LELIAN CHEW

FOUNDER
The Wedding Atelier, The Floral Atelier

Photo: KT Merry

Leading the team is Lelian Chew, founder of *The Wedding Atelier* and *The Floral Atelier*.

Awarded Luxury Travel Guide's *Global Wedding Expert of The Year*, Harper Bazaar's *Top Wedding Planner in The World*, and hailed in the BBC documentary as the *Million Dollar Wedding Planner*, Lelian is a name synonymous with luxury events and design.

A former Goldman Sachs financier to the power brokers of Asia, Lelian was a trusted advisor to heirs of family fortunes, heads of states, and luminaries. Combining her unique understanding of this elite client segment with her innate grace and beauty, Lelian brings unprecedented expertise and exceptional service to her clients.

With offices in Hong Kong & Singapore, *The Wedding Atelier* and *The Floral Atelier* plan, design and orchestrate breathtaking celebrations, whether it's in the remote islands of Maldives or majestic ballrooms of China.

LuxuryTravelGuide
GLOBAL AWARDS 2016
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WEDDING EXPERT OF THE YEAR - GLOBAL & WEDDING EXPERT OF THE YEAR - ASIA

THE WEDDING ATELIER

www.theweddingatelier.co

There are few companies in Asia more suited to crafting elegant and exclusive weddings than The Wedding Atelier. Possessing a decade of experience as a financier for Goldman Sachs, owner Lelian Chew is well accustomed to dealing with an elite clientele. Her exquisite attention to detail and quality has led her to create events of an exceptionally high standard, making The Wedding Atelier a favourite with heads of state and luminaries. Boasting offices in Singapore and Hong Kong, The Wedding Atelier is perfectly situated to execute spectacular weddings anywhere in the world, be it an extravagant island event in the Maldives, or an intimate mountain wedding in Hawaii.

We were impressed with the comprehensive range of services The Wedding Atelier offers, spanning from location scouting, budget management, concept design to media facilitation. As the company only takes on 10 events each year, you are guaranteed Lelian and her team's undivided attention from the initial organisation to the arrival of the big day itself. The team is exceptionally talented at creating original and beautiful concepts, which have ranged from lavish enchanted garden weddings, to spectacular island paradise soirees. With Lelian at the helm, your wedding is also certain to be luxuriously bespoke, limited only by your own imagination.

THE
WEDDING
ATELIER

BAZAAR's Little Black Book: The Top Wedding Planners in the World

Engaged? Check. Next, have one of these top-tier event specialists on speed dial.

BY CARRIE GOLDBERG AND HEATHER HALL / JUL 2, 2020

Lelian Chew

The Look: Cinematic. Our expertise at The Wedding Atelier lies in transforming every detail, big and small, into a stage for the greatest love story. The goal is for guests to be hit with a grand sense of awe that lingers long after the party ends.

The Approach: Our internal mantra is: Nothing is impossible; and we push every limit to best serve our clients. All aspects of the wedding—from planning and design, to florals and production—are handled in-house with our regional teams based in Hong Kong, Singapore and soon, Shanghai. We look to bring our unique touch and a focus on client experience to all we do, anywhere in the world.

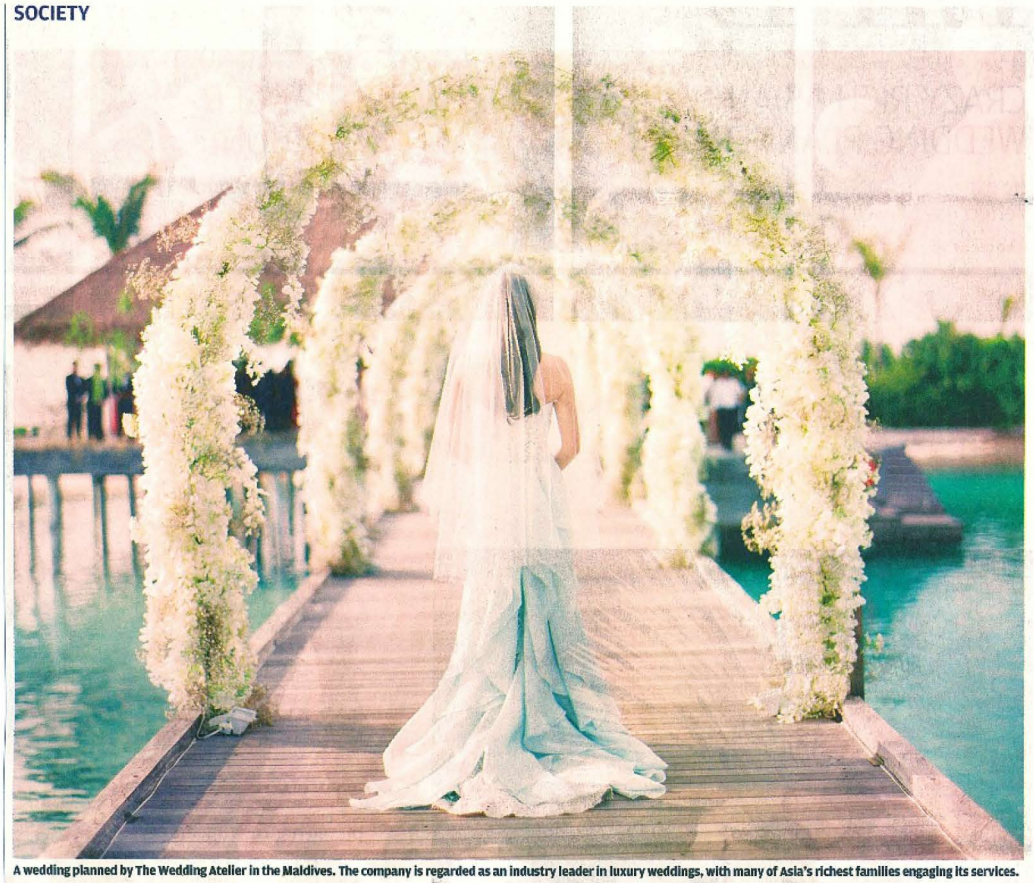
Expert Advice: A wedding is unlike any other event. It is highly complex, and the most public declaration of your most private feelings. With that in mind, it's crucial to find a planner who cleverly balances the lavishness your wedding deserves, with the intimacy it requires. Ensure he or she is someone you can trust wholeheartedly on all decisions—from style to organization, budget, etiquette, and more.

Weddings of Note: We are extremely fortunate to work with some of the best families in the world. But such privilege is to be enjoyed with extreme discretion. You'll never find us name dropping, nor photos identifying our clients on any of our platforms. If you're looking for a rare glimpse into our world, catch us on the BBC docu-series *Million Dollar Wedding Planner.*

BBC DOCUMENTARY ON THE WEDDING ATELIER

THE FLORAL ATELIER FOR PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

South China Morning Post



A wedding planned by The Wedding Atelier in the Maldives. The company is regarded as an industry leader in luxury weddings, with many of Asia's richest families engaging its services.

THE WEDDING PLANNER TAKING BRIDEZILLAS IN HER STRIDE

Lelian Chew pulls out all the stops to create the perfect day for her wealthy, largely Asian, clientele

Karen Tee
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The Atelier & Co's headquarters in Singapore, and company founder Lelian Chew. Photos: Handouts

Say the word "bridezilla" and most wedding planners will run in the opposite direction, screaming in horror. But not Lelian Chew, who welcomes such brides-to-be with open arms.

"If they are not bridezillas, they won't come to us," says Chew, founder of luxury wedding planning company The Wedding Atelier.

"I set the expectation that every client will be demanding, or they would not hire us. On a daily basis, these brides get everything that they want, so you can't tell them that on the biggest day of their life, they can't have something. They will flip out."

Chew's company, which she launched in 2013, is regarded by many as an industry leader in luxury weddings, with many of Asia's richest families engaging her services. Although she is not at liberty to reveal names, Chew says impossible is nothing for these clients, who typically hail from Hong Kong, the mainland, Indonesia and Thailand.

"Everything is indulgent – we've had clients who bought vineyards just to grow grapes for [wedding] wine or purchased hotels to make sure they can create a space to their specifications. Clients often choose to pay for accommodation for their guests, and I've had a bride who was willing to spend US$1 million on an Elie Saab gown," Chew says.

Chew was speaking at her newly opened 7,000 sq ft headquarters in Singapore. The space, called The Atelier & Co, houses the company's planning arm, design studio and floral cold room. It also includes an event space and sells speciality products sourced from the team's global travels. The firm has another studio in Hong Kong and one planned for Shanghai.

Chew and her team take on no more than 10 weddings a year. A job often starts with her and her creative team flying around the world to scout for destinations for the happy couple. "It need not be a traditional hotel," she says. "In Hawaii, we saw a rundown 200-year-old sugar mill, which I knew we could transform into a unique space. So we converted it by building a roof over it. It almost felt like a purpose-built structure for the wedding."

For another wedding in Yangshuo, near Guilin in southern China, the bride wanted to give her guests an authentic experience, Chew says. "We worked with the villagers to build chairs for the event and old ladies came in to sing for us."

Chew began the business by chance after leaving her job as a banker on Goldman Sachs' "A-team", which managed the investment portfolios of Asian billionaires. She was planning her own multi-day destination wedding in Bali. Then one of her former clients called.

"I said I'm taking a break and planning my wedding but he misheard me and asked me to plan his son's wedding," she says.

"I knew the family well so I flew to Indonesia where I realised I was one of seven planners he engaged."

The experience made her realise there was untapped potential in the luxury wedding category, which had typically been run by family-run enterprises.

"I have a very specific skill set in handling a specific segment of clients. If they could trust me with their multimillion-dollar investments, they knew they could trust me with their wedding day."

Since then, she has expanded her business to include The Floral Atelier, a floral shop that provides custom design and event styling.

"If you don't want us to plan your entire wedding, you can have a bit of that magic where we design and decorate it," she says.

The Wedding Atelier was named Global Wedding Expert of The Year by Luxury Travel Guide, a travel resource, in 2016. One of Chew's weddings also got on the cover of *Martha Stewart Real Weddings and Honeymoons* magazine, something that the bride had always dreamed of.

"We spent 18 months predicting colours and working with a photographer who we felt could be selected by the magazine," Chew says. When the wedding made the cut, the bride was "over the moon".

Chew says there are ways for couples to make their special day stand out. "Look out for the juxtaposition of raw and luxe [when looking for venues]. For example, a warehouse space is something unexpected for guests. Or play with materials and textures – you don't usually find angular lines, metallic tones or concrete at a wedding."

She also encourages brides to be more experimental with at least one outfit. "Colour is coming back. It is not just pastel pink but strong shades. I'm also seeing more pants, not just dresses."

For destination weddings, Chew suggests that the bride and groom arrive at the location at least two days before the event to avoid unexpected travel issues.

However, there is one thing Chew cannot control – the weather. It does not stop her from trying though. "We prep for bad weather and actually do cloud seeding," she says.

Read more: https://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/fashion-beauty/article/3025603/crazy-rich-asian-wedding-planner-million-dollar-dresses

THE STRAITS TIMES

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Women bosses with staying power

Singaporean entrepreneurs Lelian Chew of The Wedding Atelier and Choo Yilin of jewellery label Choo Yilin are growing their brands and marking milestones

Ms Lelian Chew is beefing up her company's presence in Singapore by setting up its global headquarters in Delta House. The Atelier & Co will house her two businesses – The Wedding Atelier and The Floral Atelier. ST PHOTO: YEN MING JUN

CHOO YILIN: CHARMING THE WORLD WITH JADE
on D2

Amanda Chai

High-society wedding planner returns to home base

For many home-grown brands, longevity is a tricky hurdle to cross.

Not for Singaporean entrepreneurs Lelian Chew, founder of wedding planning company The Wedding Atelier, and Choo Yilin, of jewellery label Choo Yilin.

While others struggle to stay afloat in the first year, these two proudly local, female-fronted brands are expanding further abroad and marking milestones.

The Straits Times checks in with them on their plans.

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While most local brands typically start at home before expanding abroad, Ms Lelian Chew found success overseas first before she brought her brand back to Singapore.

She is the founder of bespoke wedding planning company The Wedding Atelier, launched in Hong Kong in 2013.

It may not ring a bell to most Singaporeans, but it has a reputation in elite society in Hong Kong and China.

A chunk of her clientele appears on the annual Forbes list, says the 37-year-old, who was previously a private banker with Goldman Sachs.

She has planned weddings for some of Asia's richest families – jobs she had to pitch for in boardrooms – though she declined to reveal names.

A wedding she styled has appeared on the cover of Martha Stewart Weddings, a quarterly publication widely regarded as the pinnacle of wedding magazines.

But growing the brand abroad first was unintentional.

Ms Chew, who is married with no children, first moved to Hong Kong seven years ago for her job in finance and fell into weddings as "a beautiful accident".

"At that point, there wasn't really a professionally run wedding company. It was a bit of a niche market then, so we had first-mover advantage," she says.

"A lot of times when people are looking to do a wedding, they go to a hotel, book out the grandest ballroom and let the banquet team handle it – but there is so much more to that."

The Wedding Atelier focuses on the aesthetics of a wedding, with most of the budget going to the decor and floral arrangements.

The unorthodox choice paid off and she made a name for herself in Hong Kong. Through word-of-mouth, her business grew.

She opened her Singapore office two years later in 2015 to target the South-east Asian market.

Later that year, noticing "a bit of a void" in the floral decoration market here, she launched The Floral Atelier in Eng Hoon Street in Tiong Bahru to offer in-house retail and florist services.

> I feel like we have made some headway in Europe, Asia and the United States. But here in Singapore, no one even really knows about us.

MS LELIAN CHEW, who started bespoke wedding planning company The Wedding Atelier in Hong Kong in 2013 and found success overseas, on bringing her brand back to Singapore

Last month, Ms Chew closed her Eng Hoon Street studio and opened an all-new global headquarters in Singapore. The Atelier & Co serves as a physical home to both her businesses.

The 7,000 sqft space takes up the entire top floor of Delta House in Alexandra Road.

Inside, the centrepiece is a glasshouse that was custom-built for the space, housing fresh blooms and bouquets in cool temperatures. Customers can walk in and buy ready-made arrangements, or get a feel of the inventory before placing their orders.

They can also take home imported decorative vases and scented candles from cult Korean fragrance brand Soohyang, which retails exclusively in Singapore at the space.

On weekends, the headquarters will host masterclasses and workshops taught by local artisans, such as chocolate bonbon-making classes by pastry chef Janice Wong. It will also be available for rent for events, with all the furniture, save for the glasshouse, movable.

Besides expanding retail efforts, grounding the headquarters here signals a return home for Ms Chew and her brand, which opened a store in Paragon in December.

China remains her strongest market for weddings.

"(But) for personal reasons – because I'm Singaporean – and looking at how we've done with various parts of the business and the needs of the market, we decided to go big in Singapore," she explains.

It was also partly to show fellow Singaporeans what a local brand can achieve overseas.

She has grown from a one-woman company in 2013 to heading a team of 19 full-timers, and has plans to open a Shanghai office later in the year.

"I feel like we have made some headway in Europe, Asia and the United States. But here in Singapore, no one even really knows about us," she says.

"It was unfair to the team that their family members don't really know what they do.

"It was important for me to make sure that their home country knows they have done really good work in the past six years."

Read more: https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/fashion/proudly-local-female-fronted-brands-the-wedding-atelier-and-choo-yilin-set-sight

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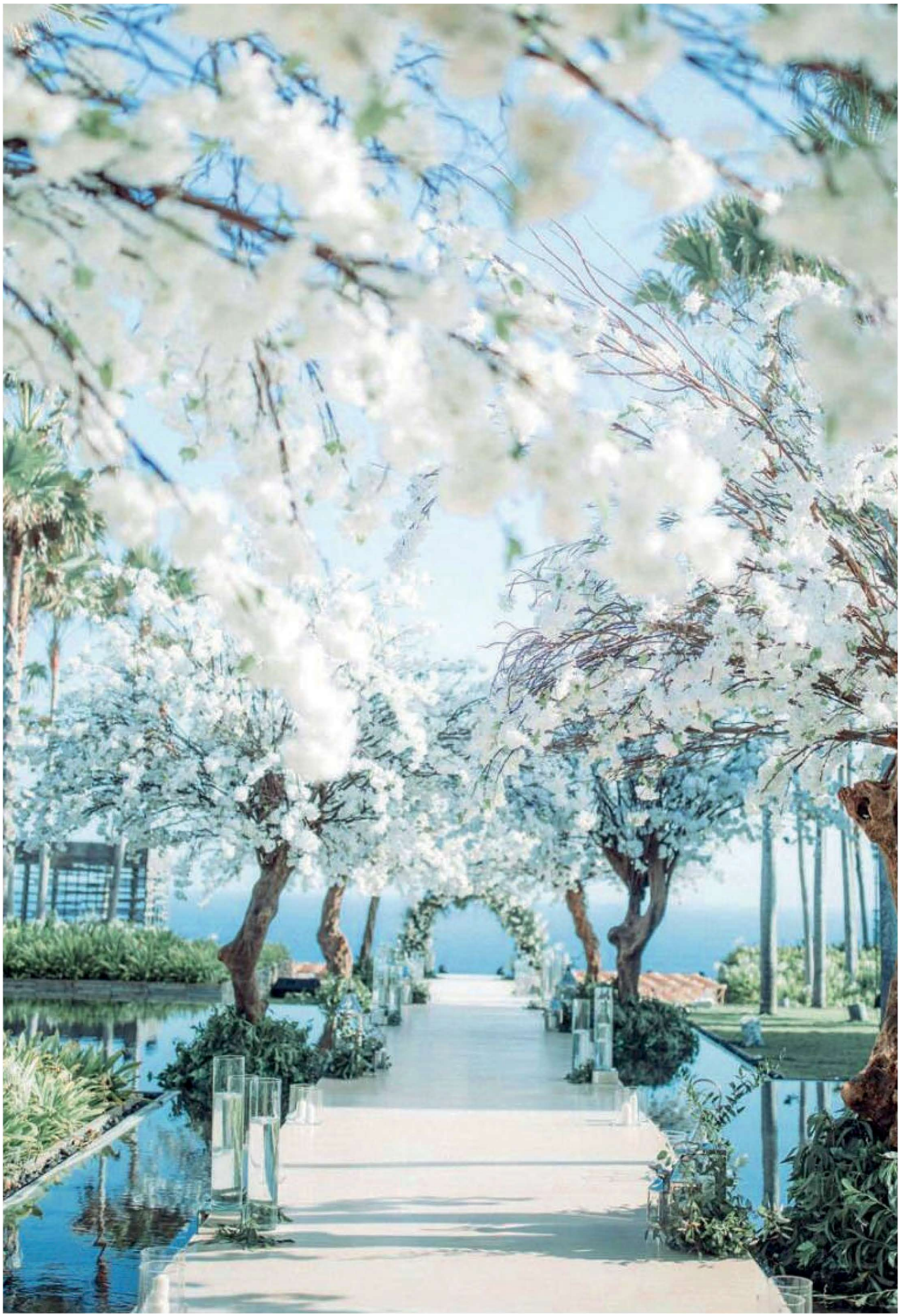
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