

# CITY & BEACH

lifestyle

CITY & BEACH MAGAZINE

JULY 2024



## TOMAS DE BRUYNE, FLORAL ARCHITECT



The business of events! The pre-planning and installation of major celebrations, including weddings, is a science that demands fantastic organisational skills and an exacting approach to detail. Floral architect Tomas de Bruyne, who was born in the picturesque medieval city of Bruges in Belgium – where he still resides – is a master at creating, planning, producing, training and inspiring...

**C&B:** "Tomas, you appear to be multi-talented so it's difficult to say exactly what you do; how would you describe yourself and your work?"

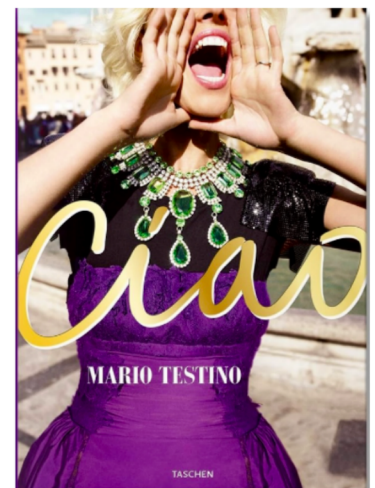
**TdB:** "When industry professionals inquire about my role in event planning, I often portray myself as the individual who intricately weaves flowers into the event's fabric by connecting the dots, elevating it to a higher and more distinctive level. My work primarily revolves around crafting concepts that seamlessly blend various elements to construct a captivating narrative for each event. I specialise in curating bespoke floral experiences on a global scale, catering to the needs of private individuals, businesses, and event planners who recognise and value my unique talent in enhancing their events..."



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**C&B:** "What was it that first inspired your career in floristry and event design?"

**TdB:** "Passion drives me to create, whether it's something innovative, unique, or simply different. This drive gives me satisfaction and fuels my adrenaline to keep going. While my journey initially led me to a career as a floral designer, my true inspiration comes from the beauty of flowers; I view flowers as my artistic medium, and I am grateful for the opportunity to work with one of nature's most beautiful designs. This work challenges me to understand the language of beauty and continually pushes me to create..."

**C&B:** "What would you say is the one crucial ingredient leading to success in floral design today? Not so long ago, a florist was just a local florist, in this era the categories range from one-off event stylists through to international floral architects..."

**TdB:** "In addition to dedication and strategic effort, I believe that grit plays a crucial role. Grit embodies an unwavering determination, courage, and inner strength; it involves the ability to persist, endure, and bounce back in the face of difficulties or setbacks. Demonstrating grit means navigating through challenging circumstances while maintaining a focus on long-term objectives, even when confronted with obstacles or setbacks. The path to growth often leads through the challenges we shy away from, where the seemingly impossible becomes the gateway to progress..."

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**C&B:** "This is almost a spiritual awakening as much as creative enlightenment! When you work with your own team, do you have full time employees or do you hire in experts such as artists and stylists, as required?"

**TdB:** "My business operates in a non-traditional manner compared to my colleagues; my business model is unconventional and is a key strength and unique selling point of my company. I have a team of between three and ten freelancers, some working almost full-time, and in addition to them I love to collaborate with local individuals. This setup allows for flexibility, adaptability, support for the local community, integration with local customs, and improved networking for local tasks..."

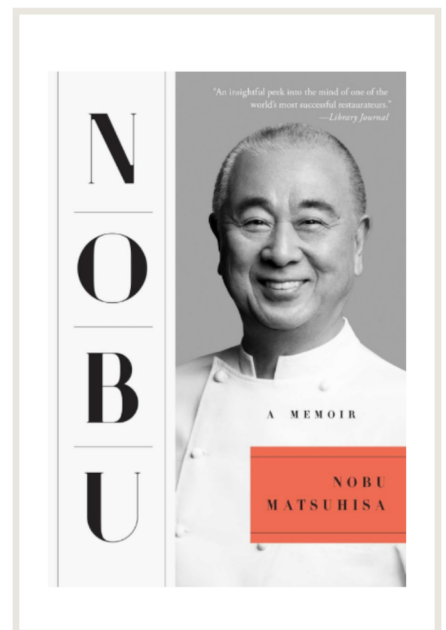
"In my company, I have three managers: an office manager overseeing administrative and financial matters, a project manager – focusing, of course, on a good flow of the project but as well on the HR factor, and third, we have a technical manager handling implementation calculation, technical aspects, etc. This simple yet effective company structure aligns with my preference for efficiency..."



**C&B:** "It sounds like a very well run and organised company – so essential when you're running major events! Which of your many projects would you say you're the most proud of, and why?"

**TdB:** "Each project presents a new and unexpected challenge for me. By consistently pushing myself to the limits, I have learned to embrace the discomfort, ultimately leading to moments of achievement where pride shines through. One project that stands out is an event in India which is a source of pride as it involved pushing my team, and myself, to the absolute limit to surpass the client's expectations, which proved to be extremely challenging. However, the moment when the client personally expressed gratitude and witnessed their dream come to life was truly fulfilling and left me feeling immensely proud!"

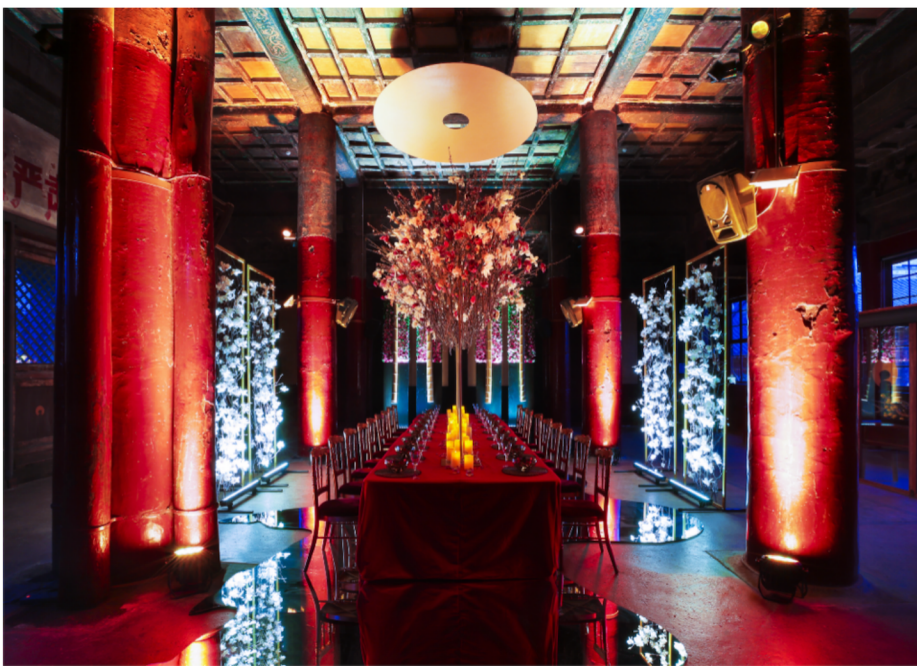
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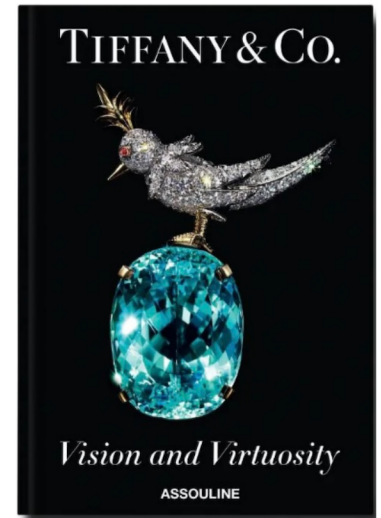
**C&B:** "You mention India...which other countries have you staged events in? You're showing images here from past projects in Singapore, Mumbai, Lahore, Venice..."

**TdB:** "Yes, I've had the opportunity to work in numerous countries spanning from the USA and Europe to the Middle East and Asia, catering to various events and occasions. This globetrotting experience has provided me with a deep understanding and respect of different cultures, emphasizing the importance of adaptation and flexibility. My company's structure of collaborating with local vendors naturally evolved over time and this approach not only enriches my design skills but also allows me to gain insights from each country's customs, rituals, and more. For instance, I've been fortunate to be involved in the conceptual design of an entire Indian wedding, including in the architectural Mandap, which exemplifies the beauty and significance of cultural rituals in this market..."



**C&B:** "Tell us about the training aspect of your business..."

**TdB:** "This question is particularly intriguing, as it underscores the importance of preserving and enhancing craftsmanship and knowledge within a profession, while keeping pace with the current era. Craftsmanship and knowledge are rooted in the past and are meant to be utilized and potentially enhanced in the present to ensure a sustainable future. This philosophy prompted me to establish an international floral design school with my American partner, Christi Lopez. Together, we introduced a certification program known as the European Master Certification (EMC)."





*Tomas De Bruyne*

Floral Experiences Worldwide  
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"The journey begins with a course titled 'Fundamentals of Floral Design', which delves into the foundational aspects of beauty, focusing on the elements and principles of design. Many students find this course to be a gateway to further exploration, which led us to develop the intensive Master Certification program. This advanced program is tailored for passionate and open-minded individuals who are eager to expand their skills and gain insights into the design process. For more information on this distinctive educational opportunity, please visit our website (address below).

**C&B:** "It's incredible how you've inspired so many future star floral designers over the years and given them a solid foundation to set up their own businesses! We know you're the author of several books, where can readers purchase them and are they all in print?"

**TdB:** "In total, I've authored or co-authored over fifteen books, the majority of which have sold out. Given the constantly evolving nature of our society with new ideas and developments emerging, I don't see the need for reprints. Should readers be interested in acquiring any of the books, they may still find a few available on traditional book platforms such as Amazon..."

"My most recent publication, "Techniques for Floral Beauty," serves as a blend of inspiration, education, and encouragement to engage with floral arrangements. In response to your earlier inquiry about understanding the language of beauty, this book meticulously details and elucidates each design through this aesthetic language. While the publisher no longer carries these books, I still have the last remaining copies available for purchase directly through my office..."



**C&B:** "Final question, Tomas: What would be your dream project and which brand would it be in collaboration with?"

**TdB:** "The beauty of dream projects lies in their limitless potential; once realised, they have the power to expand your vision even further. If you had asked me five years ago, I would have pointed to the last wedding I worked on as my ultimate project. However, my current dream project is currently in progress, as I collaborate with the creative director of Cirque du Soleil (above, right) to incorporate a floral feature into the scenography, adding an element of show entertainment. This endeavour pushes me beyond my comfort zone, transforming it from a mere wish into a compelling aspiration..."

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