

WEDDING RELATED FAQs

Please read first the FAQs section of our website which is already providing a wealth of useful information: <http://chateaudevarences.net/moreinfo/faq/>

Other FAQs are listed below

1. Accommodation

- Do we have to book all the rooms when hiring the reception venue ?

Yes, we are offering a discount for booking all the rooms (vs the public rate of booking individual rooms). You can also share the b&b costs with your guests in order to reduce your own bill. Just let us know how you want to allocate the bedrooms (download and return the spreadsheet at least 2 weeks before arrival but earlier is better so we can check if the room allocation works: <http://chateaudevarences.net/bedrooms>) and our receptionist can take care of the payment process with each guest. We accept cash, transfer and bank cards. Please note that split billing and payments with bank cards are applied an extra fee.

See Guest-FAQs on our website for other questions

2. Outdoors, activities, transport, weather (check Guest-FAQs for other questions)

Please download our welcome book (password is chateau or Varennes through all the site): <http://chateaudevarences.net/moreinfo/welcome-book/>

- Can I get temporary heating for outdoor events in case the day is sunny but it is cool at night?

Yes, we can hire portable heaters but these are quite costly and from our experience we can do without most of the times

- What happens if it gets very hot on the wedding day?

Drinks are chilled in our cold storage rooms and we also have professional ice cube makers.

- Do you have aircon?

We do not need aircon in our region, our climate is warm and dry but the heat rarely gets unbearable. If a heat wave occurs, we can put fans in bedrooms but the walls of the main building are very thick which is a good protection against over-heating. However the walls of the outbuildings are not as well insulated thus there is aircon in these bedrooms. Contrary to other hot countries, the heat in our area is dry and it is cool at night allowing everyone to sleep comfortably. And there are pretty no bugs most of the times contrary to other Southern regions like Provence/Italy/Spain

- What is the easiest way to travel to the venue?

Travel information can be found here:

<http://chateaudevarences.net/moreinfo/transport/>

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

Please make sure to put the right postal code (71270) in your GPS as there are several villages named Varennes.

- What about shuttling service for events?

As we are located in the countryside, there are no cabs driving in front of our gate like in a big city but cabs or shuttling service can be arranged for your external guests. This service is to be reserved in advance by paying a booking fee. Depending on number of guests, we usually book 1 or several drivers for 3 hours (but can be extended). You can hire a small cab (up to 4 passengers) or a mini-van for 8 passengers. Your guests will pay their ride directly to the driver (on top of the booking fee which is paid by you).

You can also book a coach if you have big numbers (above 100 guests). It is a good option for inbound trip to the ceremony but for return trips to local hotels, guests will prefer the flexibility of small cabs and mini-vans rather than a timetable with a coach every hour. From our experience, guests prefer to do car-pooling or call a cab than having to wait for a coach therefore coaches are driving pretty empty half of the night!

3. Weddings and events

- What kind of functions do you cater for?

The property can be rented on an exclusive basis for weddings, holiday breaks and corporate events. There is no time limit for party

- What is your max capacity?

Around 180 guests can be seated in the Orangery (in a single room). The gardens have unlimited capacity for cocktails. We can also hire a marquee for larger functions.

- When is the Orangery available for decorating it?

The Orangery is usually available the morning of the event (depending on what happened on the previous night, cleaning can be later). If you require an earlier check in time, please contact us.

- Do you have a baby-sitting service?

Yes, it is possible to hire baby sitters and pay them directly. If you have a wedding planner, she can book them for you.

- Can you recommend wedding vendors?

We can recommend reputable vendors (hair stylists, make up artists, djs, live musicians etc) who have already done a good job here but we do not impose anyone. Before selecting them, we make sure that they are good professionals and can do a good job for destination weddings (even if they do not speak English which happens frequently in France). Contrary to most French venues, we do not request any commissions nor kickbacks from vendors as we believe our clients deserve the best quality price ratio and a neutral advice.

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

- *What kind of celebrants are available for the ceremony ?*

If religious ceremony: you can hire our local Catholic priest or a vicar from Church of England or you can bring your own officiant. We also know several English speaking priests who can come for a Catholic ceremony.

If non religious ceremony: we can recommend celebrants for a non religious ceremony

- *Do you organize legally binding weddings ?*

Yes, it is possible under certain conditions. Please check info here :

<http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/weddings-2/wedding-ceremony/>

A legally binding ceremony is called a civil wedding in France. This can be arranged for foreigners but paperwork can be quite painful and costly (for example for translating your official papers in French from English or your local language). If you want to avoid French bureaucracy, we recommend you have a civil ceremony at your local registry office then a symbolic blessing or a religious ceremony in France. You can keep your civil ceremony confidential if you wish. In France, all the couples are doing the paperwork first (with only their parents and bridal party) and usually a few weeks later, all the other guests are invited to the actual ceremony (blessing of rings and exchange of vows) and they attend the wedding reception which is held in a wedding venue (usually a chateau). In France, it is similar as the process of buying a house : you sign the paperwork first and a few days or weeks later you throw a big housewarming party where everyone is invited.

Doing the paperwork beforehand is allowing couples to make their "actual" ceremony more personal as civil weddings are quite dull in France (nothing can be customized while your religious or symbolic blessing can be fully personal from readings to songs or decor).

- *Can we bring our own wedding planner?*

Yes, external planners are welcome

- *Is the pool open during events?*

The pool will be open until the end of the cocktail hour (provided that you have baby sitters or parents to supervise small children). We have to shut the cover after sunset to prevent any accident related to abuse of alcohol.

- *Can you suggest local specialties to offer to our guests?*

Among the most popular options: macarons, blackcurrant liquors, jam jars, mustard jars etc

- *Do I need a special insurance for planning an event in France?*

French residents usually do not need a special insurance as it is included in their household insurance coverage.

For foreigners, it is recommended to subscribe a special insurance even if the probability of using it is actually quite low. The cost of an insurance should be around €160-200 for 3 days.

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

4. Catering

- Do you have sample menus

Sample menus can be downloaded here but can also be discussed with our chefs if you have other ideas : <http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/moreinfo/menus/>
(password is chateau or varenn.es)

- Are breakfasts included in the rental fees ?

Catering is not included in the rental fees as each group has different needs
You can request b&b or half boarding or full boarding. We can charge each room if you do not wish to cover all the food bills.

- What are the options for meals outside of the wedding reception?

Most couples will opt for half boarding or full boarding as it is a full-time job to feed many people for several days. They will usually host a welcome BBQ the night before the wedding and a farewell brunch the day after. Sample menus can be downloaded here but can be discussed with our chefs if you have other ideas:
<http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/moreinfo/menus/>

- Are you flexible with dietary requirements?

Yes we are used to cater for all kinds of dietary requirements (gluten-free, fat-free, dairy-free, allergies, veggies etc)

- Are you able to provide American or British specialties like wedding cakes, cupcakes, cake pops etc

Yes, we have a specialist cake designer who was trained in France and in the UK. She was also trained to make gluten free desserts.

- Can we have a French wedding cake?

Yes, fyi a French wedding cake is called croquembouche or "pièce montée"

- What are the options for children meals?

Menus at discounted rates are adapted for children depending on their age.
Children are usually having their meals with baby sitters in the main building then they can play outdoors or sleep in the tv lounge.

- What are the times for the meals?

For the wedding reception, we recommend the following timeline (it allows enough time for the preparations and the light will be good for photography after 4pm)

- Ceremony : 4pm
- Cocktail hour : from 5 to 7.30pm
- Dinner : from 7.30 to 10pm

For the other meals

- Breakfast : 8.30-10.30am

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

- Lunch : 12.30-2pm
- Dinner : 8-10pm

Please contact us if you request other timings

- Do you have caterers from a different cultural background than France?

Our chefs were trained in France and in the UK and can cook the following styles very easily: French, fusion, Asian, international (British, American) & Indian. We are always open to discover new cultures and traditions. Our chefs recently had to learn African cuisine for a groom coming from Ghana and we know good caterers from India, Italy, Lebanon & Madagascar. We are always happy to discuss new and creative ideas

- Can you recommend options for evening snacks (to be served during the dancing party)?

Yes, in Evening snacks menu

- Is self-catering possible ?

It is possible outside of the wedding reception but not recommended unless you have professional chefs among your party. Managing food shopping and preparations for big numbers is a full-time job and is very time-consuming (do you really want to spend your holidays working or ask your guests to work). In any case a cleaning service should be factored in the costings (depending on numbers).

5. Wines and other beverages

- Do you have a wine list?

Yes we do, mostly with Burgundy wines but we can also provide wines from other regions upon request. Burgundy production is very small compared to other regions therefore the wine list is often to be updated and some vintages can become unavailable quickly.

- Can we bring our own bottles?

Yes it is possible but there is a cork fee for chilling, serving and disposing the alcohol bottles (and also the recycling tax)

- Is it possible to have a cash bar?

Yes

- Do you recommend vineyards?

If you are short of time, we recommend you go to the Cooperative Nuiton-Beaunoy in Beaune which will offer a wide selection of bottles at producer's price : www.nuiton-beaunoy.com

Other options here: <http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/moreinfo/burgundy/wines/>

- Can you give an estimate of the # of bottles to purchase

Yes, see advice here: <http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/moreinfo/burgundy/wines/>

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

- *How far in advance can we get our bottles delivered to the Chateau?*

Wine bottles usually get delivered 3 days before your arrival (so they can rest before the event). In case your cellar wants to ship bottles in advance, please contact Aymeric to plan the logistics: adetruchis@chateaudevarenn.es.fr

- *Is it possible to get beer kegs?*

Yes but we have to hire the machine and it is more costly than beer bottles. Please give your guest numbers for each meal and the list of beers you request then we will get a quote for you.

- *Do you provide soft drinks?*

Yes, we usually provide an unlimited package for the duration of your stay as it will waste your holiday time to go to the supermarket and transport hundreds of bottles for your stay (quotes are depending on the volume/number of guests/beverage list, we usually charge a flat fee on a per person basis)

6. Equipment and facilities

- *Can we invite external guests to enjoy the pool or attend our meals*

Yes, external guests are welcome and they can use the pool house for a shower and getting changed. They can also have your meals on-site provided that they or you pay for the bill.

- *What happens if a guest wants a drink outside of the meal hours?*

For soft drinks: with the unlimited package the fridge in the chateau is refilled regularly
For hot drinks: there is a complimentary kettle in a few rooms (pantry, dining room etc). Nespresso is included in the unlimited soft drinks package otherwise the pods are charged at the end of your stay.
For alcohol: you can bring your own or we can also fill the fridges for you with beers etc

- *What kind of equipment is provided for large events?*

Description of the equipment packages is available on our website (classical white package, rustic or gold package)

7. Lay out of the reception

- If standard lay-out

- Ceremony: in the Chapel or in the gardens by the statue (to get shade from the trees)
- Cocktail hour: on the Orangery terrace
- Dinner: in the banquet hall of the Orangery
- Dancing party: in the dance floor area of the Orangery

A curtain can be put or a divider can be hired for dividing the banquet hall (gives more intimacy for small groups)

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

- If fully outdoor event

- Cocktail hour: on the Chateau terrace
- Dinner: on the Orangery terrace (string lights or led lights can be rented for this, various options to be checked with wedding planners)
- Dancing party: we can hire a wooden floor to be set up on the Orangery terrace. However local regulation only allows outdoor dancing until midnight and this can be reduced to 11pm under certain circumstances

- For welcome BBQ and farewell brunch

We recommend to use the pool area for a change a scenery vs the main wedding day

- *Can we see pictures or videos of your previous events?*

Please check our facebook page for recent pictures and films as well as press features on our blog (www.chateaudevarenn.es.net/blog) or on <http://chateaudevarenn.es.net/weddings-2/real-weddings-videos/>

8. Wedding planning

- *I have booked the venue, what is the next step now?*

- First plan a viewing trip if you have booked the venue without seeing it
- This viewing trip can be combined with a wedding planning session

This wedding planning session is usually comprising the following appointments

- Food sampling is held at the chateau if your wedding meal is managed by our resident chefs. Otherwise it will be at the caterer's restaurant
- Hair and make up trial if you do not bring your own
- Discussion around the logistics (lay out and timeline of the events)
- Styling the event
- Meeting or skyping with vendors like DJ if possible

Bear in mind that good photographers and videographers have to be booked early so you should short list (and possibly book) your preferred ones before the wedding planning session if it does not happen shortly after booking the venue.

- *What are the possible dates for wedding planning sessions?*

As we are fully booked on week-ends and sometimes mid-weeks from early April to late October, wp sessions usually happen in low season. Please contact us for booking dates.

- *How much is a wedding planning session?*

We are offering a discounted rate for visitors. Food is charged based on the menu you sample and wine consumption is charged based on the wine list. Please contact us for current costings

- *Can we invite guests for wedding planning sessions?*

Yes you can invite guests. Please tell them that their room and meals are also to be

WEDDING RELATED FAQs

settled on site.

- *Can we do things ourselves?*

Yes, if you are crafty and have time to manage a diy project, you are welcome.

9. Financial matters

- *Who is in charge?*

Our receptionist is in charge of split billing (invoicing individual rooms). All the other budget related questions are managed by our finance manager

We also have an accountant.

- *What is the process for booking the venue?*

* Rental fees with a direct booking: a 33% deposit is required upon booking. There are a couple of other installments 12 and 6 months before arrival then the balance is due two months before arrival. For split billing, we usually request 50% deposit upon room booking (at latest 6 months before arrival) and the balance 1 month before arrival.

Regarding catering: usually a 33% deposit is required upon booking catering, There are a few other installments 12, 6 and 2 months before arrival then the balance is usually settled before arrival to avoid having to manage financial issues during your stay with us (variable things like the balance for cork fee or bartenders hours will be adjusted the day after the wedding).

More flexible terms can be discussed if necessary

- *When are we expected to give final numbers?*

Final numbers for all the meals and activities have to be provided 1 month before arrival and the final balance will be adjusted accordingly. Please note that the catering quote will be based on your estimate numbers and may change for example if numbers drop by more than 10%. We accept cash, transfers and credit/debit cards (the latter are subject to a bank charge if from foreign banks)

* For a booking through an agent: If you book through an agent, the payment calendar may be a bit different and their own payment terms apply for the rental fees but the wedding/catering related costs are always settled directly with the venue. Agents may add their own billing charges on top of the rental fees, this is not something that we have control upon.

- *Do we have to tip the chateau staff?*

Tips part of the staff's compensation schemes and they are happy to see a recognition of their efforts to make you happy. Most groups will leave €20-30 per staff member, €100-150 for the resident chef and €50-60 for the sous-chef but some clients can be more generous. The event planning team is usually receiving a 8-10% bonus on top of their regular compensation.

WEDDING RELATED FAQS

- Do we have to tip vendors?

If you are happy of the vendors' work, it is common to show your appreciation by leaving a tip. Indicative amounts are given here:

<http://preciousoccasions.blogspot.fr/2013/08/tipping-your-event-vendors.html>

- Do you have advice on how to optimize our wedding budget?

Indeed, we have many ideas based on feedbacks of previous guests (what was priority for them and what were things that you can skip easily). After planning hundreds of events, we have a good idea of where it is worth to invest and where you can skip things. This can be discussed during your wedding preparations.