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Artem Kind: “The Wedding Awards reveal the top talents in the Russian wedding industry”

The WHITE Wedding Awards is one of the most prestigious international wedding accolades. Every year in Russia, it honors the most successful companies, venues, and individual professionals in the wedding organization industry who demonstrate outstanding results in bringing their projects to life. In 2024 and 2025, the Award was presented to the World Trade Center Moscow wedding project (WTC Wedding). Artem Kind, the founder and CEO of the WHITE Wedding Awards in Russia, shared insights on this and much more in an interview to BM Moscow Foresight.

- In 1995, you graduated from the Institute of Asian and African Studies and worked in the advertising and publishing business. How did it happen that you linked your future career with the wedding industry?

- I ended up in the glossy magazine industry almost by accident. As a recent MSU graduate, I was invited to work in the advertising department of Hachette Filipacchi Press. At the time, they were forming the very first team for the Russian edition of ELLE magazine, which covers fashion, beauty, and lifestyle. It seemed like an interesting and promising venture to me. So, the journalistic and commercial experience I gained at the company is likely what shaped my future path.

After a while, I received an invitation to head the commercial department of the Russian edition of the French magazine

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L’Officiel. Later, I managed the launch of TopGear magazine in Russia, as well as the TopGear television show on the NTV channel.

Other important and exciting projects for me in Russia included the Russian version of the weekly magazine Sportweek, which is published in Italy as a weekly supplement to the La Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper, as well as the men's magazine MAX, published by the leading Italian media group RCS Media Group.

My acquaintance, a publisher, introduced me to the wedding industry. Some time ago, he launched the Wedding magazine, but according to him, he lacked both the time and energy to fully commit to it.

Since I had already gained plenty of experience launching and promoting new magazine projects, the prospect of lifting up another glossy publication did not scare me. To promote it successfully and confidently on the Russian market at that time, we needed a main, licensed project that could serve as a 'locomotive' for this new direction in the publishing business. That role went to the highly respected magazine Collezioni ('Collections'). In Italy, this publication consists of thematic fashion catalogs that are very popular among international buyers.

As a result, we launched the Russian version of Collezioni and built a professional and creative team. I consider this to be my achievement.

As for the wedding theme, it has always interested me. I understood for myself that people will always get married. More than 1,5 million weddings take place in Russia every year. In addition, a wedding will always be associated with one of the most important events in a person's life. When a young couple starts preparing for the celebration, they have a desire to make it bright and unforgettable.

Of course, the whole spectrum of wedding industry services—including the bridal gown, the groom’s suit, or, say, the hotel, decor, and flowers—can easily be found on social media if you dig around. However, a magazine is a premium and selective story. It represents a different level of journalism, reputation, and trust, not to mention that it is simply convenient to hold a beautiful, well-illustrated publication featuring the very best for a wedding. And if there is a specialized magazine on the market, there is no need to waste time browsing through hundreds of wedding websites.

Taking on the wedding theme, I understood perfectly well from the very beginning that all the participants of the celebration—wedding agencies, future newlyweds, and invited guests—are the real target audience for a wedding magazine.

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- Looking back, Artem, could you tell us when the thought of starting your own wedding project first crossed your mind?

- Since 2010, I had worked as the Managing Partner of Indochine Media Pte Ltd, which published Robb Report magazine in Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Thailand. Although my career there was thriving, I decided to return to Russia. I developed a plan to launch a new, independent project by securing a licensing agreement—just as I had done before—with one of the world's most prestigious bridal publications, the Italian magazine WHITE Sposa (White Bride).

Within just a year, my team and I successfully launched the publishing project in Russia. Today, alongside WHITE Sposa Russia magazine, our company's portfolio features the annual international bridal industry awards, the WHITE Wedding Awards, as well as the WHITE Wedding & Event Travel Fair—an exhibition showcasing the finest hotels and venues for weddings, private functions, and corporate events.

- So, this means you are publishing your third top wedding magazine in Russia?

- I am the only person in Russia to have launched three wedding magazines - Wedding, Collezioni Sposa and WHITE Sposa Russia.

- When you established the Awards in 2013, what were your primary goals?

- The core goals of the award remain the same to this day: to identify, on a competitive basis, the best companies and top professionals in the wedding products and services sector who demonstrated leadership over the past year and set high standards for other market participants to follow.

Furthermore, from the very beginning, I set strategic objectives: to unite the professional community, raise the quality of wedding services, and, ultimately, shape a new wedding culture in Russia.

As I envisioned it, the award should present the Russian wedding market to the global community and identify leaders of the wedding industry in more than 40 different categories of the WHITE Wedding Awards.

- In your opinion, how relevant is the WHITE Wedding Awards to industry professionals today?

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- In the wedding industry, you cannot just be a talented genius hiding in the shadows. You must speak up and loudly showcase yourself, your projects, and the strengths of your business, or else no one will ever know you exist. Your talent will simply remain unfulfilled.

The WHITE Wedding Awards is one of the best ways to display your achievements, receive an honest evaluation from a professional jury, and make a name for yourself in both the Russian and international markets.

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- You call your Award international, probably because Italians participated in its organization?

- To begin with, the Award was established by the wedding magazine WHITE Sposa Russia together with the magazine WHITE Sposa Italy.

The idea of creating the WHITE Wedding Awards in Russia was proposed by my Italian partners from the company NewCo SPA. And I thought it was a wonderful idea! Especially since they don't have such a project in Italy!

The fact is, the Italians realized the massive potential of the Russian wedding market a long time ago. In any case, to begin with, they helped me form an international jury, to this day, this jury includes masters of the global wedding industry. Among them are Enzo Miccio, an Italian TV star and one of the most famous decorators and wedding dress designers in Europe; Carlo Pignatelli, a legendary Italian fashion designer who revolutionized wedding and evening fashion; Elisabetta Polignano, a wedding dress designer popular across Europe, and many others.

The Russian side of the jury is represented by the top tier of the wedding elite. These include Gennady Samokhin, one of the most famous decorators in Russia; Ksenia Afanasieva, the founder and owner of Wedding Residence, the largest wedding agency in our country; and Yulia Zholya, President of the National Association of Event Organizers.

In addition, the jury features owners of major international wedding agencies. At the same time, the panel of the WHITE Wedding Awards judges is updated every year.

Returning to your question, I would like to note that foreign wedding agencies and individual professionals from the wedding industry also compete for the award. The number of contenders grows with every passing year.

- Artem, do you mean to say that, despite the sanctions imposed on Russia by the West, representatives of the European wedding business are not afraid to come to Moscow for the WHITE Wedding Awards ceremony?

- It is no secret that after February 2022, no representatives of the Western wedding industry actually left Russia, despite pressure and threats from Western authorities, and they have no intention of leaving today. Even if some foreign brands did leave the country, I assure you they are now just waiting for the right political moment to return as soon as possible.

In fact, Italian professionals openly declare their participation as jury members for the WHITE Wedding Awards. Meanwhile,

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with the support of our partners, we are successfully promoting the Awards in international markets.

- What are the main stages of the competition that you can highlight??

- It all begins with wedding agencies emailing presentations of their projects, along with video attachments, to the jury members. The accompanying documents usually include a financial report on the wedding expenses, the venue location, the scale of the decor, the project concept, the bride and groom's attire, and the guest count. We keep these presentations strictly confidential, meaning only the jury members can view them.

Afterward, all presentations must be deleted. This is because some projects, for various reasons, are under an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) and cannot be shown to the public.

Based on the evaluation of the submitted projects, the jury creates a short-list and then a list of finalists competing for the Award in each of the 45 categories.

The results of the competition and information about the finalists and winners are posted on the official WHITE Wedding Awards website.

As part of the 2025 Awards, applications for photographers, videographers, hosts, stylists, confectioners, DJs, and cover bands were accepted from August 1 to February 15, 2026.

The final results, the announcement of the 2025 finalists, and the award ceremony took place on March 23, 2026, at the La’Pino Hall complex on Rublyovka. More than 400 guests attended this grand celebration.

- The WTC Wedding project by the World Trade Center Moscow has received several prestigious wedding industry awards in recent years. What made them stand out from their competitors?

- As a reminder, in 2025, the WTC Moscow Wedding Project received the well-deserved Top100 Awards 2025 in the category of "Best Urban and Suburban Locations, Hotels, and Restaurants for Weddings, Events, and Private Functions".

Following the voting process, WTC Wedding was named one of the top 100 best venues in Russia. The jury evaluated the nominees based on four key criteria: infrastructure, concept, service, and overall impression.

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A year earlier, the WTC Wedding project won the award for "Best Wedding Location in Moscow".

A key advantage of the WTC Wedding Project locations is the ability to organize everything you need for a wedding under one roof: panoramic and intimate halls, a summer veranda perfect for an on-site wedding ceremony, banquet services, rooms for the newlyweds and guests at the five-star Plaza Garden Moscow WTC hotel, and ample parking. Of course, the famous interiors and stunning views from the WTC windows—overlooking Novy Arbat, Moscow City, the Moscow River embankment, and Krasnaya Presnya Park—also play a major role in creating perfect photo backdrops. There are simply no other venues in Russia with this complete range of possibilities.

We all understand that the Russian capital offers many wedding venues today, especially for smaller, more intimate gatherings. However, when it comes to truly large-scale events, the options are actually quite limited. For a wedding with 500 or 700 guests, you genuinely won't find a better venue than the World Trade Center Moscow.

- As you know, the winner is the nominee who receives the highest number of points from the jury's vote. In the final, they are awarded the "WHITE Wedding Awards" statuette. Is there really no cash prize for the winners?

- It is not about the money at all, but about the prestige of the Award itself. It is not for nothing that it is often called the "Wedding Oscar".

If, for example, I had the opportunity to participate in an international competition, and I made it to the finals or even became the winner, I would be proud that independent international experts recognized me as the best in a certain category.

The participants of our competition get an opportunity to make a name for themselves and showcase their creative work to major agencies, whose representatives may be sitting on the jury. All of them are looking for new talent, and the brightest participants will not go unnoticed.

The WHITE Wedding Awards statuette is a commemorative prize presented to the winner of each category at the international wedding industry awards. Finalists also receive beautiful certificates signed by all members of the international jury.

Hosting the finalists' award ceremony is both a huge pleasure and a massive emotional and financial challenge for me. Why? Because once a year, I bring together highly professional, vibrant, and talented people, and I have to maintain my own standards and the high prestige of the WHITE Wedding Awards.

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- Artem, what can you say about the future of the wedding market in Russia?

- Our market has colossal potential. In this regard, everything is going just wonderfully in Russia! At some point, ultra-wealthy clients with huge budgets started entering the wedding market. This created very fierce competition in the professional community, which, as it should, began to drive the wedding market forward. This competition basically forces agencies to create incredibly high-quality wedding projects.

My Italian partners, who monitor the wedding market, recently told me: "The Russian market today is the best in the world. You have the most highly qualified agencies, and your vendors are top-level professionals!"

But even without the Italians, I can tell you that we have truly outpaced absolutely all competitors in Europe and Asia! This is because wedding planning in Russia is a whole industry. It is no surprise that our vendors are constantly invited to countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Yet, compared to Russia, those places have much larger wedding budgets. On the other hand, our level of organization and quality of service are much higher and more affordable.

I am happy to be in the epicenter of the global wedding business and to experience its real boom right alongside you.

Ivan Pekhov.

* Photos provided by WHITE Wedding Awards press service

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