

WEDLUXE

# Trend

# Global

## REPORT

Summer Edition

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Photography by Tanuj Bhatia

An exclusive interview with world renown florist Tomas De Bruyne of Tomas De Bruyne Floral Experiences Worldwide. Find out how he got started in the industry, his floral education classes, and more!

# Tomas De Bruyne

## Floral Experiences Worldwide

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SPEAKING WITH US! CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHEN AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE EVENT INDUSTRY?

In 2014 I was invited as a speaker by the ICWF (International Convention of the Wedding Fraternity) in India, to talk about the algorithm of beauty. After my presentation, I was approached by a number of event planners who were impressed and wanted to work with me. Before that I was already active in the sector, but not on such a large scale. This was the start of my international career as a large-scale floral designer. Because of our hard work, beautiful creations, and flexible attitude, I am now seen as the perfect partner for every event planner who wants to take their event to another level with floral installations.

YOU ARE KNOWN FOR CREATING BESPOKE FLORAL ARCHITECTURAL EXPERIENCES AROUND THE WORLD. WHAT IS THE MOST LAVISH WEDDING OR EVENT YOU'VE EVER WORKED ON?

I had the absolute honour to work on a wedding event for the Ambani family in Mumbai, India. The concept was surreal, I'm talking about thousands of flowers. The size of the flower installation was absolutely impressive. Since the assignment was so extensive, it was divided between myself, Preston Bailey and Tuscany Flowers. The collaboration, not only with my team but also with the people responsible for the planning, scenography, lighting, etc. was crucial here. You definitely need a good plan to keep the overview. At all times, I am responsible for leading my team, guaranteeing quality and craftsmanship.



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SIGNATURE DESIGN STYLE?

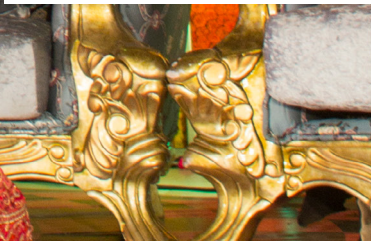
The architectural element with respect for nature defines my signature style. Creating experience and added value are two concepts that are constantly present when creating an assignment. Flowers must be more than just some “table flowers,” they have to be able to lift the event to an unknown height. It’s all about personalizing memorable events. Knowledge of the language of design comes through strongly in my work, since I use every element of design to create an extra dimension.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE LOCATION AROUND THE WORLD FOR WEDDINGS?

The biggest challenges and opportunities for me in the last four years have been mainly in India. Being able to be part of these big Indian weddings puts everything in a different perspective. Less is most definitely not more. The visual impact and openness of the Indian families is so enriching. Gaining the ability and confidence of the client to let the flowers speak fully - within the necessary budget - is a dream for every flower designer.

WHERE WOULD BE YOUR DREAM PART OF THE WORLD TO PRODUCE A WEDDING?

An iconic venue where I can merge my flowers with the already exciting magic of the building/interior is my dream location. Locations such as the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, The Forbidden City, and many more speak to everyone’s imagination. The art of blending the flowers in a respectful way with the uniqueness of the location and meeting the expectations of the customer is always a challenge. People still see flowers as a separate item to “embellish” something. As a floral architect, I have long deviated from this, because flowers have to take the lead of the decoration and ultimately have to reflect the personality of the client.





WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS WHEN A COUPLE FIRST CONTACTS YOU ABOUT THEIR WEDDING?

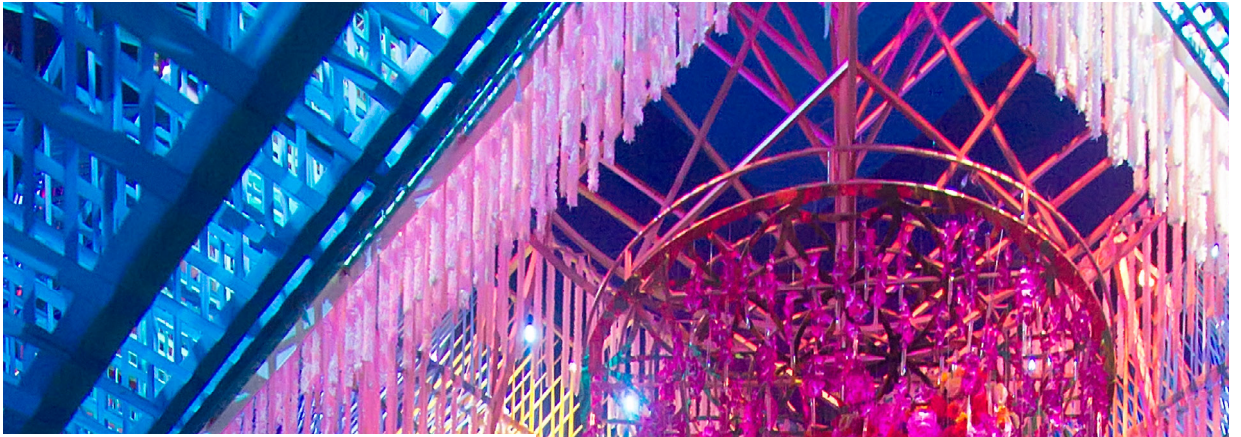
It's all about basic human communication. First, I analyze the client's expectations, not just on budget but also on design. Then we will go into their wishes in depth: what is their preferred colour, theme, and location. These criteria are the foundations that must be taken into account in the design phase. Now we are in the phase of creating moodboards, colour palettes, and botanical lists. My proposals are then discussed with the customer, so that we are on the same page.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE FLORALS AND COLOUR SCHEMES TO USE WHEN PLANNING A WEDDING?

My focus is less on colours and flowers, but primarily on the expression. The use of my favourite florals is secondary. (I know this may sound controversial, as most designers have their favourites and try to stick with them.) As a DNA designer, I always challenge myself to design from the customer's perspective, resulting in different outcomes that must reflect their personalities. Of course, there are flowers that I prefer, such as the flower named after me, *Gloriosa Rothschildiana* "Tomas De Bruyne." But overall, I am a fairly seasonal designer, which means that I like to offer seasonal (local) flowers to my customers. These reflect the colours and atmospheres of the very moment.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST EVENT PLANNING CHALLENGE?

My biggest challenge must have been my first major Indian wedding in Calcutta, where I used over 600,000 flowers. Flowers were a main feature of the scenography design. They popped up everywhere and had to be a design factor that stood on its own and were not just used as decoration; all areas had to be arranged individually yet emotionally connected. A performance of *Cirque du Soleil* was planned, so we had to take the layout of the stage into account when designing. We had only five days to set up and limited experience in this area led to a huge challenge on-site.



TELL US ABOUT TRENDS IN YOUR LINE OF WORK. WHAT TRENDS HAVE BEEN BIG IN 2019 THUS FAR?

When I started five years ago, I had the impression of “the bigger, the better,” but now the focus has changed to newer, unusual designers, more personalized details, and great concepts. The next step trend-wise: all these elements with the right visual impact and grandeur as larger-than-life floral installations. However, originality and innovation never go out of style for the new generation. Active entertainment allows guests to experience the drama, action, and intensity where flower installations are gaining a more important role.



CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE FLORAL EDUCATION CLASSES YOU RUN?

Colleagues and flower-minded people asked me to share my knowledge through education, and that's why I came up with EMC, our European Master Certification program. EMC's approach is completely different from the standard classes, because from the development of the program onwards, the emphasis was on developing the creative process of the student; giving the student insight into the design process of why, how, what to design. Currently our courses are being organized on almost all continents and give students the unique opportunity to learn from the best florist teachers from all over the world. Our training does not stop after giving the course. We have established a community through which we stay in touch and keep on training each other. Our core team consists of 13 members, who are working daily to raise the industry to a higher level.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE EVENT THAT YOU'VE DESIGNED AND EXECUTED?

I will never forget the event I got to do for Gerhard Swarovski in Innsbruck, Austria. Garden roses were his passion and he wanted to be part of the building experience. I was invited to design a Hofball event based on garden roses. Working with such a passionate person, who shares his wisdom while making the same arrangement, is unforgettable and makes this event one of my favourites. The intensity and challenge, but especially the satisfaction and experience, play a major role in what makes a favourite event for me.





Photography by Cohim



WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO TRAVEL?

Every place has its pros and cons but is given true beauty by its local people. Much depends on the experience. My events embrace so many aspects, making it difficult to choose. But I can count “Incredible” India as one of my favourite places. The fascinating marriage culture, partners, possibilities, and local mindset make this country unique.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF WORKING IN THE EVENT INDUSTRY?

The design process, seeing how everything ultimately comes together to form a fantastic whole - literally but also figuratively. Building a beautiful concept where everything flows into each other and where the flowers can transcend themselves by designing a concept. Working in the event industry involves being able to work together. I find it very important to build lasting relationships with event planners and partners. Communication, respect, and commitment are beautiful values.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

My next event is a royal wedding in the UAE. It will again be an unforgettable adventure, where I can express my creativity and where teamwork is central. But my phone does not stand still, so new challenges can always come up.





To see more of Tomas De Bruyne, visit

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