



BRUCE RUSSELL BY JEZ DICKSON

## The life of the PARTY

Already a major player in the world of weddings, Bruce Russell is now branching out into lifestyle party planning.

**Katy Parker** finds out why

**T**he summer party season is nearly upon us and Bruce Russell, esteemed wedding and party planner extraordinaire, is dusting off the silver in his newly acquired Surrey home in anticipation. “My passions lie in entertaining,” he tells me, “whether it’s hosting at home or planning an event in a venue, for me it’s all about creating that perfect experience, not only for the guests but for the host too.”

Russell started his career in hospitality, working for hotel chains across the world before starting off on a road that led him to planning weddings at The Savoy Hotel. Now, Russell is looking to

branch out into general party planning. He says of the move: “Weddings are intimate and personal celebrations – which I love – but parties enable you to be a little more creative, whether it’s a dinner party in your home or a birthday or special occasion. Plus it means you can spread events out throughout the year.”

When I ask Russell what his top tips would be for preparing a summer festivity he reflects, “People are going back to that era of entertaining. There are so many occasions in the summer: Wimbledon, Royal Ascot – so there are lots of opportunities for theming. Pick one element to focus on and



conceptualise around that; so if that is Wimbledon, serve strawberries and cream and hire someone to greet people when they arrive wearing Wimbledon whites. I feel as though, currently, it's almost as if people are tired of going out, so it's about bringing the restaurant in; hiring a private chef to create dinner, or borrowing a mixologist from an award-winning bar. It's all about the little touches – these are what make an event memorable.”

And what is Russell's advice for enjoying your own get-together? “It's all in the planning – and making a lot of lists. I think of it as a theatre production, divided into different acts, which represent the different processes. If you can, have a dress rehearsal.”

Russell has applied his creativity and meticulous organisational techniques to an impressive portfolio, spanning everything from sumptuous weddings in Marrakech to an industry soirée themed around going to bed. In the midst of this ever-expanding repertoire is the prestigious The Mayfair Awards, which were held at The Ritz London last October. I asked Russell what it was like to work on the event. “It was great. The exciting thing for me was working out how I could put my own stamp on it. In the end it was working with the sponsors, creating concepts in different rooms so that the event offered so much more than just a glass of Champagne – and The Ritz London was the perfect space for that. Ultimately, we showcased each brand in a subtle, yet very luxurious way.”

When it comes to holding an event elsewhere in the area, which venues would make Russell's shortlist? “I love Annabel's for something quirky yet still sophisticated. I would love to host a house party in The Arts Club, or recreate *Breakfast at Tiffany's* at one of the Bond Street jewellers.”

Looking ahead, Russell is focused on world domination. “I want to grow the name internationally. I spent a long time building a business in the UK that was centred around weddings, but I would like to build on my international reputation, and more in the realm of lifestyle. For me it's about having the opportunity to be creative and to push boundaries.” It seems that for Russell, the party has only just begun.   
(bybrucerussell.com)



GOLD DINING. PHOTO  
CREDIT: AMARA



MARRAKECH WEDDING  
PLANNED BY BRUCE  
RUSSELL. PHOTO CREDIT:  
JEZ DICKSON



ROBERTO CAVALLI  
TABLEWARE. PHOTO  
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