

Culture DEFINED

INFUSED WITH LOCAL WINES AND LOCAL OILS

By Courtney Michelle

During a meeting with **Cristina Verger** at a Park Avenue office, we entered one that was seemingly bland - an oak desk and a single plant in the corner. I thought, kind of boring for an **event planner**. Surely she read my mind because she immediately said, in a thick Italian accent, “**oh this isn’t my office. I would do wonders with this space.**” After seeing the events and weddings she plans, you’d have to agree.

“Working with space is my specialty, it comes naturally. The possibilities are endless,” she expressed, “probably because I’m Italian.”





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Verger specializes in destination events, and her favorite to date is a wedding at a castle in Tuscany. The bride originally wanted a small ceremony, but Verger told her, “let me handle everything,” and she did so; with meticulous attention to detail, quality, and originality. Verger prides herself on getting to know her clients in order to cater to their wants and needs. Clients typically come to Verger with their own ideas, but after hearing her concepts and visions, they inescapably let her take over. “I can really get them. I’m able to give them what they truly want and need.”

“The location is always my inspiration,” she says, “I wanted them to feel like they were in Tuscany; local wines, local oils, a touch of culture.” Verger also hired authentic flag throwers who participate in Siena’s traditional horse race, Palio di Siena. Her goal is to also expose the guests to entertainment they’ve never seen before.

“The main focus was where we were, and how the beauty and culture could be emphasized. It was fun, beautiful, and interesting. We had wines that matched each course at dinner, made at the very castle - it’s also a vineyard,” she winks, sensing I was impressed (which she was right). “I don’t plan honeymoons, but I did so for these clients. After all that time with family, they needed to get away immediately. I want every client and their guests to have a good time and for them to be stress-free.”



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Verger has offices in Milan and Rome, making her destination weddings more accessible. “It’s similar to being an architect; designing from scratch, assembling my team along the way. For the Tuscany wedding, I called the florist and told them what was needed, had my offices in Italy handle the couple’s amenities for their arrival, I had custom tablecloths made here in New York and carried them in my suitcase. I have the design and vision, but the end result comes with teamwork.”

When asked about any upcoming projects, “I’m currently planning a wedding for a client that’s a model, at Essex House. She loves being a model, so I’m building a runway in the middle of the room. She’ll have her very own catwalk.”

And if you’re from a small town, don’t worry, Verger’s got you covered. “Oh, I can transform anything,” she jokes. “I’ll make them walk in and say, ‘Oh wow, this is Cleveland?’”

Her idea of the perfect wedding isn’t about \$150,000 custom-made chandeliers, or serving hors d’oeuvres you can’t pronounce, it’s about the everlasting memories created at the start of a couple’s married life. “We all focus on the wedding, but not the marriage. Everything else is extra.”

She tells me Cristina Verger Event Planning and Production doesn’t focus on superstar personalities, “we don’t really do ‘celebrity’ couples, I enjoy working with young professionals.” Perhaps that’s what sets her apart from other sought after planners in New York; for Cristina it’s about getting to know her clients on a personal level, and creating the perfect event and environment collaboratively.

“What is this, ‘what do you do’ question as soon as you meet someone here in New York?” she asks, genuinely confused, “in Italy, we do not do this. It’s rude. What difference does it make what you do? Italians can look at you and get a sense of who you are, that’s how I am able to read my clients so well.”

