

Listening is the main part of my job

When money is no object and you need to show the world what you're all about, floral decorating takes your event to a whole new level. Belgian floral designer Tomas de Bruyne decorates parties and events worldwide for the rich and famous. What's this trend about?

Tomas entered floristry when he fell in love with a girl whose father had a flower shop. After being educated as a florist, he and his (then) wife made a success out of their flower shop. But his international designer jobs at big events took so much time that he withdrew from the shop to concentrate on his other tasks.

KNOWING YOUR CLIENT

Where do you begin planning a large scale event? "By communicating and listening to my client. Who is he? What does he want to tell the world? Who's the audience? By listening I find keywords for my job. Then feelings, concepts, constructions, colours and shapes occur. Flowers come later. If the keywords are 'show' and 'grandeur,' it has to be big in vibrant colours. But you can also emphasize things or give them excitement by detailing shapes, forms, lines, density, textures, colours, etc. It is like stopping to look in a shop window. You only stop when there's something exciting to be seen and your soul is stirred."

A TEAM OF PARTNERS

Creating floral decorations of this magnitude requires teamwork. Basically, Tomas is the architect of the team. "I develop the concept and ideas to meet the expectations of my clients. I design the constructions necessary to carry the floral decorations. If possible these constructions are made locally (in India, China, etc.). Through the years I've built up good partnerships with many local event companies and vendors worldwide. Since nothing may go wrong, trust, craftsmanship and commitment are important key values."

THE USE OF FLOWERS

Numerous flowers are used in these type of decorations; over 100,000 flowers are now the norm. Once Tomas even used 700,000 flowers. "Where I source them from depends on the budget and my client's wishes. Sometimes I mainly use local products, but if it is very specific I buy at Dutch exporters DGI. They deliver superior quality in large quantities and know exactly where to find specific varieties

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and colours. They help me by sending the flowers as efficiently as possible. On the job I am assisted by highly professional florists, both local and my own team. I also try to be in contact with the growers whose flowers I use. I admire their passion and creativity in constantly improving their product."