

DESTINATIONS

WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS | SANDALS

Q&A

MARSHA-ANN BROWN, HEAD OF ROMANCE, SANDALS

INTERVIEW BY Natalie Marsh

Q. What does your role as head of romance entail?

A. I get paid to dream of everything that could possibly be romantic. That entails everything that encompasses a wedding, ensuring we have options that allow every bride and groom to customise their wedding, and also that as a brand, we have all the romance elements on the resort. That flows into the honeymoon and the selection of suites that we have for them to choose from – that really enhances the romance. It's a very all-encompassing job and there are no two days that are the same, which makes it exciting.

Q. Which Sandals resort is the most popular among Brits?

A. Without question, we tend to find that for Brits, Barbados, Saint Lucia and Antigua are our most popular locations.

Q. What goes into planning a wedding? How long does it take?

A. A lot of times, couples want to start their planning or enquiries 12 months out. But we also have those who will decide in a shorter window of time – we see some as little as four months out.

Q. Are there any wedding themes that are particularly popular?

A. Everyone wants to tailor-make their wedding. They want their wedding to be as unique as the love that they share – so we don't have packages or themes, we have

“One bride, 30 minutes before her wedding, said she wanted to ride down the aisle on a horse

'inspirations'. This really opens out a canvas for our guests to select what appeals to them the most. Everyone has their individual preferences. The royal wedding last year certainly influenced the preferences of many, whether it was the bridal bouquet or just the expression and styles.

Q. What's the strangest request you've ever had?

A. I've had quite a few! We had a couple that were getting married here in Jamaica and about 30 minutes before the wedding, the bride said she didn't want to walk down the aisle after all. We didn't quite understand – until she added: "I want to get a horse." So I said: "OK, no problem, allow us to check on it." The last thing you want is a nervous groom, thinking that his bride is not coming, so we negotiated it and ensured that the

groom was set away from the location. We do become magicians when we need to – whatever it takes to make the bride happy – and my girl entered on a horse. We'll do whatever it takes to make it happen.

Q. What is your favourite wedding location?

A. They all have a different theme and a different backdrop. I believe very strongly that is part of the customisation for each couple. With the ones who want to have weddings on the beach, you will have beach activity taking place – it's not exclusive to them – so when someone says they want a wedding that's more private with

MARSHA-ANN'S TIP FOR AGENTS

Our sellingsandals.co.uk website has a wedding brochure that provides a comprehensive overview of all that we offer. Agents can also get in touch with our agency sales team, who can give guidance if they're not sure about anything.

fewer people around, the garden might appeal. But here is the win-win of both: the photography. If we have weddings in the gardens, we get pictures there, and then we go on the beach and get photos there as well. And vice versa. And then we have our Over-the-Water Chapels, which have taken off like a storm. We have three in Jamaica and one in Saint Lucia, and they're absolutely beautiful.

Q. Do couples tend to bring lots of guests?

A. It varies. The majority of them are more intimate affairs, with the bride and groom and perhaps three other rooms. But we've had those who have certainly enjoyed much more than that. We find that the guests who come consider it a mini vacation for themselves. **TW**



PICTURE: Brandi Gard Studios