

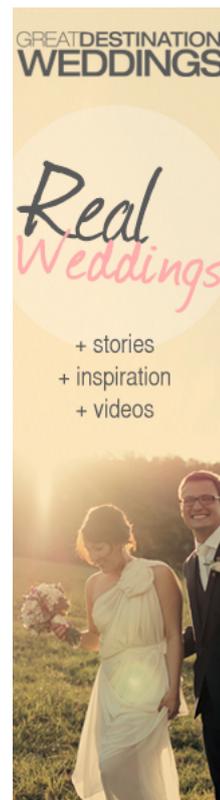


Expert Q&A with Sonya Yeung – Founder and Creative Director of Bliss Creations

In: *Planning*



EXPERT Q&A: Sonya Yeung [Creative Director of Bliss Creations]



Sonya Yeung of *Bliss Creations* talks destination weddings in our exclusive expert Q&A...

1. Tell us a little about your beginnings: how did you end up living in Asia and organising weddings?

I arrived in Hong Kong in 1997 and loved the opportunities it provided and after a few years working in a production company, in 2005 I decided to start my own business. Because of my love of travel and noticing a gap in the destination wedding market along with my experience in event production, Bliss Creations was born.

2. What was it that drew you to weddings in the first place?

I love planning events and loved my experience in event production, but what attracted me to weddings was the ability to be involved in one of the most important days of a couples life together and being able to provide them a fun and relaxing experience in planning their wedding and ensuring that everything is of excellent quality from the food service to the music during the entire event.

3. What countries do you find most popular with the couples that approach you for help with organising a destination wedding?

We have had enquiries for so many countries, but Bali and Thailand are the most common. We love those two destinations but there are some other great options out there including Cambodia and newly added to our list – Sri Lanka, which deserves a mention.



4. What are the more unique elements couples can enjoy when marrying overseas?

- Intimacy. Having a destination wedding naturally means that your guest list is often your nearest and dearest. Most guests along with the couple will arrive to a destination a few days early, and often stay near one another, therefore it gives you lots of quality time with everyone. To have all your friends and family gathered in one location on such a special occasion is rare, so it's important to really embrace the moments you have.

- Culture and change of scenery. Because you are away from home it seems your senses are somewhat heightened and this automatically seems to relax people. The various cultures and food and the change of scenery that you experience as a couple and as guests while present creates really unforgettable memories.

5. Is there a particular wedding you organised that really stands out for you? What was so special about this particular wedding or couple?

A couple that we worked with recently had three weddings. They are a loving and fun couple and really wanted to find the best ways to celebrate with everyone. The first wedding took place in the Maldives with 50 of their closest friends. This was a lot of fun and really allowed them and their guests to relax and have a great time in a beautiful setting.

The second event was a close family ceremony and luncheon while the third event was the much more traditional Chinese banquet with over 300 pax, but was very unique in itself with a custom candy bar, photo booth, musical performances and slideshows.

6. What is your favourite and the most satisfying element in creating weddings?

I love the brainstorming and conceptualising of the design and ideas for the decorations and details. Every one of our weddings is unique and reflects the desires and personalities of the couple.

There are so many wonderful ideas out there too, so it is lots of fun seeing what can be done for each particular couple.



7. Is there anything couples need to consider before deciding to marry in Bali – legalities, practicalities?

In any destination wedding, couples need to consider the weather and the time of year they are getting married. In Asia, there is a strong monsoon season, so this can affect even the most beautiful wedding if a downpour occurs.

Couples may also need to consider legalities. Depending on the country there are requirements should you wish to legalise your marriage at your destination of choice.

Couples should also be realistic on who might be able to attend. This sometimes can lead to a decision to not having a destination wedding if those that are most important to you cannot attend.

The wedding attire you choose should also fit the destination.

8. To your mind, what are the benefits of a destination wedding?

Smaller guest list.

You can spend more quality time with your guests.

A unique wedding experience for the couple AND their guests.

A simpler affair.

9. Many people see destination weddings as a more expensive option, as their families have to pay for airfares, etc. Would you agree this is always the case?

Individual costs may be slightly higher, but usually destination weddings mean that guests can use the opportunity as a holiday for themselves as well.

For the couple, it is usually a more affordable option because the guest count is lower and places that are chosen are usually more affordable in general.

As well, the couple can decide to incorporate their honeymoon within the destination so all in all it should be less expensive.



10. Is it difficult for couples to plan their wedding at a distance? Do you deal with couples from all over the world and if so, how does your company alleviate any stress planning from home may create?

It is important to note that planning a destination wedding really requires patience from couples.

Because you are likely dealing with another culture and their working styles and possibly another language, communication may be difficult and can often be quite stressful and time consuming. Bliss Creations, however, can take this stressful side of planning off their hands.

Because of our extensive experience and network of service providers, we can take care of all the calling, discussions, explanations, communications, etc. so we are able to supply as much comprehensive information as possible. We also have an extremely detailed proposal which encompasses everything regarding the couples event so that couples are not left 'in the dark' and know where they stand with each related item.

We also understand the anxiety that can build when planning a destination wedding, our high level of professionalism and efficiency means that we can alleviate a lot of stress.

11. What are your top three pieces of advice for a couple about to embark on the wedding planning journey?

- 1) Trust. It is essential that you trust your planner and that you feel comfortable having them negotiate and work on your behalf. If you need to be in control at every level and cannot relinquish this in any way, a wedding planner is not for you.
- 2) Communication. Communication with your planner is key so that everyone can be on the same page. If you are unhappy or uncomfortable with anything, you must communicate this. Wedding planners are not mind readers.
- 3) Flexibility. Especially with a destination wedding the chosen location may not have everything that your hearts desire, so one must be very flexible. Cultures and styles may be very different to your own so being flexible is key to a great destination wedding.

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