

# *Melissa* ANDRE

TORONTO'S PARTY PRINCESS

A birthday girl's biggest concern used to revolve around what cocktails to serve with dinner to her guests. A bride's biggest stress would focus on major details: what event venue to use? What should the wedding theme be? Now, as celebrity events are being broadcast for the world to see – via magazines both online and in print, social media and so many other mediums, it's no wonder everyone wants to partake in extravagant celebrations. The notion of being fabulous at every age is becoming more popular, so with endless possibilities comes endless questioning. That's where Melissa Andre steps in.

*Words by Megan Rudson*



photographer: Shu Hsien Hsiao Company

Toronto-based celebrity event planner Melissa Andre focuses her party-aesthetic on refined elegance and customized elements. She uses this model to ensure every party reflects the client's personality in a unique way, making each event a difficult one to repeat.

*"I design parties for people who like to dream," she says. "I love bringing the outdoors in, the inside out, playing with dimension, scale and colour." Andre's sophistication can be applied to weddings, Bar and Bat Mitzvah's, branding events, product launches and of course her own special celebrations. "Personal parties give me the opportunity to execute new ideas without the typical restrictions that I would have for a client event," she says. "The aesthetic, budget, guest count, menu, design are all dictated by my personal taste, which is constantly changing."*



Photographer: Steve L. Siffert Photo Company



Andre's design style is as unique as her personality. Words like whimsical, modern and romantic only touch on her capabilities. But, as important as it is to have a sophisticated design, it's equally crucial to have a great menu.

To assist Andre is chef Arpi Magyar. Some of her favourite items that Magyar has helped create include, "Tiny margaritas and fish tacos, oysters with red caviar and single sips of sangria."

With things like the Magnum Bar pop-up ruling the Toronto ice cream scene this summer, it's obvious that personalized treats are a popular craving. Utilizing this trend in an original way, Andre worked with the Mexican hot spot, La Carnita, to create a popsicle bar at one of her over-the-top events. There, they served Mini Egg and Key Lime Pie popsicles for guests looking to cool down in the mid-July heat. She says, "What could be a better surprise than frozen treats in place of a traditional cake?"



furniture: Contemporary Furniture Rentals  
 rentals: Chairman Mills  
 florals: Medina Andre Events Inc.  
 dessert: Butter Avenue  
 catering: Couture Cuisine  
 venue: EFS  
 stationary: Savil Bow

photographer: Mango Studios



Andre's inspiration for creating such elegant events comes from more than a theme or colour palette. With a passion for traveling and a background in fashion, she collaborates ideas derived from culture, clothes, art and architecture. "I think it's important to have a lot of things going on at the same time at a party," she says of her planning process. "Because if you get bored of one thing, you can just look at something else."

Andre is far from leaving her party-planning legacy behind. "I really am so lucky to do this," she gushes. "You get to create magic for just one night and the very next night, you can choose to explore a completely different type of mystique."



Party Planning 101: Melissa Andre knows how to impress her guests; here are some of her tips and tricks on how to make a party unforgettable.

1) Fabulous Floors: "I feel like flooring really gets ignored... I love incorporating custom floor graphics for an unexpected design element," says Andre. Anyone can toss around a few rose petals or light some candles, "but I feel like you can really transform a space by adding elements that people don't generally pay attention to."

2) Food for thought: Andre says food is one of the most important elements at a party. Create a menu by looking at your audience and finding a common trait. When planning a party for NHL player Mikhail Grabovski, Andre opted for a Russian themed menu to adhere to Grabovski's background and guest list. "We even gifted the guests with miniature bottles of different types of vodka."

3) Surprise and personalize: "Always surprise your guests with elements and details that they wouldn't see at anyone else's party," says Andre. She designed a party for Michael Cammalleri of the Calgary Flames, where each guest was gifted a Christian Lacroix journal with a personalized message from the hosts inside. Custom items for each guest are bound to make an event memorable.

4) Impress your guests: "Make sure that you are really thinking about your guests," says Andre. "I often see people planning their own events to accommodate themselves, not thinking about their guests' experiences." Avoid selfish planning by keeping people's dietary restrictions in mind and carefully devising a seating chart. Making sure guests are comfortable is key.

**Melissa Andre Events**  
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photographer Mango Studios

