

TORONTO LIFE

ROUNDUP

Altar Egos

"I dos" of the city's busiest wedding planners BY RYAN BIGGE

The average, run-of-the-mill perfect day now costs up to \$50,000 and requires the organizational savvy of a D-Day commander. So it's no surprise that busy Toronto dyads are divorcing themselves from cumbersome flow charts and letting a wedding planner deal with the grunt work (or throw some Mothra into the path of a runaway Bridezilla). Herewith, a rundown of the city's top wedding planners.

	Karen Jacobs and Karen Garscadden, Up & Coming Events	Yvette Shier, Yvette J. Shier Consulting	Mary Mulligan, Mary Mulligan Event Management	Jaime Crouch, Thunderstar Presents	Tara O'Grady, Bliss Weddings & Event Design
Years in Business	18	15	9	2½	5
Specialty	Elegant, sophisticated extravaganzas for the well heeled	Multi-ethnic weddings (recently oversaw a Korean-Ukrainian merger)	Elaborate or unusual venues; "e-mail weddings" for expats getting married in Toronto	Gay and straight weddings ("Gay men are very particular")	Personalized events that appease every familial constituency
Ultimate Wedding	A six-tent backyard blowout with tennis court dining area (catered by North 44°) and a martini bar suspended over an indoor pool	A \$300,000 Muskoka event, with Irish dancers, steamboat tours and free hotel rooms	A reception at the Hockey Hall of Fame, with dinner in the Great Hall and dessert served inside the old bank vaults	An intimate do held at Sainte-Marie Among-the-Hurons, featuring a pig roast on a spit	A \$95,000 Colombian-Italian affair, complete with a children's choir, mariachi band and chocolate brown linens with red accents
Damage Control	Moved an entire reception into a foyer after misplaced fireworks started a fire	Hustled a bride to a tailor when the seam of her dress disintegrated post-ceremony	Nudged the mute musicians when a bride clad in a navy Armani suit entered church unnoticed	Sourced all new decorations two days before event, after original shipment failed to arrive	Convinced a bouzouki player to cut the tempo when the dance floor began bouncing precariously
Hot Trends	Functional ice sculptures, such as chilled-soup bowls, shot glasses and drink luges	"Weddings have become simpler—less frou-frou and frilly. Less is more"	Cupcake wedding cakes created by a tiered stand full of tiny iced gâteaux	The groom being involved in planning ("It's his day, too!")	Candy stations (for late-night snacking), featuring jars of jelly beans, jujubes and gumballs
Average Cost	\$75,000	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$40,000
Flower Power	"Colourful roses and hydrangeas"	"Roses are a sure thing, but peonies are also beautiful"	"Cymbidium orchids are lovely"	"Orchids"	"Peonies are luscious, fragrant and delicious"

TELLING TALES



Matching Belgian schipperkes

GONE TO THE DOGS

Dog fashion shows are an easy target for those with a satirical bent. You might even say that the genre is overdetermined—after a film like *Best in Show*, there's not much left to lampoon. Then again, let's say you'd attended the **Purina Celebrate Pets Weekend Gala** fashion show at the Holiday Inn on King—the climax of a two-day expo featuring all things pet related, from food and supplies to reflexology seminars—and sat beside a woman and her two Belgian schipperkes in matching hot pink pleather outfits, the same trio you'd seen earlier that day dressed in matching Harley-Davidson jackets. And let's say you'd heard the woman ask, out of anyone else's earshot, "Who are my perfect little motorcycle mamas, hmmm?" Well, you might be forgiven for thinking there's at least a little air left in those tires.

The fashion show included human duds by **Linda Lundström, Zenobia and Roots**, and doggie duds by **Dogs in the City, Posh Pawz and Fursacci**, and featured as co-hosts our very own **Jeanne Beker** and her retriever, **Beau**. In her introduction, Beker gave voice to what everyone in the audience was feeling: "At a time when there's just so much going on in the world that isn't very nice, isn't it great to be involved in an event that's frivolous and such a great way to put a smile on your face?" Later, Ms. Beker swept across the lobby to drop Beau at a dog-sitting service. Through a rictal grin, she proclaimed, "I just can't believe I'm here!" At that moment, not five feet away, an Italian greyhound named Everest carefully positioned himself and peed into the exact centre of a baby diaper lying open on the floor. "That," said this reporter, "is amazing."—DOUGLAS BELL