

ASHISH SHANKAR

BEST LAID PLANS

Candice Pereira has you hooked; the wedding planner's company's called Marry Me

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TYING the knot can be a staggeringly tedious business. From gifts to groomsmen, hairstyles to honeymoons, rings to receptions, planning a wedding can send the wind whooshing out of the grittiest, moonstruck-to-the-hilt couple.

Enter wedding planner Candice Pereira. She's diminutive but dynamic and most importantly, possesses the one superpower that sifts the best in the business from the weedy, wannabe stragglers of wedding planners: the ability to supernaturally appear at three places at one time.

She ushers us into a quaintly cluttered office with a variety of eccentric-but-captivating items—colourful cards made of pulp, tulle-wrapped candy, polka-dotted mugs and scented candles—strewn about. Twenty-nine-year-old Pereira says that she entered the wedding business two years back when she started doing the weddings of friends and friends of friends. Six

months ago, her passion for “everything wedding-related from planning the menu, to going trousseau shopping to wrapping the gifts” crystallised into the wedding consulting firm called Marry Me which she says has six people working full-time and dozens of freelancers.

The first wedding she planned was that of a close friend. It was a beach wedding in Goa. “I knew exactly what I wanted. Everything had been fine-tuned to perfection but I was so nervous I think I went a little crazy.”

She might have the tendency to go a little crazy for weddings but then again it might be an essential job requirement. “There was this wedding around eight months ago where we had arranged chairs with immaculate white covers. Just before the ceremony was to start, these pesky kids with dirty hands dropped chocolate all over the chairs and it looked horrendous. Finally we just took some ribbons lying around and covered it up but that was one time I really panicked.”

Talking about wedding trends, she says that destination weddings (with Goa, Jaipur

and Maldives occupying top slots) and theme weddings from Bollywood to red carpet to Hawaiian to Casino are climbing the charts in India. “People are also looking to incorporate international trends without letting go of traditional touches. For example, while the menu might consist of Indian cuisine, families are planning western-type sit down dinners with name cards placed on tables. We had also planned an eco-friendly wedding recently where we gave away small, potted plants as gifts to the guests.”

So should we expect a big, fat Indian wedding when her turn comes? “Oh no,” laughs this spirited lass. “I just want a small, intimate ceremony with just family and friends.” What? No elaborate sunset wedding on the beach with the guests in flip-flops and Hawaiian shirts, or a traditional one with colourful Sangeet and Mehendi nights and wasted uncles dancing the night away? “Nope, just a small one. And I'll probably need to hire a wedding planner when it comes to my wedding because I'm going to be so stressed out.”

