

The magazine dedicated to women who have chosen to make Nevada their home!

NEVADA

WOMAN

Weddings!

Beautiful brides &
handsome grooms
Lovely flowers &
heavenly cakes and
oh those starry-eyed
honeymoons

War Bride

A wedding in Italy planned for
Sept. 11, 2001

Wedding Bell Blues

A view at weddings gone awry

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Plus: Girl Talk, Street of Dreams, The Dressing Room and
Roberto Cavalli, and two books about coping with our
partners, ourselves

Virginia and Mark planned their perfect wedding for over a year. It would be unforgettable: They would be married in Italy, surrounded by family and friends, and it would take place on September 11, 2001.



War Bride

by Ginger Tafoya
Photography by Audrey Dempsey

Virginia watches Mark down in the courtyard

As Vegans Virginia Thompson and Mark Martino had been a couple for 15 years, and when they decided to marry, it had to be special. As co-founders of Odyssey: A Celebration of Wine and Food, they knew that they wanted fine wine and gourmet food to play a role. And with Mark being Italian, the wine country in Italy was the natural choice for them.

Next came the date. August could be the month and Mark's favorite number is 11, so August 11, 2001 was what they settled on. But in researching, they found that Italy essentially closes down during that month. Their second choice was settled on: September 11, 2001.

They were given the name of Castello (Castle) di Spessa and Mark found Alberto Ciani via the web site who helped plan the details. Family and friends made plans to go to Italy to witness Virginia and Mark's wedding: mother-in-law Rose Thompson; best man Eric Martino; Sue and Mark Martino; and Audrey and Bob Dempsey.

Just prior to leaving for Italy, as luck would have it, Mark and Virginia

experienced delays in securing the proper paperwork between the Italian and the U.S. embassies. The week before they left, they elected to move it forward one day in order to assure all documents were finalized.



Mark waiting in the courtyard the morning of the wedding

Once in Italy, on the 11th, Virginia remembers, "We were selecting our menu with chef Vlade Puzzer at Tavernetta al Castello when her daughter came running into the dining room breathlessly saying, "Your trade center no more - gone!" Mark's first thought was that there was an earthquake in Manhattan and part of the towers collapsed. They both ran into the lobby just in time to see the television rerun of the plane hitting the second tower. "The whole thing seemed surreal. Everyone was scared, and we didn't know what to expect," remembers Mark. "Our immediate thoughts went back to all of our friends and family in America praying nothing else would happen."

On watching the Trade Center attack, Virginia turned to Mark and said,



"This is the reason why we weren't meant to be married today. Someone was watching over us."

On September 12, 2001, Virginia and Mark became the first Americans to be married by Mayor Attilio Vuga of Cividale del Friuli. "The mayor started our ceremony with the tragedy of New York and what that meant to the entire world," says Virginia. "He expressed to us the importance of family and friends and said in light of what had happened to our beautiful country, we could not let it affect our wedding on this cherished day."

Following the ceremony, La Taverna di Bacco hosted a three-course luncheon, paired with wines from the Friuli region. Later that evening Virginia, Mark and the wedding party had a seven-course wedding celebration dinner in the formal private dining room (used daily by the family of Castello di Spessa and had never been available for outside guests), paired with the finest wines of Castello di Spessa's own collection. The gourmet food was prepared by chefs Vlade and Stane Puzzer of Tavernetta al Castello.

The next day, as were so many others, the guests were stranded. Virginia and Mark were going to honeymoon in Italy, so their plans were not compromised. Each party had flown in on separate airlines and had

to find a way back via London and Paris. Rose and Eric could not leave because they flew into Venice and they were not allowing anyone to go to the airport. "So, they both went with us on our honeymoon to Rimini where we stayed until September 20," says Mark, "when we were able to return to the United States."

Looking back on the good and bad events

of September for the Martinos, Virginia remains positive. "To be married in Italy was significant for us. Weddings and family are sacred there and important to the Italian culture, and we wanted to make that a part of our marriage," she says.

Friendship also is significant to the Martinos. Alberto Ciani, who helped with the wedding, showed them the countryside and attended their wedding. They now count him as one of their friends. **DW**



Just pronounced husband and wife by Attilio Vuga, Mayor



On their way to the castle



Wedding party L to R: Rose Thompson, Eric Martino, Virginia & Mark, Sue Martino, Joe Martino, Audrey & Bob Dempsey