

The Party Queen of Westminster

Li Brewer has the Midas touch of the party world,

so says Dame Shirley Bassey, Westminster

Reporter's Camilla Milward tracked down the

glamour guru to try and pick up a few golden tips.

With 25 years' experience representing the rich and famous, she has managed to advise, defend and promote many an A-list celebrity. But could Li Brewer (DHL head) actually employ her own just how to turn inVill into the "hostess with the mostess"? It was a challenge I was very eager to accept.

11am on a cosy Monday evening, I found myself outside one of the most prestigious addresses in Westminster, for minutes later I was sitting with a cup of warming home-made ginger tea, chatting to the author of *The Party Queen*, Li Brewer. Here are some of the answers to the questions that you all want to know but never dared to ask.

At your 25 years of entertaining have you ever had a disaster?

If you class the roof of a venue blowing off then yes, I suppose I have! It was at the Curzon Gardens Launch in Texas with 300-400 guests. Unfortunately it was hurricane season. I arrived on the day of the event with about a dozen security guards, so first the 250,000-ampere surge blew the roof. It was like a bomb had fallen out to sea heading for NOAA. Somehow all the guests managed to squeeze into the nearest dining room and then later probably loved the situation by playing on a small upright piano during dinner. However at midnight as the storm had died down, a group of about eight of us headed by John Birt and Richard Hoag, the photographer, took some champagne and headed out to the original rooftop venue. It had not started in the moonlight and we were definitely in the party mood. We found the switches for the music room of which were clearly ground rats and started on the light show and started to dance and party. It was on the occasion that John married and Richard thought James Grant of Eton with his trousers down hit the headlines around the world. Soon the rest of the guests joined us, armed with several cases of Laurent Perrier champagne and the party went on until dawn.



Li Brewer

What do you think London has to offer, in the way of entertainment, that other cities in the world can't and would you be able to choose a couple of your favourite venues in Westminster?

London is definitely in my top ten cities. I find it to be one of the most vibrant, exciting cities in the world. It caters for everyone who wants to have a good time, with an array of pubs, bars, restaurants and clubs. Another thing is a wealth of culture, beauty and fashion treasures. I think the one gem that really characterises London is its great pubs, they are something that no other country can really boast. I think most of the club establishments need to be kept to a minimum, however as it may lead to anti-social behaviour. Pubs do need to sleep at some stage. However good the pub!

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Of the matter of favourite venues, I think the squares are great. Be perfect, such as Eaton Square and Belgrave Square. Three years ago there used to be a Belgrave Square Brasserie, it was a treat to sit there and eat. Great for well held in the beautiful surroundings of Belgrave Square.

Any final tips for hosting a great party?

One golden rule, if it all doesn't go to plan, walk by off, guests don't turn up or things get broken the best thing to do is laugh it off!

The Party Queen by Li Brewer is published by Aris in paperback £4.99 and available from all good bookshops.

LADIES WHO LAUNCH

like Genealogies, Tongueer Cattle and Timberrry in Scotland. Soon countries turned to her to help increase their tourism potential and Portugal and the Algarve, Jamaica, Florida and Greece were added to her portfolio of clients.

The 1920's Ball, the England Ball, the Miss Harter's Military Ball and many others were under her control, organised together with some of the most elegant and notorious British women of the century including The Duchess of Argyll and actress Lady Diana Cooper.

In addition to representing a number of trendy establishments, she took on a number of high profile clients in the 70s and 80s and became their confidante, advisor and media spokesperson.

She represented businessman Peter de Swain during his Challenge for the America's Cup and the launch of his St James' Club in London.

Already this year she has organised the

launch of the Special Olympics Great Britain at Downing Street in London.

So what are her top ten tips to ensure that an event goes smoothly?

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Carry a notepad around and make notes as and when you find something that needs to be done.

ALPHABETICAL GUEST LIST

for ease of reference.

FORM OF ADDRESS - When writing and addressing invitations make sure you use the correct name, spelling and title of your potential guests.

INSURANCE

Remember that if an accident happens in your own home you are responsible. Check your insurance.

KEEPING FLOWERS FRESH

Sold an apricot.

PRINTED BALLOONS

Printed balloons show attention to detail and are fun for guests to take away.

HOW MANY CANAPES

If you are not sure how many canapés to prepare, use the following guide: for 1-2 hours prepare 6-8 per person, for a reception lasting 2-3 hours allow 10-15 per person.

CLEANING MATERIALS

If you are doing your catering keep utensils clean. You can never have enough cloths.

KEEPING COOL

Keep the drinks cool. Blocks or large bags of ice can be delivered by your wine merchant. To keep a large number of bottles cool a plastic bin full of ice serves well.

SAYING GOODBYE

Indicate a departure time on the invitation or encourage them to go by saying you hope they have enjoyed themselves and that you hope to see them again soon. Alternatively, stop the drink half an hour after the allotted time and ask the waiters to start clearing glasses.

The Party Bible has become an overnight success in bookshops and she is now being asked by a host of conference organisers to share her secrets with them.

She has also recently launched a new company, Sibbs Event Management, which she has opened with her business partner, London PR guru Murray Harkin. "If my Party Bible doesn't fill you with enough confidence to throw your own party - then now you can use it to do it for you" she says with a twinkle.



LADIES

WHO LAUNCH

Organising a party, an event, a wedding or just simply an anniversary is an important step. You need guidance and if you can afford it you need to bring in the professionals.

Who better to talk to about organising that special event than Britain's Liz Brewer – advisor to anyone who's anyone and Party Organiser Supremo. Jim Dunn meets the lady behind many of the most successful parties.

Renowned for her party organising throughout Europe – guide and guru to such luminaries as Shirley Bassey and Frank Trump – Liz is now also a successful author. In her first book, "The Party Bible", she has put down on paper a host of tips on creating a successful event.

We met at Darley House, the discreet boutique hotel in London's fashionable St James Street. It turned out to be a perfect setting for our interview. "A perfect setting is the number one requirement for a successful event", says Liz.

Liz began her career as "advisor to The Rich and Famous" telling them who to talk to in the media and how to make good social contacts in the capitals of Europe and beyond. She then began organising lunches or dinners where her clients could meet her contacts, and she's now a media personality in her own right having organised a number of glamorous TV events. She regularly participates in a variety of television and radio chat shows commenting on current social news and the etiquette of Party Giving.

Her book – The Party Bible (published by Arnold – price £24.25) has become the



invaluable "must have" manual for anyone who wants to get their party organisation right.

From an explanation of what black tie really means – to budget-conscious tips for those of us unlucky enough not to have a Liz organise our event.

She can draw on a list of international celebrities, many of whom are personal friends as well as clients, to launch the most extraordinary and imaginative events. Frank Trump, Dame Shirley Bassey, Zandra Rhodes, David Tang – the Hong Kong businessman – and Jimmy Choo – the fashion designer – are just a few of the names that roll off her tongue as we take tea in Darley's Drawing Room.

Liz Brewer first shot to fame in the 1960s when she swapped life as a London debutante to launch Portugal's first night club. She attracted an array of celebrities including Cliff Richard, The Shadows, Lulu, Gilla Black and Paul McCartney and this gave her an appetite for organising extravagant events.

Having sold the club in the 70s, she returned to London and set up a consultancy, whose clients included top hotels