

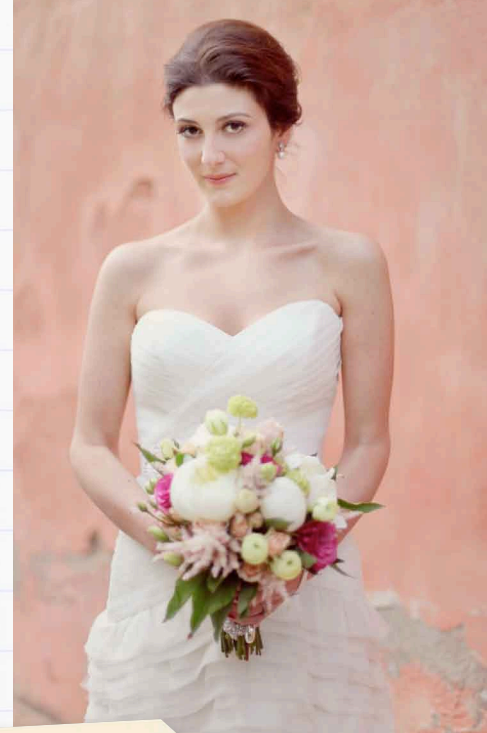


## DESTINATION I DOS



**A LITTLE BLUSH**  
Lia and her mum customised the orders of service with lace to reflect the

colours of the villa, while her friend Sara wore a similar-toned Sue Wong dress



## MADE IN ITALY

*Fine wine and great friends created the perfect Tuscan day for Lia and Roberto*

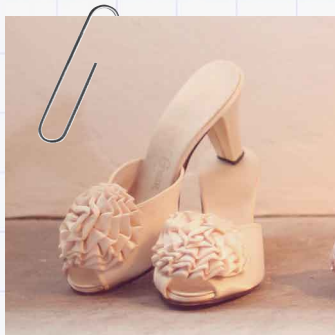
It had to be Tuscany for Lia Minkoff and Roberto Battistuzzi, both 28, who were already hunting for wedding venues in the famously romantic region when Rob (who was born and raised in Genoa) officially proposed.

“Even though we weren’t engaged, we both knew we wanted to get married in Italy, and one day we found great last-minute flights,” Lia remembers. “So we rented a car and spent a week driving from villa to villa. I’ve always loved Italy for its beauty, culture and food – for me, just the idea of a Tuscan wedding was a dream.”

Halfway through the scouting mission, they stopped in Siena and cracked open a bottle of wine on a hilltop and Rob popped the question. “He’d been carrying the ring in his front pocket the whole trip waiting for the perfect moment.”

With help from amazing local wedding planner Il Cerimoniere Firenze and tireless work by Lia’s mum (who flew to Italy for an intensive week of planning and made many of the details by hand), their day began to take shape. Of course, the process wasn’t without its stresses. “Having to let go of control was definitely the biggest challenge,” Lia admits. “I had no idea I was a controlling person until I started planning my wedding!”

On 29 May 2010, Lia and Rob were married in the gardens of Vignamaggio, a gorgeous villa they hired for four days exclusively for themselves ➤



### STEP IN TIME

Lia’s shoes were something old and borrowed – her mum’s ivory satin slippers from the Sixties



**WELL GROOMED**  
Rob wore a custom-made suit by an Italian

designer, which fitted perfectly with the semi-formal feel of the day



➔ and their 60 guests. "It ticked all the boxes – a stunning backdrop for the wedding, easy access to Florence and the airport, and wonderful amenities such as two pools, vineyards, a wine cellar and hiking trails," says Lia.

The ceremony, officiated by two of their closest friends, was personalised at every turn, from a ring blessing, where guests offered silent wishes, to their custom-written vows. Thick garlands dotted with lemons and roses framed the aisle, and Lia matched the intricate layers of her Monique Lhuillier gown to her bouquet of pink astilbes, peonies and tiny roses.

Afterwards, friends and family sipped prosecco on a terrace overlooking the hills before enjoying dinner underneath the villa's olive trees. "We chose a colour palette of soft pinks and ivory," Lia says. "I'm all about the individual touches so we had a lot of them: I simply wanted to complement the venue and not compete with it." Details played to the beauty of the Tuscan setting, with wine bottles as table numbers and corks as placecard holders. To create a romantic glow, Lia and Rob hung gold chandeliers from the trees, along with a chalkboard-style seating plan.

The menu, too, was packed with Italian favourites, including a symphony of seasonal vegetables, a spinach and ricotta Beggar's Purse, stewed wild boar, Caprese salad, and wine pairings from Vignamaggio's own vineyards.

"I wanted to do everything according to local tradition, so we also had the Italian wedding cake millefoglie," Lia explains. "I'd never tasted it before, but it was mouth-watering!" A coffee bar and chocolate spoons ensured that guests were energised for the dancing that followed and, for the party-goers who filled the floor until 5am, Lia and Rob set up a gelato bar and a cheese buffet. "As a gift for Rob, I had a groom's cake waiting there too, decorated with the flag of his football team and his favourite Italian cookies."

Lia and Rob also planned a series of special extras to make guests feel welcome, from baskets in their rooms filled with wine, snacks and a personal note, to a wine tour, day trips, and a Tuscan barbecue and karaoke party. "We got days of quality time with our guests instead of hours, and it was so moving to have them all with us to witness our vows," Lia says. "We laughed, we cried, we kissed – it was magic!"

**CITRUS SURPRISE**  
Fresh lemonade was an inviting treat for guests as they arrived at the ceremony



## DESTINATION I DOS



**ALL LIT UP**  
Large vintage chandeliers, hired from a local antiques shop, hung from the trees to create a romantic glow



### LIA'S TUSCAN ADDRESS BOOK

- Photographer** Simply Bloom Wedding Photography ([simplybloomphotography.com](http://simplybloomphotography.com))  
**Bride's dress** Monique Lhuillier ([moniquelhuillier.com](http://moniquelhuillier.com)) at Mark Ingram Bridal Atelier ([bridalatelier.com](http://bridalatelier.com))  
**Venue** Villa Vignamaggio ([vignamaggio.it](http://vignamaggio.it))  
**Wedding planning** Il Cerimoniere Firenze ([ilcerimonierefirenze.it](http://ilcerimonierefirenze.it))  
**Bride's veil** Karl Lagerfeld ([karllagerfeld.com](http://karllagerfeld.com))  
**Bride's belt** Lela Rose ([lelarose.com](http://lelarose.com))  
**Groom's suit** Firenze su Misura ([firenzesumisura@libero.it](mailto:firenzesumisura@libero.it))  
**Bridesmaid's dress** Sue Wong ([suewong.com](http://suewong.com))  
**Flowers** Statti Fiori ([stattifiori.it](http://stattifiori.it))  
**Stationery** Lion in the Sun ([lioninthesunps.com](http://lioninthesunps.com))  
**Groom's cake/gelato** Gelateria Vivoli ([vivoli.it](http://vivoli.it))  
**Hair and make-up** Salone Contrasto ([salonecontrasto.it](http://salonecontrasto.it)); Mej Staff ([mejstaff.it](http://mejstaff.it))  
**Ceremony music** Firenze Classica ([firenzeclassica.com](http://firenzeclassica.com))  
**DJ** Francis Jay ([danceparty.it](http://danceparty.it))  
**Linens** Costan La Coccinella ([coccinellanoleggi.it](http://coccinellanoleggi.it))  
**Coaches** Brandi Bus ([brandibus.it](http://brandibus.it))

