Welcome to The National Herald’s annual Greek-American Weddings special issue! We hope you enjoy the articles and information we have gathered for you and wish those couples planning their big day all the best for a long and happy life together! The Greek wedding and all its traditions celebrate love, life, faith, and family.

Those of us from the average, usually large, Greek family will undoubtedly have attended numerous weddings throughout a lifetime. We may take for granted the ceremony and tradition that make Greek weddings so special. I recall being shocked and saddened to hear that one of my classmates (non-Greek) had never attended a wedding in her life at the ripe old age of 12 or 13. By that age, most Greek-Americans have been to at least three or four weddings and have probably participated as a flower girl or ring bearer in at least one or two. Most Greeks would never imagine sending out an invitation that said “no children allowed.” Where would they leave them when everyone they know who could babysit will be at the wedding?

Family is vital to a Greek wedding, which is why mothers and daughters fuss over the guest list and the seating arrangements. Do you really want to hear complaints from your theia about where she sat at the wedding? Just keep in mind that you will hear those same complaints at every family gathering for the next twenty years at least, if not longer, God willing.

The church, the reception hall, the food, the music, the decor, the dress, every little aspect of the wedding day can add up to a lot of stress for the happy couple, mostly the bride, but with some forethought, and a few ideas from TNH, we hope to ease some of the burden.

While it can be hectic, we hope you enjoy the process of planning the wedding as much as possible. Keeping things in perspective can help. Remember, you are not the first or the last person to get married, and very few people plan an entire wedding on their own. Ask questions and ask for help when you need it. Whether mom is helping already, or maybe not, your cousins and friends who have already tied the knot are probably very knowledgeable on the subject. Get their advice over coffee, borrow their wedding planning binder, you know which friend has one, and if needed, hire a professional wedding planner. There is a wealth of information available online and in TNH as well. A glance through the archives of our weddings special issues will show how some things have changed and others have stayed the same in planning a wedding. What remains constant is the love that brings the happy couple together in the first place.

Above all, take a moment to appreciate how truly blessed you are to have found the person you will spend the rest of your life with. Your family and friends are also there to share in your happiness, so make sure to thank them. Time spent with your loved ones is always precious. The close personal relationships we share are what make life truly worth living, so remember to make some happy memories on your special day and throughout your lifetime.

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Among the traditions: “The stefana, or crowns, are linked with a ribbon that symbolizes the union of two people into a married couple”
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Though many brides choose a traditional style for their wedding, it can be fun and memorable to incorporate some of the current trends into the celebration. The National Herald searched through the top wedding trends for 2018 to compile the following list of ideas you might want to use for the big day.

**Potted Plants and Green, Living Bars**

As an alternative to cut flowers, think about decorating the aisle with potted plants that can be donated to the church or given away to guests at the end of the ceremony. Wrap the pots with fabric to blend seamlessly into the décor for the wedding, and/or tie a bow around the pots for a pretty effect.

The green, living bar trend brings a touch of nature to the bar area where the bar itself can be covered with greenery, living plants or vines. A simple bar cart can be transformed with fresh plants or bushes and painted latticework.

**Destination Weddings**

The trend continues, but more and more couples are embracing the local traditions at their destination weddings. Greek weddings feature many traditions you might want to incorporate into your destination wedding in Greece, including the procession to the church with live music and the traditional wedding songs. Some regions of Greece also have pinning money to the bride, or the bride and groom, traditions, but don’t worry about ruining your dress; the money is usually pinned to the other bills, making a sort of chain or money necklace for the bride and the groom.

**Colorful Florals**

Floral arrangements are going colorful in 2018 with dramatic shades and textures adding contrast to arrangements, decorations, and bouquets. Dramatic color palettes are a big trend this year with darker hues including shades of purple and increased use of greenery taking center stage.

**Texture and Translucent**

The linens at most weddings can be a little boring with white or off-white being the obvious choices. Textured linens, featuring laser-cut designs are a great way to personalize the look of the reception. Translucent decorations are also a trend this year with see-through elements and clear tents bringing light and clean design to the modern wedding.

**Artopolis**

Artopolis, a bakery with the sweet flavors of Greece, where each mouthful is an adventure in taste, quality and freshness designed to please every customer. For Weddings, Bridal Showers, Engagement Parties, Sweet Sixteens, Anniversaries and other events. All baking done on premises.

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Trends for 2018

The After-Party

While the reception is still central to the wedding day, more and more couples are having after-parties as part of their celebration. With destination weddings growing ever more popular, the festive atmosphere can continue for days with everyone enjoying a holiday as well as the special event. The after-party can have a more casual vibe with fun foods, adult beverages, and dancing into the early hours of the morning.

Creative Place Cards

The trend in place cards is creative and often edible. Among the ideas for place cards to spice up your wedding, adding names to small containers with flavored breadsticks or cheese and crackers so guests can snack on hors d’oeuvres as well as find out where they will be seated. A mandarin orange or clementine, wrapped in paper, and tied with a bow and a name tag can also be a fun place card. The fruit makes a nice snack between courses too.

Smaller Wedding Parties

This trend may not be possible for a Greek wedding since so many cousins will be upset by not being included in your wedding party. Still, the smaller wedding party has many advantages and can be difficult to coordinate the schedules of 12 to 15 people these days and it will save time during the wedding if there are only one or three bridesmaids walking down the aisle and being announced at the start of the wedding reception. Some brides choose to have no bridesmaids at all and instead include the children on both sides of the family as flower girls and ring bearers.
Greek American Weddings

THE NATIONAL HERALD, FEBRUARY 10, 2018

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Wedding Dress, Hair, and Makeup Trends for 2018

The trends in wedding dresses for fall 2018 look to be continuing the trends from last year, but on a new level. Capes made an appearance last year, in the form of the capelet, and the trend continues with princess capes. Jackets are a trend this year with special emphasis on men’s jackets for both the bride and groom. Mushrooms from lace to leather. The very flattering off-the-shoulder look is still going strong with designers creating new looks with various sleeve options including ones that detach which give the off-the-shoulder look to a dress that is, in fact, completely strapless.

Poof sleeves and bell sleeves were also seen on the runways. Length gowns offer a ladylike choice designed by Ellie Saab, Savannah Miller, and Oleg Cassini, among many others. The trend is a classic reinvented with a whimsical touch for the modern bride. If the midi-length is not for you, shorts have also made an appearance on the runways for the fashion-forward bride. Including Monique Lhuillier, Lela Rose, Hayley Paige, Justin Alexander, and Victor & Rolf Mariage, may be perfect look for the chic city hall wedding.

High-low hems, miniskirts, and shorts suits were also on the runways for 2018.

For men, the traditional suit colors and patterns can add a distinct look. For example, mauve. Textures including casual rounds and herringbone patterns can add a distinct look for the groom.

As for lengths in 2018, tea-length gowns offer a ballsy choice designed by Ellis Saab, Savannah Miller, and Oleg Cassini, among many others. The trend is a classic reinvented for the modern bride. If the midi-length is not for you, shorts have also made an appearance on the runways for the fashion-forward bride. Including Monique Lhuillier, Lela Rose, Hayley Paige, Justin Alexander, and Victor & Rolf Mariage, may be perfect look for the chic city hall wedding.

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The Renaissance Event Hall in Long Island City, NY is a convenient location for events and weddings, particularly in Queens. Located close to Astoria and Manhattan, couples can enjoy their reception without worrying about guests having to travel long distances, especially when they choose to have the ceremony in one of the many churches in Astoria.

For those interested in outdoor photos, the hall is also located near Astoria Park, Socrates Sculpture Park, Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, and Gantry Plaza State Park for dramatic views.

Renaissance Event Hall was recognized in the last three years (2015, 2016, and 2017) with Wedding Wire’s “Bride’s Choice” and The Knot’s “Best of Weddings” Awards. The National Herald spoke with Teresa Lisson, Renaissance GM and partner, for the latest information on the wedding venue.

TNH: What makes the Renaissance Event Hall a good choice for a wedding?

TL: We host only one event at a time. Our space is newly renovated and in summer 2018 we will also open our backyard for ceremonies.

TNH: How have weddings changed at the Renaissance since the time you started until now?

TS: We used to have many inquiries for all-inclusive packages where the flowers, DJ, and photographers are included. Now, couples like to customize their event alone to give a personal touch to the special occasion.

TNH: How many guests attend an average wedding at your venue?

TS: 125-400 guests.

TNH: How far in advance should couples begin planning their wedding at the Renaissance?

TS: It should be 9-12 months, however, we have had couples book their wedding less than 3 months in advance and they had a lovely celebration. I suggest if you have never planned an event before, give yourself at least a year.

For couples interested in planning their wedding at Renaissance Event Hall, appointments are available 11:30 am – 6:30 pm, 7 days a week. A baby grand piano is available to rent by the hour to be played by a pianist the couple provides or the Renaissance can provide the pianist as well, for an additional fee.

As noted on the website, “Guests are greeted in the lobby bar, its simple elegance punctuated by a baby grand piano. The room flows to a gracefully curved staircase. Marble steps descend to reveal the neoclassic decor of the main reception hall and hardwood dance floor below. The soaring ceiling flanked by two spacious, yet cozy, balconies. The perfect setting for any stylish event, from a wedding ceremony, reception, to corporate functions, award dinners, fundraisers, filming, photo shoots and fashion shows.”

The 12,000 square foot wedding venue also features a full-service kitchen providing catering options for buffet and plated dinners, capacity for parties up to 350 seated guests and 450 cocktail guests, state-of-the-art audio visual system. The hall’s event coordinator and team can assist with the details. More information is available at renaissanceventhall.com.
By Eleni Sakellis

Greece. To say we’ve come a long way since marriage in ancient Greece. Most people probably know that marriage was not viewed in the romantic sense until very recently in human history. It is only about the last 200 years or so that the idea that people could or even should marry for love has taken root in the popular consciousness. Marriages in the past were mostly arranged by the parents of the young persons to be married. Whether the bride and groom liked each other or not might make no difference at all in the negotiations since they were marrying for the practical reason, continuing the family line, extending land holdings, or securing alliances between families. Money was more than romantic ideals was the deciding factor in the arranged marriage. It was more a business deal rather than the ending of a love affair.

Though city-state in ancient times had its own laws regarding marriage, most were arranged by the parents, and laws concerning marriage varied so that practically each person had their own interests. The laws of Sparta were particularly specific on the point of marriage being to raise productive members of the state. There are evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece to marry a man who was older than his wife, his “lawfully wedded concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40. The evidence, and examples from Homer specifically, suggest that it was more common in ancient Greece for a man to have one legal wife, the “properly wedded wife,” and then keep a concubine, or more than one concubine. Women rarely married before age 20, as noted in the book Spartan History, Book 6, chapter 39 and 40.
The Greek Wedding Traditions

Continued from page 4

RPC - THE NATIONAL HERALD, FEBRUARY 10, 2018

13

Greeks value the beauty of the ceremony. All the gifts for the koumbaro today are placed in a stefanothiki and then held by the koumbaro as he leads the wedding couple into the church after the stefana are in place. The gifts are given to the koumbaro the night before the wedding, and in the tradition of pinning money to the newlyweds' clothing continues. In Greece, the new-brides' clothing continues.

At the reception, the bride and groom take three sips each from the same cup of wine, symbolizing the eternal bond of every- thing in their lives. The dance of bliss, the III. The second reading is from the Gospel According to St. John, Stephe- nopoulos continues.

“One must remember that the phrase in Greek includes a word meaning ‘love’ of his wife, love him,” reading, ‘Husbands should love [his wife], mutual fulfillment, as seen in the every prayer recited,” Fr. Stephanopoulos said, as re -

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Food Trends for Weddings and a Traditional Recipe

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The trend in foods for wed - dings is more casual and per -

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Protelia Weddings Talks To The National Herald

PROTELIA WEDDINGS TALKS TO THE NATIONAL HERALD

Featuring Ktima Kleopatra, Protelia

By Eleni Sakellis

Protelia Weddings is a boutique event planning company with over 15 years of experience in the field. Based at the beautiful wedding venue Ktima Kleopatra, Protelia since 2002 has successfully planned and organized over 500 weddings and events, including social and business events. The company recently expanded their business to offer services for wedding and event planning all over Greece as well as in the Greek islands. They can create tailor-made solutions for the destination wedding of your dreams.

The National Herald spoke with Mados Christodoulou, who manages Protelia Weddings and Events. Ms. Christodoulou told TNH about their wedding planning services, how far in advance a couple should begin planning their special day, and what Greek American couples look for when they plan their wedding with the company.

TNI: What can a couple expect when they choose Protelia to plan their wedding?

MC: Having more than 15 years of experience in designing and planning dreamy weddings and events, we pride ourselves on being the perfect choice for your celebration. Our experienced team works closely with you to interpret the couple’s personal sensibility and then create a small piece of art customized to their personalities, passions, artistic vision and then create a celebration that is unique to their own dreams.

TNI: What can a couple expect in advance should couples begin planning for their wedding with Protelia?

MC: The sooner a couple decides to set their wedding date, the more options we have to book the space that interests us! We have been very interested in the excellence and professionalism for a wedding reception. The wedding and baptism offer for us a only is a b

TNI: What can a couple expect when they plan their wedding abroad with Protelia Weddings? Are Greek-American couples be aware of any type of wedding ceremony.

MC: It depending on the type of ceremony and the location of the couple. In any case, we are willing to deal with all the bureaucratic requirements to perform any type of wedding ceremony. We are very interested in the excellence and professionalism for a wedding reception. Your guests can couple look for the most when they plan their wedding with you at opposed to what Greek could look for? Are Greek-American couples be aware of this? Do they most special paperwork or permits if they plan to have a wedding in Greece?

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TNI: Are there any major differences, either in scale or preferences?

MC: As an event planning company with an excellent knowledge of the country and culture, we organize unique events under the Greek sun, by interpreting the couple’s personal sensibility and then creating a tailored location where the couple has chosen their dream. We aim to remove ourselves in our clients’ aesthetic, their personal style, artistic vision and then create a celebration that is unique to their own dreams.

By Eleni Sakellis

Ktima Kleopatra is a Planning venue that combines elegance and professionalism for a wedding reception.

More information is available at proteliaweddings.com.

See the full interview at proteliaweddings.com.

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Ikaros Beach Luxury Resort & Spa offers stunning views of Crete for the fairytail wedding of your dreams. Sun, sea, blue sky, and the expert staff will make your special day unforgettable. Located along the northern coast of Crete, the island renowned for its unspoiled coastal charm, natural beauty, and rich culture. The five-star hotel is perfectly positioned on a rocky peninsula with sweeping views overlooking the Cretan Sea. Steeped in the warmth of Cretan traditions and hospitality - Ikaros Beach brings luxury, romance, and world-class services together to ensure a remarkable experience for your wedding.

The National Herald asked what Greek-American couples can look forward to when planning their wedding at the Ikaros Spa.

**TNH:** What can a couple expect when they choose Ikaros Beach Luxury Resort & Spa as the venue for their wedding?

**IS:** Professional attention, respect to their needs and personal care.

**TNH:** You have had many Greek American weddings at your venue. What do Greek-American couples look for the most when they plan their wedding at your resort? In comparison, what do Greek couples look for?

**IS:** Greek couples use the resort church, have bigger numbers for catering, and do not need much accommodation. Greek-American couples use the hotel accommodations for their out of Crete incoming guests. They usually organize various pre-wedding parties for both their guests from abroad but also any guest from Crete. They use the hotel church for their wedding ceremony and hold the cocktail and dinner party at our Sunset beach deck. An after-wedding party brunch, with Greek food by the beach, next lunch time, usually completes the wedding celebration.

**TNH:** How many guests does your resort accommodate?

**IS:** We have 253 rooms of various types with a total capacity of approximately 550 guests. The hotel facilities include one main dining room and 5 a la carte dining areas. We also have children's facilities, a private sandy beach, and a full services Spa.

**TNH:** What should Greek-American couples be aware of when they decide to plan a wedding in Greece and especially on Crete?

**IS:** Crete is an area specially blessed for starting a new life. However, the couples should schedule their needs by early January to make sure they may reserve all their wished-for accommodation needs. Everything else will be done after with great care and no matter the time-limit.

Ikaros Beach Luxury Resort & Spa wedding packages start from 650€ or about $800. For details regarding specific costs, couples should contact Ikaros Beach Luxury Resort & Spa by Phone: +30 28970 31268-9, Fax: +30 28970 31269, or Email: reservations@ikarosvillage.gr. More information & wedding packages also available online at: www.ikarosvillage.gr. The wedding packages package, along with the features they include, are listed below.
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