

a wedding story



TUSCAN COUNTRYSIDE ENCHANTING WEDDING VENUE

By Chiara Sernesi

A whole year of intense emailing had gone by when we at Weddings in Tuscany first met Mark and Landi upon their arrival in Italy. A year of emailing may sound like a lot, but this becomes the average when the couple develops a relationship with their wedding coordinators that is not only pure business. Couples will start sharing much more and we are always happy to be included in their list of friends.

Mark and Landi are both from Ontario but now live in North Carolina where they met and got engaged. After meeting them at the airport on June 17, five days before their wedding, we drove them to the charming farmhouse we had recommended for their celebrations. Their 35 guests, all from North Carolina and Canada, were to stay there for a week. They couldn't believe their eyes; everything was so beautiful. The Tuscan landscape, with its narrow country roads leading through lush vineyards and olive groves, was simply enchanting. The pictures I had emailed were beautiful, said Mark, but they didn't do justice to reality!

During their week in Italy, we organized interesting tours around Tuscany, including visits to San

Gimignano and Siena; and wine tastings on typical wine farms. Mark and Landi were excited and their guests even more so.

Mark and Landi had their civil wedding at the small town hall of the nearby village. But their main celebration was held at the farmhouse, where a symbolic ceremony was performed in the olive grove, and where a wedding dinner was served on the terrace, overlooking the superb Tuscan countryside.

They held their civil wedding on the Wednesday, and that same evening, as tradition requires, Landi and her bridesmaids spent the night in a superb hotel a few kilometres from the farmhouse. Mark was feeling a little lonely so I suggested he offer Landi a serenade to let her know how much he was already missing her. Mark loved this idea!

That evening, with help from the bridesmaids who knew about the plan, a mandolin player serenaded Landi in her room with Italian love songs. Landi was thrilled at the surprise. Half an hour of Italian love songs, chosen especially for you by the man who loves you—no woman would remain indifferent to such a gesture! And all of this in the amazing, peaceful environment of the Tuscan hills, with the sound of night crickets all around and fields of ripe, golden wheat gleaming in the setting sun.



The wedding day

Mark was very nervous on his wedding day. He was always next to me, asking me if everything was all right. He wanted to be reassured and I did my best to make him feel at ease. We set up the celebration area with the guests' chairs facing the breathtaking view of the valley. A small white table, two green apples, green candles, and a bunch of green-white roses were the simple but effective decorative elements on the country-style altar.

Our celebrant Jo Bertolino (www.tuscanpledges.com) was ready with her chalice of sweet Sicilian wine and a parchment for the couple to sign after the wedding. At 5 p.m., all the guests were seated and Mark was trying to remember to breathe deeply as Jo had advised.

Landi arrived fashionably late but Mark was already panicky; now he needed to see her! And she did arrive, only 15 minutes late, getting out of a black Mercedes car and treading lightly on a carpet of rose petals, while a trio of musicians accompanied her with the classic notes of Pachelbel's Canon in D Major.

The ceremony was sweet and simple. Some guests shed a tear or two and everyone commented later on how appropriate and beautiful it had been.

Aperitifs were served at the swimming pool as the couple had a few more photographs taken in the stunning countryside. Dinner was served on the panoramic terrace overlooking the rolling hills, where the ochre of wheat merged beautifully with the silver green of olive trees and the lush green of vineyards. The candles around the terrace created a romantic atmosphere, and the flower centrepieces and olive oil bottles as party favours were enticing the guests who were now ready to appreciate their dinner.

After dinner, featuring a traditional Tuscan menu of roast pork, wild boar and much more, the cooks received an ovation and everyone moved to the pool area where music and drinks culminated the evening. Comfortable beds and spacious rooms welcomed the tired merrymakers, and at the end of the event, we at Weddings in Tuscany knew we had made another couple happy.

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