A nice day for a green wedding!

NNL writer Niobe Shaw and Oli Wray wanted their big day this summer to be as eco-friendly as possible. We asked Niobe - the new Mrs Wray-Shaw - to give us the lowdown on their 'eco I do'...



The newlyweds, Oli and Niobe Wray-Shaw, at Waxham Great Barn

WEDDINGS can be so wasteful. Oli, my husband, and I knew we wanted to minimise the environmental impact of ours. Of course, the greenest wedding would be a tiny affair, but as we still wanted to celebrate with friends and family, we made the most sustainable decisions we could.

Venue and decor

Waxham Great Barn (www.waxhambarnweddings.co.uk) was ideal. It's a stunning, 15th-century barn, and a licensed, empty, dry hire venue, giving us complete control in choosing suppliers and what we wanted to do with the space! Daisy Bonham and Aaron Riches, who manage the barn, are wonderful, offering as much support as each couple needs.

Our family helped make the barn beautiful. Mum used flowers she and Granny had grown to create our bouquets and arrangements, displayed in vintage glass and stoneware, a far more sustainable and personal approach than importing flowers grown in monocultures. She also dried petals for confetti. Oli's dad sliced and sanded a log from his garden to create natural and rustic table decor and stands for the food. We brought some furniture from home and also used Array Wedding Hire (www.arrayweddingandeventhire.co.uk) who offer a great range.

Outfits

We didn't want any single-wear outfits. Oli's suit from Hatters (www.jonathantrumbull.co.uk) will be regularly re-worn. My outfit was harder as I struggled to find anything suitable second-hand. Thankfully, Evie Riddell of Naya Bridal in Coltishall (www.nayabridal.com) brought my idea to life: a top and trouser combo I'll now wear separately.

'I'm always excited for a unique brief like Niobe's two-piece,' says Evie. 'Her crepe fabric is made of recycled acetate and organic viscose, ending up with a cool look with a sustainable fabric.'

Georgie Cleaver from Tide & Earth jewellery (www.tideandearth.com) drilled holes into Mum's sea glass collection, which Evie added as statement buttons. Georgie also crafted our bespoke wedding bands using recycled silver.

Our bridesmaids and groom's party chose their own outfits within our colour scheme. This meant they all wore something they looked fantastic in and will use again.



Niobe in her top and trouser combo by Evie Riddell of Naya Bridal

Food

Keeping food vegan and vegetarian limited its carbon footprint. Crabb & Fox pizzas and evening grazing boards (www.crabbandfoxbar.co.uk) were thoroughly enjoyed. Any leftovers came to our beach picnic the next day.



Oli and Niobe's wedding set up inside Waxham Great Barn

Dessert was Feel Good Ice Cream (hwww.feelgoodicecreamco.co.uk). As well as the excellent real fruit flavour, we loved the business' purpose: 'The Feel Good Foundation was the driving force behind creating Feel Good Ice Cream,' says founder Jon Lee. 'As the company prospers, it will support youth groups facing inequality... providing young individuals with the resources and support they need to overcome challenges and flourish.' Additional sweet treats were baked by friends and family - another personal touch that felt so special!

Oli and I are thrilled we planned our wedding this way. In doing so, we created a celebration that felt so authentically 'us', without causing unnecessary waste.

NIOBE'S TOP TIPS

Bridal outfit: Use local designers or buy second-hand. Threads Bridal in Holt (www.threadsbridal.co.uk) stocks pre-loved pieces.
Borrow and share: Chances are, someone will have the decor you need! After your wedding, pass items onto others.
Flowers: Use seasonal, locally grown flowers. Norfolk Flower Farm (www.norfolkflowerfarm.com) can help keep your blooms beautiful and eco-friendly.
Stationery: Digital invites are the greenest option. The second-best is printing with a company who use FSC certified, recycled paper and vegan inks.
Focus on the fun: Remember, it's not about the stuff - the most important thing is getting married and celebrating with loved ones.

Photography © Mim Howell, www.mimhowellphotography.com

47 GREEN STYLE.indd 1 17/09/2024 10:12