



> DESTINATION WEDDINGS:

romantic settings
with joann gregoli



THIS PAGE: **Grand Hotel Quisisana** Capri, Italy



Drama may seem like the last thing you want for your wedding day, but a great destination wedding demands a dramatic setting to fill your guests with a sense of awe, afford a stunning backdrop for your photos, and provide memories to last a lifetime.

As destinations go, Italy and Greece have little in common except that they are both in Europe. Yet each is home to luxury resorts that are literally a step above—grand hotels and stylish hideaways that occupy breathtaking aeries atop some of the world’s most breathtaking destinations.

Capri, once home to Roman emperors, requires a change in attitude as well as altitude, and visiting couples embrace a lifestyle that revolves around leisurely afternoons spent at cafés on the island’s



PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS PAGE: **Mystique Oia** Santorini, Greece





famous La Piazzetta, dining at intimate local restaurants and shopping at luxury boutiques.

Arriving by hydrofoil from nearby Naples, couples ascend the cliffs of Capri by funicular and on twisting, narrow roads. “It’s really magical how every turn up the mountain has the most amazing vistas,” says destination-wedding expert JoAnn Gregoli of Elegant Occasions, Inc.

When E! news anchor Giuliana DePandi married Bill Rancic of “The Apprentice” in 2007, the couple exchanged vows at the 500-year-old Santa Sophia Church in the village of Anacapri before returning to the Grand Hotel Quisisana in Capri for their reception, stylishly dismounting a red convertible Fiat. Established in 1845, the hotel embodies refined luxury and old-world taste, serves world-class Italian cuisine, and offers Mediterranean-style balcony suites to pamper couples on their wedding night and beyond. Many couples choose to use the hotel’s pool area, which overlooks the sea, for their cocktails, while the hotel’s manicured Augustus gardens can accommodate receptions.

For a different perspective of this quintessentially Italian island, the dazzling Capri Palace Hotel & Spa retains the feel of an ancient palazzo, yet is modern in every other way thanks to a recent renovation. Most weddings at the Capri Palace include cocktails on the rooftop terrace, which overlooks the Bay of Naples and the island of Ischia. The hotel is located in Anacapri, the quieter and more traditional of the island’s two villages. “There are fabulous little churches off every piazza,” says Gregoli, so the bridal party and guests can follow the Italian tradition of walking from the ceremony to the hotel for the reception. The Capri Palace’s new wine cellar provides an intimate setting for a rehearsal dinner, while receptions can be hosted at the poolside Il Mosaico restaurant.



Santorini, in the Greek isles, is another destination famed for its nightlife and the new Mystique Oia resort provides both dream-like views of the Aegean Sea and iconic, whitewashed accommodations perched on a Cycladian cliff. Couples can exchange vows at a nearby blue-domed chapel presided over by the local mayor, entertain wedding guests with dinner in a wine cellar or the gourmet Charisma restaurant, then retire to a private terrace suite with views of the ancient caldera thought to have consumed Atlantis.

“The views are so stunning you can’t believe it’s real,” says Gregoli. “You don’t need a lot of flowers to decorate these places. The natural background is all the décor you need.”

> **Written by Bob Curley**

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