

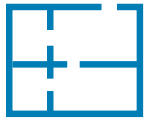
15 questions

Expert event planners ask before booking a unique venue



Planning a memorable event is simple – when you know what to ask. With these 15 questions recommended by expert event planners, you can guarantee a venue that's perfect for you.

01



Can you spy before you buy?

A unique venue means a wonderful surprise for your guests. But, as the planner, you should know exactly what to expect. Obviously an advance visit is always ideal but, if this isn't convenient, you can always ask for floor plans, photos or even a virtual tour.

02



What's the (real) capacity?

Always double check the numbers you're given. Establishing the size of the tables and confirming how many people will be seated at each will help you determine the eventual ambiance of your event: cosy, sociable, relaxed, bustling, intimate, spacious etc.

03



Can you plan an extraordinary event in a convenient location?

You don't have to go far off the beaten track to find a unique venue that oozes character and is still easy to get to. If you look hard enough, there are hidden gems to be discovered – even in familiar, convenient locations. In fact, the beauty of unique venues in city locations is enhanced by the wealth of nearby attractions you can plan an extended activity around to really make your event stand out.

04



What's the best way to budget?

The most economical package isn't always obvious. If you're not sure whether DDR (Day Delegate Rates) are right for you, ask about paying for room hire and catering separately – you might be surprised to find that your off-menu preference actually comes in cheaper!

Bonus tip: in London, a DDR package below £70 is generally considered good value if it includes room hire, AV facilities, refreshments on arrival and in the afternoon, and lunch.

05



Can you save time and money with preferred suppliers?

You could spend a lot of your own time, energy and budget researching suppliers of special 'extras', or you could simply make use of the venue's contacts. You might even get a good deal from preferred suppliers as friendly venues will pass any loyalty discounts on to you – but watch out for venues 'marking up'. Some venues will add 20% so it may be worth going direct.

06



Where's the kitchen?

It's quite rare for unique venues to have permanent in-house caterers and front of house staff, so think about the distance the food will have to travel to the table and the level of service you expect. Expert event planners know that an on-site kitchen with permanent staff ensures fresh produce and a team who will know how to look after you best.

07



How are special requirements catered to?

Have you checked your guests' access and dietary requirements – and that the venue can accommodate them? Some thoughtful venues provide parking for blue badge holders as well as accessible entrances, toilet facilities and lifts. It's also reasonable to expect unique venues to be able to suggest bespoke meal options that cater for specific dietary requirements.

08



Are you compatible?

Sacrificing beautiful architecture for cutting-edge technology... That may be the trade-off in many historical buildings. But definitely not all. So if you need AV facilities along with your columns and stained glass, check that the venue's technology is reliable, easy to use and compatible with your speakers' and delegates' devices.

09



Are they sending the right signals?

Patchy connectivity can wreak havoc on a business meeting or conference. If your guests need to stay connected at all times, make sure the venue has free, reliable wifi and strong phone signal.

10



Do you need exclusivity?

If you're hosting an evening event, such as a dinner, party, lecture or reception, you may want to find out if you can have exclusive use of the venue. If not, check what safeguards the venue has in place to make sure your guests enjoy their evening in peace and privacy.

11



How can bespoke service make your event one to remember?

All good venues should provide meeting basics like comfortable chairs, tables and presentation equipment as standard. Ideally, the use of AV facilities will also be included. But one of the best things about unique venues is the opportunity for bespoke service. Special touches like seasonal flowers, menu cards or themed decorations can really add to your guests' overall experience and make your event one to remember.

12



Who's responsible for first aid?

The venue may have trained first-aiders on site or you may need to provide your own. It's always worth checking, just in case. But a good venue will always be conscientious of health and safety requirements. You can ask for more details when they show you the fire exits.

13



What's your window of opportunity?

Venues can sometimes request that items are delivered and cleared out within a very short space of time, so make sure you plan for that. On the other hand, the personal service you often get with unique venues can mean flexibility and compromise so it's important to have that conversation.

14



Can you do some extra good?

One of the most gratifying perks of booking a unique venue that's linked to a non-profit organisation is the satisfaction of knowing you're making a meaningful contribution to a worthy cause. Similarly, venues might have 'green' initiatives to reduce waste, energy use and packaging, and use only locally sourced and seasonal food. So find out where your money is going: ask about any charitable connections or green policies.

15



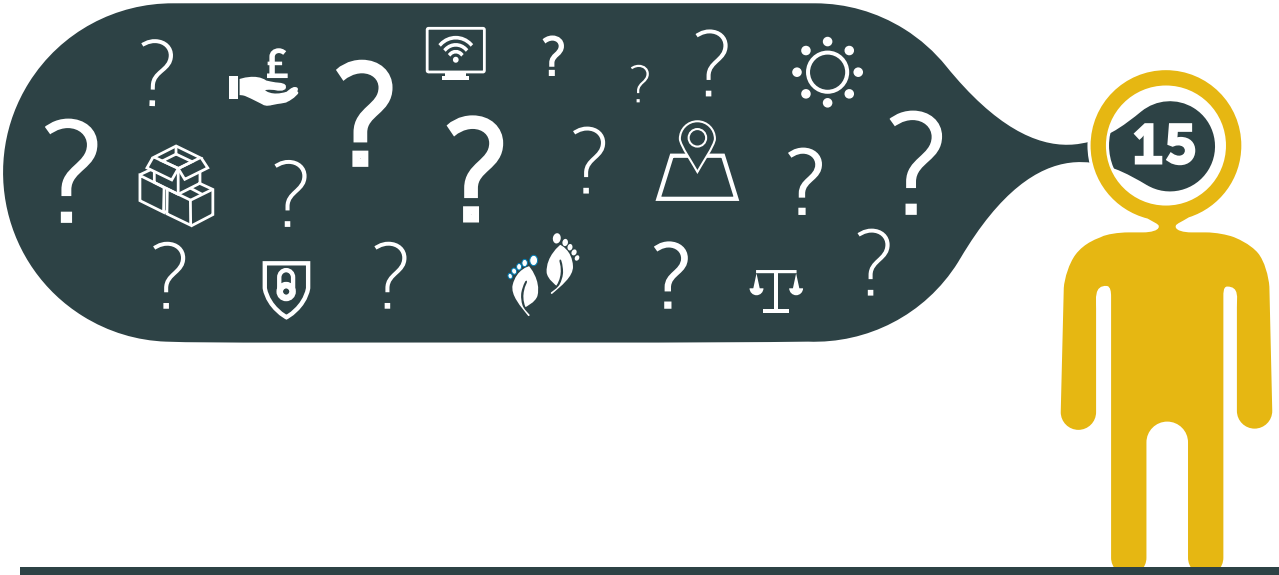
Does a unique venue suit your style?

Good event planning is about meeting your guests' needs and expectations, but planning a great event at a unique venue is an opportunity to far exceed those expectations. In order to balance value with experience, these questions should help you to ask yourself: in which areas are you happy to compromise and where do you really want to wow?

Your checklist

We've summarised all our **expert tips** for you in one **handy checklist** to make it even easier to remember exactly what to ask the next time you're planning an extraordinary event at a unique venue.

- 01: Can I spy before I buy?
- 02: What's the (real) capacity?
- 03: Can I have an extraordinary event and a convenient location?
- 04: What's the best way to budget?
- 05: Can I save time and money with preferred suppliers?
- 06: Where's the kitchen?
- 07: How are special requirements catered to?
- 08: Are we (technologically) compatible?
- 09: Are you sending the right (WiFi and mobile) signals?
- 10: Will we get exclusivity?
- 11: Can bespoke service make our event one to remember?
- 12: Who's responsible for first aid?
- 13: What's our window of opportunity?
- 14: Can We do some extra good?
- 15: Does a unique venue suit our style?



The Royal Society of Chemistry at Burlington House

Against the backdrop of London's West End, Burlington House is a hidden gem. Nestled in the heart of Piccadilly, impress your guests as they make their way through a tranquil courtyard to discover an innovative blend of heritage architecture and state-of-the-art technology, including fully integrated audio visual systems.

Our six light-filled rooms can accommodate anything from exhibitions and conferences to private parties, from the most intimate of dinners to the grandest of gatherings – all tailored specifically to you.

This is venue hire with a difference.

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