



*Bruce Russell, one of the city's leading wedding and events planners, describes why London will always be the ultimate party destination*



During summer in London, there is something to celebrate every month, from the Chelsea Flower Show and The Championships at Wimbledon to The Queen's birthday. For me, this is hugely exciting as there are endless opportunities to plan parties inspired by this calendar. London's plethora of beautiful, historic venues are also a continual

source of inspiration. Instead of transforming these buildings completely, I take elements of what makes them special – the history, the art or the spectacular décor, perhaps – and use them to inform the planning and design process. London has so many iconic venues that are great for this, such as Claridge's, The Dorchester, the Savoy and so on, but they are all very different, with their own captivating and unique character.

In a city as busy as London, where engagements and parties are hosted every day, it's important to make an event stand out as unique, so I am keen to ensure that everything I do is personal. If I feel any elements of what the client wants have been done already or are becoming too clichéd, I find a way to adapt them to make the end result more individual. Some guests may have been to two or three other ceremonies in the same venue, so the question is always 'how can we do this a little differently from everyone else?' This involves being creative and looking at new ways to re-interpret a space. I worked

on a wedding at the Victoria and Albert Museum last November, and we held the ceremony in an area that the museum had never used previously as the team simply hadn't thought of it before. However, as soon as I walked into the space I sensed it could work and I turned out to be right – it was a truly magical event.

Applying this personal touch is becoming even more important as clients increasingly want to impress guests by creating an experience to remember. Sometimes we're given to thinking bigger is better and that we should aim for a 'wow' statement, but once that initial impact has been made, it's about looking at the smaller details to make an event special. I vet everything myself, so when I hire caterers I don't just taste the food, I also find out where the members of staff have been hired from, how they dress, how many floor managers they use, and so on. After all this preparation, it's about creating joy for every guest at the party; the function can look great and be designed flawlessly, but you need to bring out the emotion and enjoyment of the occasion from every person there – that's the pleasure I get from what I do.

Bruce Russell is one of the most highly sought-after party planners in London. Under his eponymous brand, By Bruce Russell, he offers independent specialist services for weddings and civil partnerships as well as private parties and unforgettable occasions.

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