



DESCRIBE SOME UNIQUE WEDDING STYLING YOU'VE DONE

Creative styling is our specialty, and I particularly loved one wedding we planned at a remote mountain tea farm in Hong Kong. Using vintage elements inspired by local history, along with specially designed, hand-painted plates that matched the wedding stationary, we were able to create something truly next level.

HOW DID YOU STYLE YOUR OWN WEDDING RECENTLY?

We seated our guests at one long table furnished with succulents at each place setting, while vases brimming with white orchids, cream roses and pink lisanthus dotted the length of the table. Round white lanterns hung overhead to create a sense of intimacy, and more than 100 candles were scattered around the beach to add a romantic tropical ambience.

(Go to page 156 to get a peak inside Sonya's luscious wedding to husband Shaun at the Boracay Beach Resort in the Philippines last February.)

CAN YOU WORK WITH A WEDDING COORDINATOR IF A VENUE ALREADY HAS ONE?

We love working with wedding coordinators as they know their venues intimately. This, combined with our experience working with a diversity of suppliers in multiple countries and our understanding of each client's needs, enables us to create beautiful weddings together. Often a local wedding coordinator doesn't offer all the services we do, so they're usually happy to collaborate and produce something really special.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO MAKE DESTINATION WEDDINGS REALLY MEMORABLE FOR GUESTS?

Greet guests on arrival at the airport, as this makes them feel special. Organise for them to receive a gift pack on check-in at their accommodation. Include in it a personalised note and an itinerary for the days ahead, along with a small gift or snack for weary travellers. Kick off celebrations with some welcome drinks, preferably somewhere different to your wedding venue to keep things interesting. You may also like to plan a relaxed, recovery party for the day after your wedding, so that departing guests can drop in and say their goodbyes.

Spotlight on Wedding Planners

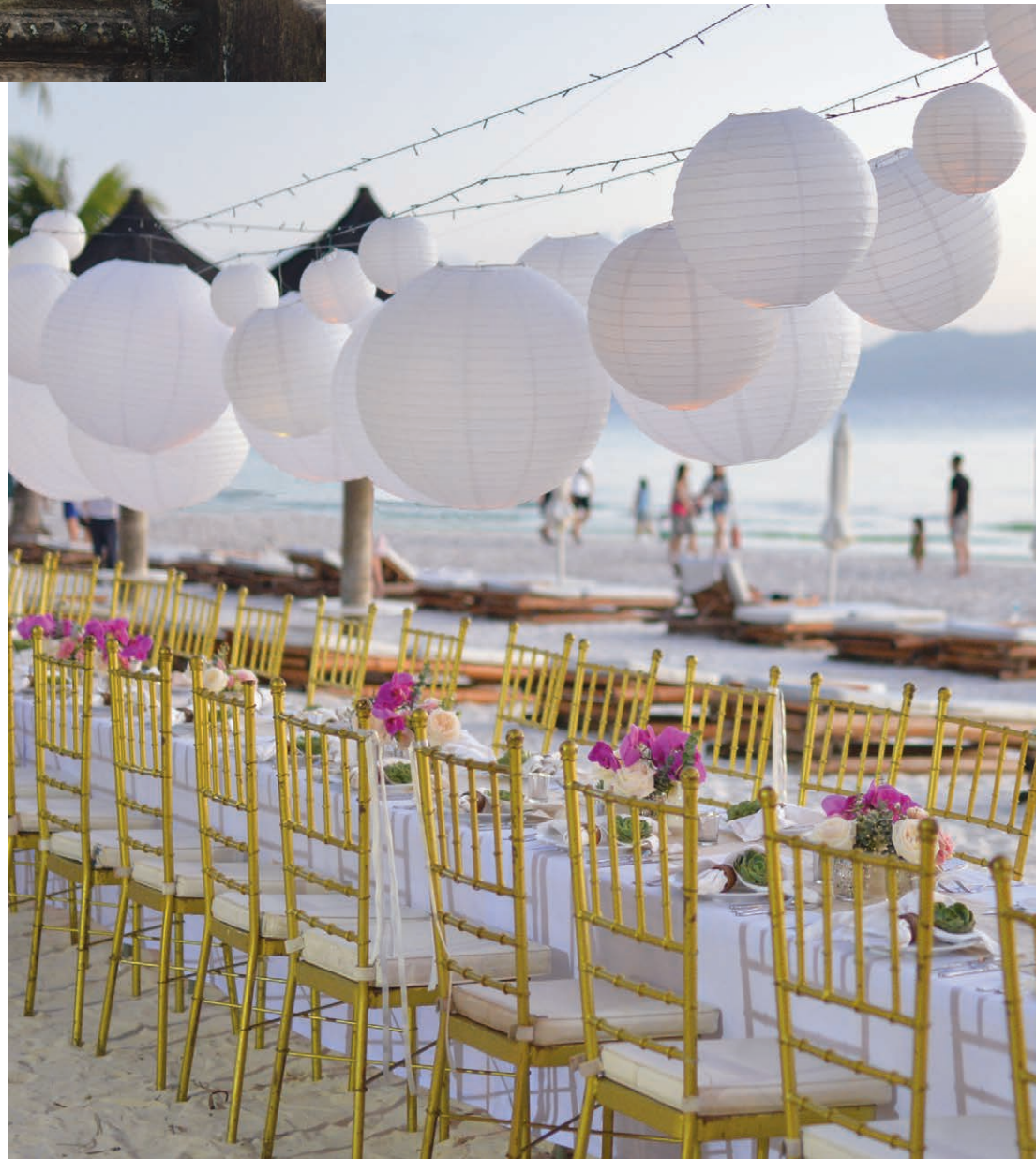
Destination weddings are big business as more and more couples ditch tradition in favour of escaping to paradise for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Someone who knows this first-hand is Sonya Yeung, owner of Bliss Creations – a successful wedding planning and events business in Hong Kong that has been creating gorgeous, bespoke destination weddings in exotic locales for almost 11 years. We caught up with Sonya to find out about the unique weddings she's planned and get some expert advice.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO WEDDING PLANNING?

I started out working for an events company in Hong Kong planning corporate events, fashion shows and glamorous gatherings, but I always knew I wanted my own business one day. After planning a wedding in Hawaii, I noticed a gap in the Asian market for destination wedding planning services, so in 2005 Bliss Creations was born.

TELL US ABOUT A MEMORABLE WEDDING YOU CREATED

Every wedding we've worked on has been extremely special and unique, but one of the most memorable is a wedding we planned in Cambodia inside the World-heritage temples of Angkor Wat. While working in a country with limited available resources had its challenges it was well worth the effort. Guests were in absolute awe when they learnt they'd be dining amongst ancient ruins.



Sonya's Tips For a Hassle-free Wedding

- Plan to have your wedding during the best time for travel to that destination as it will help to reduce anxiety about the weather.
- Enlist the services of a wedding planner that you communicate well with. Choose someone who understands destination weddings and knows your location of choice inside out.
- Be flexible! While some destinations might not have the selection of services, decorations or flowers you were hoping for, there are always creative alternatives that can surpass your expectations.
- Ensure your wedding attire is appropriate for the climate at your destination – especially your shoes. A change of shirt for the groom, and a party dress for the bride, will work wonders in making you feel refreshed throughout the day.