



DREAMS TAILORED FOR TWO

Your guide to eloping to
Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast



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UNA STORIA D'AMORE



With intimacy, romance and settings so beautiful the reality is even more exquisite than Pinterest, Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast have oh-so many charms. Each winding street oozes character, the air fills with an atmospheric buzz and the sun sparkles on the surface of the azure sea.

This gorgeous corner of the Italian coastline promises to wine, dine and fill you with wonder, and as a destination wedding planner at Sophisticated Weddings, crafting celebrations right here, I'll show you why it's the perfect place to elope.

I'm opening my little book of love stories to help you decide if eloping to Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast is for you; where your location of dreams might be; why you might want to elope here and how to make that dream happen.

One of my wonderful celebrants, Carmela Cesarano, will also be dropping by to offer her advice, as will the ultra-talented photographer Peggy Picot. So, grab a coffee, or even a glass of fizz, cuddle up together and prepare to write the next chapter of your love story, as you discover all you need to know about eloping in Italy.

FOLLOW YOUR HEARTS

WHO LOVE ON [THE COAST]

For some couples, tying the knot in Italy will be a longstanding dream; for others, opting for a more intimate elopement might be opening the door to this stunning spot on the map for the very first time.

"Most couples decide to elope because they want to create a moment entirely dedicated to them and their love, in a dream setting," celebrant Carmela Cesarano reflects, smiling. "It's an opportunity to do something completely unique without any of the considerations and concerns that affect larger weddings. There is so much scope for creating a really unique and personal experience. After all, an elopement wedding is an adventure with the person you love most - an unforgettable and unrepeatable moment which should be exactly what a couple want and more."

"Everything is possible with elopements, so I'm ready (and so excited) to receive any kind of requests - because this should be the essence of eloping: freedom to celebrate your love the way you are," adds photographer Peggy Picot. "Elopements are not a minimal wedding, a plan B or a second choice without guests."

Whether a large-scale celebration or an elopement for two, here at Sophisticated Weddings, I invite you to ask away. Your first consultation is completely free of charge, so you can 'dip your toes' before jumping in, when you know an elopement to the Amalfi Coast is exactly right for you.



WHAT 'I DO'S IN ITALY

Just as you can often choose between a legally-binding civil ceremony or a symbolic ceremony on your wedding day back home, the same applies in Italy, inviting you to craft your day, your way and that begins with how you make your vows. Choosing which ceremony type is the one for you can feel daunting, but with a planner at your side to guide and advise you, you'll soon find 'the one'.

Many of my couples will fall in love with the freedom a symbolic ceremony promises. Every element becomes yours to craft, so the love and personality isn't simply limited to your vows themselves. Symbolic ceremonies may be celebrated in the language of your choice, with the wording of your choice and with support to find the right words should you need it.

"The decision between a symbolic and civil ceremony depends upon several factors," celebrant Carmela Cesarano explains. "For some couples, having a legally-valid Italian wedding ceremony is an absolute must, in which case a civil ceremony is the only option. Other couples are happy to discreetly complete the legal side at home (which is usually both quicker and easier) making a symbolic ceremony a viable option. And for couples who don't wish to renounce the legal aspect or the personal aspect, then there is the option to have both civil and symbolic ceremonies: a low-key civil ceremony and a more elaborate, personal and meaningful symbolic ceremony."

"Civil ceremonies can only be celebrated by the mayor or an official delegated by them. They are celebrated, in Italian (as required by law) and translated into English by a sworn interpreter for couples who don't speak Italian" Carmela adds.

Whether civil or symbolic, celebrating your elopement in Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast allows you to experience more romance on your wedding day than you imagined possible. Working together, one-to-one, I'll infuse every part of your elopement experience with your personality. The result will be a completely bespoke wedding, crafted with love and laughter, while feeling irresistibly authentic.

WHERE CLIFFTOPS KISS THE SEA

As you leaf through pages of real weddings in bridal magazines, you're bound to land upon a celebration in Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast. And for good reason. Home to the charming towns of Positano, Ravello and Sorrento, each has its own flavour and character, while being close enough for wanderlust-filled couples to explore each town during their romantic getaway.

I encourage couples to soak up every moment of their time here: whether you dream of hiking the Path of the Gods and enjoying a candlelit dinner for two in a fragrant lemon grove, or perusing the high-fashion streets of Positano, as you work up an appetite for a Michelin-starred dining experience later that night.

And for the big day itself, you'll be spoilt for choice between dream locations to fall for. From bohemian, lantern-lit celebrations high up the cliff looking out to sea, to ultra-chic private terraces where lights twinkle on the water, to seriously luxurious villas complete with infinity pools.

Not to forget the deliciously aromatic vineyards and lemon groves, where trestle tables can nestle into the landscape, or the unrivalled intimacy of a mountain-top table for two.

Your choice of ceremony can guide you towards your choice of venue. *"Although a civil ceremony can only be held in a location owned by the town hall and designated for the purpose,"* explains celebrant Carmela, *"some towns have really unique settings: historic cloisters, sea-view terraces, fragrant gardens and frescoed halls."*

With a planner heading up your elopement A-team, you'll be perfectly placed to discover these hidden gems, which may otherwise be missed, if you have set your heart on a civil ceremony.

For couples opting for a symbolic celebration, the Amalfi Coast is your oyster! Write your vows in the sand of an intimate cove and share your first kiss as the sea laps your toes. Take over a private terrace with panoramic views and turn up the luxury with a dramatically-lit ceremony at sunset. Perhaps, even a symbolic ceremony at sea, floating aboard a private yacht off the shore of the island of Capri. The sky is the limit, and to get you there, I'll find the soul of your unique elopement dream and deliver you to the location that will forever steal your hearts.



While tradition brings to mind tales of couples following their hearts and surprising their family by eloping, often couples have a different vision in mind, and elopements have evolved to match. An elopement needn't be strictly limited to two: you might choose to jet off with an intimate group of family or close friends, for example.

But, of course, it can absolutely be a totally romantic experience exclusively for the two of you, perhaps with a celebration back home for family and friends to look forward to later on, after celebrating a day entirely focused on you.

"On a classic wedding day with many guests, we don't have much time for portraits of the couple alone, because the most important focus is to celebrate with family and guests," explains Peggy Picot. *"But with an elopement, it's completely different, as we have time."*

"On the Amalfi Coast, I would recommend all the experiences you can have on the water - it's the best way to get amazing shots and backgrounds. And there's nothing more beautiful than feeling the fresh wind on your face (without worrying about your hair!) and the heat of the sun, enjoying the colours of the coast," Peggy recommends. *"I don't put limits to my clients' requests. I had a couple who wanted to jump from a boat in the sea on the shore of Ravello. So they did it! Another couple wanted to eat cheese and drink red wine during a boat tour in Positano (yes red wine on a boat, this bride was my hero!). They did it!"*

Without the pressures of planning for 100 family and friends, an elopement can offer a less demanding planning experience for couples (and the perfect excuse for a romantic getaway beforehand, if you fancy exploring possible venues first-hand).

Where family dynamics may be complicated or the budget simply may not suit hosting, feeding and entertaining such a large guest list, an elopement lifts all those worries away, with a celebration that is just as unique, with all of the indulgence, magic and romance distilled into one beautiful picture, painted just for the two of you.

WHY EXPERIENCES MADE FOR TWO

WITH LOVE FROM THE AMALFI COAST

I hope your hearts are racing and your imaginations are running wild, as you let yourselves dream about the magic of eloping to the Amalfi Coast. My greatest advice at this very moment is to dream big, because the possibilities of elopements know no bounds. And as that dream comes together, remember that your first consultation with me at Sophisticated Weddings is complimentary, so you can dream big, ask away and, when you're ready to do so, set the date. Enjoy every second!

VICTORIA, PEGGY & CARMELA X



Images courtesy of Maison Pesteia - Peggy Picot