

A match made *in paradise*

Agent Joanne Osborne tells *Travel Weekly* about tying the knot at Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa



Glasgow travel agent Joanne Osborne, 49, and her now husband David, 50, have long been fans of the

Caribbean, and they always knew they'd end up marrying there – the question was where? Then, 12 years ago, David popped the question while the pair were holidaying at Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa, and after falling in love with the island, the decision to return there for their wedding in June this year became an easy one. Here, the *Barrhead Travel* agent reveals the highlights from her Caribbean wedding.

Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa was the first Sandals we had ever been to and it was fantastic. It's the most romantic place in the world, so we had to go back there for our wedding. The beaches are out of this world.

I've been to the Caribbean lots before, but we chose to marry in Antigua as the resort was special

to us because we got engaged there. We loved the hotel, the service, the chilled and relaxed vibe – it was everything we wanted for our wedding.

▶ A GOOD START

We opted for the Beautiful Beginnings package, which is free if you spend more than three days at the resort. As we only

had four guests coming out with us, it was ideal for us.

The great thing about the package is that everything is sorted for you, which makes it very stress-free. I spoke to the wedding planner four times over the course of three months before I even went to Antigua to tell them exactly what I wanted, and you can book things over the

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**SAMPLE
PRODUCT**

Sandals offers a seven-night stay in a Sunset Bluff Honeymoon Luxury Club Level Room at Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa from £1,619, with flights from Gatwick and transfers for travel between May 1-24, 2017. A Beautiful Beginnings wedding is free with stays of three nights or more. sellingsandals.co.uk

phone before you go, such as your hair and makeup. It's all paid for before you go, which allowed us to budget better.

When we arrived for our two-week stay, the resort had already arranged for us to see the wedding planner the next day to talk through everything. We did a cake tasting and picked out our wedding cake - we chose a chocolate sponge with strawberry cream.

A fair amount was included in the price, like my lilac orchid bouquet and my husband's orchid for his suit. I also got a complimentary pedicure and manicure before the wedding, and we had breakfast in bed the day after.

THE BIG DAY

Our guests were my best friend, who was my maid of honour, and her husband, who was David's best man, and my best friend's mum and dad, who are like my second mum and dad.



It was a dream day for us both. There was no stress beforehand and the weather was gorgeous

The ceremony took place in the Reflection Pool gazebo, which we picked out because it was the largest of all the gazebos on offer, and it looked out onto the beautiful gardens. It also had a fan in it, which meant that we kept nice and cool!

We also had our reception in the gazebo, with nibbles and champagne. We then had a dinner at Eleanor's, where the table was decorated with flower petals and a lovely Mr and Mrs Osborne name setting.

I had booked my room using my

Sell & Go nights as I'd sold quite a few Sandals holidays, so we got a Club Level Room in the all-suite Mediterranean Village, which had an in-room bar and a Club Sandals key.

We had a fantastic day, and everything went to plan from the start, when the hair and makeup people arrived. The staff were so friendly, they came to our room to start videoing the day, and the photographer came to take pictures too. I laughed the whole day; everyone made us feel so at ease.

It was a dream day for both of us. There was no stress beforehand as all the documentation had been sorted out, and the weather was gorgeous. Our guests loved it too, so much so that they are all going back again to Sandals Antigua next year.

THE AFTER-PARTY

The pictures you get of your wedding in the gardens and on the beach make it so special too. We have a big family, so when we arrived back home we got to have another big party, too, which is a big perk of a wedding abroad.

My tip to agents would be to make sure clients know where they want to get married in the resort and what gazebo they want, and to book it in advance. The locations can get booked up, especially if you want to marry on the beach.

I've recommended many Sandals weddings and clients often go back again for their anniversaries or to renew their vows. My husband and I also plan to go back for our fifth wedding anniversary to reminisce. TW