



5 minutes with KALLY ELLIS

Kate Smallwood speaks to the inspirational florist behind the legendary McQueens

What do you think are the key qualities that make a great wedding?

I think that everything has to work together – particularly paying close attention to the venue. Never underestimate the flowers. They are the icing on the cake and really do make a wedding.

Does it matter how much money couples have to spend? Work within your budget, but make sure that what you want is achievable with the money that you have to spend. A little can go a long way and a little bit of creative thought also helps keep the costs down. My motto is that keeping things simple always works best – less is definitely more!

Who would design your ultimate wedding outfit and what would it be like?

It would have to be Suzy Harper – she makes beautifully tailored clothes with a twist. I would choose a rich taupe colour – like a vintage cream – think Farrow & Ball.

Who would make up your dream team when it comes to cakes, catering and flowers?

For cakes it has to be the master patissier himself, Eric Lanlard. He makes beautiful cakes that really do taste as good as they look – I always recommend him to my clients. For catering, I would choose Mari Taylor. Her food is always delicious and her attention to detail is second to none. She's professional and has a great team that work with her. For Flowers it would be McQueens of course!

What is your idea of a dream wedding?

An elegant, yet intimate affair with close friends and family.



When Kally Ellis set up McQueens (020 7251 5505 mcqueens.co.uk) in 1991 she had one aim in mind. "I wanted to sell simple, stylish flowers, beautifully presented, to the people of London. And I knew they would love it." Since then McQueens has flourished, supplying flowers to clients including Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Mulberry, The Grove, The Berkeley and the Connaught Hotel. Perhaps their greatest accolade has been to provide the flowers and styling for the legendary Vanity Fair parties.

Do you have a favourite wedding venue in the UK?

I have a few. The Berkeley in London for a city setting – there is something so sophisticated about it – you instantly feel special once you walk through the doors. The Connaught for some of that 'old school' glamour and first-class service and The Grove in Hertfordshire for a summer wedding. The grounds and the gardens are absolutely stunning.

If you could tie the knot anywhere in the world, where would it be?

Le Marche in Italy. It's beautiful yet undiscovered and it brings back happy childhood memories for me.

How about the honeymoon – what would be your chosen destination?

The Greek Island of Kefallinia is breathtaking. There's no other sea like the Aegean – the waters are crystal clear – it's so alluring and so romantic.

What flowers would be in your ultimate wedding bouquet? Lily of the Valley – effortless yet exquisite.

Tell us a little about your wedding... and your wedding flowers

I had a small, intimate London wedding. It was my second marriage and I was expecting my first child. I got married at the Local Town Hall and the reception was in a restaurant above a pub called the Island Queen – which is no longer standing. My flowers were 'Nicole' roses – sumptuous raspberry colours on the inside petals and lighter almost white on the outside petals.

What's your top piece of planning advice for any couple?

Plan and plan! Work out a budget, choose a style or a theme and stick to it. And try not to get too many people involved. At the end of the day it's important to make it personal to you, but also make the occasion something that your friends and family can also share.



For cakes: Eric Lanlard (cake-boy.co.uk)

For flowers: McQueens (mcqueens.co.uk)

For catering: Mari Taylor 07774 671212

For receptions: The Connaught, London (the-connaught.co.uk); The Grove, Hertfordshire (thegrove.co.uk); The Berkeley, London (the-berkeley.co.uk)

For hand-printed stationery: Harrington & Squires (harringtonandsquires.co.uk)

For wedding gifts: Ellis+Louca (ellisandlouca.co.uk)

