

BORGO COLLEOLI & EFFETTI WEDDINGS

the perfect partners for a perfect day

Provided you allow yourself enough time to deal with the legal bureaucracy, getting married with a civil or religious ceremony in Tuscany is perfectly possible for happy couples from all over the world, although it is true that there are different legal requirements for different nationalities, and at first glance the paperwork part of getting to the Italian altar can seem like a minefield. But is it really so scary, and what can you do to smooth the process?



We spoke to Francesca Vinci from Effetti Weddings, winners of a WeddingWire Bride's Choice award 2011, who specialises in weddings for foreigners in Italy. "Without a doubt, the paperwork is the part that our couples find the most intimidating," she says, "but we advise them on all the procedures that they need to follow in their home country, what they must do when they get to Italy, and how to do it all. We even take care of the paperwork that can be done for them, like going to the Consulates here in Italy on their behalf, where that is possible. Basically, they don't need to worry about anything." You will need to be in Italy some days before your wedding to complete the final documents – but as Francesca says, you can look on that as an advance honeymoon!

You could always decide to legally tie the knot in your home country and have a symbolic

wedding in Tuscany - this completely removes the paperwork requirement, and if you have friends and family who are not able to travel to Italy with you, at least they can be involved in the legal ceremony at home.

"There are some amazingly beautiful locations in Tuscany that unfortunately are not licensed for a legally-binding civil ceremony," says Francesca. "In these cases we organise a symbolic ceremony for the couple at the venue, and they have the legal ceremony in private in the nearest town hall, or at home."

One such spectacular venue is the Borgo di Colleoli, a historic villa and estate about 30 minutes from Pisa International airport. The original medieval castle on this site was developed over the years to become an elegant country retreat, and in 2003 the whole Borgo was painstakingly restored under the guidance of the Italian Fine Arts Commission. It is an entire typical Tuscan hamlet, perched on



a hill amidst ancient olive groves, providing 50 individually furnished apartments which all reflect the style and flair of Tuscany, a restaurant, wine cellar, and two swimming pools. A majestic tree-lined driveway leads to this truly unique and charming property where time seems to stand still. The elegance of the architecture and the authenticity of the surroundings make it a stunning location for weddings, where your guests can all be accommodated together and enjoy the Borgo's strategic location which has Pisa, Florence, Siena, San Gimignano and Volterra within easy reach. It also lends itself as an ideal venue for all kinds of special events, conventions and meetings. The Borgo di Colleoli has recently been featured in the documentary 'Tuscany Luxury Wine Tours' which will soon be shown on the Discovery Channel. Borgo Colleoli also has a wonderful restaurant, I Secoli.

The prestigious Music Room at the Borgo di Colleoli is a beautiful place for a symbolic ceremony, but you are also spoilt for choice within the grounds of the estate – woodland, poolside, olive grove or medieval courtyard are some of the options. As for the symbolic ceremony itself, you can personalise it in any way you like, to reflect your personal values and beliefs. Two popular modern options are the Unity Candle and the Unity Sand ceremonies. In the candle ceremony, the bride and groom use two small taper candles that have previously been lit by members of their families, to light a larger pillar candle together, symbolising their passage from their former family lives to their new life together. In the sand ceremony, the bride and groom together pour sand of different colours into one glass vase, symbolising the joining of the flow of their separate lives into one single stream.

Either way, whether it's a civil, religious or symbolic ceremony, one thing is sure – Francesca will be teary-eyed. "When the couple says 'I do' – that moment always brings tears to my eyes, it gets me every time!"



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