



A GUIDE FOR COUPLES MARRYING IN TUSCANY FROM ABROAD

Your destination wedding bar in Tuscany, question by question

The questions couples planning from abroad ask us, with the answers we actually give.

Before we start

We have been working in events for more than twenty years, and to this day we are the ones behind the bar at every event.

Couples coming from abroad to marry in Tuscany nearly always ask us the same questions. You will find them all here, with the answers we actually give and a few experiences that taught us something.

On the day of your celebration you should be able to relax and enjoy every moment. That peace of mind does not happen by chance: it comes from careful preparation, with someone who knows what to expect.

This guide is meant to make you aware of what we need to know to run a service like ours at its best. If you have a wedding planner or a coordinator, these are things they handle easily on your behalf, and you don't need to deal with them. Otherwise, they are worth knowing and following first-hand. Many logistical matters, such as access, timings and spaces, we can also settle directly with the villa's contact person.

Not getting married in Tuscany? Tuscany is home, but we travel all over Italy: we have already worked in Liguria, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna. Outside Tuscany, we work out the extra travel costs with you.

1. Who we are

We bring a real bar where there is none: gardens, villas, places that never had so much as a simple serving table. Our counters are **handcrafted, each one of a kind**: setting them up, moving them and looking after them takes considerable effort, but they make the difference. The bar becomes part of the furniture, as if it had always been there.

We take care of everything, from A to Z: that is why we do not hire out just the counter, the equipment or the bartenders. We choose our bartenders for their technical skill, but above all for how they relate to the team, to you and to your guests.

We have handled simple events and demanding ones: several bar stations, huge guest lists, Indian weddings, sprawling estates. Every one of them stayed with us.



Villa Catignano, Castelnuovo Berardenga (SI)



Tenuta La Fratta, Sinalunga (SI)



Villa Pazzi al Parugiano, Montemurlo (PO)

2. How far ahead should we book the bar?

Couples planning from abroad start early, and rightly so. Many contact us **up to two years in advance**: the most beautiful villas in Tuscany have long waiting lists, especially at weekends, and once the villa is booked, the suppliers are chosen.

One month is the minimum. With less than a month, it is sometimes possible and sometimes not: in that time we have to discuss the proposal, adapt it, then organise transport, staff and supplies around the other events of the season.

How booking works:

- We send you a tailored proposal: the base service plus every option you can add.
- From then on, **the date is held for you for about two weeks**, so you can decide calmly. Our availability for each date is limited, and while we hold it for you we do not accept other requests. If anything needs clarifying with the villa or other suppliers, the period can be extended.
- Once the contract is signed, you pay a **confirmatory deposit**, which is then deducted from the total.
- **With the deposit, the date is confirmed** and the bar counter you chose is dedicated exclusively to your event.



Castello di Montalto, Castelnuovo Berardenga (SI)

3. Does your villa allow an outside bar?

This is the first thing to check, even before choosing us.

It has happened that we signed the contract and received the deposit, and the villa then turned us down: its policy did not allow outside suppliers for the bar. We naturally refunded the deposit. Since then we recommend this check to every couple, more than once.

Checking this is your responsibility, first-hand. Here is what to ask the villa:

1. **Whether it accepts outside suppliers** for the bar service.
2. **Whether it has rules for outside suppliers:** if so, please forward them to us.
3. **The contact of a person in charge:** please share it with us and pass ours on to the villa, so they can tell us directly everything they need.

From the villa we ask for a contact person, the rules to follow and, if available, a back room or freezers we can use. If there are none, we are able to manage independently.

When the villa requires it, we provide all the documentation: **public liability insurance, HACCP food safety certification, DURC (social security compliance), company registration and a site safety plan (POS).**

We always contact the villas that do not know us yet, in the months before the event, and we visit them in person. If you come to Tuscany to see the villa, we can join you that day: we get to know each other and decide things together.



Villa Corsini a Mezzomonte, Impruneta (FI)

4. Can the villa's own wine be served?

Yes. If the villa or the winery produces its own wine, we will gladly serve it.

Wine at dinner and the toasts are normally handled by the caterer or the villa. The cake-cutting toast or a champagne tower can be arranged with us. The bar can also stay open during dinner.



Villa di Rignana, Greve in Chianti (FI)

5. Can we bring our own spirits?

As a rule, no, except in particular cases. The main reason is that with a product this important, we need to be fully in control of it.

Those who ask often expect to save money. This is usually not the case, for two reasons:

1. **The cost of the service is not just the cost of the drinks.**
The drinks are part of it, but a smaller part than you might think.
2. **For every event we buy far more than we need,** because nobody knows in advance what will go fastest. If you do the buying, you risk large leftovers and spending more than necessary.

If you would like particular labels, we start from our product lists, standard and premium. If the label is not there, we will look for it and find an arrangement together.



Certosa di Pontignano, Siena (SI)

6. Cash bar, and the bar after the open bar

A cash bar is possible, but **only on top of a service already agreed**: we do not organise cash-bar-only events. After the open bar ends, a cash bar can also be opened if needed.

If you are considering **extending the open bar**, please let us know in advance. The extra hour is already listed in the quote as an option, and on the night it is almost always possible. However, when more than two extra hours were requested, there was a risk of running out of supplies: if we know a month ahead, we bring adequate quantities.



Castello di Montalto, Castelnuovo Berardenga (SI)

7. Tips and paying from abroad

- **Tips are not expected.** They are appreciated, but not expected.
- **From abroad, you can pay by bank transfer or credit card.**
- **The balance**, meaning the total minus the deposit already paid, is due **by the day of the event**, on the day itself too. We accept instant bank transfer, credit card, or cash within the legal limits.

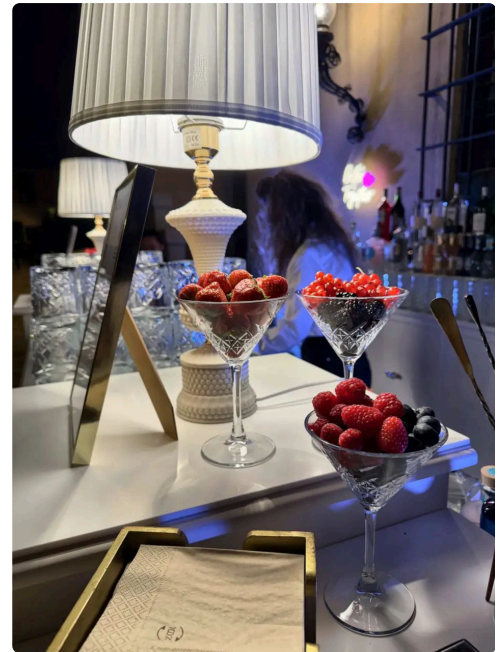


Tenuta Bichi Borghesi, Siena (SI)

8. Children and guests who do not drink alcohol

Children up to 16 are not included in the guest count. Soft drinks, juices and proper alcohol-free mocktails are always available for them.

Guests who do not drink alcohol matter a great deal to us. Anyone who does not drink, by choice or for religious reasons, should be able to order their own drink at the bar like everyone else. Our menu already includes alcohol-free options, and we create new ones for every event.



Villa Pazzi al Parugiano, Montemurlo (PO)

9. The drink list and the signature drink

The drink list is finalised **three weeks before the event**; if you already know what you want, you can choose it earlier. This avoids decisions made in a hurry during the last few days.

- **Our menu is a starting point.** Share your ideas and tastes with us, and we will gladly create cocktails that are not on it: the only limit is imagination.
- **Think of your guests.** It is right to choose the cocktails you love, but it is worth considering who will be drinking them. The secret lies in a balance between familiar and less familiar cocktails: people who do not know a drink often will not order it, but once they have tasted it, they will remember it.
- **The tool in your portal.** In your client portal you can put the drink list together, and the tool shows you whether it is balanced in preparation time. We then review and confirm it.
- **Printing the drink list is always included.** Other personalisations, such as lettering on the counter, brochures and tags, we design and proof ourselves, with a separate quote.

The signature drink. It is an original cocktail, created specifically to represent an identity: at a wedding, usually the bride and the groom. It starts from your tastes, but also from the themes and colours of the event, because its appearance,



Castello di Montalto, Castelnuovo Berardenga (SI)

garnish and colour matter as much as its ingredients. It is not essential, but it makes the event more personal and becomes a unique memory of it. It is included in some of our packages.

There are two possible routes:

- **Created from scratch**, the signature drink in its truest sense. We send you a questionnaire about your tastes and about memories, travels or moments in your story that the cocktail can evoke, and we propose four or five options, each with a description and an image of how it will look. You can taste them at our premises or, if you are planning from abroad, choose from the descriptions and images.
- **A twist on a well-known cocktail**, or an existing cocktail that feels like yours. You choose the name; we suggest a few ideas.

It must be decided at least two months before the event, either way: we need one month to create it and fine-tune the test recipes. We often use our own preparations, such as syrups, cordials and craft liqueurs, but the cocktail must be quick enough to prepare for many guests. It can also be alcohol-free. At the event there are usually one or two signature drinks, in addition to the drink list, presented on a separate drink list and served at any time, from the aperitivo to after dinner.

In 2024 we created "Respiro" for a couple: gin, soda and a honey and rosemary cordial. It is a very fresh cocktail, designed to convey serenity, security and trust: the sweetness of honey and the bold scent of rosemary, which evokes a sense of home.

10. How many bartenders do we need?

The number of bartenders is decisive. **We normally plan one bartender for every 50–55 guests**, and **always at least one waiter** to support them and complete the service among the guests.

Timing matters too. **The most underestimated moment is when guests arrive for the aperitivo**, when the bar opens and everyone arrives at once: that is when you need to be ready. Between 55 and 60 guests we offer you two options, with one or two bartenders (the second as an optional extra), and we choose together based on your expectations.

The drink list matters as well. Every cocktail made properly takes time, and some take longer than others: a list made up mostly of elaborate cocktails slows the service down, or requires more bartenders. The tool in your portal helps you strike the right balance.



Villa Il Granduca, Carmignano (PO)

11. How long should the bar run?

You decide the length, based on how you picture the day.

- **Aperitivo:** usually an hour and a half to two hours. These days it often becomes a buffet of starters and may run longer.
- **After-dinner party:** we recommend **no less than two and a half to three hours**, so that every guest has time to enjoy the bar. Much also depends on the music and entertainment.
- Our **standard service is 3 hours**. Less than 2 hours is usually not worthwhile: behind three hours of bar there are another **7–8 hours of work** between transport, setup, breakdown and putting everything back in order.



Antico Convento dei Cappuccini, Montalcino (SI)

12. Historic villas and timings

Tuscan villas and castles hold a heritage that must be protected, and each has its own rules. This is how we work:

- **We never fix anything** to walls or columns: the counter is freestanding.
- **We protect the floors**, terracotta included, with carpets and platforms, always present behind the counter.
- We move everything on **trolleys with large rubber wheels**.
- We dispose of melted ice and liquids **only where the villa indicates**.
- Where glass is not allowed, for example **by the pool**, we use **polycarbonate glasses**: we simply need to know beforehand.
- **We respect the villa's access and breakdown times**.

What we need to know from you or the villa:

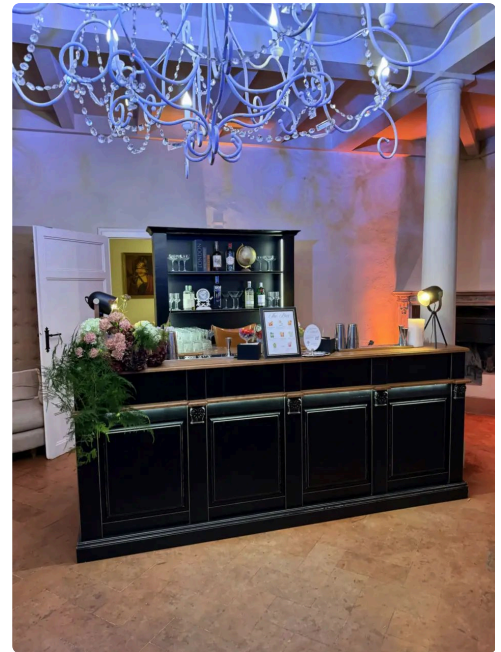
- **Photos and measurements of the access**: width of passages, doors and their height. We arrive with a van and the counter; if spaces are tight, we carry out a site visit.
- **Where the bar goes**: a **level** surface (we can compensate for a slight slope) and, for a medium-sized event, at least **3 by 3 metres**.
- **The times for outdoor music**: at many villas the music outside has to be switched off or turned down at a set time, often midnight or 1 am, and the party continues indoors. It is worth asking the villa.

We once had to set up the bar on a terrace reachable only by a long flight of stairs: no proper site visit had been done and the bar's position had not been made clear, and carrying the heaviest modules up by hand was exhausting. On another occasion the van could not get close and we unloaded hundreds of metres away, in the sun, which slowed down the preparation of the service. Since then we want a clear picture of each place and its difficulties before we set up; when access is complicated, we choose the most suitable counter, lighter and easier to take apart.

We can be self-sufficient, but we need to know beforehand.

We always bring our own ice and refrigeration, even in summer. Normally all we need is a power socket near the bar, and the extension leads are ours: they are used for lamps or for some equipment, such as the draught beer system.

Where there is no power we can work fully independently:



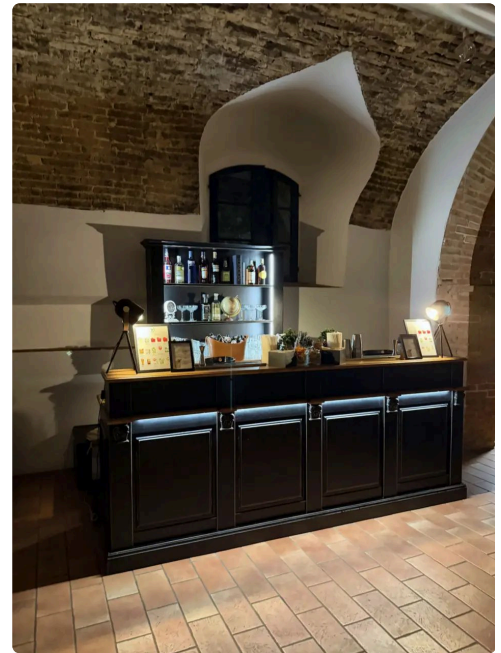
Villa di Ulignano, Volterra (PI)

the counters have water tanks and battery-powered lights. If the villa sets aside a space for us, ideally next to the caterer's, even better. At the end of the night we take away all rubbish, glass and glassware, and leave our area as we found it.

13. What if it rains? The plan B

Plan B turns out to be needed **more often than you might imagine**. That is why it is essential to have one, and to assess it carefully when choosing the villa.

- **Plan B spaces are often smaller**, but the counter stays the same size: check that it can accommodate everything you have chosen.
- **A villa's plan B is often not on a par with its plan A.** Assess it carefully: the difference should not be too great.
- **The decision rests with the coordinator** and must be made **before setup**. Once made, it cannot be reversed.
- Moving the bar after the event has started is possible, as our counters can be taken apart. But it is an emergency measure: **service stops for half an hour to forty minutes**.



Certosa di Pontignano, Siena (SI)

14. Why a good planner matters

Delays at a wedding are normal: a dinner that runs long, the speeches. We adapt, as it is part of our job, and we often stay beyond the agreed time so that you can enjoy the full service you booked.

With many suppliers, however, organisation makes the difference. **Every villa has its own rules and its own difficulties**, and the caterer, the music and the bar all need to work in harmony. A good planner or coordinator keeps everyone in touch. **When communication works, 80% of problems are solved.**

Where the bar goes must be decided together with you and your planner or coordinator, because how well the party works depends to a large extent on it. Especially after dinner, the bar should be close to the dance floor and the music; at the same time it must not get in the way of people moving around or of the caterer and waiting staff, nor create crowding in sensitive areas. A site visit often helps clear up many doubts.

Key dates when planning from abroad:

WHEN	WHO	WHAT
In the preceding months	Us	Site visit, if the venue is new to us; direct contact with the venue
Two months before	You	Request the signature drink, if you'd like one: we then send you the questionnaire to create it
One month before	You	Programme of the day and event timeline finalised; any extension of the bar with the extra hour (optional)
Three weeks before	You	Final drink list and final guest count
By the day of the event	You	The balance



Antico Convento dei Cappuccini, Montalcino (SI)

If you remember just one thing

The most important advice we can give you is this: choose a supplier not because they will solve your problems, but because their experience will help you anticipate them and avoid them.

Federico, Just Drink Bar Catering



GET IN TOUCH

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