

WEDDING & EVENT PLANNING

BY DORA MANUEL
OF VIVA BELLA EVENTS

To review video and photographs from Dora Manuel's internship with Colin Cowie, visit Viva Bella Event's Facebook Page at: www.facebook.com/pages/...OH/viva-bella-events/3649238842.



Photo By: Deogracias Lerma

Following Colin Cowie around the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles is like entering a windstorm of style and glamour. The Shrine has hosted nine Academy Awards ceremonies, several Grammy and Emmy awards ceremonies. It is said if it's important in Hollywood, it's happened at the Shrine. Spouting off dozens of compliments, comments and orders to his eager team of executors, I'd never seen event planning like this. Everything is "fabulous" in Colin's world, and anyone and anything is swept into the aura of chic in a matter of minutes.

I'm proud of the boutique event planning company that I run in Cincinnati, but spending four days interning for Colin Cowie, best-selling author and party planner to celebrity luminaries such as Oprah, Tom Cruise, Jennifer Lopez and John Travolta, was eye-opening to say the least. The job was a Bollywood-themed corporate event, taking four days to set up, yet over in four hours. I was under the wings of Cowie and his very capable and amazing staff, generously sharing his experience and insights. Here are some of the nuggets I was able to glean from Cowie:

1 Dream BIG. When Cowie presents to clients, he puts no limit on what he envisions. "If it doesn't exist," he explains, "we'll build it." Ice staircases? Live elephants? Wall-to-wall custom carpet? Rooms inside tents within a conference center? Yes, throw it all out there. "Don't limit yourself by your clients' expectations," encourages Cowie. Ideas can always be edited for practicality's sake, but the pitch is a time for wowing and letting your imagination run wild.

2 Details matter. Cowie designs each event down to the smallest detail, aiming to ignite each of the senses. At the Shrine, he wanted a dance floor railing made from a pattern he discovered at the Taj Mahal. He also wanted a golden, shimmering dance floor cover, taking 2 days to install, emerald green turbans, 25 different exotic linens, sultry snake charmers, aerialists and an Indian princess. He even provided costumes for the guests. After completion, he and his staff hit the dance floor. "Whatever it takes," Cowie exclaims. He pays attention to details that guests may not notice, but those details add up to an intricate whole, which makes the event what it is.

3 Every event is an opportunity. Perhaps the most valuable lesson I learned from my internship is that what Cowie and his team do is not so different from what I do – regardless of the budget, our work requires passion, a sense of style and tenacity. Because his team was affirming of my abilities, I left feeling confident about my own business and skills. I've already begun implementing Cowie's advice into my events here in Cincinnati and I can see that, though the scales are different, the experience for guests can be just as enthralling.

Special events, whether they're weddings, anniversary parties or corporate meetings, are supposed to be beautiful, engaging, and special. That's the belief that started my business and it was reaffirming to be reminded by one of the industry's greats.

Interested in planning an event with Viva Bella Events?
Contact Dora at (513) 792-2298 and located at 8044
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