

IT'S *show time!*

Have you considered how you'll keep everyone entertained on the big day? Help is at hand as we consult the region's top talent on how to get guests shouting 'encore!'

"Keeping your guests entertained during your wedding is so important," says top planner and stylist Georgina Webb of Ruby Weddings. "The day will pass in a blur because you'll be busy, but don't forget about your guests." Indeed, while you're whirling around in a state of loved-up bliss, it's worth sparing a thought for those tricky intervals where your guests may be left with little to do but quaff champagne. If you're unsure of when these are, Georgina pinpoints three key times: "During the arrival drinks, the changeover time between your wedding breakfast and evening reception – if you're using the same room for both – and the evening reception itself."

But don't despair if you've already blown your budget on the bar, or that head-lining band – entertainment needn't cost the earth. "A country wedding I worked on last summer had games on the lawn during the afternoon, including cricket, archery, hula hoop and skittles," reflects Georgina. "The bride and groom joined in after their photos and everyone had a great time – it was a real ice-breaker."

Of course, if you want to add some wow factor, as well as the fun factor, you can use entertainment to help shape your big-day

theme – think casino tables for a black tie, James Bond-style soirée, coconut shies and carousels for a carnival-themed day or even a Santa's grotto for a wedding in the festive season. "If a couple have a particular interest that they want to incorporate into their big day then you really can have some fun with it," affirms Georgina. "At a recent wedding I attended as a guest, the groom was a huge wrestling fan so as part of their early evening entertainment they set up a ring on the lawn and hired pro-wrestlers to put on a fight for their guests – it was so much fun and a surprise for everyone!"

If you've resolved to simply leaving your adult guests to mingle and enjoy the free-flowing reception drinks, Georgina says do spare a thought for any little ones who'll be attending the day – some form of entertainment could stop them from running riot. "If you have children at your wedding it's crucial that you keep them entertained and there are several ways you can do this," she tells *Your Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wedding*. "Creating a kid-friendly corner with arts and crafts is a simple, cheap and effective way to keep the children happy."

If it's a real child-friendly affair, Georgina suggests hiring a professional crèche or

entertainer. "Their parents will thank you for this and they'll be able to relax and enjoy the day so much more if they know their children are being entertained".

But if your budget doesn't stretch, why not simply consider an activity during those times when quiet is a must? "Long speeches are boring for children so giving them something to do during this time is a win, win," Georgina says. "Create a colouring competition where the children can win a prize for the best drawing of the happy couple, or give older children disposable cameras and a list of pictures to take. They'll love it!"

Whatever you plump for, one thing's for certain: "You'll never please everyone," says Georgina. Regardless, if you have a wide age range attending, from your one-year-old flowergirl to your 80-year-old grandma, consideration could be the key to success. "You and your friends may love the dance music that you've asked your DJ to play, but what about your older relatives?" reasons Georgina. "Consider mixing up the music played to get them on the dancefloor too and offer them a seating area where they can escape to for a bit of quiet when things get loud."



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We chose... *A photo booth*

"We had an outdoor photo booth: I used our instant camera and arranged a set up with a backdrop, chaise longue and lots of vintage-style props and funny signs for everyone to pose with before sticking them in a guest book with a funny message. It worked really well after the wedding breakfast before the DJ started – so much so I have launched it as a small business – Flash Fabulous!" – Real Wedding bride Sophie Gyamfi

You want... *humour and fun* Try... *Facebloke Caricatures*

"I draw stylish and fun caricatures on the spot for wedding guests," says caricaturist Paul Vale – aka 'Facebloke'. "It's great entertainment for those taking part as well as those watching. My fun and sensitive caricatures will be taken home and kept as a reminder of your special day too!"

When it comes to which part of the day to hire a caricaturist, why not opt for a budget-friendly short stint to keep guests busy while photos are being taken and prior to dinner? Alternatively, go for a longer booking, taken after the speeches to bridge the gap before the evening band or DJ kicks in. "At this time I either walk round or set up with a small table and chairs and people can watch and gather round chatting and laughing," tells Paul.

From £220 for one hour, visit the website www.facebloke.me

We chose... *Casino tables*

"In the day we had giant garden games set up to entertain the guests, then for the evening we hired our venue's DJ as well as two casino tables from Crown Casinos. A group of us also performed a dance for the guests, which we'd been taught on my Dirty Dancing-themed hen do!" – Real Wedding bride Jayne Webb



www.roseypinkweddings.com



We chose... *A saxophonist*

"We chose saxophone player Mike Taylor because he was playing one of our potential first-dance songs at a local wedding fair we went to. We thought he would be great to entertain people as they arrived at the venue." – Wedding of the Year entrants Donna and Luke



www.facebloke.me



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