

Married in Sardinia

Niamh and Lenny McAuliffe wanted something different for their destination wedding and the island of Sardinia, Italy ticked all the boxes. The unspoilt and largely undiscovered Mediterranean location set the scene for their perfect nuptials.

Wedding Date: 3rd June 2009

Wedding location: Sardinia, Italy

We met...

We met through a good friend of ours, Trevor. I was working with Trevor at the time and Lenny and Trevor were friends from Cork. We were on a work night out and Lenny came in to meet him.

Our proposal...

The proposal was New Year's Eve 2007 on a trip to Sydney, Australia with some friends. We were at Groove Armada on Bondi beach where Lenny proposed at midnight during the fireworks. After seven years together Lenny carefully planned the proposal so that it would be a surprise – and it was! It was a fantastic night. Lenny had asked my father before we went to Australia, which meant a lot to me as I am the eldest of three girls and our family is very close. After I said, 'yes' the first question I had was "did you ask my dad?" My father kept quiet so that I could break the great news to my Mam and sisters.

Our wedding abroad...

We knew we wanted to get married abroad after being at our friends' wedding in Italy the prior year. We looked at many locations; Spain, France, Malta and Italy. As our friends had been married in Italy near the Amalfi Coast, we wanted to pick somewhere different. A friend in work suggested Sardinia as an option and we looked into it.





When we started to look at Sardinia, we knew very little about the island or how to go about planning a wedding there. We knew that we would have about 80-100 travelling but that was all we knew. We looked up some options on the internet and got in touch with a few wedding planners, but none were as professional, helpful and friendly as Frinaeventi. Vittoria and Claudia were very patient and answered all of our questions via email for months before we even flew over to meet them.

As Ryanair fly directly from Dublin to Alghero we knew it would be easy for our guests to get there and the airport is only 15 minutes from the town.

My dress...

I took my time choosing the dress; I looked at many magazines and got a sense of what I wanted. I kept gravitating towards the Spanish label San Patrick as I really liked the old style lace look, and because I was getting married in an old church I thought it would suit the wedding. I looked up the stockists in Ireland and went to meet with Anne of Annie Occasions in Templeogue village. Anne couldn't have been nicer. She spent hours with my mam and me trying on dresses and eventually I tried on one

and it was what I always wanted. It had the lace detailing, the long train and yet wasn't too heavy for getting married in the heat.

Our personal touches...

We know we wanted to have a mix of a traditional wedding with a relaxed, fun atmosphere. We wanted to surprise our guests by bringing them to a fantastic place in both Alghero and Castelsardo, and we wanted everyone to feel completely at ease. The church was very old and quite traditional, yet our priest Don Andrea brought a great sense of humour to the ceremony.

A traditional wedding in Italy does not incorporate dinner and dancing, usually the focus is just the meal with background music. So many hotels don't cater for dancing and a party after the meal. Our choice of Villa Loreto was perfect for helping people relax and have fun – we had a lovely meal and then our guests were on the dance floor all night!

My favourite part of the wedding day...

The church at Castelsardo – our priest Don Andrea was a lovely man, witty and funny and yet so professional to make the day

meaningful. He helped us relax and enjoy the whole ceremony. I also loved seeing our guests' reactions to how beautiful everything was.

Also at our meal, the owner of Villa Loreto served the top table our main course, which was such a lovely gesture. He was very proud of the meal and wanted to ensure that we were enjoying ourselves and were happy with everything. Also, Lenny's sister-in-law surprised us with a DVD of us growing up, which was shown after the meal. It was a lovely moment, and it was great to get a surprise on the day when you've been involved in all the planning!

My piece of advice for other brides...

Take your time and think of what is right for the two of you, if you are happy your guests will be happy! If you are getting married abroad make sure you research your location well and take time to select the best wedding planner to suit you. Research online and try to get information from previous couples who have used them. Getting the right one is crucial to helping you relax and have the best day of your life. It was the best money we spent in terms of the overall wedding.