



PHOTOGRAPHER **PAULA O'HARA**
on venues

“WHETHER IT’S A VENUE THAT HAS LOTS OF CHARACTER OR A BLANK CANVAS THAT CAN BE PERSONALISED, A COUNTRY MANOR OR A CITY WAREHOUSE, MY FAVOURITE VENUES ARE THE ONES THAT LET THE LIGHT IN. IT’S EVEN BETTER IF WE CAN ACCESS PRIVATE, INTERESTING PLACES WHERE COUPLES CAN ESCAPE FOR A LITTLE WHILE FOR THOSE ROMANTIC PORTRAITS.”

Paula O'Hara Photography, paulaohara.com

1 MUSSENDEN TEMPLE, Co Derry
One of the smallest venues I've ever shot in, but unique in every way. It's on a cliff edge with the north coast as far as the eye can see. It's an epic location and its round, brick interior makes the ceremony all the more intimate. For those who love scenic shots, there are ample locations here, with 18th-century walled gardens, the cliff top and the beach below.
Nationaltrust.org.uk

2 CASTLE LESLIE, Co Monaghan
This is one of my favourite romantic Irish castles, thanks to perfect photo locations indoors and out and all within view of the main castle. This place has so much original character. I fell in love with the floral femininity, the pretty furniture, the long sash windows for maximum natural light. I also love the arched

walkways for light. The sandstone colour of the building adds warmth to photos, especially on overcast days.
Castleleslie.com

3 CLONWILLIAM HOUSE, Co Wicklow
This is just a gem of a place, set near the Vale of Avoca. It's a 19th-century house on a hill, with breathtaking views all around, hidden rivers and winding pathways making for magical portraits in shady light, while interiors are light-filled and luxurious. The whole place feels very welcoming and private. And there's even a barn refurbishment in progress, so it's about to become all the more adaptable.
Clonwilliamhouse.com

4 BALLYFIN DEMESNE, Co Laois
This is, in my opinion, the height of grandeur and period drama in

Ireland, with no detail missed in the restoration. Wedding parties have this huge estate all to themselves, with the staff attending their every need. It's pure lords-and-ladies escapism. From a photographer's point of view, it's a light-filled dream, with ancient trees, orchards, lakes, opulent rooms and period furniture everywhere.
Ballyfin.com

5 THE TAP ROOM, Co Antrim
Rather different to the extravagance of Ballyfin but with plenty of boho charm, this is the place for chilled-out parties, big on craic. I love the rustic mood of the Tap Room itself, but there is also the option of glamping it up in the on-site teepees, which is quite a laugh. This is the perfect venue for a summer wedding, with lots of space for stamping your own personality.
Taproomhilden.com

PORTRAIT OF PAULA BY MICHAEL TOMAN AT STORY OF EYE; MUSSENDEN TEMPLE, CLONWILLIAM HOUSE AND THE TAP ROOM BY PAULA O'HARA

