

# The look of love

Imagine tying the knot in a stunning beach resort with a sunset over the Mediterranean as a backdrop. That's exactly what drew travel agent **Marie Almond**, of Hops Travel in Grimsby, and fiancé Gabriel Mihai to book their wedding in Cyprus with Olympic Holidays. She tells *Travel Weekly* all about their dream day

## ► HOW IT ALL BEGAN

A couple of years ago, Gabriel and I went to Greece and saw these little white-domed chapels. We walked in and it was absolutely beautiful, and he said to me: "I want to marry you one day in a chapel like this."

We were going to get married in Greece, but because it was May and Greece would have been a bit cooler, we chose Cyprus. We went for the Golden Coast Beach Hotel in Protaras because it had a chapel in the grounds.

My family were fantastic and it was all booked through Olympic Holidays straight away, then my friends booked a little bit later. Gabriel's family came from Italy and Romania as well.

## ► THE RUN-UP

The booking process was very easy. Fanoulla [Spyrou, weddings executive at Olympic Holidays] asked me about what I needed -

about the wedding cake and the flowers I wanted.

We probably emailed once a week for a year, and everything was done for me - it was beyond my expectations. There was really no stress at all, so I couldn't recommend her enough.

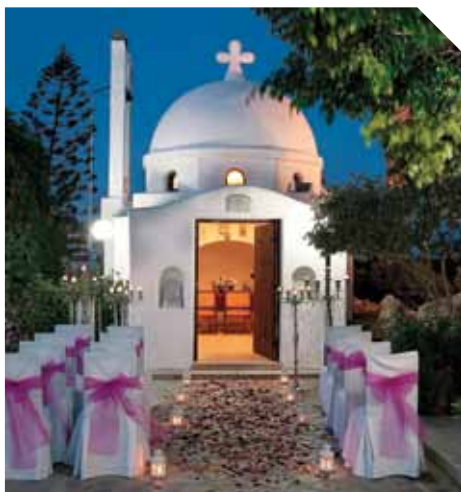
I wanted a priest to marry us; I picked what flowers I wanted; I told them how many bridesmaids I had. It was all tailor-made, which is what I wanted.

## ► THE BIG DAY

I got there on the Sunday and we got married on the Tuesday. When we arrived, Olympic had upgraded my room, and there was a bottle of sparkling wine with a lovely letter saying they'd meet me the next morning.

There were two wedding coordinators confirming the flowers and the cake; they had arranged for my dress to be pressed; and they had my





interview with the priest set up for 2pm. It was just so easy.

On the day, I started getting ready in my room with my bridesmaids and then my flowers arrived at about 3pm, all fresh and beautifully done.

The wedding coordinator got the boys in place, then came and got me with my dad and my bridesmaids, while the hotel wedding coordinator was sorting all the guests out.

It was very well organised and we were very well looked after.

## THE CELEBRATIONS

I had a violin playing when we got married at the chapel, then we walked



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over a bridge to this little private area with gorgeous views for a beautiful reception overlooking the sea.

We had our own area with a band, and it was all nicely decorated, exactly

as we'd asked for. The food was amazing; I could have fed 100 people. We went for a Cypriot-style hot and cold buffet and a two-tier wedding cake, plus there was a massive table just for the desserts!


I was so impressed with the food and the whole set-up – how the wedding coordinator made sure everyone was in the right position and got everybody together, it was fantastic.

For me, the highlight was the ceremony itself, and how they had decorated the aisle with beautiful flowers. We got married at 4pm and watched the sunset over the beach.

## THE PROS AND CONS

Everyone was in the sun, having a relaxing time and enjoying themselves already, which is a fantastic atmosphere to have at your wedding. You're not obliged to do anything so it just makes everything hassle-free.

The only downside was that a few people couldn't come, either because they couldn't afford it, though it wasn't an expensive holiday, or because they couldn't get time off, as one person had to work, so that was the only issue. But it was fantastic value for money overall – when I tell people what it cost me, they're shocked!

It was also a very relaxing process. I could have had anything I wanted, and it's not too stressful – you're not obliged to have anybody, and the only people who are at your wedding are the people that really want to be there. That's a massive thing for a bride. Everybody is there because they prioritise wanting to be there, so it just makes your day beautiful. 

**ABOVE LEFT:** Chapel at Golden Coast Hotel, Cyprus

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Marie was able to specify the wedding cake she wanted

**LEFT:** Marie and Gabriel tie the knot in the resort's chapel



A wedding at Golden Coast Hotel in Cyprus starts at around €600 for the ceremony only, which includes a priest and hotel set-up. **Olympic Holidays** organises weddings for an arrangement fee of £289, which includes a wedding coordinator and assistance in the UK. [olympic.holidays.com](http://olympic.holidays.com)