



calling all chief bridesmaids and best men!



OLD COURSE HOTEL SPA, ST ANDREWS

Have you organised a suitably spectacular hen/stag do yet? If not, read on!

SINCE THE BRIDE and groom have the whole wedding to organise, it's only fair that you, head honcho in the league of attendants, at least takes control of the hen/stag night. But what should you do? Organise a series of ever crazier surprises and stunts as the night unfolds or just arrange a cosy night in with close mates? A lot will depend on the hen/stag's personality, so the first step has to be consultation – get a list of people they'd like there and quiz them on what sort of day/evening/weekend they'd like. Surprises can be fun, but only ones that suit their character. If he/she doesn't like being the centre of attention, arrange to do activities that keep the focus elsewhere, and if he/she's the shy and retiring type, don't assume they'll be happy to shake off this innate modesty for the evening and take part in all sorts of sordid dares.

Devil's horns? No thanks...

Whatever the actual hen/stag may believe, it's not all about him or her. As the organiser you have a duty to make sure the event isn't too painful for the others involved, financially or otherwise. If older family members are invited, you should take this into account as you're planning. Take uniforms, for example. Many girls think it's great fun to have everyone wearing the same silly t-shirt, but others may find it uncomfortable and resent shelling out a fiver for something they'd rather poke their own eyes out than wear. Why not give the group a theme to guide how they dress? Choose something quite vague like 'the 80s' or 'glam' or maybe a more specific idea like the bride/groom's favourite colour. That gives people the freedom to take it as far as they like and decide how much they want to spend. Also ask everyone to contribute any ideas they might have, this will make your job easier and ensure they all feel involved. Remember that everyone who's invited has a different take on the hen/stag so should be able to bring different elements to the table. Try to make use of any valuable contacts people may have in restaurants or clubs too. The usual practice is for the group to split the costs between them, with the hen/stag not paying for any meal or tickets etc, so if you can wangle a discount it may cover this part of the bill.

Stens and hags?

Obviously, don't hold it the day before the wedding, even a week before may be too close as the hen and stag will probably be busy finalising last-minute plans. When you're deciding on locations and timings take into account what the respective hen or stag's opposite number is doing – the last thing you want is for them to bump into each other! That said, if the stag and hen have lots of mutual friends, it might be an idea to hold a joint party. OK, it does go against everything the hen and stag celebrations are supposed to be about, but it might be more fun that way. Or maybe you can do your own thing and then all meet up later on for a nightcap. It's one way of trying to fix up your single friends before the wedding... [SWD](#)

Inspiring ideas to make the last night of freedom a memorable one

1. WE'RE ALL ORFF TO THE THEATRE

There are some fantastic plays and musicals on and prices are surprisingly reasonable, considering it's a couple of hours' entertainment. Why not check out what's on around the time of the party, there may be something that's right up his/her street! If it's going to be a boozy affair, this is a great way to limit the drinking for a while too.

See what's on at the King's Theatre in Glasgow: theambassadors.com

One of the capital's most popular theatres: pleasance.co.uk

2. THERE'S BEEN A MURDER!

Let's face it, the chances are the bride and groom have been on plenty of drunken nights out in their time, so why not do something completely different that they'll never forget? A murder mystery is brilliant fun and a great way to get all their friends to know each other in a short space of time. It also provides some focus to the evening, rather than everyone just trying to make the poor soul down shots or get hold of some guy's underwear.

See bluemurderevents.co.uk (specialises in running murder mystery hen nights in Edinburgh)

3. PRIVATE PARTY

It's all very well booking a massive table in a restaurant for all the gang, but if you're planning on being a bit raucous it can definitely help to have your own private dining area. You can be as loud and silly as you like without getting 'evils' from other customers. They might also give you the freedom to decorate the place with embarrassing pics of the hen/stag.

Plan a private party: g1group.co.uk

4. TREATS FOR MIND, BODY AND SOUL

There's nothing like a pampering session to release all those pre-wedding tensions. Try a relaxing facial to make your skin glow, or a full body massage for tired muscles. Many spas now offer great hen packages, and it's up to you whether you just go for a day trip or splash the cash with an overnight stay at a luxury hotel. Or if the budget's tight, get some girly videos in and stock up on home beauty treats for a fun night at home.

Take a spa break in St Andrews: oldcoursehotel.co.uk

5. GO ABROAD

Thanks to cheap flights and affordable holidays, more and more hens and stags are deciding to go overseas, extending their last night of freedom to a weekend or even a week in the sun. There are loads of different ways to do your hen or stag abroad, from package holidays filled with adventure activities, to pampering weekends, or trips based around shows or gigs. You could even take everyone off to one of Europe's many music festivals.

Tailormade group packages: weddings-honeymoons.com