

“I Want My Clients to Have Fun With It,” Says Wedding Planner Sandy Malone of TLC’s ‘Wedding Island’



By [Whitney Johnson](#) and Kristin Mattern

Sandy Malone is the woman behind Weddings in Vieques, a full-service destination wedding planning company that will take your wildest island fantasy and make it come true. The vivacious personality is dedicated to making each and every bride happy with her special day and will do whatever it takes, as showcased in a recent episode when she found a helicopter at the last minute. Now, viewers can share the high tension and drama when they join this thick-skinned wedding

planner on her escapades as she creates romantic magic on *Wedding Island*, TLC's new series that showcases Malone and her company.

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Malone's wedding planning career began in 2004 when she had to save her own wedding to the love of her life, Bill Malone. "I hired a wedding planner that *said* she knew Vieques, but clearly, she didn't. It was awful," the reality star recalls. "I was getting frantic phone calls and dealing with vendors who were asking me if I was still getting married. I panicked! We had to fire her and start over."

Malone was able to plan their wedding on her own and realized that she could make a full-time gig out of that sort of work – but only if her now-husband was on board too. When the two first met, Bill was part of the Metro Transit Police Department, and Malone was working as a political journalist. He asked her out, but she politely declined. After many persistent attempts and chivalrous deeds, like clearing the snow from the path to her house, she finally came to her senses and let Bill into her heart.

The pair bought a house in Vieques a year after their wedding, and in 2007, when Bill retired, they decided to make the remote island their home. Soon after, they launched their company with the assistance of a close friend. "She helped me put together our original logos and actually referred our first client, who ended up being someone I knew in grade school," Malone shares. "We did the wedding on 07/07/07 and thought we'd do two weddings per month. We ended up planning forty or fifty weddings that first year."

In addition to adding wedding planning to their resumes, the couple also jumped right into running a business together for the first time. "We've worked hand-in-hand since the

beginning. Sometimes it's hard – we're not the perfect couple, but we respect each other," the event-planning wonder explains. "I focus on the planning, and he focuses on the execution, and we don't interfere with each other's work."

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Along with her team, Malone has now put together over 400 weddings – and the number continues to grow as more and more engaged couples chose Vieques for their big day. "It's been voted one of the top Caribbean spots for the past few years by *Travel and Leisure* magazine. It's pretty spectacular," she says of the island, seven miles off the coast of Puerto Rico. "You can go to the beach everyday and not go to the same one twice for weeks and weeks."

For those brides not lucky enough to be in Malone's capable hands as they plan their walks down the aisle, consider this advice: "If you're working with a wedding planner, talk to them and tell them why you're feeling overwhelmed. If not, talk to your fiancé or bridesmaids. A lot of times, the problem in your head isn't such a big deal. Write it all down, and then bite it off in little chunks."

Ultimately, the wedding planner just wants to represent her industry and her island well. "I hope the show is a good reflection of the wedding environment. I just want my clients to have fun with it all. And we want people to come to the island – most people haven't heard of Vieques."

You can catch Malone and her team on Wedding Island on TLC on Thursdays at 10/9c – see above for a preview of tonight's episode! For more behind-the-scenes details, check out her Huffington Post blog, www.huffingtonpost.com/sandy-malone/. You can also follow her on Twitter @SandyMalone_.