

Katie & Derek's Italian Wedding



Positano, Italy



On September 4th 2010 I had the honor of photographing the wedding of Derek Busciglio and Katie Mullis in Positano Italy. This is my story.

- Jack Elka

Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess (Katie) and her handsome prince (Derek) from America who dreamed of a fairy tale wedding in Italy. The Amalfi coast was the home base and is one of the most beautiful places on the planet. As the story goes, the humble photographer from Anna Maria Island was asked to document their incredible journey.

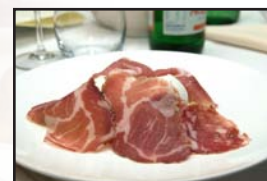
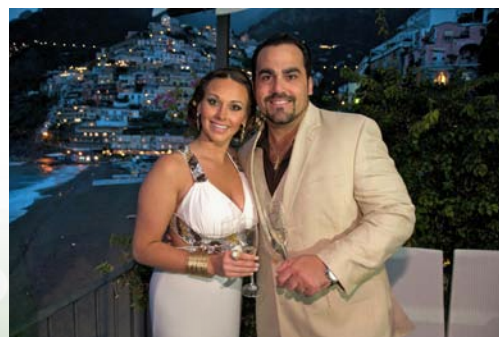
It started with a phone call from Katie last November asking me if I could take engagement pictures of her and her fiancé Derek. It was an overcast, gloomy day on Anna Maria Island (perfect for pictures). We met at a stately old Mediterranean house on the north end of the Island and spent a couple of hours around sunset just taking fun pictures and talking. She mentioned that they were getting married next year in Italy. I immediately said "Do you need a photographer?" They both smiled and said that they would think about it. The next day after they saw the pictures online I got a call from Derek, asking me if I would go with them to Italy to photograph their wedding. They were both very comfortable with my style and loved the pictures that they saw. I told them that my bags were already packed.



I departed for Rome on Monday September 4th. After a 9.5 hour flight, I then boarded a train for a 2.5 hour trip to Naples, followed by a 1 hour train trip to Serento, then the 1 hour bus ride to Positano. A long day! The next day I met up with the bride and groom to go over the agenda for the next 3 days. That evening at a private Disco, a group of about 30 friends and family gathered for the first time to mingle and dance the night away, and I got loads of great shots of loving friends and doting family.

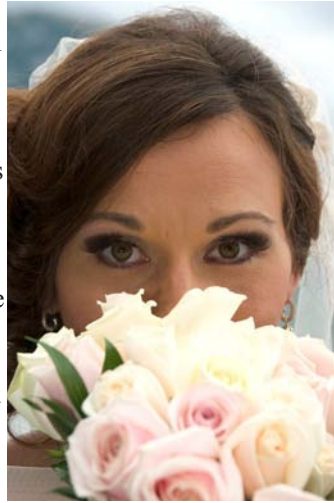


The next afternoon Katie and the ladies were pampered at the salon. After trying many "dos" she left looking stunning for the rehearsal dinner that night at Le Terrazze Dell'Incanto in Positano. It rained. It rained like I never saw it rain in my life. It was like being hit with a fire hose! Everyone was soaked to the bone but the wine poured, toasts were given, testimonials and cheers flowed. And it rained.



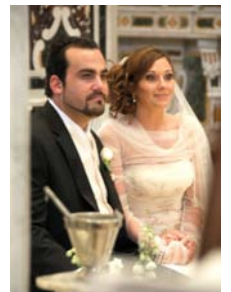


The next day we gathered at the Hotel Marincanto to be transported to the tiny town of Atrani about 20 miles from Positano. On the way I heard passengers talking about a mud slide in Atrani from all that rain. The drive along the Amalfi coast is one of the worlds most spectacular drives. The single lane road clings to the cliffs dropping off 1000 feet to the sea below. All of the passengers were white knuckled as the driver, one hand on the wheel and the other hand waving a cigarette out the window whipped around hairpin turns like Mario Andretti. As we got closer to Almafai and Atrani the traffic started to back up. The driver told me it was the mudslide. We stopped at the bridge and he told me I could get out to take pictures. I was shocked! It looked like a war zone. Hundreds of people and press were lined up on the bridge looking down into a giant mud field where search and rescue teams from Germany, Switzerland and the US were digging for survivors. A normally small stream coming down the mountain turned into a torrent of death and destruction. Cars, trucks, buildings and people were washed down the mountain and out to sea. I took pictures and got back into the van. Finally, we were able to move on to the church on the other side of the bridge.



The wedding ceremony took place in the Cathedral de Santa Maria Maddalena, a beautiful old 13th century Catholic church. Everything was spectacular. The bride was gorgeous. The groom looked like he stepped out of GQ magazine. All of the women were dressed to the hilt. It was hard

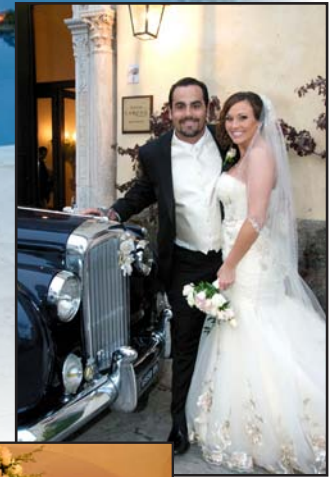
to get a bad picture. At one point, I was shooting the ceremony at the alter when a rescue helicopter hovered over the church and sirens were screaming. The sound was deafening. There was a small window nearby and I turned to the right to look down into the mud pit where the rescue work was going on. It took my breath away. I looked to the left to see the beautiful ceremony and to the right to see death and destruction. It was like a sci-fi movie - surrealistic.





After the ceremony we gathered outside the church for pictures. Incredible light with views of the Mediterranean Sea and the mountains behind.





We moved on to the reception about 5 miles up the mountain to the Hotel Caruso in Ravello. This 5 star resort was something out of a Fellini movie, over the top! The food, wine, music, hotel staff, architecture - all world class. After cocktails, an incredible meal, wine and toasts, the party moved out to the pool area where an Italian DJ rocked the night away. A surprise during the cake cutting was fireworks over the mountain side. A fitting end to a fairy tale wedding. Everything in Italy is a work of art. Bellissimo!



An amazing movie of the wedding was made by VJF Video 813-766-5943. It was shown at the Cini Bistro in Tampa and sure to win awards.



The Italian wedding was one of the most memorable trips I have ever experienced. The next day I journeyed back to Rome and on to another shoot in Northern Italy before returning back to America. In Rome the wedding planner set me up with 5 more wedding shoots. I plan to have another wedding web site specifically for European weddings available very soon. I love to travel and I love to shoot weddings. It's perfect!

Ciao Italia! - Jack Elka



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