

Cemetery wedding brings unique twist

Cemeteries ideal venue

FORGET about getting married in a traditional chapel, on a beach or in a park.

Annelise Calderwood, 31, and her partner Josh Hoare, 35, have decided to buck the trend and tie the knot at the Springvale Botanical Cemetery on March 28.

The Frankston couple don't believe a cemetery wedding is the least bit creepy. They say they will be surrounded by loved ones, including their three children, and believe Ms Calderwood's late relatives who are buried at the cemetery will be there in spirit.

"The gardens are just gorgeous and the price was very reasonable," Ms Calderwood said.

The couple met at a party when she was 17, and over the years, Mr Hoare proposed several times, but the timing was never right.

This time, Ms Calderwood decided to pop the question herself over a romantic dinner and soon the pair was making plans for a cemetery wedding.

"We saw the new function centre being built and thought it would be a really nice place to get married," she said. "We've had great feedback and everyone's really excited and thinks it's really unique. It's nice that it's getting used, not just for funerals but for weddings too."



THE PERKS

- Landscaped gardens four times the size of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens
- Five chapels on site
- New state-of-the-art function venue, the Clarence Reardon Centre
- Ample parking
- Competitive pricing

Annelise Calderwood and Josh Hoare will get married in the cemetery.

Picture: TANYA FRY

"TILL death us do part" has taken on a whole new meaning with wedding ceremonies in cemeteries starting to catch on.

It is a revival of a practice from the Victorian era where socialising among the gravestones was a common Sunday practice.

Jane Grover, the chief executive of Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, which manages Springvale and Bunurong cemeteries, encouraged people to regard the sites as a community asset.

"We want society today to regard cemeteries and memorial parks in the same way that Melburnians did in the Victorian era when people would gather to socialise with friends and promenade along its wide pathways," Ms Grover said.

She said it was hoped both sites would soon become popular wedding venues.

"Often these couples will have a close relative buried there or perhaps a family member has a cremation memorial at the site. For such couples, there is an emotional connection to the cemetery."

Ms Grover said there had been a few weddings held already and encouraged other couples to consider the option. Details: <http://smct.org.au/>

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