance or styling, Lauren hopes visitors experience a quiet exhale — a sense of ease. Sanctuary is intentionally gentle. It doesn't demand performance or impressiveness. Instead, it welcomes people exactly as they are.

The physical space plays a powerful role. Natural light filters through the room, timber floors ground the atmosphere, and the open layout allows people to gather without crowding. Neutral tones and minimal design were chosen deliberately, creating a canvas that adapts to each story rather than overpowering it. This is what makes Sanctuary particularly special for weddings.

Rather than spectacle, the venue supports intimacy. Couples are able to focus on meaning — their commitment, their people, and the emotion of the moment. There is room for stillness, laughter and authenticity. One couple described the experience simply: the space held them.

Lauren's journey into managing Sanctuary feels like the natural meeting point of everything she has done before. With more than twenty years in hospitality and events — and later her own event business — her work gradually shifted toward creating spaces of care and connection, particularly for women and community groups.

Now she walks alongside each couple or host with curiosity rather than direction. Conversations come first: their story, their hopes, and what they want people to feel. From there, she offers guidance and support, allowing each gathering to remain personal.

Among the many events hosted, one stands out deeply: her grandparents-in-law's 70th wedding anniversary. Seeing generations of her Filipino family fill the space with laughter, food and celebration brought the vision full circle.

"Sanctuary isn't just for other people's milestones," she reflects. "It's a place I can share with those I love." Community remains at the heart of everything the venue does. Sanctuary intentionally welcomes local creatives, facilitators and gatherings, and a portion of hire fees supports women's empowerment initiatives through the At Her Table community.

For Lauren, hospitality is not about perfection — it's about presence.

*"People remember how they felt far more than how something looked."*

Her hope for the future is simple: that Sanctuary continues to be known as a place of warmth and care — somewhere meaningful moments are marked, stories are shared, and people feel they belong.





## The Heart of the Wedding: Why the Ceremony Matters More Than You Think

*Featuring Celebrant Pat Coelho*

For many couples, wedding planning begins with colours, flowers and seating charts. The reception playlist is perfected. The menus are debated. The styling boards are saved. And yet, the only moment that actually changes your life is the ceremony. According to celebrant Pat Coelho, this is the part couples most often misunderstand.

"Couples pour enormous energy into the reception," she explains, "but the ceremony is the only part of the day that legally and emotionally transforms them. It isn't just the start of the wedding — it's the heart of it." A meaningful ceremony, she says, comes down to one word: intention.

### **Not a Performance — a Moment**

The ceremonies guests remember are never the most elaborate. They're the most real. A meaningful ceremony reflects the couple's story — their humour, their challenges, their values, and the life they've built together. It feels less like a production and more like an exchange: between two people, and between those people and the community who supported their relationship. "When guests feel they've witnessed something authentic rather than rehearsed, that's when a ceremony becomes unforgettable."

Many couples worry about length, structure or tradition. Pat gently challenges that thinking. "Forget what a ceremony is 'supposed' to be. Forget the readings you think you need to include. Make it yours. Think about weddings you've clearly loved — and ones you didn't — and build from there."

### Personal Without Being Performative

Modern couples want their ceremony to feel personal, but they often fear it becoming theatrical or awkward.

The answer isn't adding more rituals. It's specificity.

A simple story about how they met.

A quiet acknowledgement of a shared challenge.

A natural private joke that everyone recognises.

Even a moment of stillness before vows.

"Depth matters more than volume," Pat says.

"When the words actually sound like the couple — not something copied from Pinterest — the ceremony never feels performative."

She often encourages couples to include a playful line during the "I do" portion: something that gently captures a habit or quirk their friends already know about.

The result is immediate connection. Guests laugh, relax and feel included — and the ceremony suddenly feels alive.

### The Truth About Vows

Almost everyone is nervous about writing vows.

Pat sees it constantly — confident people suddenly paralysed by a blank page.

Her advice is surprisingly simple:

"Don't start with the promises. Start with the person."

Why them?

When did you know?

What changed in your life because of them?

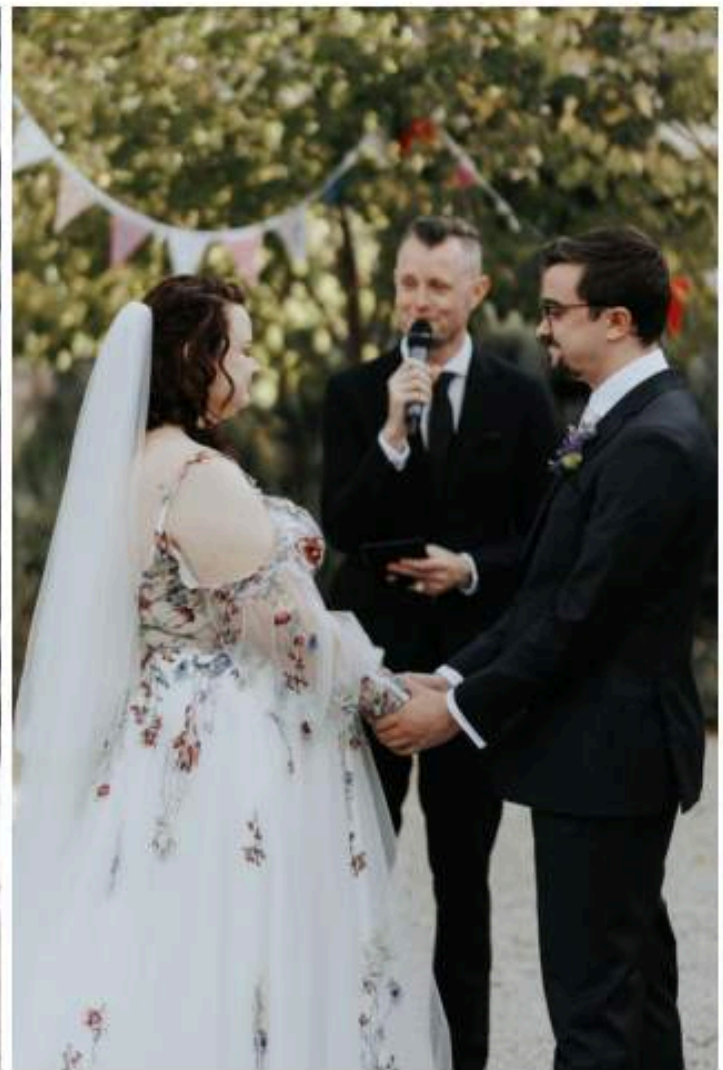
Write in dot points first, without structure or pressure. The promises will naturally appear from gratitude.

"Vows are not a public speaking competition," she says. "They're a declaration of forever to your soulmate."

What makes vows memorable is never poetic language or elaborate metaphors — it's detail. "I promise to always support you" is beautiful.

"I promise to support your wild business ideas, even when they start at 2am" is unforgettable. The most powerful vows are the ones where guests quietly think, that is so them.





### **Emotion Is Not a Mistake**

Many couples worry about crying.  
They shouldn't.

"No guest has ever thought less of someone for tearing up during vows. Those are the moments people remember most."

Pat advises couples to look only at each other and speak to their partner, not the audience. When they do, the crowd disappears.

"Tears aren't losing control. They're love showing up."

### **The Celebrant's Invisible Role**

A good celebrant does more than deliver words. They hold emotional space.

Through tone, timing and presence, they set the pace of the day — often long before the ceremony begins. Calm energy spreads. Warmth spreads. Confidence spreads.

"When couples feel prepared and supported, they walk into the ceremony feeling safe. My goal is for guests to wonder if I'm a lifelong friend they asked to become officiated just to marry them." Even tiny details matter.

A pause after the aisle walk.  
Music chosen intentionally.  
Standing closer together.  
Holding hands.  
Small shifts create emotional intimacy.

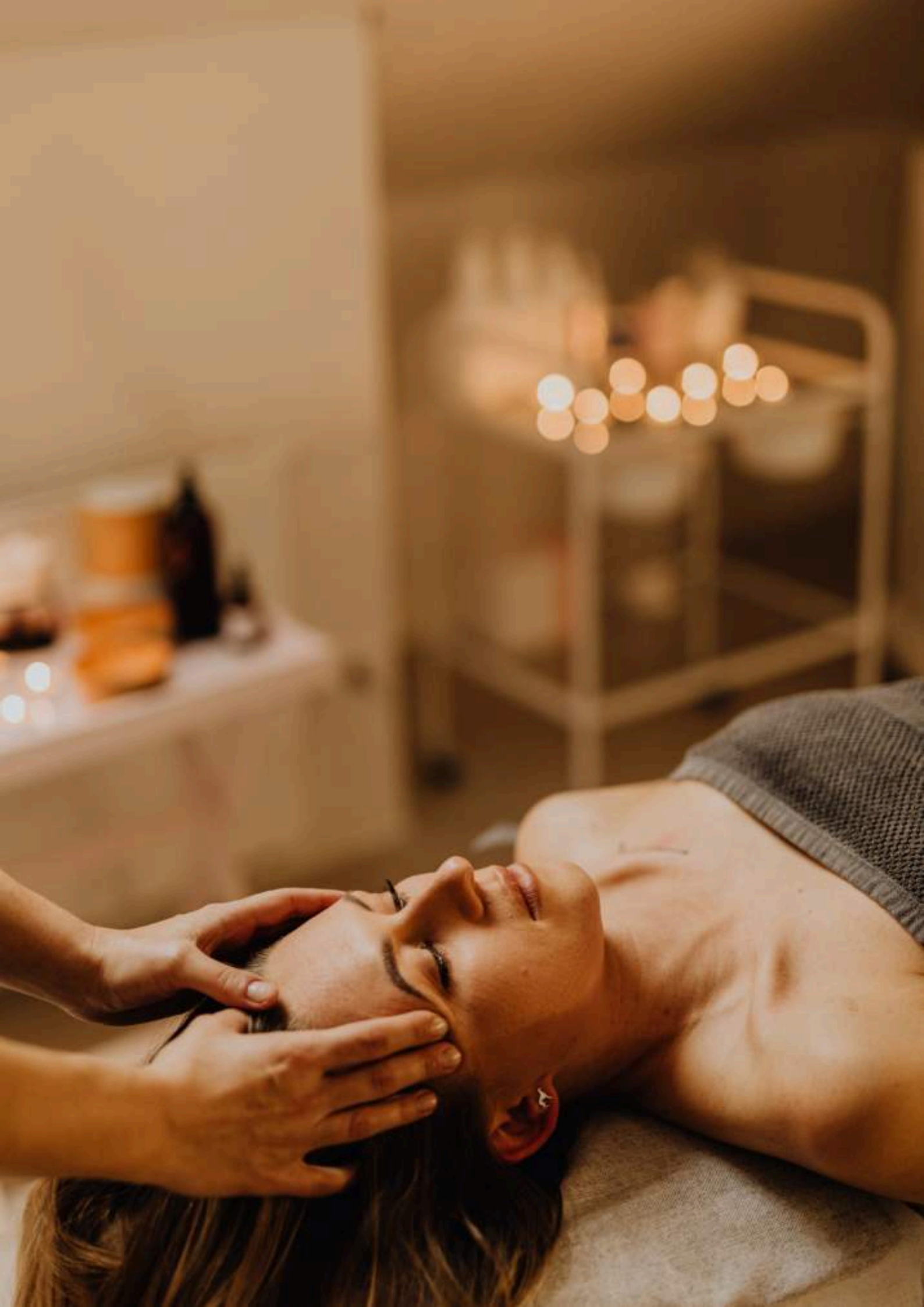
### **The Moment to Remember**

The ceremony will feel like it passes in seconds. Pat gives couples one piece of advice: "Slow down. Take a mental snapshot. Look at the faces in front of you. Feel your partner's hands. This is the moment everything changes."

The reception may be the celebration. But the ceremony is the reason for the party.

# WELLNESS

Wellness, in all its forms, is an act of presence — a return to balance in a world that moves too fast. In this section, we explore the rituals, spaces, and stories that remind us to slow down, to breathe, and to nurture what grounds us. It's about living with intention, honouring rest as much as ambition, and finding beauty in the quiet moments that restore.





## A Soft Place to Land

*Replenishing retreats for the woman who's been holding it all together — and is finally ready to let go.*

For the woman who's been holding it all together—and is finally ready to let go.

There's a quiet kind of tired that settles in over time. It doesn't announce itself loudly. It creeps in between school pickups and unread emails, between calendar reminders and "I'm fine" texts. It's the kind of tired that has nothing to do with sleep—and everything to do with the slow forgetting of yourself.

If this feels familiar, you're not alone. And more importantly—you're not too far gone to come back to yourself.

Somewhere between the weight you carry and the roles you fill, you may have started imagining it. A weekend where nothing is required of you.

Where food appears without you lifting a finger.  
Where the only decision is: tea or wine? Beach walk or massage?

### **Not Just a Retreat—a Reset**

Welcome to Replenishing Retreats, soul-soothing escapes for women who do it all—and are ready to feel something again.

Curated by award-winning planner and creative visionary Carissa Webster, each retreat blends luxury, depth, play, and pause. Warm, elegant spaces where everything is taken care of—not just the logistics, but you.

This isn't a detox or bootcamp. No pushing your body or denying joy. It's wholesome meals made with love, laughter over dessert, soulful workshops that awaken you, soft pillows after days of movement and magic.

Where girls' weekend energy meets intentional rest.  
Where you laugh until you cry... and cry without explanation.

### What You'll Find Here

- Mornings that start with movement or stillness  
—your choice
- Creative workshops that invite play
- Sessions with experts in wellness, nutrition, self-worth, style
- Wine at sunset, dessert after dinner, permission to enjoy
- Breathwork, journaling, nervous system support
- A final gala celebrating your reclaimed glow

All delivered with care, wrapped in calm, designed to make you feel safe, seen, softly whole.

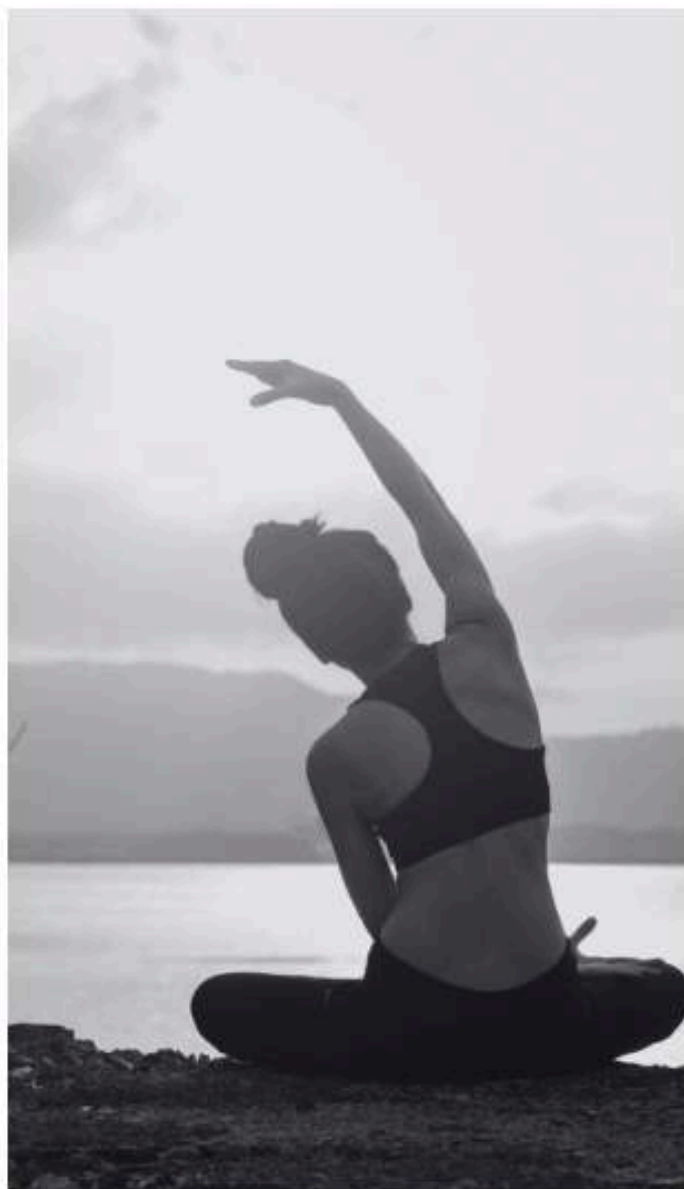
### For the Woman Ready to Remember

These retreats are small, intimate—true rest needs no crowd. Every woman here seeks something deeper. Solo or with a friend, you'll find belonging that lingers.

When you return home, it won't be the same life.

It'll be the same life, with a new you in it. Clearer. Lighter. Joy-connected.

This isn't escape from your life.  
It's gentle return to it.  
And maybe.. to yourself.





## **Billabong Retreats 2026**

*Where stillness restores the soul*

There are places that ask you to slow down. Places that hold space for you to breathe. Places that feel like an invitation—not an itinerary.

Billabong Retreats is one of those places.

Nestled gently into water, earth, and sky, it feels like it has always belonged. A refuge for those tired of rushing, overthinking, performing. Where time pauses long enough to hear your own thoughts, heartbeat, breath.

Here, life moves to a different rhythm.

### **A Sanctuary for the Senses**

Arriving at Billabong feels like exhaling for the first time in months. The environment itself heals:

Sunlight shimmering on water.

Grass whispering in soft wind.

The profound stillness only nature provides.

Not loud beauty—the quiet kind that seeps into your bones. The air feels lighter. Easier. By the time your feet touch the earth, modern tension begins to melt away.

### **Designed for Reconnection**

Billabong was created with intention—a space to peel back daily layers of noise, schedules, pressure, and simply be.

Whether through meditation, breathwork circles, or barefoot walks by the water, the focus remains: reconnection. Not for productivity or achievement, but for restoration.

Here, you're not repairing yourself. You're remembering you were always whole.

### **A Rhythm of Rest, Movement, Nourishment**

Billabong flows effortlessly—not forced, not jam-packed, but naturally unfolding.

Mornings offer soft movement: sunrise yoga, slow walks along the water.

Afternoons invite reflection, journaling, tea, or nothingness.

Evenings bring community—fireside conversations, shared meals, laughter spilling into night.

Every moment is optional. Every moment is enough.

### **Food That Feeds the Soul**

Meals at Billabong are experiences—fresh, intentional, lovingly prepared.

Colourful bowls of seasonal produce. Teas that warm your chest. Flavours both familiar and restorative.

No rush to eat. No guilt over treats. Here, food is medicine—slowly savoured, deeply felt.

### **Community, Stillness, Shared Silence**

Some arrive seeking others. Some seek solitude. Both are welcomed.

A perfect balance exists between togetherness and space—a shared understanding that everyone walks their own path, but needn't walk alone.

Group meditation, breathwork, gentle movement. Equally vital: the silences between. The pauses. The freedom to simply exist.

### **Why It Feels Like More**

Retreats can feel like fleeting resets before 'real life' returns. Billabong feels like home—not familiarity, but belonging to yourself again.

Guests leave speaking of clarity, presence, groundedness rediscovered. Golden-hour water. Pre-dawn quiet. Dormant parts of themselves awakened.

It's not just a getaway. It's recalibration.

### **A Turning Point**

What makes Billabong extraordinary isn't just the breathtaking setting—it's how it holds you. It demands nothing. Pushes no performance. Simply welcomes.

Here, you don't have to be anything. You are enough.

And sometimes, that's the most radical gift of all.



# In Rhythm: Training with the Female Body, Not Against It

*Body By Ashy*

In an industry built on extremes — extreme discipline, extreme restriction, extreme transformation — Ashy is quietly reshaping what strength looks like for women. A certified personal trainer and nutrition coach specialising in sustainable body transformations, her philosophy is simple yet radical: the female body was never designed to operate like a male one. And until women begin working with their hormones instead of against them, true transformation will always feel out of reach.

Her approach is not about punishing workouts or weighing every gram of food. It's about alignment. Hormones. Nervous system intelligence. And learning to build a body — and a life — that feels supportive rather than restrictive. It's a method born not just from education, but from lived experience.

## **A Personal Transformation**

Before becoming a coach, Ashy was a woman navigating the same frustrations many of her clients now bring to her.

From her early teens through her twenties, she cycled through every popular fitness solution of the moment — fad diets, shake programs, rigid coaching styles, extreme restriction. Each attempt brought short-term results, followed by the inevitable return to square one.

"I would lose a few kilos, only to gain more back," she reflects. "Each cycle left me more exhausted and more disconnected from my body."

Eventually, she stepped away from the noise of the industry entirely. Instead of chasing another quick fix, she turned inward, educating herself on female physiology, hormonal health, and how women are actually designed to function. What she discovered was cycle syncing — aligning training, nutrition, and lifestyle with the natural hormonal rhythms of the female body.

Using herself as the case study, she began applying what she learned. Over time, the results were not just visible but sustainable. More than 22 kilograms of fat loss. Improved health. A regulated nervous system. And for the first time, results that lasted without burnout or obsession.

Eight years ago, she built her business to help other women experience the same shift.

Today, she works with clients across the world — many navigating postpartum recovery, high-stress careers, or the mental load of modern life — guiding them back into trust with their bodies.



## Redefining Strength

For Ashy, the turning point came when training stopped being about aesthetics and became something deeper.

"No matter how much you transform your body, it doesn't automatically create confidence or self-worth," she says. "You can change your physique dramatically and still feel disconnected if your internal relationship with yourself isn't cared for." Strength, in her world, is layered.

Physical strength is capacity — the ability to move through life with resilience and recover well. Mental strength is clarity under pressure — making aligned decisions rather than reactive ones.

Emotional strength is safety — the ability to feel and regulate without self-punishment.

"True strength isn't rigid," she explains. "It's responsive. When all three are developed together, strength becomes something you live inside of, not just something you perform." Her own relationship with her body has shifted from control to trust. What was once a space of frustration and self-criticism has softened into something far more supportive.

"Confidence stopped coming from how my body looked and started coming from how safe and capable I felt inside it."

### Where the Industry Gets It Wrong

At the core of her philosophy is a critique of the traditional fitness model — one that she believes has fundamentally misunderstood female health. Most training and nutrition programs, she explains, are built around male physiology. A 24-hour hormonal rhythm. Predictable daily energy patterns. Linear progression.

Women, by contrast, operate on a roughly 28-day cycle, with continual hormonal shifts influencing energy, recovery, appetite, strength, and stress tolerance.

"When those shifts are ignored," she says, "women are framed as inconsistent or undisciplined rather than biologically different."

The result is a culture of burnout. Hormonal disruption. And a growing disconnect between women and their bodies.

Until female physiology becomes the blueprint rather than the afterthought, she believes the industry will continue solving the wrong problem.

## Training with Nervous System Intelligence

Ashy's coaching goes far beyond sets and reps. Every program begins with listening — not just to goals, but to the body itself. Hormonal disruption, chronic fatigue, stubborn plateaus, recurring cravings — none of these are random. They're signals.

She assesses stress levels, sleep patterns, life load, and emotional capacity alongside training history. For a new mother, a corporate executive, or someone navigating burnout, the same program would be not only ineffective but potentially harmful.

"The goal is never to add stress," she says. "It's to build capacity."

Central to this is nervous system regulation. A body living in chronic fight-or-flight cannot prioritise fat loss, muscle growth, or hormonal balance. Without adequate recovery, sleep, and stress management, even the most disciplined training plan will stall. Breathwork, recovery, and intentional rest are not optional extras in her method — they are foundational.

"Training is the stimulus," she explains. "Recovery is what allows the body to respond."



### **Consistency Without Punishment**

One of the most powerful shifts her clients experience is redefining discipline. In a culture that often equates discipline with restriction and intensity, Ashy frames it differently: consistency without punishment.

"Discipline, when done well, is an act of love," she says. "It's choosing behaviours that support the body over time, even when motivation fluctuates."

Self-compassion doesn't mean lowering standards. It means removing shame from the process. When discipline is driven by self-respect rather than self-criticism, progress becomes sustainable.

For many clients, the biggest transformation isn't aesthetic — it's internal. Energy stabilises. Sleep improves. Confidence grows. The relationship with food softens. And for the first time, they feel at home in their bodies.

### **A New Way Forward**

In a world saturated with quick fixes and before-and-after promises, Ashy's work offers something quieter and far more lasting.

A return to rhythm.  
To listening rather than overriding.  
To strength that feels supportive rather than punishing.

"The female body isn't something to control," she says. "It's something to collaborate with." For the women she works with — whether postpartum, overwhelmed, or simply ready to feel good in their skin — that collaboration becomes the foundation for real, lasting change.

Because transformation, when built in alignment with the body, doesn't just change how you look. It changes how you live.

### **Connect with Ashy**

Instagram & Facebook: @bodybyashy  
Website: [ashywise.kartra.com/page/BBAHome](https://ashywise.kartra.com/page/BBAHome)  
For coaching, education, and hormone-informed training programs available worldwide.



# HER smile

## “Confidence Is an Energy: How Image, Presence & Self-Trust Shape the Way We Show Up”

*Her Smile by Adele Haussmann*

“Confidence Is an Energy: How Image, Presence & Self-Trust Shape the Way We Show Up”

Some women teach style. Others teach confidence. Adele Haussmann — founder of Her Smile — sits at the rare intersection of both, where elegance becomes more than an aesthetic and self-belief becomes a practiced way of moving through the world.

Her story is layered: a childhood model, a professional dancer with the Rhodesian National Ballet, the owner of a ballet school for 23 years, a competitive body sculptor who represented Australia on the world stage, and a makeup artist and skincare expert with international recognition. But what ties every chapter together is not performance — it's presence.

Because in Adele's world, confidence isn't something you're born with. It's something you build. And image — done well — is never shallow. It's language. It's energy. It's self-trust made visible.

### **The Woman Behind Her Smile**

Adele's life has long revolved around one mission: helping women step fully into who they are.

“My foundation was built on movement and discipline,” she shares. “From the stage to the stadium, I saw the same truth again and again — when a woman feels confident in her body, her appearance, and her presence, her entire life shifts.”

That belief was shaped by decades of lived work. As a dancer, she learned the psychology of posture and poise. As a body sculptor, she understood the power of physical commitment. As a makeup artist and skincare expert — awarded Student of the Year by the International Health and Beauty Council — she witnessed how small external refinements could unlock something deeper internally.

Her Smile became the natural evolution of all of it: a place where internal strength and external style meet, and where women are taught not just how to look confident — but how to become it.

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## Confidence Is Embodied

When asked whether there was a single moment, she realised confidence could be learned, Adele doesn't describe one dramatic turning point. Instead, she points to a pattern she observed for years.



"I watched women who described themselves as shy or invisible undergo a radical internal shift through simple external changes," she says. "When they stood taller, wore colours that illuminated them, and presented themselves with intention — their psychology changed."

It's the core of her philosophy: the body and mind operate in a feedback loop. Change how you carry yourself physically and your mind has no choice but to meet you there.

At Her Smile, confidence is treated as a skill — built through repeated, aligned action until it stops being something you're trying to do and becomes simply who you are.

## Image, Reimagined

Adele's definition of image moves far beyond clothes. "To me, image is communication without words," she explains. "Long before you speak, your image has already told a story — about whether you trust yourself, whether you value your contribution, and whether you're ready to be seen."

True image, she believes, is not the fabric — it's the integration of posture, grooming, movement, and authenticity. It's the quiet message your presence sends before introductions.

And ultimately, it's not about impressing others. "Image is an act of self-respect," she says. "When you show up with that level of care, you're not just wearing an outfit — you're wearing your self-belief."

## Why Her Smile Exists

Her Smile wasn't created from a trend — it was born from necessity.

Adele describes what she calls her "ten dark years": living on a different continent, raising two small children, feeling far from her country of birth and deeply alienated. She carried the emotional load quietly, pushing through, "putting on a brave face" — until she reached a breaking point.

That moment sparked a search for something she couldn't find real, structured support for women moving through internal transformation. So, she built it.

Her Smile offers a clear pathway — including her signature 6 Essential Steps to Empowerment — designed to help women stop shrinking, stop second-guessing, and start showing up as unmistakably themselves.

Now, at 63, Adele is living proof of her message: Self-care isn't indulgence. It's power.

### **Capable Women, Quiet Doubt**

Adele works with women who look confident on paper — high-achieving, competent, admired — yet privately struggle with self-belief.

Why? Because many women don't see themselves as worthy of investment.

Raised to accommodate, to be humble, to nurture and perform for others, women often lose connection to their own identity. Self-prioritisation gets framed as selfishness. Visibility becomes uncomfortable. Confidence becomes something you're "meant" to have, without being shown how to build it.

"In reality," Adele says, "confidence returns the moment a woman gives herself permission to prioritise her needs. Confidence is built the moment she decides she is worth the effort it takes to be seen."

### **Style as Nervous System Safety**

Adele's work is surprisingly physiological. When you feel prepared and polished, she explains, your nervous system receives a signal: safe. You're not scrambling. You're not second-guessing. You're not shrinking.

Her mantra captures it simply: "You are what you Do, Think, Eat, and Wear." When those pillars align, clarity replaces overthinking. Presence replaces performance. And authority feels natural, not forced.

### **The Myth of "Superficial" Image Consulting**

The most common misconception Adele hears is that image consulting is frivolous — reserved for celebrities, red carpets, and luxury lifestyles. But the transformation, she argues, is psychological.

"We aren't just choosing outfits. We are intentionally choosing identity."

A curated image becomes a kind of armour — not to hide behind, but to support you as you step into rooms you once felt unsure in: boardrooms, events, first dates, new seasons of life.

"When you're dressed in your self-belief," she says, "you aren't just looking good — you're equipped."

### **Confidence Has a Frequency**

Ask Adele how confidence shows up energetically, and she doesn't talk about volume or dominance. She talks about stillness. When a woman trusts herself, she enters a room and shifts the energy without forcing attention.

There's a steadiness in her movement. A softness in her expression. A certainty in her pace. "The most telling sign," Adele says, "is that she isn't rushing to prove herself."

It's quiet authority — magnetic because it comes from internal completion rather than external validation.

### **Dressing With Intention**

Adele begins with a concept that lands instantly: most closets are filled with the ghosts of who we used to be.

Outdated versions. Past identities. Old roles. "If you're wearing clothes that represent a past version of yourself," she says, "you will feel anchored to the past."

Her advice is simple and powerful: Dress for the woman you are now — and the woman you're becoming. Because clothing, when aligned, becomes support. Grounding. Direction. Future.



### **the Confidence Outfit (No Trends Required)**

Regardless of style or season, Adele believes every confidence outfit shares a few fundamentals:

- **Comfort + quality** (so your nervous system can relax)
- **Perfect fit** (non-negotiable; it honours your body now)
- **Colour alignment** (tones that illuminate, not wash you out)
- **Appropriateness** (your outfit matches the room and the task)
- **The "fabulous factor"** (it makes you feel unmistakably you)

"Trends fade," she says. "Personal presence never does."

### **Authenticity Over Performance**

The tension women feel around style often comes from trying to "play a role" that doesn't fit. So Adele starts with listening: the woman's lifestyle, personality, ambitions, and essence.

The goal is not to copy trends — it's to arrive at that moment in the mirror when she thinks:

"There I am."

"That's when the performance ends," Adele says, "and presence begins."

### **After Life Changes: Finding Yourself Again**

For women who feel disconnected from their style after motherhood, career pivots, grief, or aging, Adele offers a gentler truth:

#### **Breathe. Release urgency.**

Life changes reshape us physically and psychologically — and image must evolve because we evolve. She encourages curiosity over criticism: Who am I now? How do I want to be perceived in this chapter?

"When we accept where we are today," she says, "we stop grieving the past and start rebuilding with intention."

### **Hosting, Leadership & Being Seen**

Adele believes presentation influences leadership more than women realise.

When you're not distracted by self-doubt — or an outfit that doesn't match your spirit — you become fully available to host, lead, and connect.

"Presence becomes a gift," she says, "because it gives others permission to feel grounded too." Her top tip for event confidence is unglamorous but transformative: prepare. Not just your outfit — the logistics, timing, comfort, even whether you'll be standing or sitting.

Because ease isn't a personality trait. It's a byproduct of being ready.

And if you want presence without speaking?

- slow your movements
- lengthen your spine, relax your shoulders
- soften your face
- breathe like you belong

### **Everyday Confidence Rituals**

Adele's version of confidence isn't built in public. It's built in private moments of self-respect.

- move your body, even briefly
- groom with care
- monitor your inner narrative
- dress with intention — even at home

"Make yourself your first appointment of the day," she says. "When these become rituals, you're not just getting ready — you're practising self-belief."

### **Mirror Talk**

What does Adele want women to remember when they're standing in front of the mirror? Silence the negative narrative — and honour the woman who has carried you through every season.

The mirror shouldn't be a place of judgement," she says. "It should be where you prepare to show the world exactly who you are."

Because Her Smile isn't just a name. It's the result.

### **Connect with Her Smile**

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Email: [adele@hersmile.com.au](mailto:adele@hersmile.com.au)

Phone: 0422 572 133

Instagram: @\_\_\_hersmile

Facebook: [hersmiles](https://www.facebook.com/hersmiles)

LinkedIn: Adele Haussmann

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## **Skin Wellness Academy**

### *Bridal Skin & Real Wellness*

Some beauty journeys begin with lipstick or a love of spa days. This one began with acne, confusion and the feeling of not being understood.

For years, the founder of Skin Wellness Academy felt embarrassed and overwhelmed by her own skin. Harsh treatments, conflicting advice and products that never addressed the root cause left her feeling disconnected from her appearance and unsure who to trust. That private struggle became the foundation for everything she does now: making sure other women never have to feel that alone or lost in their skin again.

She began in the beauty industry, then went deeper, completing advanced dermal studies and a Bachelor degree to understand skin as it truly is: a living organ connected to gut health, hormones, breathing patterns, stress and overall wellbeing—not just something to be polished on the surface. With over 22 years of experience and thousands of skin journeys behind her, she created Skin Wellness Academy as a place where women feel supported, educated and genuinely cared for. The goal isn't a one-day glow, but skin that feels confident under makeup for life's big moments—and long after the photos are taken.

#### **A Calling Written on the Skin**

There was a moment when this work stopped being a career and became a calling: watching women arrive feeling disconnected from their skin and leave standing taller, softer in their own reflection. Skin is deeply personal. When someone heals their skin, they're often reclaiming confidence, presence and self-trust.

After more than two decades, she has seen it again and again—a client who once hid behind makeup walks in bare-faced, glowing, and at ease. It became clear this work changes lives, not just complexions.

#### **Where Bridal Skin Meets Nervous-System Care**

Weddings are emotionally charged milestones. At Skin Wellness Academy, the focus is on the journey leading up to the day as much as the day itself. Brides often arrive anxious, overwhelmed and worried about last-minute breakouts or sensitivity. In the treatment room, skin support becomes emotional support: a space to exhale, be held and feel prepared.

Rather than chasing trends or quick fixes, every woman moves through the Academy's signature Skin Transformation System: Restore, Repair, Rejuvenate, Maintain. Skin is always viewed through a clinical and holistic lens: how the gut is functioning, whether the liver detoxification pathways are supported, how hormones, stress, sleep and breathing patterns are impacting inflammation and repair. Even professional treatments are prescribed through this deeper understanding, so they're truly customised instead of generic.

Clients aren't "sold" treatments; they're guided through a personalised plan with education and integrity at the core. That's why bridal and milestone journeys work so well here—the results are steady, sustainable and rooted in long-term skin health.

### **The Real Bridal Concerns (And What Actually Works)**

Most brides arrive with a familiar list: inflammation, redness, hormonal breakouts, dehydration, dullness, pigmentation and uneven texture. Even women who usually have balanced skin can experience stress-related flare-ups in the lead-up to a wedding, and many simply want smoother texture so makeup applies flawlessly.

The biggest mistake? Doing too much, too late. Panic facials, over-exfoliating, trying new active products or jumping on TikTok trends in the final weeks can disrupt the skin barrier and spark irritation that shows up on the big day. Skin doesn't respond well to shock—it responds to calm, consistent care.

If there is one golden rule at Skin Wellness Academy, it's this: protect your skin barrier. Calm, hydrated skin is glowing skin. Consistency over intensity. Gentle, regular care will always outperform aggressive, last-minute fixes.

### **The Foundations Brides Often Underestimate**

When the conversation turns to "bridal glow," the focus usually goes straight to serums and facials. Here, the foundations are broader:

- Sleep quality and stress regulation
- A simple, consistent skincare routine that suits your skin
- Daily SPF
- Hydration at a cellular level—water plus minerals, nutrition and healthy fats
- Nervous-system regulation and healthy breathing patterns

Hydration is treated as more than just drinking extra water. Electrolytes, healthy fats, antioxidants and adequate protein all support repair and radiance. Rather than restrictive "shred" diets before the wedding, brides are encouraged to lean into colourful whole foods and nourishment, understanding that skin reflects deficiencies quickly.

Just as important as what to do is what to avoid in the lead-up: new active products, harsh scrubs, at-home peels, untested in-clinic treatments, excessive alcohol and viral skincare trends that have never met your face before.



## Top Five Pro Tips for Photo-Ready Skin

For skin that looks incredible in photos and under makeup, the Academy's top professional tips are surprisingly simple—and powerfully effective:

1. **Commit to a nourishing routine twice a day.** The right products, used consistently, will do more than any last-minute miracle treatment. A qualified skin specialist can prescribe what your skin truly needs instead of guessing.
2. **Calm inflammation first. Redness and irritation show immediately on camera.** Soothing, barrier-supportive products and treatments take priority over strong actives close to the wedding.
3. **Hydrate more, exfoliate less.** Plump, hydrated skin reflects light beautifully and holds makeup smoothly. Hydration masks several times a week—especially the night before—are preferred over harsh peels and scrubs.
4. **Support lymphatic drainage.** Gentle facial massage, cold therapy and professional lymphatic-focused treatments help reduce puffiness and enhance circulation, giving the skin a fresh, sculpted look.
5. **Guard your sleep in the final week.** Deep, consistent sleep reduces puffiness, supports repair and gives a rested luminosity no product can replace.

These habits create skin that looks as good as it feels—radiant in photos, comfortable under makeup and still healthy long after the makeup is removed.

## Stress, Sleep and the Skin You Wear

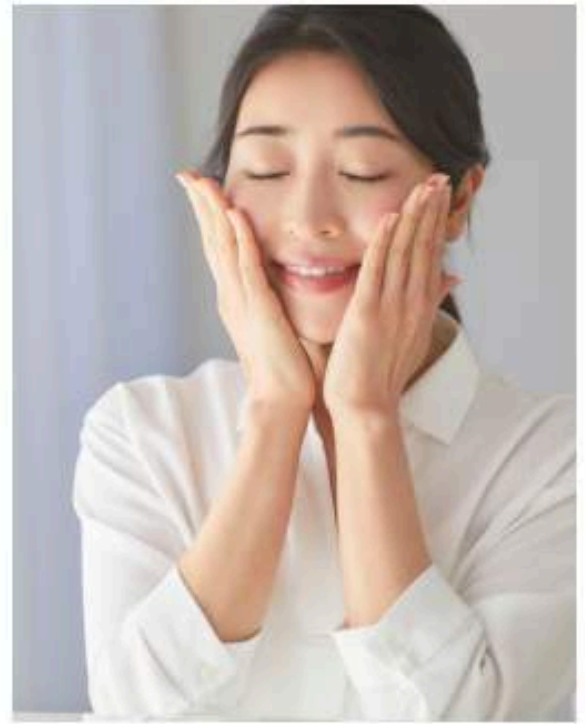
Stress and sleep deprivation don't just affect mood; they imprint themselves on the skin. Elevated cortisol increases inflammation, breakouts and dehydration. Lack of sleep dulls the complexion, exaggerates fine lines and amplifies puffiness around the eyes.

At Skin Wellness Academy, brides are encouraged to treat rest as part of their beauty regime. Evening wind-down rituals, breathwork, magnesium baths or supplements, reduced caffeine and staying loyal to familiar skincare all help the nervous system settle. Professional LED therapy is often used to quickly dial down inflammation and boost brightness.

A healthy skin barrier sits at the centre of all of this. When the barrier is intact, it holds hydration, resists irritation and creates that smooth, luminous finish every bride wants. When it's compromised, moisture escapes, irritants get in and redness, flakiness and sensitivity take over. No high-end foundation can truly hide a broken barrier. True glow comes from protecting and strengthening that shield first.

For stress-related breakouts, the first instruction is always: don't pick and don't attack. Instead of stripping the skin, the Academy focuses on calming it—using gentle enzyme exfoliation, hydrating masks, targeted LED and, where appropriate, in-clinic antibacterial and anti-inflammatory treatments like high-frequency therapy. The aim is to soothe, stabilise and guide the skin back into balance, not fight it into submission.





### **The Two-Week Countdown**

If a bride arrives exactly two weeks before her wedding, the strategy shifts from correction to protection and refinement.

In Week Two, the focus is on building hydration and calm:

- Hydration-focused medifacials with gentle enzyme exfoliation and LED light therapy
- At-home hydration masks at least twice
- A simple, barrier-supportive skincare routine
- Extra attention to water, electrolytes and quality sleep

In Week One, the goal is to protect and maintain:

- Pausing strong actives like retinols and intense acids
- Increasing hydration and prioritising rest
- Only light enzyme exfoliation if the skin is stable and non-reactive
- Calming, redness-reducing treatments only—no aggressive procedures

In the final 72 hours, the theme is “do less, but better.” Brides are encouraged to:

- Keep skincare minimal, familiar and hydrating
- Use a reliable hydration mask and gentle facial massage
- Opt for LED sessions and light movement such as walks to support circulation
- Focus on water, electrolytes, nourishing food and early nights

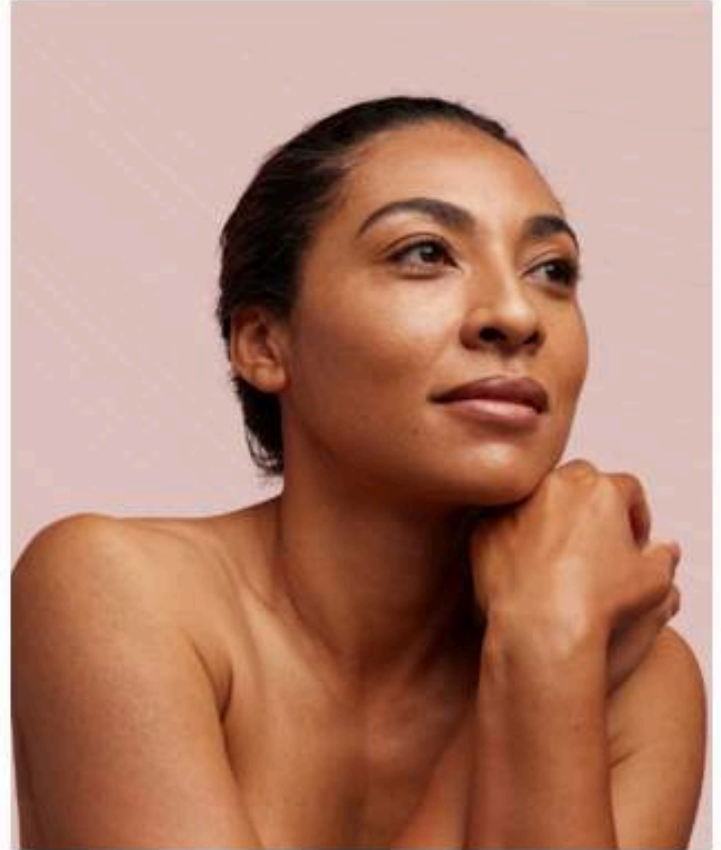
New products, waxing, harsh exfoliation, untested treatments, heavy alcohol and adventurous foods are firmly off the list. Consistency and rest create far better skin than last-minute experiments.

For calming redness or puffiness quickly, the go-to tools include cold therapy, lymphatic drainage, calming serums, deep nasal breathing and, when possible, LED. On the morning of the wedding, the ideal prep is simple: a hydrating mask that truly works for that bride's skin, followed by the familiar, trusted routine her skin already responds well to.

### A Different Kind of Skin Journey

Skin Wellness Academy is more than a clinic; it's a learning space. Every journey begins with understanding the skin instead of rushing it. Women are invited to step out of the cycle of panic buying and into a relationship with their skin that is informed, calm and deeply supportive.

Readers can connect with the Skin Wellness Academy via their website, [skinwellnessacademy.com](https://www.skinwellnessacademy.com), follow along on Instagram at [@skinwellnessacademy](https://www.instagram.com/skinwellnessacademy), or book a personalised skin strategy session either in the Canberra clinic or online. Skincare is shipped globally, and every new journey starts the same way: with a conversation about what your skin has been trying to say—and how to finally listen.





## The Seed Cycle

*Nourishing hormones, rebuilding trust with your body*

Some women arrive at hormonal health after a single diagnosis or a dramatic turning point. For Mel Kovacevic, founder of The Seed Cycle, it began with a sentence she kept hearing on repeat: "I'm doing all the right things, but I still don't feel like myself."

Day after day, she listened to women describe irregular cycles, PMS, acne, fertility challenges, burnout, and later the emotional and physical rollercoaster of peri- and menopause. What struck her wasn't a lack of effort or discipline; it was the pressure they carried, and the belief that their bodies were somehow failing them.

"Women didn't need another diet or more willpower," she realised. "They needed nourishment, rhythm, and a way to reconnect with what their bodies were already trying to say."

### **A Turning Point: From Fixing to Supporting**

For a long time, Mel's own relationship with her body mirrored the stories she was hearing. Internally, her narrative was harsh: that she was broken, deficient, that being a woman was a curse. Living from that place was exhausting.

The shift began with EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques). Through that work, she moved away from trying to restrict, suppress, or "fix" symptoms, and toward supporting her body instead. Seed cycling became part of that new approach.

"It stopped being about forcing balance," she explains, "and became about creating the conditions for balance to emerge."

That mindset shift—from control to collaboration—would eventually become the foundation of The Seed Cycle.

## Discovering Seed Cycling

Mel first encountered seed cycling through the work of Dr Jolene Brighten, who introduced it as a gentle, food-based way to support hormone metabolism. Later, she saw it mentioned almost in passing in Alisa Vitti's work. The idea was simple, but something about it landed deeply.

Seed cycling uses four specific seeds across the month to support hormone metabolism and balance. In the first half of the cycle, women eat specific amounts of ground flax and pumpkin seeds; in the second half, they swap to sunflower and sesame seeds. For women without a regular cycle, the phases are mapped to the moon instead.

"It's simple, nourishing, and designed to work with the body—not against it," Mel says.

When she began teaching seed cycling to women, something clicked. It felt less like a new trend, and more like a remembering—cyclical, practical, deeply respectful of the female body. "What stood out to me wasn't just the physical changes," she recalls. "It was a sense of steadiness. Better digestion, clearer skin, more consistent energy—but also a deeper trust in my body." As more women started sharing similar shifts, she knew this was something she had to offer more widely.

## Why It Resonates So Deeply

In a wellness world obsessed with extremes, seed cycling feels refreshingly soft.

"Seed cycling gives women permission to slow down, listen, and understand their cycles," Mel explains. It's not restrictive, intense, or complicated. It doesn't ask women to do more; it asks them to nourish.

At its core is a simple but radical truth: women are cyclical beings, not designed to operate the same way every day like men. Seed cycling honours that.

Most women who arrive at The Seed Cycle are dealing with irregular cycles, PMS, acne, PCOS, fertility struggles, or the shifting landscape of perimenopause and menopause. Increasingly, Mel also sees something less tangible but just as important: a loss of body literacy.

"So many women tell me they don't trust their bodies anymore," she says. "They feel like their signals are unreliable. Maybe that loss of literacy—of knowing how to read ourselves—is at the heart of hormonal imbalance."

## The First Shifts

The earliest changes women tend to notice aren't always the big, dramatic ones. More often, they're quiet and cumulative.

"The first shifts are usually digestion, skin, and energy," Mel shares. Less bloating. Clearer skin. A calmer nervous system. For many, these show up within the first month.

Hormonal shifts—the ones tied to cycle regularity, PMS symptoms, or perimenopausal fluctuations—tend to unfold over a longer window, around three months and beyond, as the body responds to consistent nourishment.

But perhaps the most meaningful shift is emotional.

"It builds a daily ritual of care," she says. "When women show up consistently for their bodies, even in this small way, trust begins to rebuild. Seed cycling can feel grounding. It reminds women that their rhythms are intelligent and worthy of respect."

## Seed Cycling

for balanced hormones





### Stories That Stay

Mel has now supported thousands of women through seed cycling and cyclical nourishment. Certain stories stay lodged in her heart. She thinks often of women navigating PCOS, fertility challenges, or persistent skin issues—women who have often tried everything, only to be left with trade-offs that create new problems instead of relief.

"I also think about teenagers just starting their hormone journeys, and women moving through menopause," she adds. "Those moments when someone realises their symptoms aren't just something they have to live with—those are incredibly powerful."

It's not about promising a perfect body, but returning choice, clarity, and hope to people who've been told to accept their discomfort as inevitable.

### Seeds of Sisterhood

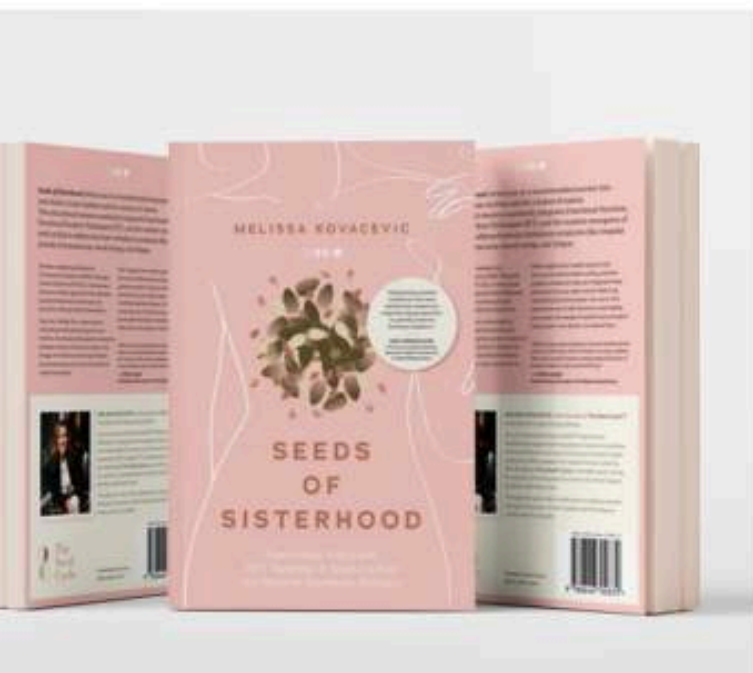
Mel's book, *Seeds of Sisterhood*, was born from a desire to bring women back into relationship with their bodies—and each other.

"I wanted to share practical tools—nutrition, EFT, seed cycling—but also a deeper message," she says. "Healing doesn't come from control; it comes from connection."

For Mel, sisterhood, community, and shared wisdom are just as important as any protocol. We were never meant to navigate hormonal health alone, in silent comparison or shame. Gathering around shared language and rituals is part of the medicine.

If she could rewrite the script for what girls learn early about their bodies, she would start with this: your cycle is not an inconvenience—it's information.

"Each phase has a purpose," she explains. "Understanding it can change how you eat, work, rest, and relate to yourself. We weren't taught this—but it's never too late to learn."



## Modern Life vs. Natural Rhythm

Why do so many women feel so far from their own rhythms?

"Modern life values consistency, productivity, and linear output," Mel says. "Those traits don't reflect female biology."

We live in systems designed for a 24-hour rhythm, yet most women's hormones move through a roughly 28-day cycle. The mismatch can leave women feeling like they're always "behind," always "too much" or "not enough"—when in reality, their bodies are simply moving through natural phases of expansion and retreat.

Seed cycling reintroduces rhythm in a tangible way. Measuring out seeds each day, shifting blends mid-cycle, mapping nourishment to the moon when periods go missing—these are gentle reminders that change is natural, and cycles are not a flaw. They're a feature.

To women who feel sceptical or overwhelmed by wellness advice, Mel's invitation is simple: "You don't need to do everything," she says. "Start with one simple, nourishing practice and notice how your body responds. Seed cycling isn't something you have to 'believe in' for it to help you—it's nourishment. Let your own experience be your guide."

## How the Work Changes the Woman

This work hasn't just changed Mel's clients—it's changed her.

"It's made me more patient and more compassionate with myself," she reflects. "I've learned to trust rest. I no longer see it as something to earn, but as a requirement for creativity, clarity, and health."

Through years of cyclical practice, she's developed real body literacy. She understands her own rhythms and patterns, which phases allow her to give more, and which ones ask her to pull back and listen.

"That awareness has changed how I mother, how I lead, and how I show up in my life," she says.

She's still in the thick of building The Seed Cycle as a business, but she holds a clear vision: "My hope is that one day I can look back and say I built something successful with the support of my family and community—and that I did it while honouring my cycle, not burning myself out in the process."

Building The Seed Cycle has taught her that business doesn't have to demand burnout to be "successful." As a human, it has shifted her from constantly doing into learning how to be. "Trusting my body, my timing, and myself—that's been the biggest transformation."

## A New Story for Hormonal Transitions

If there is one thing Mel hopes readers carry with them after encountering her work, it's this: "Menopause—and every hormonal transition—is not a problem to be fixed," she says. "It's a passage to be supported."

Your body is not broken. With nourishment, rhythm, and care, these phases can become seasons of strength, clarity, and deep wisdom. Seed by seed, cycle by cycle. The Seed Cycle invites women back into partnership with their bodies—away from punishment, and toward a quieter, steadier kind of power.





## Nervous System Regulation with Tegan Marron

*Co-Founder of Aligned Breath & Coaching*

### **The road to breathwork and nervous system healing**

I had always worked in the personal development space, but after a series of life-altering chapters - a marriage breakdown, navigating being a single mum, leaving an emotionally abusive relationship, and then meeting the love of my life only to have him diagnosed with stage four terminal liver cancer - my nervous system had quietly reached its limit.

I realised it had been stuck in survival mode for at least a decade, and that takes a toll on a person, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

I could feel my resilience thinning. Even as someone self aware and committed to growth, I always sensed something was missing. Personal development had helped my mindset, but what I didn't realise is it was my body still carrying everything.

When I attended my first breathwork training, I wasn't necessarily expecting much. I had never experienced one of those dramatic "breakthrough" moments people talk about. My growth had always been slow and subtle, but that session was different.

It felt like I had walked into a tornado inside my own body - intense, confronting and absolutely exhausting! And then, over the course of the week that followed, something shifted. I felt clear, calm, settled and empowered!

For the first time, it wasn't just my thoughts that shifted, it was a calmness in my body, my nervous system. That experience changed the trajectory of my life. I fell in love with the power of the breath, not as a concept, but as a physiological reset and I knew I wanted to help other people have their own incredible experiences.

### **Why we need to support our nervous system**

I had a lot of signs, nudges. I knew for a long time that something needed to give, but interestingly, my biggest turning point didn't happen at the beginning of my journey - it happened last year. After things in my life had somewhat stabilised, after I had built more safety within myself, everything from the past decade surfaced. It was as if my body finally felt safe enough to process what it had carried...and it unravelled me!

I went into extreme burnout. My mind and body went into complete shutdown, and it was probably one of the scariest experiences of my life.

There was guilt attached to it too - here I was teaching nervous system regulation while feeling like I was having a nervous breakdown myself, but that breakdown taught me something I couldn't have learned otherwise.

It taught me the true importance of caring for your nervous system, not just on a surface level where you can function day to day, but on a deeper level where life actually becomes enjoyable again. Where you feel like you can breathe for the first time.

### **The meaning of "Aligned Breath"**

Aligned Breath is about stepping into alignment with the truest version of yourself. It's about using your breath to return to the version of you that you actually want to be, not the stressed, reactive, running-on-empty version that modern life so easily creates.

Aligned Breath & Coaching is all about teaching people simple, practical tools fit into everyday life to help regulate their nervous system and mindset shifts that can help people live in alignment with their truest values.

### **How to tell when your nervous system is in survival mode**

I could honestly talk about this for hours, but let me keep it simple.

Your nervous system is basically the communication highway of your body. It's the network that carries signals between your brain and literally EVERYTHING else - your heart, your gut, your hormones, your immune system, every system relies on it.

We've always been taught that the brain controls everything, but the brain can't do much without the nervous system relaying the message. So, if the nervous system is overwhelmed or constantly switched on, the signals get all mixed up, and when the signals get mixed up, you feel off.

That "off" feeling can look like anxiety, poor sleep, digestive issues, hormone problems, brain fog, a racing heart, snapping at your kids, feeling constantly on edge, or on the flip side, feeling flat, depressed, numb, exhausted, disconnected. Most people don't realise that what they're experiencing might just be a nervous system stuck in survival mode.

If you're in fight or flight, you might feel wired, restless, forgetful and reactive. Everything feels urgent. You struggle to stop, you're quick to anger and you can't switch off.

If you're in freeze, it can look like burnout, low energy, brain fog, not caring about things you used to love. Just feeling "meh" about life. Neither of these things are wrong, it's just your nervous system doing what it was wired to do, keep you safe.

The issue is, these days we normalise it. We say, "That's just how I am," or "I must be anxious," or "I'm just bad at coping, but a lot of the time, it's not a personality issue, it's a nervous system that's been running too hard for too long.



## How chronic stress shows up in the body

A dysregulated nervous system doesn't just affect your mood, it affects your entire physiology. When the body is stuck in chronic stress, it affects the body's overall functioning.

Over time, this can show up as digestive issues like IBS, sleep disturbances, hormonal imbalances, metabolic dysfunction, respiratory issues, chronic inflammation and like I just said anxiety, low mood, depression, brain fog, it even causes changes in the immune system.

The body can only run in survival mode for so long before something starts to suffer.

I often use the analogy of a light switch. As kids, we'd stand in a room flicking the light switch on and off, on and off, thinking its funny, but our parents would tell us to stop because eventually..you'll blow the bulb.

That's what happens when the nervous system is constantly toggling between stress and collapse without ever spending enough time in your regulated "rest & digest" state. It's not just the intensity of stress that's damaging - it's the constantness of it, as well as the fluctuation.

Regulation isn't about being calm all the time, it's about having the ability to rebound and come back to a calm state as quickly as possible. You want your adrenaline to spike if there's real danger, but you also need the capacity, what we call vagal tone, to return to safety once the threat has passed, and to stay there long enough for your body to rest, digest, heal and restore.

The challenge today is that most of our threats aren't life or death. They're emails, finances, traffic, constant notifications, deadlines. The nervous system doesn't always know the difference between a tiger and a text message, so it keeps firing.

Without intentional regulation, we end up flicking that switch all day long for years at a time and eventually ..something burns out.



# EVERYTHING STARTS HERE.

-  **Sleep**  
Trouble falling or staying asleep, fatigue.
-  **Hormones**  
PMS, irregular cycles, low libido.
-  **Digestion**  
IBS, bloating, nausea, stomachaches.
-  **Mood**  
Anxiety, brain fog, low mood, depression
-  **Immunity**  
Autoimmunity, frequent colds.
-  **Breath**  
Shallow, disordered, shortness of breath.

*When your nervous system is overwhelmed, every system feels it.*

### Top 3 nervous system regulation tools that are free and accessible to anyone

Of course, I'm going to say breath!

Your breath is the only autonomic function you can consciously control, which means it's your fastest access point to your nervous system. Slow, controlled breathing (especially longer exhales) signals safety to the brain. It stimulates the vagus nerve, lowers heart rate, and helps shift you out of fight or flight and back into a regulated state. You don't need an hour. Even five minutes of slow nasal breathing can begin to reset your system.

Second I would suggest walking - outdoors preferably. Walking is incredibly regulating and it's often underestimated.

When you walk, your eyes naturally move left to right in a rhythmic pattern. This bilateral stimulation is similar to what's used in therapies like EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), which helps process stress and trauma. That gentle left-right tracking helps calm the nervous system and integrate information. On top of that, being in nature reduces cortisol, sunlight supports circadian rhythm and fresh air encourages deeper breathing. It's regulation layered on regulation.

Third, stillness Practices - Meditation or Prayer. Stillness can feel uncomfortable at first, especially for someone who's lived in survival mode, but creating even small moments of intentional pause teaches the body that it is safe to rest. Whether that's meditation, prayer, journaling, grounding or simply sitting quietly with your hand on your heart, the key is consistency.

#### One breath technique you recommend for panic or spiralling thoughts

One of my favourites and the one I personally default to is the 4-7-8 breath. It's really simple and you can do it anywhere, in the car, at your desk, cooking dinner...literally anywhere.

- Inhale through your nose for a count 4
- Hold for 7
- Exhale slowly through pursed lips for a count of 8

The magic is in the extended exhale. When you breathe out longer than you breathe in, you naturally activate the parasympathetic nervous system, the part responsible for calm and restoration.

The gentle breath hold also increases your carbon dioxide tolerance over time, which helps stabilise the nervous system and reduce reactivity. It really doesn't need to be complicated.

#### If someone wakes up at 2am with a racing heart, what should they do?

First, always rule out anything medical if symptoms are new, severe, or concerning, but if you're lying there with a racing heart and no underlying condition, it's often your nervous system firing in the night.

When your heart is racing, your breath is usually shallow and sitting high in the chest. The first step is awareness. Notice where your breath is. Notice the pace.

Then gently guide it down.

I recommend coherence style breathing:

- Inhale through the nose for 5
- Exhale through the nose for 5

Or even better: Inhale for 5. Exhale for 6 or 7

That slightly longer exhale signals safety to the body and helps bring the heart rate down. Slow. Deep. Steady.

You want to avoid breathing faster. Rapid breathing will only amplify the stress response and can tip you further into panic.

What's the relationship between the nervous system and feeling safe, calm, and confident?

Well, contrary to popular belief, safety isn't a mindset issue, it's a nervous system state.

You can repeat affirmations all day long, but if your nervous system doesn't feel safe, your body won't believe them.

When the nervous system is dysregulated, it's scanning for threat. In that state, you're more reactive, more self-doubting, more defensive, you second guess decisions, you struggle with boundaries. You either over explain yourself or shut down completely.



### **Why can rest feel uncomfortable or unsafe?**

Rest can feel uncomfortable because, at some point, your nervous system learned that being "on" equalled being safe.

If you grew up around stress, unpredictability, abuse, high expectations, or in environments where emotions weren't allowed - children should be seen and not heard, don't be dramatic, boys don't cry - your body adapted. It stayed alert and busy became normal.

Now, when you stop.. because there's nothing to monitor, emotions rise to the surface, your body slows down, which can feel unfamiliar or unsettling and your identity can 'wobble' because you're not "doing."

It's not that rest is unsafe, it's just that your body hasn't yet learned that it's safe to rest now.

Interestingly, and this is something people don't talk about enough, this is also where confidence lives. Confidence isn't just a personality trait. It's what happens when your body feels safe enough to take risks, speak truth and be seen. When your nervous system feels safe, you respond instead of react, you don't spiral as quickly and most importantly, you build self trust. When your system learns it's safe to rest, it also learns it's safe to expand, and that can be taught, gently and in small, consistent doses.

### **Why are retreats so powerful for nervous system recalibration?**

Retreats work because they remove you from the environment that's dysregulating you.

In everyday life, we're needed constantly. Deadlines, technology, notifications, responsibilities - the nervous system is rarely given space to fully exhale.

A retreat interrupts that pattern. You step away from the hustle, the constant stimulation, the dopamine hits and the micro triggers that keep you cycling in and out of fight or flight and instead, you enter an environment intentionally built around calm, safety, and nourishment.

When the body finally feels safe enough.. things such as suppressed grief, anger, resentment that you may have pushed down can then come to the surface to be processed and released.

People often leave retreats lighter, clearer and more grounded, not because something was added, but because something was finally allowed to be let go.

### **What shifts do you see after breathwork?**

The first thing I usually see is shock. Depending on the style of breathwork, the shifts can be profound. When people allow themselves to breathe intentionally, the body often brings forward what's been stored - emotions, memories, tension - without them needing to intellectually "figure it out."

During sessions there can be tears, trembling, laughter, and release. It can feel intense but when they come back into their bodies, something changes.

Their whole energy is different, their body softens, their eyes look clearer, there's often silence filled with a sense of awe..

People usually say things like, "wow, what did i just experience!?", "I feel so much lighter," or "I haven't felt this calm in years."

Even if they're emotionally tender, there's groundedness and a sense of peace. Every single time, their energy shifts and witnessing that is my favourite part of what I do.

## What does a daily aligned nervous system routine look like?

I'm a big believer in getting back to basics.

Before reaching for supplements or prescriptions, ask: am I doing the foundations consistently?

Am I drinking enough water?

Am I sleeping enough?

Am I eating in a way that nourishes my body?

Am I putting my phone down at least an hour before bed?

Am I spending 10 minutes a day working on regulating my nervous system.

That's it. You don't need a two-hour ritual. Just simple but impactful tools done consistently. Small practices, done daily, create long term resilience and regulation.

If you could leave readers with one message about regulating the nervous system, what would it be?

With constant negative news and stimulation, it's easy to feel powerless.

You may not be able to change the world overnight but you can change yourself, and that ripple matters.

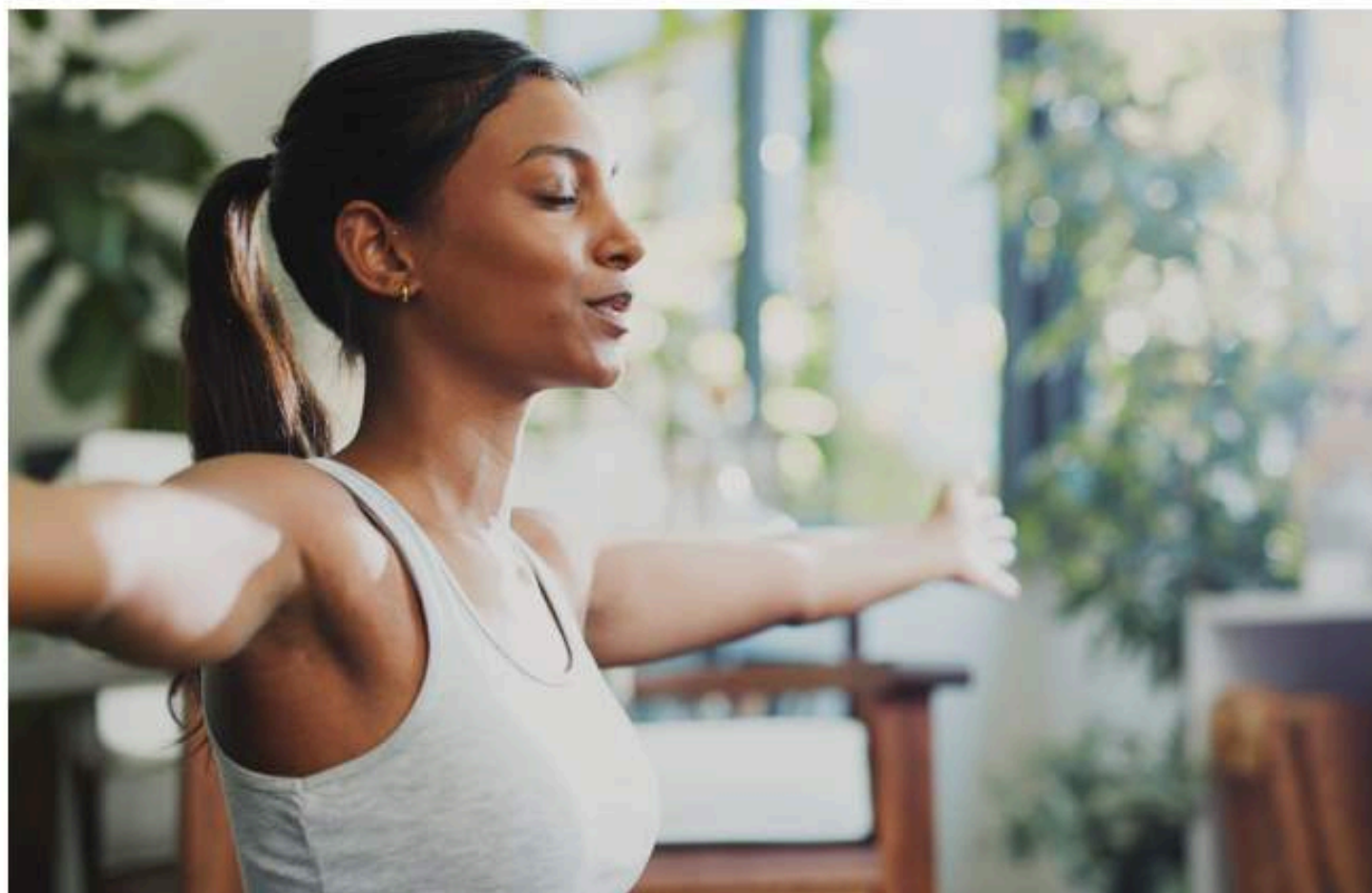
Focus on the small, consistent basics:

Sunlight. Movement. Water. Real food. Less scrolling. Intentional breath.

Regulation builds vagal tone - your ability to rise when needed and return to calm quickly, and stay there long enough for your body to rest, digest, and heal.

The magic isn't in massive changes but in the tiny, everyday shifts that compound into sustainable change. That's how you change your life, and from there, you quietly change the world around you.

## Inhale - Align - Exhale





## Kim Yang Music

*Honest, melodic, intimate storytelling*

Music pulled Kim Yang in through childhood cassettes shared with her sister and endless hours singing karaoke in Taiwanese restaurants. What began as soothing escapism became a calling after moving to Australia.

Taking a leap, she left her office job to study music formally at CIT as a mature-age student. "That decision changed the direction of my life," she says.

### **The Song That Changed Everything**

Garden of Eden, written after the 2019 bushfires in NSW, marked the turning point. Performing it live for the first time, Kim watched tears form in the audience.

"People came up afterwards to say thank you," she recalls. "That was when I realised my music had become something bigger than myself—a way to bring good into the world through storytelling."

### **From Entertainment to Anchor**

Music evolved from simple entertainment to emotional processing and professional craft. "It's where I feel grounded," Kim explains. Songwriting became therapy during her private IVF journey, captured in *The Nurse*—"a painful experience I carried quietly, approached with lightness."

A Canberra Theatre listener's response to *Garden of Eden* stayed with her: "Thank you for telling our stories as bushfire victims." Music, for Kim, creates powerful human connection.

### **When No One's Watching**

Her process starts chaotic: "freewriting gibberish for 10 minutes, then picking fragments to sing over guitar chords." Ideas spark from nature's quiet and city people's movement. "Bad songs are part of finding the good ones," she admits.

Balancing authenticity with financial pressures, daily meditation keeps her anchored. "Protecting my creative truth matters more than chasing trends."

### **Stage Zen & Imperfect Magic**

Before shows, Kim enters "zen mode"—silent, centred, rehearsing talking points. Her most unforgettable moment? A National Folk Festival ukulele plosive that turned her gig into comedy: "The audience laughed, my nerves vanished. Imperfections became the most human part."

### **The Invisible Labour**

'The biggest misconception is that we only work onstage,' Kim says. 'It's years mastering craft, plus load-in, soundchecks, emails, packdown, late-night drives. Most musicians are sole traders running businesses without support staff.'

Artists who last prioritise sustainability: 'Taking breaks isn't weakness—it's what keeps the fire burning.'

### **Find Kim's Music**

Website: [www.kimyangmusic.com](http://www.kimyangmusic.com)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/kimyangmusic](https://www.instagram.com/kimyangmusic)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/kimyangmusic](https://www.facebook.com/kimyangmusic)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@kimyang](https://www.youtube.com/@kimyang)

Spotify: [open.spotify.com/artist/7kwuujRrUf8BEBpqsruiW](https://open.spotify.com/artist/7kwuujRrUf8BEBpqsruiW)

Linktree: [linktr.ee/kimyangmusic](https://linktr.ee/kimyangmusic)

***"Authenticity lasts longer than hype." — Kim Yang***



# HWTM

Hostess with the Mostest

A RETURN TO YOURSELF AWAITS



# For the moments that deserve more than ordinary.



There comes a moment when you realise you have been carrying so much for so long that you have forgotten what it feels like to simply be.

Our Replenishing Retreats are designed for exactly that moment. Created by Hostess with the Mostest, each retreat is a beautifully considered experience that invites you to slow down, reconnect and return to yourself.

For busy mothers, women seeking clarity and connection, couples wanting to realign, and teams in need of renewal, every retreat is tailored with intention and care.

Slow mornings. Nourishing meals. Meaningful conversation. Space to breathe. Space to reflect. Space to restore.

From luxury multi-day escapes to intimate day retreats and corporate reset experiences, every detail is designed to leave you feeling lighter, calmer and more like yourself again.

*You do not need to earn rest.  
You simply need to say yes to it.*

Join the waitlist for upcoming retreats



0414 195 202



carissa@hwtm.org



hwtm.org



hostesswiththemostest.au



# HOSTING

The new art of hosting blends style with soul — a space where design meets generosity, and every detail feels intentional. Here, we share ideas and inspiration for gatherings that are as beautiful as they are heartfelt, reminding us that true elegance lives in the warmth of connection.





Photo credit: M. Southern Photo

## The New Way We Gather

*Why 2026 celebrations—from weddings to dinner parties—are all about feeling, not formality*

There was a time when hosting meant performing.  
Perfect place settings. Perfect timing. Perfect everything.

But somewhere between the rush of modern life, a collective craving for meaning, and a quiet return to nostalgia, we decided we wanted something else entirely.

In 2026, the way we gather—whether for a wedding or a Wednesday night supper—has softened. The rules have loosened. The energy has shifted. And in that shift, something deeply human has returned.

We are no longer hosting to impress.  
We are hosting to connect.

This new era of celebration is defined by intention. By comfort. By experiences that feel curated but never contrived. At weddings, this looks like deconstructed timelines, supper-club receptions, private moments carved out of the noise, and guests invited to participate rather than observe. At home, it shows up as hostingcore: casual, intimate gatherings that feel effortless but are quietly thoughtful.

### The Parallels Are Unmistakable

Food is central again—but not as spectacle. Instead of rigid plated meals, we see shared tables, grazing boards, progressive courses, and dishes designed to invite conversation. The menu becomes a rhythm rather than a schedule. Retro favourites reappear—devilled eggs, prawn cocktails, fondue—not because they're ironic, but because they're comforting. Familiar. Disarming.

Spaces, too, are being reimagined. At weddings, ballrooms are softened with draping and candlelight; aisles curve, timelines bend, and rooms flow into one another. At home, the same philosophy applies. Living rooms become lounges. Libraries turn into cocktail corners. Kitchens retreat slightly from view, allowing social spaces to breathe. Every room earns a second life.

### Lighting Does What Words Cannot

Lighting does what words cannot. Lamps replace overheads. Candles gather people inward. Soft pools of glow encourage guests to stay longer than planned. Time stretches.

### Fashion Follows Suit

Fashion follows suit. Brides change outfits not to shock, but to move freely. Grooms wear colour, texture, personality. Hosts at home dress tables the same way—mixing inherited pieces with found objects, white plates with coloured glass, linen with velvet. Nothing matches perfectly, and that's the point.

What ties it all together—across weddings, homes, and every gathering in between—is a shared belief: that presence is the real luxury.

Phones are set down. Moments are allowed to unfold without documentation. Even at the most social-media-aware celebrations, couples are hiring content creators so guests can simply be there. The memory is prioritised over the post.

And perhaps that is the quiet truth of this moment in time: after years of speed, noise, and spectacle, we are choosing slowness. Choosing warmth. Choosing gatherings that feel like exhaling.

The most beautiful celebrations of 2026 won't be remembered for what they looked like—but for how they felt.

And that feeling is one of belonging.

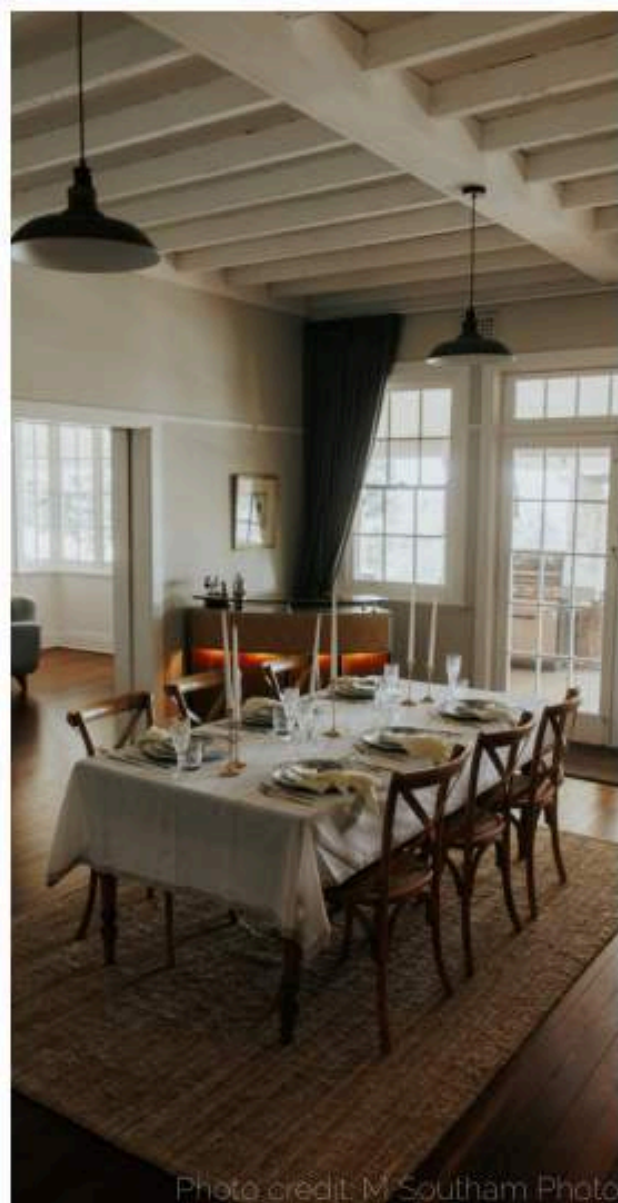


Photo credit: M Southam Photo

# At Home Entertaining 2026

## *Hostingcore: The Art of Gathering, Reimagined*

Entertaining at home has entered a new era. Gone are rigid dinner parties and Pinterest-perfect pressure. In their place: gatherings that feel intimate, intentional, nostalgic, and deeply human.

Welcome to hostingcore—where comfort is elevated, effort feels invisible, and connection is everything.

### **The Rise of Hostingcore**

Hosting in 2026 moves with quiet confidence. Homes are styled to be party-ready at a moment's notice—not grand or formal, but beautifully prepared for people to arrive.

This shift embraces:

- Casual yet intentional gatherings
- High-effort planning, low-stress execution
- Multi-purpose rooms that adapt effortlessly
- Real tableware, real food, real conversation

Built-in bars, cozy conversational seating, hidden wet bars, and soft lighting zones have become essentials. The goal: make guests feel instantly at ease, like they truly belong.

### **Retro Revival, Served Warm**

Nostalgia is setting the menu—but not ironically, lovingly:

- Devilled eggs
- Prawn cocktails
- Vol-au-vents
- Fondue
- Punch bowls

These dishes are familiar, comforting, and easy to prep ahead, freeing hosts to be present rather than managing. Everyone knows how to eat them. Everyone smiles when they arrive.



Photo credit: M Southam Photo

## Spaces That Invite Connection

Every Room Gets a Second Life

Traditional room rules no longer apply. Today's homes transform:

- Libraries into cocktail lounges
- Sunrooms into listening bars
- Dining rooms spilling into living rooms
- Outdoor spaces as natural extensions

Designers prioritise conversation-first layouts:

- Extra-long sofas
- Banquettes and conversation pits
- Multiple seating zones per room
- Small tables to keep guests circulating

The party shouldn't live in one room—it should unfold.

## The Modern Home Bar

Home bars are booming—not flashy displays, but hidden gems:

- Concealed wet bars behind cabinetry
- Console-table nooks in dining rooms
- Lazy Susans stocked with wine
- Jewel-box interiors revealed for guests

A well-designed bar means there's no need to leave home.

## Tables That Glow

Interactive, Snackable Dining

Formal seated meals give way to grazing tables:

- Charcuterie boards
- Family-style platters
- Cocktail buffets
- Open-fire grilling moments

Food at the centre encourages movement, sharing, conversation. Guests snack when they want—not when dictated. Argentine-style *parillas* turn cooking into theatre around flame and food.

## The Competitive Art of Table Setting

The most stylish tables aren't expensive—they're collected:

- Mix, don't match
- White plates as timeless base; eclectic accents for personality
- Unusual fruit and vegetables as décor
- Candles are non-negotiable
- Improvisation over perfection

Think figs, clementines, artichokes in glasses, garden-clipped branches. Tables become still lifes—imperfect, warm, alive.

## Mood, Mindfulness & The Future

- Softer Lighting, Warmer Evenings
- Lighting is atmospheric, never overhead:
- Lamps over ceiling fixtures
- Taper candles on tables
- Fairy or festoon lights guiding outdoors
- Corners softly illuminated for intimacy

Good lighting flatters faces, slows time, invites lingering.



### Tech-Free, But Thoughtful

Hosting in 2026 prioritises presence:

- Phones down, conversations up
- Music sets mood, not volume
- Screens hidden away

### Intentional & Sustainable

Mindful without militancy:

- Low-waste menus
- Locally sourced produce
- Plant-forward dishes
- Reusable décor, quality pieces used again and again

Sustainability weaves quietly into good hosting.

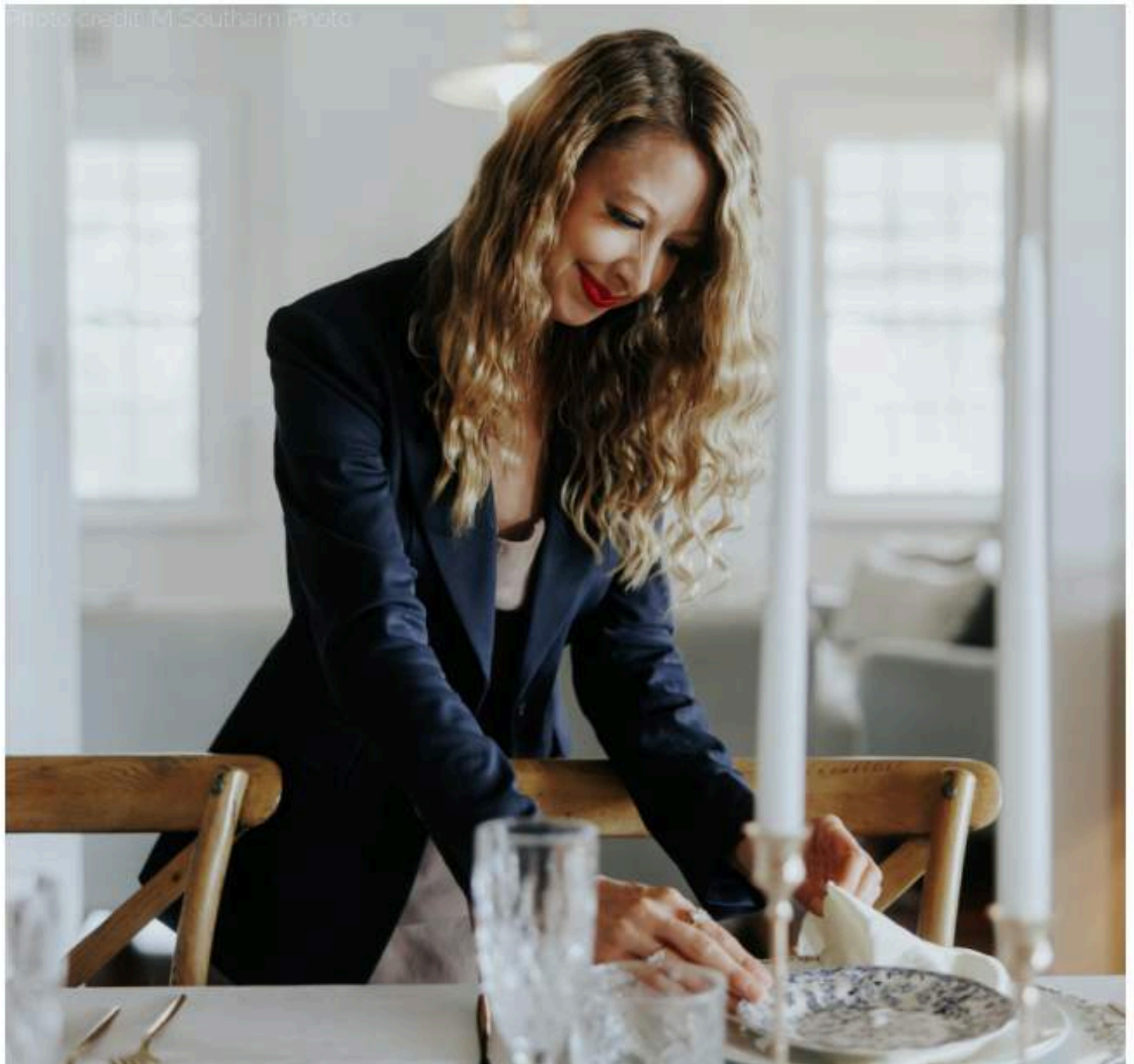
### The Hostess Philosophy

It's not about impressing. It's about caring.

The most memorable hosts:

- Dress the table
- Set the mood
- Add one small surprise
- Then let go

Because the real magic of entertaining isn't perfection—it's how it makes people feel.





## At Her Table: Where Women Belong

*At its simplest, At Her Table began with an invitation.*

During the isolation of the pandemic, when many women were experiencing a quiet loneliness, Lauren recognised something deeper than a need for events or networking. Women didn't need another polished space or productivity-focused group. They needed connection.

So she set a table.

At Her Table was born as a gathering movement centred on hospitality, conversation and belonging. There was no agenda, no business pitching and no expectation to perform — only a shared meal and the opportunity to be present with others.

"I noticed many spaces for women were performative or achievement-focused," Lauren says. "There wasn't somewhere slower, softer and relational."

The difference was intentional. At Her Table is not networking. There are no name tags, no professional introductions and no pressure to prove yourself. Instead, gatherings are shaped around story and listening. Relationships form organically through honesty rather than transaction.

Each gathering is carefully designed, from the way the table is set to the questions that are gently offered. The atmosphere encourages reflection and conversation, allowing depth to emerge naturally once people feel safe and unhurried.

For many women, the experience is unexpectedly powerful.

A response Lauren hears often is simple but telling: "I didn't realise how much I needed this."

Women leave feeling less alone, more grounded and more confident — sometimes for the first time in a long time. Not because advice was given, but because they were welcomed.

The community now extends beyond physical gatherings through an app and online space, allowing connection to continue between meetings. It offers a quiet continuity — a reminder that belonging isn't limited to one evening around a table.

In a fast and disconnected world, the deeper value of gathering is profound. Sitting together slows time. It invites listening. It allows friendship, healing and curiosity to grow without pressure.

Lauren hopes each woman leaves her first gathering with a simple realisation: I belong somewhere.

Looking ahead, At Her Table continues to grow through trained hosts and local gatherings, enabling women to create the same gentle spaces in their own communities while maintaining the same heart — hospitality, openness and care.

Because sometimes the most meaningful thing we can offer is not advice or solutions. Sometimes, it is simply a seat at the table.

***“A table is never just a table. It becomes sacred the moment a woman feels seen, heard, and gently welcomed.”***



**“I’m interested in what happens  
when people are placed inside an  
experience rather than  
observing it.”**

**Anna Odell**



## The Art Of Opening Doors

*A quiet kind of hospitality*

There was a time when homes felt more open. Not curated for an audience, not waiting for a special occasion, just ready. Ready for someone to knock, ready to pour another glass, ready to pull out an extra chair and make room. I think about that often now, how different it feels from the world we live in today, where connection is constant yet somehow distant, where relationships live in messages rather than moments, and where we scroll endlessly instead of gathering.

I've always been drawn to creating spaces that feel calm and welcoming, places where people can exhale the moment they walk through the door. Long before it became part of my work—and giving clients that incredible 'wow' moment—it was simply how I moved through life. I loved setting a table, lighting a candle on an ordinary night, making people feel at home. Not in a performative way, but in a quiet, thoughtful one, the kind of hospitality that doesn't demand attention, but lingers.



Motherhood deepened that instinct in ways I didn't expect. Raising girls has shaped every layer of who I am. It made me more intentional, more grounded, and more aware of the example I'm setting. I want my daughters to see that life isn't about having it all perfectly figured out, but about continuing to grow, even when things feel uncertain. About choosing gratitude when plans change. About finding softness and strength in the same breath.

I try to show them that ambition can live alongside warmth, that it can align with your values and personality, and that loving beautiful things doesn't make you fragile—and that a calm home can be a powerful anchor in a noisy world. My professional life has unfolded in parallel, evolving alongside those personal chapters. I built a career as an award-winning event manager and wedding planner, drawn to moments that matter, celebrations that hold emotion, meaning, and vulnerability all at once. Over the years, I've learned that what people remember isn't just how something looked, but how it felt.

The reassurance in the chaos. The calm behind the scenes. The sense that someone was holding everything together so they didn't have to. It is such a privilege to give this gift to clients.

Yet even as my work grew, I realised it was never only about events. It was about people, presence, and the spaces that bring us together.

I love beauty—linen, mood lighting, flowers, the small details that make a home feel cared for—but what matters most to me is the atmosphere they create. A calm home environment isn't a luxury in my world; it's essential. It shapes how we connect, how we rest, how we show up for one another. Hosting, at its core, is an act of generosity. It's a way of saying, "Come in, you're welcome here," without needing to explain or impress.

Somewhere along the way, though, that instinctive way of gathering began to fade. Life became busier. Homes became more private. We started waiting for the "right" moment instead of creating it. We became experts at researching, planning, and consuming, while quietly losing the habit of simply inviting. The 90s version of life—doors unlocked, friends dropping by, conversations stretching late into the night—began to feel like a memory rather than a norm.

I missed it.. and I think many of us do.

That sense of ease. That joy. That feeling of being surrounded by loved ones in a home that felt lived in and loved.



It was from that place that *Hostess with the Mostest* slowly took shape. Releasing the brand wasn't a sudden decision, but a gradual act of courage over time. It asked me to step out of my comfort zone, to trust that the things I cared about deeply—entertaining, hosting, wellness, events, and connection—were worth sharing more openly. Through this work, I bring education back into hosting, helping people feel confident welcoming others into their homes, while continuing to offer my services as an event manager, wedding planner, stylist, and creator of wellness retreats designed to restore, not deplete.

Wellness, for me, isn't a trend or a box to tick. It's a necessity I've learned to honour over time. I'm constantly learning, growing, and gently stretching myself—sometimes deliberately uncomfortable because growth rarely happens without it. Each arm of my business reflects a different part of that journey, all tied together by the same intention: to help people slow down, feel supported, and reconnect with what matters.

Eventually, another idea began to return again and again. A longing for something tangible. Something beautiful and intentional in a world that feels increasingly disposable. A lifestyle magazine to encompass all of these values in one place.

Not something to skim once and forget, but something you'd want to keep on your coffee table. A place where stories could unfold slowly, where people could feel educated without being overwhelmed, inspired without being rushed. A reminder of the art of print, at a time when we rarely switch off long enough to read a book, let alone sit with a magazine. In an era of doom scrolling and endless digital noise, I wanted to create something that invited people back into presence.

This is what all of my work leads back to.  
The art of entertaining.  
The art of living beautifully.  
The art of opening your home, and your life, to others.

It's about real connection. Real conversations. Real relationships nurtured around tables, in kitchens, and in spaces that feel warm and welcoming. It's about being house proud not for appearances, but for the joy of sharing what you've created. And through every season—the highs, the hard lessons, the reinventions—gratitude remains the thread that ties it all together.

Because a beautiful life isn't built all at once.  
It's created slowly, thoughtfully, and with open doors.





## The Quiet Confidence of Opening Your Door

*Inside the Return of Old-Fashioned Hospitality, Modernised for 2026*

There is a certain kind of host who never seems flustered.

The table is dressed, but not fussy.

The food arrives easily, almost casually.

The room feels warm before anyone even speaks.

This is the host of 2026—and they are not trying to impress you.

They are practising hostingcore.

Hostingcore isn't about excess or perfection. It's about preparation done with care, so that when guests arrive, the host can let go. It's the art of making space—physically and emotionally—for people to feel welcome.

At its heart is a return to something we once understood instinctively: hospitality is not performance. It's generosity.

### Homes Designed for Gathering

Homes are being shaped around this idea. Not as showpieces, but as places designed for people to gather easily and often. Built-in bars. Hidden wet bars. Console tables that quietly hold a punch bowl or a tray of wine. Mini fridges stocked in advance. Seating arranged for conversation, not symmetry.

The most successful hosts know that comfort comes first. Cushions are plentiful. Throws are close at hand. Chairs invite you to stay. No one is worried about spilling a drink.

### **Food That Welcomes**

Food is generous, nostalgic, and forgiving. Dishes are chosen because they can be made ahead. The quiet confidence of opening your door. There is a certain kind of host who never seems flustered.

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### **Food That Welcomes**

Food is generous, nostalgic, and forgiving. Dishes are chosen because they can be made ahead, shared easily, and enjoyed without ceremony. The table invites you to snack. To linger. To talk with your hands while you eat.

### **The Soul of the Table**

And then there is the table itself—arguably the soul of hostingcore. The most beautiful tables are never bought in one go. They are collected. White plates anchor the chaos. Coloured glass catches the light. Napkins are linen, not paper. Candles flicker.

Fruit and vegetables appear where flowers might once have been—figs piled casually, branches cut from the garden, clementines scattered like still-life props.

It's not about how much money you spend. It's about how much you care—without caring too much.

### **Mood That Holds You**

Lighting is layered, soft, flattering. Overheads stay off. Lamps glow. Candles do the rest. The house feels like it's holding you.

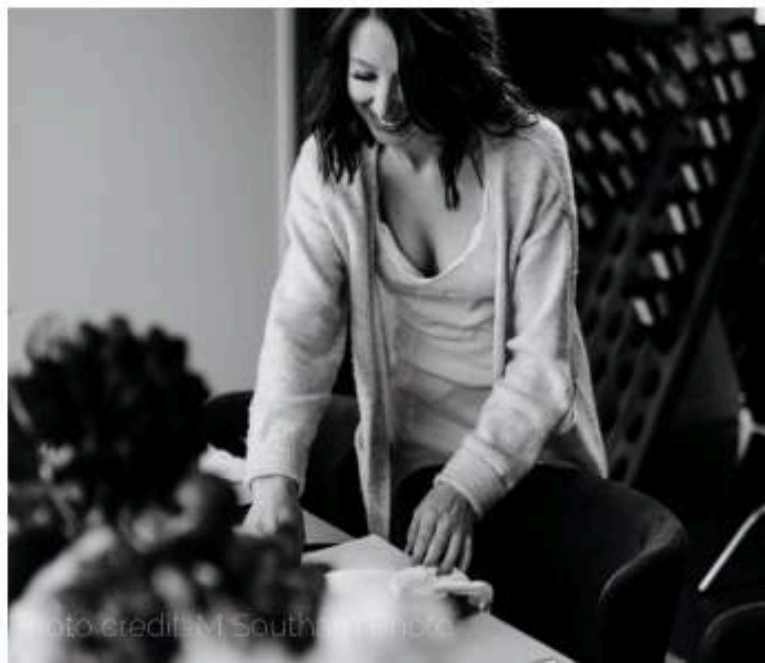
Technology recedes into the background. Music sets the tone but never dominates. Phones are forgotten on side tables. Conversations deepen because nothing is pulling attention away. There is often a small surprise—a lagniappe. A handwritten place card. A shared cocktail moment. A game table revealed later in the night. Something unexpected, offered freely.

### **The Quiet Power**

And when the evening ends, guests leave feeling nourished. Not just fed, but seen.

That is the quiet power of hostingcore.  
It doesn't shout.  
It doesn't strive.  
It simply opens the door and says: come in, stay awhile.

In a world that moves quickly and asks much of us, this kind of hosting feels radical.  
And deeply, beautifully necessary.



## The Art of Setting the Table

*A guide to everyday elegance, special occasions, and everything in between*

Setting a table is one of those quietly powerful skills. It doesn't need to be intimidating or overly formal—it's simply about intention. A well-set table tells your guests 'you're welcome here,' before a single word is spoken.

Whether you're hosting a casual dinner, a celebration, or a beautifully layered high tea, understanding the basics gives you confidence—and from there, you can make it your own.

Below is a simple guide to the most common table settings, explained in a way that's practical, relaxed, and easy to remember.



## 1. The Basic Table Setting

Perfect for everyday meals, relaxed dinners and casual hosting

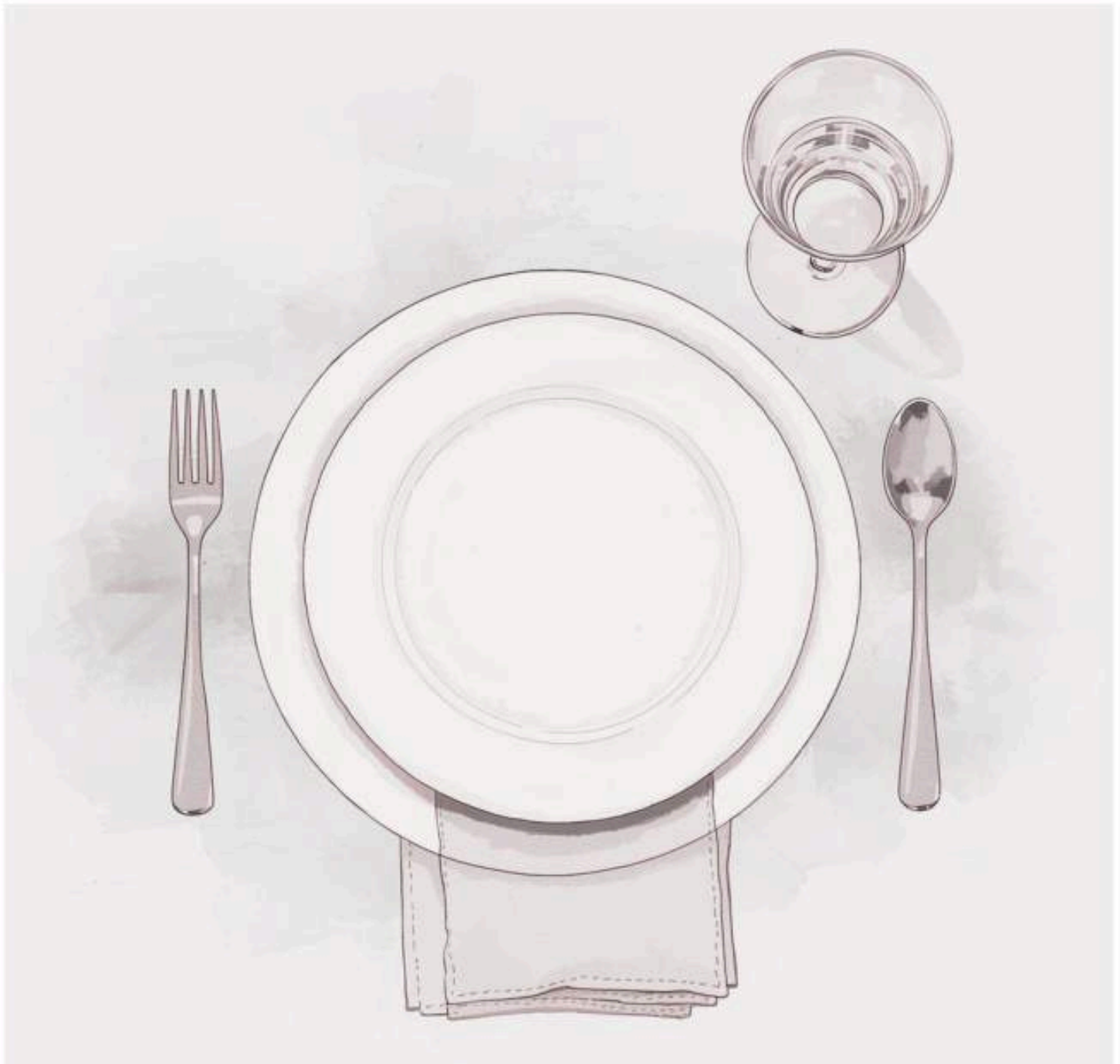
This is your foundation. If you master this, everything else builds naturally from here.

What you need:

- Dinner plate (centre)
- Fork (left)
- Knife (right, blade facing the plate)
- Spoon (right of the knife, if needed)
- Drinking glass (above the knife)
- Napkin (on the plate or to the left)

Hostess tip:

Cloth napkins instantly elevate even the most casual table. If nothing else — start there. This setting says: come as you are, dinner is ready.



## 2. The Semi-Formal Table Setting

Ideal for dinner parties, birthdays and relaxed celebrations



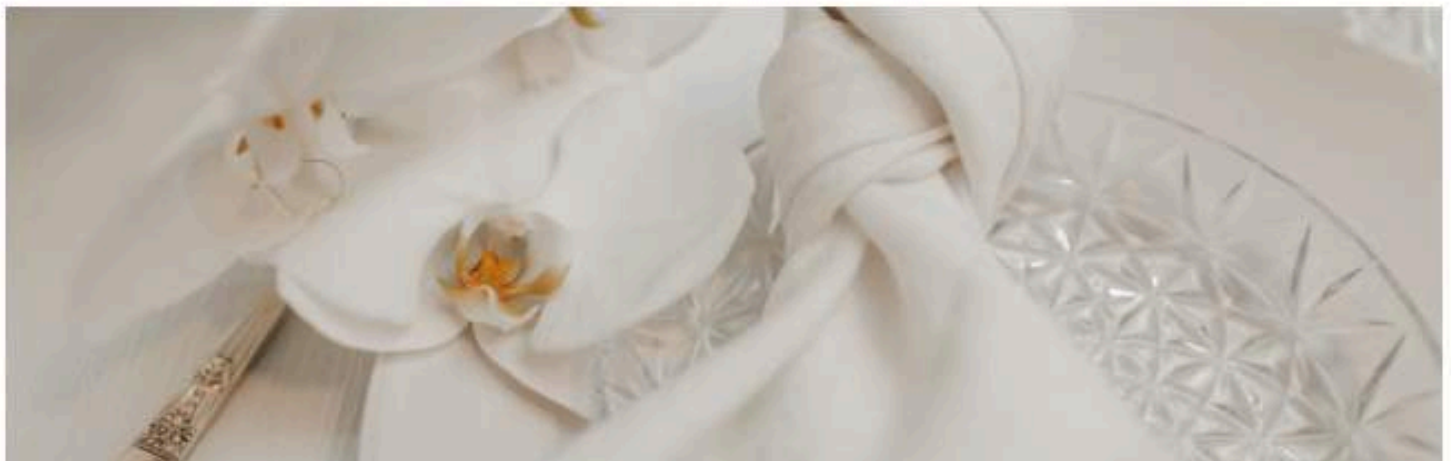
This setting adds polish without feeling intimidating.

### What you add:

- Entrée/salad plate (placed on top or served separately)
- Wine glass (to the right of the water glass)
- Napkin folded neatly beside or on the plate
- Optional side plate with butter knife
- Placement rule to remember:
- Work from the outside in — utensils are used in the order of courses.

### Hostess tip:

A simple centerpiece (flowers, candles, seasonal foliage) should never block eye contact. Connection always comes first.



### 3. The Formal Table Setting

For weddings, formal dinners and elegant occasions

This is where tradition shines — structured, symmetrical and timeless.

#### What's included:

- Charger plate (base plate that stays on the table)
- Dinner plate on top
- Entrée plate (if used)
- Forks on the left (entrée fork outside, dinner fork inside)
- Knives and spoons on the right
- Bread plate above forks with butter knife
- Water glass + red and white wine glasses (above knives)
- Napkin folded formally or placed on charger

#### Hostess tip:

You don't need every utensil unless it's being used. Formal doesn't mean cluttered.

This setting says: something special is happening here.



#### 4. The High Tea Table Setting

Whimsical, layered and delightfully charming

High tea is less about strict rules and more about romance, tradition and visual delight.

What you'll need:

- Teacups and saucers (placed to the right of the plate)
- Small plate for sweets/savouries
- Dessert fork or teaspoon
- Tiered stands for treats
- Linen napkins (folded or draped)
- Teapot, milk jug and sugar bowl

Placement note:

Handles on teacups should face 3-4 o'clock — a small detail that makes a big difference.

Hostess tip:

Mismatched china works beautifully here. It feels collected, personal and nostalgic.

This setting whispers: stay a while.



## 5. Making It Feel Like You

Because rules are only the beginning

Once you know the basics, the real magic is in the layering:

- Linen textures
- Colour palettes
- Candles at varying heights
- Handwritten place cards
- Seasonal elements (fruit, herbs, foliage)

A beautifully set table doesn't have to be expensive — it just needs thought.

And remember:

Perfection is never the goal.

Presence is.

A Final Hostess Note

The best tables aren't remembered for their cutlery placement — they're remembered for how they made people feel.

Safe. Welcomed. Seen.

If your table does that, you've done it perfectly!



**“Entertaining is about taking  
people out of their everyday lives  
and making them feel special.”**

**Martha Stewart**



## **The Instagram-worthy wedding** *(Without the Eye-Watering Price Tag)*

There's a myth in the wedding world that the beautiful weddings you see online are only possible with enormous budgets.

They aren't.

What you're actually seeing in most "Instagram weddings" is good styling decisions, cohesive design, and smooth logistics — not necessarily expensive ingredients. The difference between a wedding that looks high-end and one that feels chaotic is rarely money.

It's planning, flow, and stress management.

Because here's the truth most couples only discover on the wedding week:

A wedding is not just a party — it's a live event production happening while you are the star performer.

You'll be getting ready.

You'll be in hair and makeup.

You'll be greeting guests and managing emotions.

You won't be setting tables, lighting candles, hanging signage, moving chairs or directing suppliers — and you shouldn't be.

An Instagram-worthy wedding on a budget is absolutely achievable.

But the secret is choosing carefully what to DIY.. and what not to.

## First: The Biggest Budget Mistake Couples Make

Couples often think DIY automatically saves money.

Sometimes it does.

But what DIY actually costs is:

- time
- stress
- transport logistics
- setup labour
- reliance on friends & family

And the most common wedding day problem?

You are in hair and makeup while someone messages:

"Where do you want this sign?"

"The candles won't stay upright"

"We can't find the table plan."

"The florist hasn't arrived."

"The ceremony starts in 40 minutes.."

This is why one of the most important investments — even for a budget wedding — is having someone set up on the day.

You can absolutely create your own items.

But you shouldn't be the one installing them.

A professional coordinator or stylist:

- follows your plan
- fixes issues quietly
- communicates with the venue
- sets everything exactly as envisioned

It also lets your family enjoy the wedding instead of working it.

Relying on loved ones sounds lovely in theory — but they're not professionals, and weddings run on tight timelines. If something goes wrong, you don't want your mum climbing ladders or your bridesmaids lighting 120 candles in dresses.

## Budget Styling Tips That Photograph Beautifully

### 1. Silk Flowers (The Smart Budget Secret)

Modern silk florals can look stunning — and photograph incredibly well.

Important tip:

Always request a sample before purchasing in bulk.

Quality varies hugely. Some are breathtaking. Others.. very much aren't.

Order a test piece first and check:

- colour realism
- stem thickness
- how they look in natural light
- how they photograph

You can use silk for:

- ceremony arrangements
- arbours
- table centrepieces
- bouquets
- welcome signs

Many couples even resell them after the wedding and recover most of the cost.

### 2. Buy, Use, Then Resell

A very common (and smart) approach:

1. Purchase décor second-hand
2. Use it at your wedding
3. Resell it afterward

Check:

- Facebook Buy Swap Sell
- Marketplace
- recently married couples

Items that work well for this:

- wishing wells
- signage stands
- candles & holders
- table numbers
- arches
- plinths
- card boxes

Some couples even source items online (including overseas) and sell them post-wedding — often breaking even.





### 3. Stationery: Where You Save Big

Wedding stationery is one of the easiest areas to reduce costs while still looking premium.

Use templates for:

- invitations
- menus
- place cards
- seating charts
- welcome signs

Print through:

- Officeworks
- VistaPrint
- a local printer

Again — always print one sample first. Paper thickness and colour tone make all the difference.

The key to the “Instagram look” is consistency: Your invitation → signage → table settings → menus should all feel like one visual story.

### 4. Plates, Cutlery & Tableware

Coloured cutlery and charger plates look incredible — but hiring them can be expensive because you’re also paying cleaning fees.

Alternatives:

- hire selectively (head table only)
- buy second-hand
- purchase and resell later

Often, using statement pieces only on the bridal table creates the same visual impact for a fraction of the cost.

### 5. Candles & Ceremony Styling

Ceremony styling is often harder to DIY because access time is short.

- Always confirm:
- ceremony access window
- venue restrictions
- safety rules for candles

Many venues require enclosed candles or glass cylinders.

Not knowing this in advance is a very common last-minute issue.

If access is tight, outsourcing ceremony setup to a professional is usually worth it.

### The Real Secret to a Beautiful Wedding

An Instagram-worthy wedding isn’t created by spending more.

It’s created by:

- thoughtful styling
- cohesive design
- and a calm couple
- 

Stress shows. Rushing shows. Last-minute setup shows.

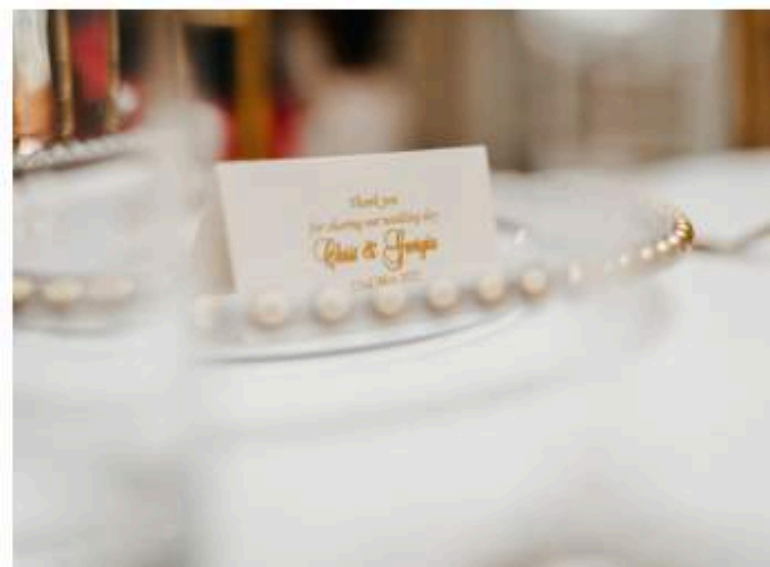
What photographs beautifully is when:

- you are relaxed
- your family is present
- the day flows smoothly

That is why even budget weddings benefit from having someone run the setup and logistics.

You can DIY your items. You can source cleverly. You can shop second-hand.

But let someone else execute it.



A budget wedding does not have to look budget.

There are wonderful vendors who will partner with you — letting you create parts yourself while they handle the important pieces. The best results come from a collaboration: you design, they deliver. Because the most valuable luxury on your wedding day isn't imported florals or gold cutlery. It's peace of mind.

And when you feel calm and present, your wedding will not only be Instagram-worthy, it will actually be enjoyable.



Photo credit: Nette Morrison

# Your wedding, expertly guided.

## A calm hand from the very beginning

Planning a wedding is far more than choosing flowers and venues. It is a deeply personal and emotional journey. While it should feel exciting, it can quickly become overwhelming without the right support.

At Capital Events, we do more than plan weddings. We partner with you.

## Experience, clarity and care

With over 18 years of experience and a reputation as the "wedding ninja," Carissa Webster brings a calm, structured and highly organised approach to every celebration. What can feel like chaos becomes clarity.

From your earliest decisions through to ongoing communication, timeline management, supplier coordination and every detail behind the scenes, each element is handled with care and precision.

## So you can simply be present

We are your project manager, your advocate and your steady presence throughout the journey, so on your wedding day you are not checking the time, answering questions or solving problems.

*You are simply present.*

*Exactly where you should be.*

*Because you deserve to experience your wedding,  
not manage it.*

## Enquire now to begin your planning journey



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