

# T A B O U T T O W N

Photographed by CHARLIE GRAY

## THE FIRECRACKER SERENA FOYLE

Nobody wants their child to grow up and become a pyromaniac. Particularly not people who own bookshops. But that's exactly what Serena Foyle (great-granddaughter of Foyle's founder William) has done. She's a 'pyromusical producer'. Eh? 'I set fireworks to music, like Tchaikovsky or Sigur Rós,' she says.

It all began as she was planning her 21st-birthday party at her childhood home in the Scottish Borders. Serena didn't just want a marquee and a few bottles of Cava. She wanted fireworks. And not any old fireworks: a 15-minute display set to The Prodigy. It had to be flawless, so she designed it herself. 'It was pretty wild,' she says casually.

She's been playing with matches ever since. After studying music at Edinburgh and the London School of Sound, she created spectacles at Mellerstain House and Brocket Hall. She can set Catherine wheels to jazz or golden showers (no sniggering at the back) to Eighties power ballads. Next up is a display at a London home that 'a rich Asian client, I can't say his name' is holding for his girlfriend. 'I'll be setting things off while lurking in the bushes.'

It helps that Serena, 26, is as gutsy as a Girl Guide. She doesn't flinch as flames flicker perilously close to her Elnett-enhanced hair on the shoot. Hippieish, too. 'Scotland's very freethinking,' she says, adding that she's contemplating moving back up north after her wedding this summer to property man Dan Balfour. She may be engulfed in sulphur, but her head isn't in the clouds about the lunacy of her job (Roman candles set to Queen, for example, will set you back £1,000 a minute, at the least). 'You couldn't get something more extravagant,' she admits. 'It's totally mad.' *Violet Hudson*

