

With the summer season in full swing, the women behind the world's most lavish soirées share their secrets...

REPORT Julia Neel

# 24/7 PARTY PEOPLE

## THE RISQUE REVELLER

Serena Mattar, 35, began her career organising themed nights at London's top nightclubs with her company Saucy Cow. Her big break came when she did Georgia May Jagger's 16th birthday party in 2008.

**CLIENTS** Saudi royals, Mohamed Al-Fayed's daughter Camilla, shoe designer Charlotte Olympia and model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley. Serena recently planned model Elisa Sednaoui's wedding to gallery owner Alexander Dellal.

**MOST OUTLANDISH PARTY** 'An English-eccentric birthday bash on Osea Island off the Essex coast. The guests dined by candlelight at a table

adorned with poison bottles, 18th-century specimen jars with snakes, mice and spiders, vintage maps and as much taxidermy as it was possible to cram in.'

**MOST UNGLAM MOMENT** 'I've had many an injury; if you don't get hurt, something isn't right!'

**TRICKIEST REQUEST** 'I spent hours sorting through jelly beans because the big-name British performer we'd booked only wanted the blue ones.'

**UPSIDE** 'Watching the ecstasy on people's faces.'

**DOWNSIDE** 'When a party is over, I get depressed for days afterwards.'



## THE HIGH-END HOST



Louisa Prescott, 34, started out by staging fashion dos in New York and events for Goldman Sachs on both sides of the Atlantic. She

then founded Polar Black in 2009 with business partner Xavier Cadou. **CLIENTS** A mix of international ultra-high-net-worth individuals, celebrities, FTSE 100 CEOs and Middle Eastern clients.

**MOST OUTLANDISH PARTY** 'Cocktails on a hotel rooftop in New York for *Vanity Fair*. We had Abercrombie & Fitch male models swimming in the pool as Taylor Swift played acoustic guitar and Donald Trump handed out martinis. It took

fabulous to a whole new level.' **MOST UNGLAM MOMENT** 'At an event in France, a Michelin-starred chef threw a plate at my head when I told him that the guests wanted sandwiches and crisps instead of his beautiful meal.'

**TRICKIEST REQUEST** 'Ten peacocks for a maharaja-themed garden party. One got particularly lively and had to be confined to the back of the garden for the rest of the day.'

**UPSIDE** 'Dreaming up the most impossible creations and seeing them come to life.'

**DOWNSIDE** 'The occasional cloakroom or loo duty when the venue staff aren't up to scratch.'

## THE QUEEN OF THE BESPOKE BASH



With a background in film-set design, Tanya Clark, 35, set up The Honest Group in Ibiza in

2007 after falling in love with the island over many holidays. Her parties are famous for their surprise factor.

**CLIENTS** Ibiza's trendiest clubs, VIPs who like to let their hair down on the Balearic Isle.

**MOST OUTLANDISH PARTY** 'We transformed the VIP beach club Blue Marlin into a circus for a 40th-birthday do, with carousel horses and a DJ booth in the

shape of a sparkling crescent moon inside a giant black birdcage, which was suspended above the dancefloor.'

**MOST UNGLAM MOMENT** 'Delivering a fragile crystal DJ booth to a superyacht before the guests arrived. That was pretty stressful.'

**TRICKIEST REQUEST** 'To build a floating party island way out at sea, off the coast of Ibiza. Guests were given the coordinates and had to get there by yacht.'

**UPSIDE** 'Seeing the sheer enjoyment on a client's face.'

**DOWNSIDE** 'Budget restraints.'

## THE A-LIST ARRANGER

After becoming friends with Dita Von Teese, Fiona Leahy, 42, was asked by the burlesque star to plan her wedding to Marilyn Manson in 2005. The queen of Qatar saw the press coverage and a week later Fiona was on a flight to the Middle East and Fiona Leahy Design was born.

**CLIENTS** Middle Eastern royals, Dior, Victoria Beckham, Louis Vuitton. **MOST OUTLANDISH PARTY** 'A Qatari wedding for 2,000 women, each of whom received a bespoke perfume, lace fan and parasol.'

**UPSIDE** 'The stress of creating temporary moments that have to be absolutely perfect.'

made from roses.'

**MOST UNGLAM MOMENT** 'Donning rubber gloves to go through rubbish to find a plastic container full of rare and expensive truffles that had been thrown away accidentally.'

**TRICKIEST REQUEST** 'To fill a swimming pool with mirror balls; we had to use divers to position them.'

**UPSIDE** 'It's a magical ride through some incredible places - Blenheim Palace, Villa D'Este at Lake Como, the Burgh Island Hotel...'

**DOWNSIDE** 'The stress of creating temporary moments that have to be absolutely perfect.'



## THE FIRST-CLASS FIXERS

After working together at an events company, Anabel Fielding (left), 45, and Caroline Hurley, 46, set up Quintessentially Events in 2005.

**CLIENTS** Wealthy Russians and Nigerians, Gucci, Valentino. **MOST OUTLANDISH PARTY** 'A wedding for a hedge-fund trader at Catherine Palace in St Petersburg. Guests were rowed across a lake for the wedding and then taken in horse-drawn carriages to a caviar reception. The dinner was held in the Throne Room, with each table setting marked with a Fabergé egg; entertainment was

provided by the Bolshoi Ballet and Elton John.'

**MOST UNGLAM MOMENT** 'Being knee deep in horse manure before the Royal Windsor Endurance competition.'

**TRICKIEST REQUEST** 'Finding 25 emperor penguins for a three-year-old's birthday party. We managed to source three.'

**UPSIDE** 'Variety. One day you are in a Scottish castle, the next you are on the Côte d'Azur.'

**DOWNSIDE** 'It can be pretty exhausting, with lots of travel and late nights.'

