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Les Roches alumna becomes first Hong Kong based international wedding maestro

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Name: Evelyn Mills

Graduation year: 1991

Nationality: Hong Kong

Program name: Hotel Management Diploma

Current position: Founder at [Marriage Maestros](#) and at [Wedding Maestros](#)

Evelyn Mills has built a career snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. When two weddings were almost cancelled, she

stood in and saved the day. From that, she has built a highly successful career as a wedding designer and planner, event and philanthropy consultant and international industry speaker. She spoke to us about discovering the world of weddings and events...or, to be more accurate, how they discovered her.

Hospitality beginnings

“I was always interested in hospitality,” Evelyn says. “My father was in the restaurant and catering business, so I was always drawn to the service industry and making people happy.” One of her uncles had previously attended Les Roches, but Evelyn was already aware of the school’s pedigree. “I knew that if I wanted to study hospitality, I wanted to study it at the best place. As soon as I arrived at Les Roches, I knew it was the right school for me.”

Once Evelyn had graduated, she took the conventional route and began working in hotels. “I did management training at Hyatt Regency and my first job was at the Mandarin Oriental,” she explains.

The skills I learned at Les Roches ensured I was ready for this role, as the bulk of it involved planning events, exhibitions and trade fairs.

Changing careers

It was then that her career began to move into more unexpected paths. “I had been looking after various embassies and consulates during my hotel career, when I was offered the role of Deputy Trade Commissioner for the nation of Belgium,” she says. While on paper it seems a drastic change, Evelyn stresses Les Roches had prepared her. “The skills I learned at Les Roches ensured I was ready

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for this role, as the bulk of it involved planning events, exhibitions and trade fairs.”

However, Evelyn craved “something more challenging and missed the interpersonal relationships” and **when she was offered a job as an Associate Producer at Jack Morton Worldwide – an American multinational brand experience agency, she jumped on the opportunity to be back in the exciting world of events.** Much as she loved her new role there, the demanding nature of event production meant she was spending little time with her new husband who was working on shifts (“we were like ships in the night”). They arrived at a solution – working together as heads of their own company. “A friend of mine worked as a travel agent, building up a successful agency in Hong Kong,” Evelyn explains. “However, she was planning on leaving the country and wanted to sell the company to someone she trusted.” **From that, Evelyn’s first foray into being her own boss began.**

A happy accident

Sadly, the travel company proved to be unsuccessful (their official Opening Day was on the ill-fated date of 9/11/2011) and Evelyn was forced to think of what to do next.

In the meantime, a close friend, Charlotte, came to her aid. “I didn’t want to return to working for hotels, so Charlotte let me work in her bridal gown business,” Evelyn says. “I love fashion and being creative came naturally to me, so over time I began helping with designs and other parts of the process.”

She insisted I had finally found my 'calling' and encouraged me to start the city's first ever wedding planning company



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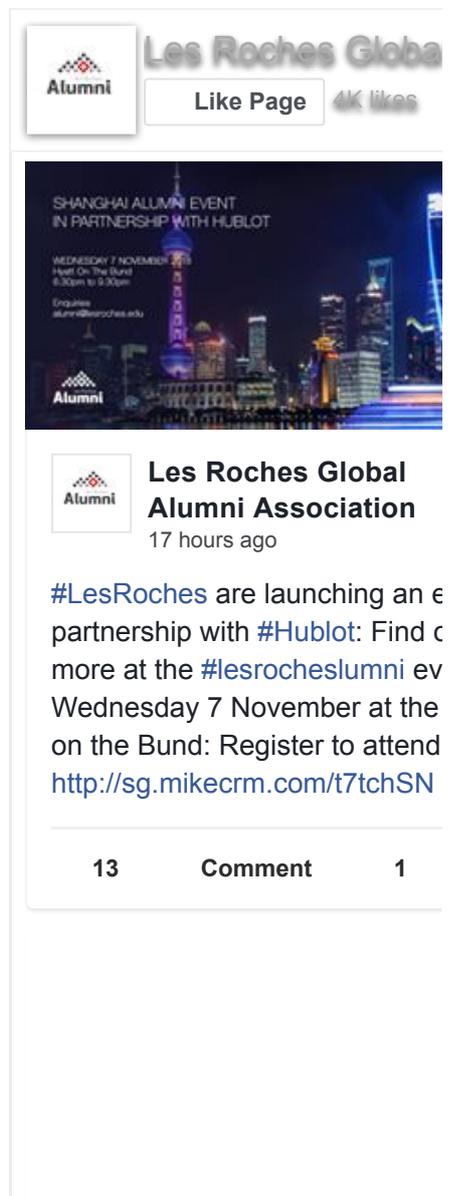
It was then that Evelyn was greeted with a career-changing experience. **“A bride-to-be came to me in tears, informing me her wedding was to be cancelled** due to a bomb that had recently went off on the island of Bali, where her wedding was to take place,” she says. “So, I suggested to her that she should move the wedding to Hong Kong instead of calling off the entire thing.

So, the bride **asked if I could help** her plan her wedding, to be her wedding planner – to which my response was: “What’s that?” **Within three weeks from that conversation we were able to bring the entire wedding to Hong Kong** and had managed to pull off a very successful wedding.”

Evelyn enjoyed the rush and thrived on the pressure, but insisted it was nothing more than a one-off. But then **near-tragedy struck once more**. “Another bride came to me shortly after with the same issue of having to ‘move her wedding,” Evelyn says. “Only **this time it was a wedding with well over 1,000 guests**, whereas the previous one had been for just 70 people.” Once again, Evelyn saved the day, and once again, she insisted it was a one-off. But

Charlotte, founder of renowned wedding designer label Augusta Jones had other ideas. “She insisted I had finally found my ‘calling’ and encouraged me to start the city’s first ever wedding planning company. She said I was ready and, after helping me get my ducks in a row, shooed me out of her nest to start my own business.”

From that, **Evelyn created Marriage Maestros – Hong Kong’s first international wedding planning establishment**. From there she also founded Wedding Maestros. The former deals with exclusive luxury weddings for HNWC (high net-worth couples), specialising in buyouts of amazing destinations. The latter, meanwhile, specialises in



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packaged weddings services offering those who desire luxury but at more affordable prices.

She now shares her expertise and guidance through speaking at international wedding summits and offering tailored workshops to hotels and a new generation of future wedding specialists.

Creating multi-million dollar experiences

Evelyn has collaborated with leading hotels such as The Four Seasons and The Bulgari **on exclusive multi-million dollar wedding experiences**, and has been commissioned to design and style wedding brochures, curate wedding packages, consult with new hotels on wedding projects and more. She now shares her expertise and guidance through speaking at international wedding summits and offering tailored workshops to hotels and a new generation of future wedding specialists.

“Every culture is different and has different customs and traditions – with the Chinese wedding business being the most sought-after in the market, my dream is to offer East meets West wedding solutions on a global scale.” Evelyn explains.

“But Les Roches ensured I was ready. I became a student of the world who is constantly learning and playing it forward. I’m so thankful that I studied there.”

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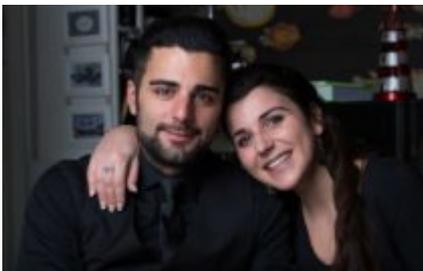
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