

A wedding is always a special occasion. Throw in a little beachside village in Greece and people from different countries drawn to each other more by their commonalities than their differences, and you have the best Greek-Japanese wedding you could ever hope to attend.

It's hard to put into words. It was like a dream. But at the same time quite comical: the lights in the church went out soon after the wedding ceremony started, and the priest left us to see if he could get the power to work again; meanwhile we were left standing there wondering if he was coming back.

The funny thing was no one around us seemed to know what was going on. So when it came to the part of the ceremony when I had to stamp on George's foot with mine*, one of the photographers had to indicate to a guest at the wedding, who indicated to George's sister Angela, who indicated to me when I had to stamp on his foot. I was happy to just go along with the flow.

*According to Greek custom, the bride does this during the ceremony when the priest says that the woman must obey her husband. By stamping on his foot, the bride sends a less-than-subtle message to the groom that she won't be so readily subservient to his wishes.

What did you enjoy the most?

Watching George do Greek dancing – very dramatic and powerful. Though, I don't think he had any idea as to what he was doing. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves and that was what we wanted more than anything.



Is there anything you didn't enjoy?

I was initially worried because it was low-key planning – but that actually turned out to be one of the best aspects: it kept the whole experience feeling very real and not rehearsed. Other than that, despite George having told me how great the weather in Greece is, watching the skies bucket down with rain early on the day of the wedding was a bit unsettling, but the weather was perfect after that.

Did your parents accept George when they first met him?

Yes. They thought he had a very bright personality. They also liked the fact that he is so tall; they had no problem spotting him when we met outside a restaurant on a crowded Tokyo city street.

What was their experience of Greece?

For my Dad Greece is an ideal country: he had a great time drinking, eating and dancing with everyone. They only stayed for four days, but the experience rejuvenated the both of them.

Do you see George differently now that you have been to Greece with him?

Well his stomach is getting bigger! Now that I understand a little of Greek culture, it has helped me understand George better. Also, seeing what great people George's family and relatives are, I understand why

George is such a nice person.

Maiko also told me that she felt that Stomio was like her second home. Its something I can relate to – the warmth of the people makes the trip there memorable.

I recall the walk up to the church on the wedding day when the entire village waited for the wedding party to walk by in order to shower them with rice and well wishes.

And what better place to have a reception than with the setting sun on the veranda of an elevated restaurant overlooking the sea to the sounds of a live, traditional band.

My other favourite memory of Stomio is seeing Maiko's parents really immerse themselves in the culture. Despite arriving in Stomio after a gruelling trip via Rome and Thessaloniki (made gruelling by a two-hour delay in Italy and the search for luggage they had been told was lost, that wasn't actually lost), they arrived in Stomio at 5:30am and immediately commenced their own Hellenic Travels by taking a walking tour of Stomio. I'm sure Maiko's father ended up taking a picture of every square inch of Stomio, and no dessert was left untried by her mother.

A truly amazing aspect of their interactions with the people of Stomio was that language didn't create a barrier between them. As one of George's uncles commented: 'Their [Maiko and her parents] willingness to enjoy their surroundings and have a good time is an important lesson for us. They are showing us how to be Greek.'

And what were George's thoughts of the whole experience? 'Nikos Kazantzakis detailed the hospitality of the Greek people towards strangers in 'Report to Greco', and as a young teenage, I remember doubting my dad's assertions that it was all perfectly true. Seeing the people of Stomio, my relatives from Crete, and friends from Thessaloniki, Larisa and Athens greet Maiko and her parents with open arms, drink, laugh and talk with them – seemingly oblivious to the fact they are Japanese – was proof enough that both Kazantzakis and my Dad were right.'

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2nd Floor, 249 Marrickville Rd., Marrickville NSW 2204

Η Νομαρχιακή Επιτροπή και οι τοπικές οργανώσεις του ΠΑΣΟΚ Σίδνεϊ και Ν.Ν.Ο. στα πλαίσια της ιστορικής νίκης του κινήματος νίκης του Ελληνικού λαού στην εκλογική αναμέτρηση της 4ης Οκτωβρίου 2009 οργανώνουν

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το Σάββατο, 21 Νοεμβρίου 2009
στην Κυριακή Κοινότητα (πάνω αίθουσα),
58-76 Stanmore Rd., Stanmore.

Γλέντι από τις 7μ.μ. μέχρι 1η πρωινή με εκλεκτή Ελληνική μουσική, DJ, ζεστή ατμόσφαιρα και δημοκρατικό περιβάλλον. Σας περιμένουμε. Είσοδος μετά φαγητού \$45 και παιδιά \$25.

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* Με δικηγορική πράξη

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