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## The Wedding Industry Awards 2015

### Recognising & Rewarding Excellence in the Wedding Industry

Vanilla Catering & Events were Regional Finalists – London and South East – in the above awards this year. All couples who got married between 1st November 2013 and October 2014 were eligible to vote. Below are some of the comments we received from our brides & grooms.

#### Average Voting Scores

Vote Question	Ave. Score
Ability of your caterer to understand, interpret and realise your vision and ideas.	9.852
Range and flexibility of menus offered by your caterer.	9.815
Quality of expertise, advice and guidance received from your caterer.	9.852
Quality of customer service and communication received from your caterer.	9.852
Quality and presentation of the food and/or drink on the day of the wedding.	9.852
Personal presentation and efficiency of catering staff on the day of your wedding.	9.774
Value for money.	9.648

#### General Comments

“The quality and service provided by Vanilla was exceptional. Sally Elcote was our contact from day one; she was such a pleasure to deal with and made the day pass without any hiccups and made us feel so at ease with how everything was going. Took all the stress out of planning our wedding and the day and we can't say enough thank you's to her and all the staff that catered at our wedding. AMAZING!”

“I really am not a person who gives good reviews, but with Vanilla, they totally deserve it. The company was faultless throughout- the tasting was some of the nicest food I've had! The team were so approachable and helped with so many other aspects of the wedding. Excellent value for money too!”

“Vanilla Catering delivered my dream wedding, not only in terms of the food (which was delicious, varied and used the best quality ingredients) but also in the impeccable service they provided right from the first consultation and tastings through to the setting up of the tables, serving of food and coordination of the guests on the day. Every member of staff was professional, polite, friendly and relaxed. Vanilla are flexible, well organised, cheerful and create delicious meals loved by all.”

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"Everything on our day was as special as we could have wished for: amazing quality food, locally sourced, wonderfully prepared, beautifully presented - topped off with seamless, friendly service. We and some of our guests felt the food and service was as good as that in high-end London restaurants."

"Sally Pickles and her team were a delight to work with from the outset. Their food is of such a high standard: fresh, locally sourced produce and impeccably presented. Sally and her team had not catered at the venue before, but were completely unfazed. We had utter faith that they would deliver a wonderful wedding breakfast and were not disappointed. Friends and family commented that it was the best food at a wedding that they had ever tasted!"

"From the moment I contacted Vanilla I received excellent customer service and they put me at ease. From the moment I met Sally I felt relaxed that Vanilla would make our vision come to life. They were able to offer us amazing food- including an evening hog roast etc- and all to restaurant standard. Sally and her team were true professionals and nothing was too much trouble. I would recommend Vanilla over and over again- to summarise the whole experience was amazing!"

"Vanilla was absolutely fantastic. Sally is very professional, warm and friendly. Never pushy, nothing was ever too much trouble and she really made us feel special. The whole experience was never stressful and very enjoyable. It took us a long time to work out what we wanted and Sally was there every step of the way, full of very good advice. I cannot remember one guest who didn't compliment on the quality of food & service. They did a truly brilliant job! Would hire them again in a heartbeat."

"Amazing service on the day, everything we expected and more, really looked after us and were happy to let us catch up on desert after it had been served. Really attentive to our needs, personal menu created for us around our budget and tastes. Could not fault at all, all our guests loved it!"

"From the first meeting we were both very happy choosing Vanilla. Staff are very friendly and professional and considered every detail to make the day run smoothly and exactly as we wanted it. All the guests commented on how fantastic the food was, it was delivered promptly, presented beautifully and tasted amazing. We had the most perfect Wedding Day and this was largely thanks to Vanilla for their organisation and hard work to make this happen."

"From the first time I 'dropped in' unannounced to Vanilla they treated me like you would a friend, welcoming me with open arms and canapés. The tasting session was out of this world, we would have chosen

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everything if we could and have to admit my husband and I finished all 9 dishes we were shown, we couldn't waste a mouthful. The wedding meal was amazing, 150 tomato panna cottas perfectly presented on the hottest day of the year, wow. It was all incredible. Friendly staff, amazing food,"

"The food and service that were provided by Vanilla Catering was truly second to none. Prior to the day they listened to what we wanted and were flexible for us to incorporate our own ideas as we wanted a 'chef' from each table to carve up the meal. On the day everything was under their control and we did not have to worry about a single thing. We've had numerous people comment on the exceptional standard of the food and many have asked for Vanilla's details - which is the biggest compliment."

"We learn't that our wedding venue had burnt down 7 days before our wedding. There aren't many catering companies who will pick up the phone at midnight and reassure you that they can still provide the same level of service and reassure you that everything will be OK. Within 48 hours Vanilla had made contact with our new venue, inspected, ordered additional equipment and been on hand to help me with any queries - however small! The service was amazing - we couldn't thank them enough!"

"Fabulous experience from start to finish. Creative and diverse menu choices, flexibility to cater for all attendees, Vanilla provided a professional service from our first enquiry onwards. The food on the day was amazing and we have been inundated with compliments from our guests ever since."

"Not only were Vanilla fantastic throughout the planning of our wedding and on the day (they were very professional and thorough as well as relaxed and friendly) but the food they created was outstanding. All our guests commented on how good the food was; it really was delicious and beautiful!"

"Vanilla were great, of highly recommend them to other brides"

"We recieved exceptional service from Vanilla Catering, they really understood what we wanted for our wedding breakfast. Their calm, professional and helpful service gave us full confidence in choosing and relying on them for our big day. On the day, the food was delicious and all staff were excellent. They went above and beyond our expectations for a caterer, helping out with much of the logistics at the reception, including helping to organise a confused troop of morris dancers!"

"Nothing was too much trouble. Everything was done and presented as I imagined it to be. So many of our wedding guests complimented us on the food and drink at our wedding and some have since asked for the

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details of vanilla catering to use in future. They really helped to make our day perfect!"

"Vanilla were fantastic both in the run up to the wedding and on the day. I was very impressed by the standard of food and service on the day. All our guests remarked on the high quality of food. Vanilla provided a premier and professional service and I would not hesitate to use them or recommend them again."

"I contacted Vanilla after the recommendation of a supplier met and asked for a specific main course of pie and mash which wasn't on their normal menu. Immediately they adjusted to our needs and asks and even assisted with a miniature ploughmans for starters after we loved their sharing platter. Nothing was too much trouble and the event management helped to make our day go smoothly. I could not recommend them enough"

"Vanilla gave outstanding service from start to finish, from the initial contact to the days running up to our wedding. They were completely flexible in the amount of service they could provide and providing our own dedicated event manager put our minds at rest that the event would be managed well. The food on the day was amazing (especially the home made scotch eggs) got many positive comments from our guests. We would highly recommend."

"People still mention how good the food and service were at the wedding. The standard of food was far beyond what was expected for the price point. An amazing beef wellington for under £16 per head and free corkage!"

"Everyone at our wedding said how amazing the food was, there was plenty, it was hot and really tasty! They served us very well. The support we received leading up to the wedding was excellent. And we loved our tasting session, the team were great at putting our ideas into reality."

"From our first meeting through to the end of the day itself, Sally and her team were amazing. The canapés were some of the best we have ever tasted, and a large number of the guests have specifically commented on the quality of them and other courses of food. Everything was done in such a professional manner, but with genuine care and appreciation that we aren't experts, just people aiming to have a great day. I continue to recommend them to anyone looking for a caterer"

"Vanilla Catering were one of three companies we were offered for the venue and they were easily the best on all accounts. Great value for money, accommodating. Sally Pickles was brilliant. She effortlessly dealt with our issues."

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"I cannot explain enough how amazing Vanilla Catering were for our wedding catering. Sally was incredibly professional from the moment go, taking control, which meant I had nothing to worry about and everything went smoothly. The food was out of this world and to an incredibly high standard, which for 168 guests is a challenge to achieve. The staff on the day were also to a very professional standard. All in all they were an incredible company to work with and I couldn't recommend them enough."

"We chose Vanilla as after visiting many different caterers Vanilla gave us the peace of mind everything would be thought about, planned and executed with outstanding professionalism. Our day was perfect Vanilla certainly ensured it ran smoothly I would definitely use them again and have recommended them to a friend who will be using them for her wedding in 2015. I rated 9 for food as everything was perfect apart from one of the meat dishes ran out which was purely a quantity issue not quality."

"We were not the easiest couple to satisfy, both in terms of us wanting to tweak the menus, and also being quite demanding on securing the food that we wanted at the price that we wanted to pay, but we could not have been happier with every part of the service and the food. All of our guests have complimented us on the exceptional quality of the food, which was amazing in it's own right, let alone taking into account the fact that it was all prepared in a small kitchen tent."

"Sally and the team at Vanilla, are ultimate professionals, the quality of food, presentation and service they provided leading upto and on our wedding day went beyond our expectations. They are so easy to deal with and made our day stress free, they are 1st class!"

"I really can't recommend Vanilla Catering highly enough they were absolutely amazing. Our team on the day were led by Helen, when we met with Helen beforehand she went through everything thoroughly and was really accommodating of our needs. Helen really helped put our mind at ease as we had been let down by our previous caterer. On the day Helen and the team were fabulous, the food was delicious and they couldn't have been more helpful. The Vanilla team were nothing sort of amazing!"

"Vanilla were great. From the initial meeting, tailoring the menus, to being so helpful, looking after everyone on the day, we were so pleased we picked them. On the day, nothing was too much trouble, Sally went out of her way to make sure we were enjoying our day as much as possible and we didn't have to worry about a thing. All the staff were friendly and professional, we owe them a great deal for such a fantastic day."

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"Vanilla went beyond our expectations - the food was exceptional and the service was seamless. Having a project manager was also so helpful: the day goes by in such a blur we really relied on them to remind us about cutting the cake, first dance etc. They have a great range of food options and were very flexible."

"Vanilla were amazing on our wedding day! They made sure the entire day ran smoothly and all of our guests commented on how great the food and service was- they truly cared about making our day special!"

"Sally and the Vanilla team were very friendly and professional and left us with nothing to worry about other than getting married! Everyone complimented the food and we really were impressed with how flexible and accommodating Vanilla were, which was one of the major things that attracted us to them. They definitely went above and beyond to make everything run smoothly. We feel very lucky to have had their excellent support leading up to and on the day itself. Thank you Vanilla!"

"There are not enough words to describe our experience with Vanilla Catering and Events, they are absolutely incredible, their service is outstanding & the food...WOW!!!! Our guests are STILL talking about the food at our wedding, the quality, portion sizes, everything we hoped for & so much more!!!"

"Everyone at Vanilla who was involved in our wedding worked hard to ensure that the day ran smoothly."

"Right from the first point of contact I was totally impressed with them, I was in a panic, Helen calmed & reassured me that nothing was a problem, they were all totally professional & so kind and friendly, Helen was amazing before & on the day, a total asset to the company. I organised my wedding from Taiwan & they were patient with me & so helpful and I would recommend them to anyone. All totally high quality, chefs are amazing, staff on the day were amazing & Helen was awesome, thank you so much!"

"Vanilla were very professional from day 1 when we met them for a tasting. We were very impressed with their selection of dishes and the chef's ability to tweak dishes to suit our needs. On the day I barely noticed the catering staff and everything ran so smoothly. The food was delicious and presented so beautifully. We would highly recommend them to anyone having a wedding."

"The events manager that you automatically get assigned to you is a great asset and we were very lucky to have Sally Elcoate who was fantastic. She put us at ease from the very first meeting and we realised we would be able to relax on the day as she would take care of everything. She liaised with the venue, photographer and MC to ensure

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that everything ran smoothly on the day. Would recommend Vanilla to anyone getting married who want quality food and great service but at reasonable price."

"I would highly recommend Vanilla, my experience of Sally and her colleagues was outstanding. I can give no less than 10 in all the categories, they were all-round perfect! On the day it was so lovely to just be able to enjoy it knowing it was in safe hands."

"Vanilla's service was efficient and professional throughout. The suggested menu, perfectly cooked (many positive comments), fitted with my themed forties wedding. The organisation of the day, friendly service and assistance with many important details, made this a perfect day for us and our guests."

"We loved the food and the service on the day was second to none. Our key contact, Sally Pickles, was a real star in particular but all the staff were very good and most or many of our guests commented on how beautiful the food was."

"Sally and her team provided the highest quality service & food to really ensure our wedding was remembered for all the right reasons. Their attention to detail was superb. As an example, as the bride wanting to remember the day clearly, I did not want to be drinking much alcohol. The serving staff were fantastic at discreetly offering a non-alcoholic option throughout the day (at which point I think I always chose alcohol!). The team were polite, presentable & efficient. The food was amazing!!!"

"From first meeting vanilla, they were incredibly professional and put our mind at rest about their service and expertise. All of our guests absolutely loved all the food and said they couldn't believe it was caterers and not a top restaurant. The service and management team on the day was impeccable. They kept the day running smoothly as it was just a venue and we didn't have A master of ceremonies. Nothing was too much trouble to make our day perfect."

"Vanilla inspired confidence from the moment we read their promotional brochure and continued throughout. The professionalism at every stage meant that we never once thought we had made the wrong choice and everything seemed so easy and effortless for them to plan and organise in an area where neither my wife nor I had any idea of how things would work. Their experience and knowledge of weddings and our venue was faultless and our day was perfect thanks to everything that Vanilla provided."

"Vanilla Catering were fantastic. On the day they looked after everything and the food was amazing. We hardly even noticed they were there."

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"Sally and her team helped shape our wedding breakfast, catering to our tastes and whims. The quality of their food and overall production were widely commended by our guests. The beef blade was exceptional at our tasting session, and the standards remained the same when presented to our 100 guests. Throughout the build-up and during the day, all members of the Vanilla team were welcoming and helpful, and I simply cannot praise them highly enough."

"Sally Elcoate and her team couldn't do enough to make our day perfect. From the very first phone call until the event I had complete trust and faith that they would deliver. They were completely flexible with all my catering needs and were extremely proactive in determining exactly what we wanted. I can't recommend them enough and I know anyone who selects Vanilla will be worry free and so happy with their choice. Ps The food was fantastic and loved by all our guests and is still talked about"

"Friendly and professional staff that cater to any dietary needs. They have a range of tasty, amazing beautiful menus which they can alter to your own individual tastes and price range. Most food is sourced locally as well and therefore support local farmers."

"Vanilla are the best! From our initial meeting I knew they were ideal. They listened when needed, but offered advice and their experienced minds when we didn't know best. They always understood our needs and what we were trying to achieve. Any request, even those last minute changes, were always greeted with 'this is your day and we're here to make it special for you'. They looked after us so well on the day, so friendly to everyone and the food was fantastic! Could want for more!"

"Sally & the team at Vanilla were of great help ensuring that everything went smoothly on our wedding day. The prep work done before the big day was timely and they were on top of everything. The food was really delicious and everyone loved it!"

"Vanilla Catering were exceptionally helpful and efficient throughout the entire process from the tasting session at their premises to the day itself - they did more than we paid for! Excellent value for money."

"Food and service on the day exceeded our expectations. We were very impressed as were our guests."

### **Why They Booked (in random order)**

"When I was gathering costs and contacting various caterers (approx. 7) Vanilla offered me the best customer service and the best price."

"Their promotional brochure and website inspired confidence before even making the first approach. We felt confident based on their previous



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experience that they would provide everything we would be looking for. We were not disappointed.”

“Even though their quote was more competitive than all the rest (we must have looked at 12 other caterers), they were the ONLY caterers that impressed us, they had tasters at our initial meeting, they listened to everything we wanted and came up with ideas of their own. Getting in touch with them was so easy, always pick up their phone, answered their emails promptly, nothing was too much trouble, they always went the extra mile. We really have to give special thanks to Helen Beak who was our Event Manager, a true credit to Vanilla Catering and Events!”

“Previously tried their food at two other weddings!”

“From start to finish the Vanilla Catering team made us feel relaxed and comfortable and their professionalism shone through. After meeting at an open day in our venue they followed up swiftly and welcomed us for a tasting soon after, which they were happy to do at a time that was outside office hours - something other companies said they could not accommodate - making things so much easier for two full-time workers! The food was super delicious, and the care and attention that the team put in to talking us through the details of how they would prepare for and run the catering on our wedding day was just excellent. They listened to all our ideas and came up with something that ticked every box and added a little extra too. Along with this the team were very calm and laid back - the result of real quiet professionalism - which appealed to us as we wanted fabulous food and service but without stuffy formality; the team listened to this and delivered in spades both in the lead up to the wedding and on the day.”

“Superior quality of staff food than any other company we visited.”

“My parents went to a wedding Vanilla had catered for last year and were very impressed.”

“It was important to me that I sourced a local supplier who would use local produce. When I sat down with them they mirrored my thoughts exactly and I loved how relaxed they are.”

“Great service, delicious menu, tasting options, locally sourced food”

“Vanilla stood out from all the other venue recommended caterers from the start. When I requested quotes from each, Vanilla was the only company to send me a comprehensive quote which broke down exactly how our money would be spent. It was realistic and were no hidden costs unlike other caterers we looked into.”

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"Vanilla responded quickly and efficiently to all correspondence and calls. They had a very flexible approach and were familiar with the venue. They made me feel comfortable that the day was in good hands and they were there not only to cater for the wedding but to make sure everything would run smoothly on the day, as it did."

"Best advice/information received + best interaction +best value for money of all quotes"

"From their customer service and not to mention the amazing food! People still rave about their carrot cake 5 months after the wedding!"

"Because they were professional and reassured me they could do what we wanted and they certainly did! Well done all of you! x"

"From the initial enquiry they stood out above the other caterers. Their professional but friendly replies to our enquiries made the choice simple."

"A combination of great food, truly outstanding service, spotless presentation and a malleable service that made us feel like we were their only customer!"

"I researched them online and saw reviews and the wedding industry award. My venue recommended them also. I was sold at our first meeting."

"We love good food and what Vanilla offered us the menu options we never dreamt were possible at such reasonable prices. They had a flexible customer focussed approach from the first time we contacted them"

"reputation, quality of food at trial, quality of service and attention to detail received from staff leading up to booking (provided much help and advice on timings, orders and process for the whole day, not just the food exclusively). They also offered to act as a master of ceremony, which they did with great aplomb, and they really helped make the whole day as perfect for us as it was, and there is nothing at all that they could have done better."

"See above"

"Local food at a great price!"

"We wanted flexibility on food, drink and service options as well as guidance since we were holding our reception in a village hall. We were immediately struck by how professional they were."

"Based on previous awards won, being local (by luck) and experience after first meeting"

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"After contacting Vanilla, we received a very detailed and thorough quote, which meant that there were no extra hidden costs they could come our way. They were the most professional and efficient company when quoting to us and came in at the best value! Thousands cheaper than some of the London catering companies we received quotes from. With great reviews on top of their great service, I thought they looked like the perfect catering company and they did not let me down!"

"Tasty food, prompt communication, reasonably priced for high quality, flexibility."

"It was an easy choice. We got quotes from three caterers and tasted Vanillas food first and did not even bother with the others"

"They put us at ease from the start, delicious food and lots of flexible options including all our crockery hire. They just knew how important the day was and really made us feel special and that they cared about our wedding being perfect."

"Recommendations and previous experiences with company."

"Friendly service. They helped make everything so easy. Once I had met with Sally I felt reassured that our wedding would be exactly as I imagined it to be. And it was!"

"Great care in the food presentation, impeccable hygiene, food quality was excellent on the day with many ingredients sourced locally, flexibility of menu options."

"The professionalism and willingness to help to fit to our specific needs was never too much trouble. Sally was a brilliant help and always answered my questions, even the silly small ones. On the day the professional attitude and attentiveness the whole staff gave was outstanding. I would recommend Vanilla to any couple looking for a caterer for their wedding."

"We were let down by the former venue owners after they went into liquidation and so when the new venue owners took over they recommended vanilla too us, and we are so glad they did Vanilla really made the day run smoothly!"

"Professional, knowledgeable and great at what they do"

"The standard of the food compared to other companies we had tried was head and shoulders above the rest. Slightly more expensive - but it was worth every single penny."

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“Professional, friendly, customer focused, easy to work with, exceptional quality, value for money.”

“Vanilla had the most delicious menus of all the caterers I looked at. Then, once I had met Sally and the team, there was no question of me choosing anyone other than Vanilla as they were so friendly and well organised, and I felt they genuinely cared about making a great day for us.”

“Professional service, good value for money, and confidence that they had a good track record and could be relied on to provide a range of services from food, staff and bar service. We also liked their commitment to donate to charity, so we were impressed with their corporate values.”

“Head and shoulders above the competition.”

“For their food, presentation and tasting, and also for their event management that they offer alongside which helps to support you on your day. Ensuring everyone runs smoothly.”

“Because when I met them I loved them, when my mum met them they wowed her and when my husband met them he ate 3 starters, 3 mains, 3 desserts and not a morsel was left. All our guests were wowed and I would now never chose anyone else.”

“Big recommendation from venue, and on meeting Sally it was clear that we would be looked after on the day and they were happy to help where they could”

“Our first contact with Vanilla was at a fair organised by the venue. Their representatives distinguished themselves from the peer group with their succinct and professional approach to our big day, all which was apparent in the first few minutes. It was an easy decision as by comparison they made us feel comfortable with their offering and ability to deliver.”

“Because the food was delicious. The staff were extremely accommodating and friendly. They were very organised on the day and everyone commented on how fabulous the food was.”

“The best balance of cost and product of the 6 we had to choose from”

“The combination of affordability & professionalism. We had greatly underestimated the cost of catering in our initial budget plan & this became apparent as we sought various quotations. Sally provided a very detailed quotation & adjusted this several times for us as we adapted. Their menu selection was very impressive, & the recommendation was a trusted one. Sally was always flexible but realistic when informing us of

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"additional" which ensured we were able to make fully informed decisions without any surprises to the final invoice."

"They were really friendly; thorough; fantastic food, in both taste and presentation; professional; experienced, they really knew what they were doing; helped run the day; knew the venue; locally sourced food, part of Hampshire Fare; had great ideas and advice; understood what we wanted and how we wanted the day to run; competitive quote; organised and timely, didn't have to worry about anything; I could go on... It also helps that they are a really lovely bunch of people and we couldn't have asked for anything more from them; They really went above and beyond."

"They were very good value for money and highly recommended. The food choices were full of great choices too."

"They had the tastiest menu with the friendliest staff!"

"Well priced against competitors and a great first impression upon meeting them."

"We booked Vanilla Catering and Events as they met all of our needs in providing suitable menus and arranged every aspect of the dining experience. This included liaising with the florist about table decorations, serving the wine and looking after all of the guests."