

## community

## Linda Marshall: wedding guru

It was good advice. After hours of sitting in front of my TV in total horror with the rest of the world for the past couple of weeks, a trauma counsellor came on and said the only way to start the healing process was to get out of the house and do normal things. After all, these events happened thousands of miles away - everything, at least in our part of the world, still LOOKS the same. It still doesn't FEEL the same, but nevertheless, it does look the same.

(Except the good people of Global Toronto who depicted Whistler as a veritable ghost town - when did they take their shots, at 6a.m.?)

As I walked around in the sunshine appreciating the mountains and the lakes, probably more than I ever had - I was reassured to see people golfing, biking and sitting on patios. Life does go on. As the expert said, it helps you feel better, and it did.

To further my quest for normalcy I rented lots of comedy videos. "High Fidelity," "Best In Show" and "The Wedding Planner."

"What's more upbeat an occasion than a wedding?" I figured. With that thought in mind I decided to take Whistler's very own wedding planner, Linda Marshall, out for lunch just to see if the movie was realistic and not some overdone cheezy Hollywood rendition.

"Amazingly realistic," laughs Linda as we sit down at Millar Creek Café in Function Junction. We've both ordered the seared salmon on risotto and grabbed a couple of coffees. "I actually took 14 people down to Vancouver see it. We chuckled in recognition the whole way through."

"Except that you probably would never find yourself trying to save your Gucci pumps from a manhole cover like J' Lo did," I point out.

"Nope, no Gucci pumps here," Linda says. "We wear sensible shoes since we're often running around on rocks at the top of a mountain, not down a city street."

Linda explains that weddings in Whistler are more like theme weekend getaways than the more traditional one day event, with various challenging loca-

Michele BUSH

brunch with  
bush

tions. Which is fun, but it seems a mountain top wedding can cause a few logistical problems that would never have occurred to me.

Like having to wash muddy bike droppings out of a gondola car in the limited time it takes it to round the bull wheel, so the bride can ride up without covering her lily white dress in a thick coat of grime. If the car isn't clean, Linda and her crew run around and start again.

*The bride  
threw a cape  
over her  
dress, pulled  
on some  
tights and  
skied for the  
rest of the  
day.*



**Linda  
Marshall**  
WEDDING  
PLANNER

Or accommodating a couple that wanted to get married at 7a.m. (cough, yes: a.m.) in the Roundhouse during First Tracks and trying to keep the general public from loudly clanking their cutlery during the ceremony.

"They were very avid skiers," Linda says. "After the ceremony the bride threw a cape over her dress, pulled on some white tights and skied for the rest of the day."

"Well, that's cool," I say.

"Yes, literally," laughs Linda.

"Now what about the scene in the movie where J' Lo opens her jacket to reveal an emergency kit with smelling salts, Pepto Bismal, and pain killers?" I ask. "Do you have one of those?"

"I don't have one strapped to my body like she does. It's a backpack actually. Full of stain removers, lint brushes, sewing kits, Band-aids, Tums, and White Out."

"White Out?" I ask, thinking maybe the couple needs it for quick revisions on their personally written wedding vows. ("Honey, scratch that part about me respecting you - after your disgusting antics during your stag last night, I've changed my mind...")

Linda explains: "One time a bride inexplicably cut her foot quite badly getting out of the limo and got blood all over her gown. I had to say, 'I know you've probably spent six grand on that dress, but we're covering it with White Out.' It actually worked really well."

The gigs that Linda lands are as varied as they are creative. She's set up an engagement by printing out "Will you marry me?" in seashells at Rainbow Park for the couple's arrival. Linda hid in the bushes to see if it all went to plan.

She's showed up, at the groom's request, to a hotel room with the dress, marriage commissioner and photographer all on standby while the guy pops the question. (she said yes); Linda's filled rooms with balloons for anniversaries; and of course planning Arthur and Janella Griffiths very high profile wedding last August. I can't help but think - what a life!

"Are you surprised at how romantic men can be when they set these things up?" I ask.

"Totally! Men can be very romantic." She laughs.

"Mind you I've had a lot of guys tell me that because I'm surrounded by flowers, candles and cake all the time I'm living in a fantasy world - and life is not a fairy tale just because I have one every weekend."

Damn - I was thinking of asking her for a job, living in a fantasy world sounds really good about now.