

destination:

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REAL WEDDINGS
IN DREAM LOCATIONS
Spring 2013

SANTORINI insider

A SANTORINI WEDDING MIGHT BE PERFECT IF YOU...

- Want a Mediterranean setting that has a beauty to match your own.
- See no ill omens in marrying at the edge of a cliff.
- Like the idea of serving your guests wines that have been famous since the Middle Ages.
- Feel that bouzouki music makes a splendid soundtrack to a first dance.

LAY OF THE LAND:

Santorini is the shattered remnant of an ancient volcano that still occasionally shakes. With a few exceptions, the best places to stay—and to have your ceremony—are on the edge of the sea cliff, or caldera. Its views out across the volcano's water-flooded crater and fringing islets, if you were not already there for a wedding, would have you planning one. Arrive by plane from Athens, or, if you have an extra half day, take the ferry from Piraeus, Athens' port. It's one of the world's most iconic travel experiences, especially if you approach



Santorini as the afternoon sun is lighting up the red rocks of the caldera and the sugar-white houses that boldly edge their way down its side. —Bob Payne



The essentials

CLIMATE

If you are seeking absolute perfection, there's only one month to get married on Santorini: September. The weather is still pleasantly warm, but the European crowds of July and especially August are gone. Beginning in March, spring can be fine, too, if occasionally damp and chilly (be sure to avoid Greek Easter). Early to mid-October is another decent choice, although by the end of the month restaurants and hotels are beginning to close.

MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

Going through the legal steps of a wedding on Santorini allows you to fully experience the Greek love of bureaucracy, which is why many couples opt for a legal marriage at home, followed by an unofficial ceremony and reception on the island. If you are determined to follow the full legal route, it is best done with the help of a local wedding coordinator. Contact them three months ahead of time and have all documents in their hands a month in advance. The details:

<http://destinationw.com/marriage-requirements-for-greece>

GROUP HUGS

What to do with the gang before the wedding:

- Wander the narrow passageways of Oia, just to hear the jewelry merchants



3 SANTORINI WEDDING PLANNERS WE LOVE

- www.fceventdesigners.com
- www.yasena.com
- www.weddingplans.gr

comment on how perfectly shaped your wrists are for bracelets.

- Gain major culture points by visiting the Pompeii-like ruins of Akrotiri.
- Take a winery tour, to see if you agree that whites do best in volcanic soil.
- Pass as many hours as possible at Dimitris' taverna in the tiny port of Amoudi, where a half-dozen fish restaurants line the waterfront



Astra



Mystique

*The
essentials*

THE FAB 5:

OUR PICK OF SANTORINI WEDDING HOTELS

IF THE VIEW IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE HUSBAND: Look out across the caldera from where the Astra Suites' open-air restaurant has been converted into your ceremony or reception area and you'll almost expect to see Odysseus approaching in his ship, rowing across the mirrored water. Another prime asset: Astra, in the small town of Imerovigli, is run by one of the best general managers in the Greek Islands. www.astrasuites.com

IF YOU BELIEVE A DAY SHOULD START WITH A DIP: Beaches are not Santorini's strongest point, so it's good for you and your guests to have a pool on property, and even better if it is the spectacular infinity pool at Katikies, in the car-free (but crowded) town of Oia. Another advantage here is that the Katikies Hotels group has five properties on Santorini, which will make planning easier if you have an overflowing guest list. www.katikies.com



Vedema



Mystique





Chelidonia

IF YOU LIKE HAVING A NAME YOU KNOW:

Although the pool is a bit small, Mystique, also in Oia, is as noted for its views, décor, and service as the rest of Santorini's top luxury hotels. And it has the extra benefit, for Americans who want a name they are familiar with, that it belongs to the Starwood Luxury Collection (as does Vedema, below). www.mystique.gr

IF IF PRIVACY IS A CONCERN: If those pesky paparazzi are always after you, Villa Vedema, in Megalohori, is where to tie the knot in luxury on Santorini. Away from the caldera, in a walled-village-like setting in the middle of the island, you'll have all the privacy you need—but room enough to pitch a reception tent if your guest list is bigger than most places on Santorini can handle. www.vedema.gr

IF YOUR BUDGET MATTERS, BUT SO DOES YOUR SETTING: Perfect for for the couple who want to take the plunge in front of only a friend or two, Chelidonia Villas, a collection of former houses on the side of the caldera in Oia, has everything the far-more expensive accommodations do—except a restaurant. And the family who lived in those former houses? They now run the place. www.chelidonia.com



Astra

Book it!

WANT EXPERT HELP WITH YOUR PLANNING? IT'S FREE!

If you're interested in one of the locations in this issue, or if you want to explore other options for a destination wedding anywhere in the world, get in touch with our partners at **Coastline Travel Advisors** (www.coastlinetravel.com). This team of top travel insiders, with extensive experience in destination weddings, is genius at:

- **Booking air travel**
- **Negotiating group hotel prices**
- **Organizing ground transportation**
- **Arranging travel insurance**
- **Administering bridal and honeymoon travel registries**

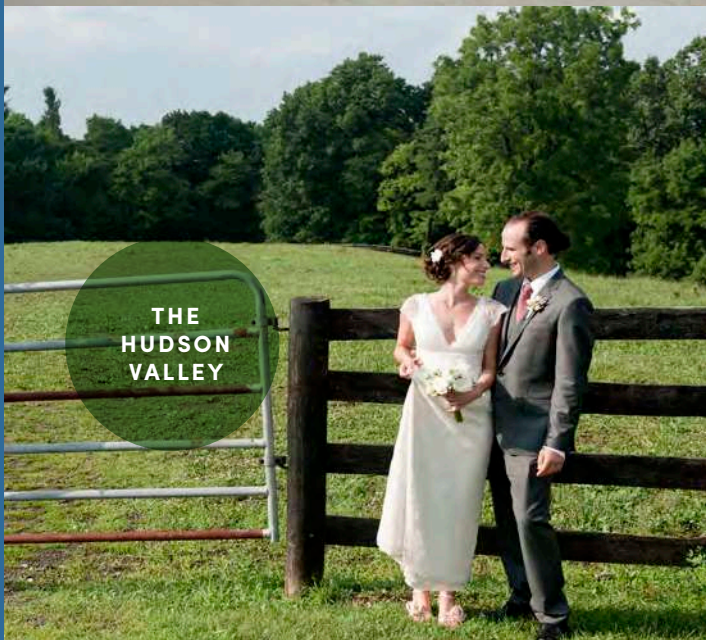
They'll hold your hand every step of the way and will coordinate your guests' travel without charging anyone an extra fee. (If you want them to help with the wedding itself, they're happy to do that for an additional cost.) This way you can spend less time sweating the details and more time enjoying your engagement.

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THE
RIVIERA
MAYA



THE
HUDSON
VALLEY



SANTORINI

