

# THE EVENT INDUSTRY'S INFLUENTIALS

**If you want to start a fire, then find someone who's hot. These event professionals are. Not only do they continue their own successful careers, but they have changed the landscape in the event industry. They are the influentials, and they continue to fire up both colleagues and newbies.**

By Lisa Hurley

## STAR TURN

Once upon a time, only the privileged party guest could see stunning special events. But these three savvy professionals have showcased their talents on TV and social media, transforming themselves into superstars—and taking the image of the industry along with them.

### PRESTON BAILEY



The venerable New York-based designer with the celebrity-heavy client list is also an author and TV commentator; he launched Preston Bailey's Signature Wedding & Event Design course last year:

"I'd love to spare younger people in the industry some of my mistakes. It's becoming more and more important to me to offer encouragement and guidance to these folks, and that goal inspired my blog, my courses and my upcoming advice book for those who want to run a creative service business."

### STEVE KEMBLE



From planner to association leader to his creating his own lifestyle brand, Dallas' Kemble wears many hats—all of them *fabulous*:

"I give 100 percent credit to the special event industry for launching my brand—Steve

Kemble, America's Sassiest Lifestyle Guru. I sincerely hope my legacy will be that, yes, I benefited from this industry but, importantly, I gave and will continue to give back."

### DAVID TUTERA



Photo by Marling Vesikari

Ask any of his 28,000 Twitter followers and they'll tell you, the New York-based star of TV's "My Fair Wedding" is the *other* man whom brides dream about:

"I would like to be seen as someone that has provided people the ability to dream and to see that you can have a career

surrounded with passion. I believe in making dreams come true and then knowing you can dream bigger! Also, I cannot stress enough that education is important. With education, you can write your own career path and be a trendsetter, and that is what helps to change the footprint of our industry."

## ASKING, WHAT IF?

Some people accept things as they are; others see what could be better—and make it happen.

### JOYCE SCARDINA BECKER, CMP

This San Francisco-based wedding planner could have stayed busy with her company Events of Distinction, lecturing at the college level, and writing. But she saw a need for a high-quality, nonprofit association for

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bridal experts, and became founding president of the Wedding Industry Professionals Association:

"The California State University East Bay Wedding Planner Certificate Program is the most challenging and difficult program nationwide—I designed

it that way because my name is on it!"

## JOANN ROTH-OSEARY



Photo by ZME Studios

The founder of Tarzana, Calif.-based Someone's in the Kitchen gives parties, gives lectures and gives. Often. She supports a range of charities helping the indigent and serves as chairwoman of the SEARCH Foundation:

"This is what you learn before you are 6 years old: You need

to give back and participate in the community at large. Regardless of how dark your day seem, someone else's day is darker."

## THEY JUST WIN, BABY

How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Practice, the old joke goes. How do you win a total of 50 Gala Awards? Create events as outstanding as this trio does.

## DAVID MERRELL



The founder of L.A.-based AOO Events doesn't keep his event design and management expertise to himself. He speaks on design to ISES chapters worldwide—and donates a portion of his speaker fees to SEARCH:

"Because there was no one to mentor me when I first started in

the business, I always wanted to be there for others who were just starting out. Through my involvement in the industry, in ISES and by blogging and speaking, I hope to pay it forward."

## ALISON SILCOFF



The founder of Alison Silcoff Events of Montreal is the belle of the ball—the Daffodil Ball, the mammoth fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society:

"My ideas are inspired by a love of the arts, extensive travel, visiting cutting-edge restaurants

and my connections to entertainers and other suppliers around the world."

## ANDREA MICHAELS



The founder of Extraordinary Events of Sherman Oaks, Calif., has an extraordinary track record—34 *Special Events Gala Awards*:

"My legacy? Don't stay in one place, complacently and fearfully, complaining about the economy, etc. Take a risk and leap of faith, and dream big."

## THE INNOVATORS

Success yesterday doesn't ensure success tomorrow. These three are changing the face of the event landscape.

## COLJA DAMS



Back in 1998, Dams' international event agency—Vok Dams Group—was among the first to make the Internet part of events:

"The future belongs to hybrid events, which pair live with MoSoLo—the use of mobile/social/local technologies. MoSoLo gives us the opportunity to

enhance the special event outcome—driving ROI up."

## SALLY WEBB, CSEP



With offices in London and the U.S., this dynamo has produced events in more than 20 countries in her 25 years in business. Recognizing the challenges facing academic planners, she launched the Academic Event Professional conference in 2007:

"I am delighted with the impact AEP has made within the academic community in such a short period of time, and to be an ambassador for standardized best practices within the event industry through my work with the ISES CSEP accreditation."

## DEBRA LYKKEMARK



Photo by John Weston

The forward-thinking president and CEO of Culinary Capers Catering in Vancouver, British Columbia, parlayed a catering gig for the 2006 Olympics into a sister operation in Beijing offer-