

# THE EXCLUSIVE & SELECTIVE

## Soha Lavin

OF COUNTDOWN EVENTS



*Soha Lavin of Countdown Events, is one of Vancouver's pre-eminent wedding trendsetters. She produces weddings so unique, so completely enthralling and memorable, that they not only reflect the personalities of the bride and groom but celebrate the consummate union of two distinct personas made one.*

Few wedding planners turn potential clients away but, if there is no chemistry, Soha Lavin does just that. The fact that Countdown Events is selective about the clientele they work with has made being represented by them a special privilege. Although it wasn't a reputation Lavin set out to achieve, it suits Countdown Events well as nothing they coordinate is ever ordinary or normal.

"We are doing this because we want to be absolutely enthralled with everything to do

with our client and their wedding so there is this definite need for chemistry between us and the clients," says Lavin. Not that Lavin is too caught up in the fairytale of dream weddings to be an astute businesswoman. Far from it. You only have to look at Lavin's annual wedding event, *Crème de la Crème*, to see how savvy this event planner is.

*Crème de la Crème* is a deluxe soiree wedding showcase created to draw sophisticated wedding-minded Vancouverites together with the city's best wedding artisans

and suppliers. This November will be the third year that *Crème de la Crème* has done just that. Lavin hand-picks each exhibitor to ensure that only the very best get to be a part of this prestigious event. This level of detail elevates *Crème de la Crème* from being just another wedding show to an unforgettable, one-of-a-kind event.

Lavin promises that everything Countdown Events does is different from other planners. There are no limits to the time dedicated to making everything perfect. "We do whatever it takes. There are no limits to what we are willing to do to make their events special," says Lavin. "We put our heart and soul into it. That's why we only pick the premier clients."

Lavin ensures that all her events are spectacular and seamless. Her imagination and dedication allow for grandiose gestures such as having a helicopter shower guests with rose petals without forgetting the importance of the smaller details such as ensuring the flavour of the chocolate underneath guests' pillows is the

same as the wedding cake.

Her calculated perfection promises to take your breath away. Having checked to see that every floral arrangement is perfect, each decorative flourish just as it should be and that everything is in its correct place, Lavin will ensure each event runs without the slightest hitch.

CountDown Events' planning process is certainly different. For a start, Lavin never takes albums or photographs to initial meetings. Inspiration must come from the clients themselves. "By starting from scratch with every couple, it really becomes about only that couple and their tastes," she says.

Lavin starts a natural conversation with the couple to find out their likes and dislikes, even those that are completely non-wedding related. "We find out what their favourite things are, such as if he likes butter on his popcorn and she doesn't. Slight things like that will tell us the kind of personalities they are," says Lavin. By taking the time to get to know her clients, their passions, what drives them and makes them so perfect together, Lavin can make each wedding a perfect representation of the couple betrothed and a springboard for the future they embrace together.

CountDown Events does not carry any inventory. Instead they tap in to their knowledge of the best vendors around to ensure that every flourish is absolutely perfect. Vendors must provide a mock-up table setting, free of charge, to the client. This may be unusual but suppliers know that refusing this is a deal-breaker for working with CountDown Events. "We do this so that there are no surprises," says Lavin. "It is one more step that makes the client know that we have taken care of them."

Lavin has the skills to make the almost unimaginable happen because, as she puts it, "Boundaries are no fun." Top notch negotiating skills and local knowledge ensure that if Lavin says you can have your wedding at a certain special location, it will happen.

Last year Lavin arranged a church wedding where both Muslim and Christian ceremonies were performed side by side. "It was groundbreaking. The guests grabbed their ceremony programs and were very surprised. It ended up being beautiful and seamless, perfect in every way," says Lavin.

Dedication to every minute detail is what makes a CountDown Events wedding flawless. Lavin oversees everything from flowers to venue cleanliness. First to arrive and one of the last to leave, Lavin ensures that everything is perfect the whole day through. ☺

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