





## ORIGINS

### WELCOME TO WONDERLAND

AS ALICE TEMPERLEY CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF TEMPERLEY LONDON AND HER 40TH BIRTHDAY, *SLT* IS INVITED INSIDE HER SOMERSET HOME FOR HER ANNUAL FÊTE AND A PEEK AT HER SS16 COLLECTION.

By Julia Seidl

When inspiration strikes Alice Temperley, we imagine not an invisible light bulb going off overhead, but instead a shimmering disco ball beginning to twirl. Despite her reputation for putting an ethereal and romantic spin on all she creates, the designer has an affinity for the flashy bedazzled object, though not in the way most would expect. “There is no greater feeling than relaxing in my disco ball bathtub looking out onto the rolling hills after a hard weeks work,” says the Brit of the mirrored mosaic Victorian tub that lies near the picture window in the bathroom of her Somerset estate. Soaking her troubles away isn’t the only way Alice incorporates her pet objet into her life. When describing her annual summer soirée, which this year corresponded with the celebration of her 40th birthday, the designer is sure to mention her gown for the evening. Specially created to coincide with the myths and legends theme of the night, her jewel-encrusted creation was an homage to the spinning sphere, or as Alice puts it quite simply, it was “an amazing disco ball dress.”

The stage for the evening was the grounds of her eight-bedroom house, once owned by newspaper tycoon Lord Beaverbrook and only eleven kilometres down the road from the cider farm where she grew up (a short jaunt to the converted chapel where her sister Mary lives). “It is the one time I can have all my closest friends and family together and dance the night away,” says Alice of her legendary gatherings, this one marking the 22nd of such annual parties. A gaggle of the designer’s closest friends, abiding by the corresponding dress code, danced the night away under the stars as they munched on barbecue and basked in the nectar of the gods. Oriental rugs served as makeshift dance floors while wild flowers adorned tented tabletops. It was a scene worthy of Martha Stewart herself. And for Alice, who already has a line of scented candles under her umbrella and who is on the cusp of adding a lifestyle section to her growing empire, it was one more arena for her to display her natural affinity for entertaining. “I love having lots of people and children all over the house with a packed dining room.” ▶



While she is still mum on what exactly will be included in the launch of the global lifestyle brand (the rumour mill is churning with buzz that first on the list is a housewares line), she credits her new CEO Ulrik Garde Due with helping her to streamline while still working on an expansion plan for the future. “The brand has grown almost faster than the collections and it is something that can do so much more. It breathes lifestyle,” says Alice. Under the guidance of Mr. Garde Due (formerly of Céline and Burberry), the entrepreneur has closed her diffusion line, Alice, and focused on her main line, Temperley London and Temperley Bridal, which offers two collections a year.

Since launching her eponymous label in 2000, with former banker and then husband Lars



Partygoers frolic on the grounds of Alice's Somerset estate at her annual summer party. Guests abided by the myths and legends theme with festive costumes.



von Bennigsen, Alice has pushed full steam ahead with her business, at times feeling like she was stuck on a hamster wheel, as she once described. Trained at London's Central Saint Martin's College of Art with a Master Degree specialising in fabric technology and print from the Royal College of Art, the designer has left her mark on the runway and red carpet thanks to her ability to create saccharine dresses with a slight modern twist. Celeb fans with widely differing tastes, from Kate Middleton to Jennifer Lopez, have all given their sartorial nods of approval, as has the Queen of England who appointed her the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2011. “Receiving this was one of the highlights of my career, though at the time I did think it was a joke when I first found out,” admits the designer who also says she forgot to curtsy after being pinned by Queen Elizabeth.

15 years in and Alice admits it hasn't been an easy road to travel, especially running a successful business as a single mother with her six-year old son Fox under her wing (the designer separated from her husband in 2011). “I had no idea how much having a child would change my whole world. Your child is your focus and everything else comes second. I'm lucky to be surrounded by friends and family ▶



who are a great support. I have remained very focused as a mother and with my brand and the tough times are over. I feel incredibly proud - and very old sometimes - and nostalgic about the journey.”

For now, the designer has her head down as she prepares for the Christmas celebration of Temperley London's anniversary. One such project is the launch of a book by luxury publisher Rizzoli that captures the myths and legends theme of this year's summer party. Until then, she has her eye behind the lens of her new LeicaQ camera, a birthday gift from a close friend. Always willing to embrace new passions (painting is also one of her latest hobbies), we can't help but wonder how many disco balls are twirling overhead right now. ☺

A Cuban vibe pulsed throughout Temperley London's SS 16 collection thanks to the heavily embroidered sundresses that begged to be packed for a vacation by the sea.



BEHIND THE SCENES AT SS16



Music lovers will be clamouring to get their hands on Alice's folksy bohemian dresses come festival time.



QUICK SIX

- FAVOURITE CITY...** London
- CAN' LIVE WITHOUT...** Family and laughter
- YOUR ULTIMATE LUXURY...** My disco bath and my jewellery box
- BEST ADVICE EVER RECEIVED...** Trust yourself and follow your passion. Intuition is everything
- INSPIRATION...** The work of Edith Head (right)
- DEFINITION OF STYLE...** Effortlessness