The Scene

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ed daily as the convivial group bonded together through shared experiences.

After the first segment, the bus tour group — having had a marvelous time together — checked into the Athenaeum Intercontinental Hotel along with more recent arrivals. Friday evening parents of the bride hosted an informal dinner party, which grew to 100 guests at the Taverna Myrtia. Folks were in high spirits with wine toasts to the wedding couple, to each other and to all of us.

A really lively table, where we sat, included Jim and Anita Terry, Dick and Marian Cote, Betty Andreae and brother-of-the-groom Blake Crocker.

Saturday morning some guests went to the Plaka in Vestevich/Crocker-reserved shuttle buses, which ran continuously. The Plaka is a myriad collection of shops in old Athens selling everything — and bargaining is expected.

In the Plaka, we ran into Wilma Peabody and her daughters, Nancy and Barbara, also here for the wedding.

Missing the bus, we attempted to catch a taxi back to the Intercontinental. After trying every means known to stop taxis, many of which cruised by empty, one tourist stood in the road waving 30,000 drachmas and was ignored. Greek taxi drivers are like French waiters.

Standing in front of the Grande Bretagne, good old American single dollars worked for us.

Now it was the big night as described earlier, so jump to Sunday when the group was bused to Cape Sounion to visit the Temple of Poseidon perched on a cliff overlooking the Saronic Gulf of the azure Aegean — a magnificent sight. Also, it's a good lookout to watch for an enemy sailing into Athens. Betty and Jackie Andreae found it mind-boggling to imagine how the marble columns and blocks could be dragged up the cliff to build the temple thousands of years ago.

Sunday evening the wedding party attended a black-tie dinner in the rooftop garden or Premiere Room of the Intercontinental Hotel, with a panoramic view of Athens and, of course, the Acropolis by moonlight. For this evening we were seated with attorney Bruce Wilson, his wife Sue and their pretty daughter, Wendy. Also at the table were Bill Vestevich and Bob Vestevich. With so many attorneys present, conversation never turned legalese. Outdoor dancing continued on the terrace by moonlight, again a 75-degree night.

Aboard cruise ship

On Monday after luncheon at the Royal Yacht Club in Piraeus, seaport of Athens, 49 of the wedding party boarded the white and navy cruise ship Stella Oceanis of the Sun Line, which also owns the larger and more deluxe Stella Solaris. The cruise liner waiters, staff and crew were attentive and couldn't do enough for the passengers. Seven-course meals were served meticulously.

Invited to Captain Nicholas Eleftheriou's table while cruising were the bride and groom, both sets of parents, the Vestevichs and David and Doris Crocker, best man Bill Vestevich, and George and Chris Strumbos and their daughter, Kathy.

Astonishingly now it was Tuesday, Day 11. We knew we were approaching Turkey. Our first port of call was Dikili near Pergamum for a morning visit. Now situated in Turkey, Pergamum was part of Greece in ancient times. It is known for its Temple of Zeus, which a German archeologist uncovered and shipped to Berlin. Archeologist Karl Humann had a legitimate deal with the Ottoman Empire in 1894. Only the foundation is left in Pergamum.

Pergamum is where psychiatry was first practiced hundreds of years before Christ. The foundations of the marble hospital, theater, stadium and baths were viewed. Doctors in the hospital at Pergamum used practices which exist in psychiatry today.

I took a drink of a natural spring, which people have been drinking since ancient times, as it is thought to be "the fountain of youth."

On Wednesday, we cruised to Istanbul. We visited the famed Blue Mosque after removing our shoes. A stop at the Grand Bazaar, 5,000 shops under one roof, found fellow travelers shopping for Oriental rugs, leather and jewelry. Ophthalmologist Ed Watson took a rest and joined us for a Diet Coke in the middle of the road to the bustling Grand Bazaar.

Soon it was Thursday and we were in the seaside resort of Kusadasi. We took the bus to Ephesus, one of the world's greatest archeological sites first settled thousands of years ago. Here are the library of Celsus, the Thermal Baths, the Magnesian Gate and the Great Amphitheatre. I was transfixed by the amazing city archeologists uncovered. As darkness was falling, I took a misstep on the uneven steps and twisted my knee. I didn't even realize it until later, being completely enthralled by the magnificent ruins, probably the most complete in ancient Greece.

Next port of call was Rhodes, home of the sun god Apollo. Visiting the charming coastal town of Lindos on Rhodes, we savored the sights of whitewashed houses built into the cliff. Later that day, in the old walled city of Rhodes, the travelers walked through the Street of the Knights in the medieval, walled city with its towers and turrets.

Cruising along, we found Crete was the next ancient ruins island, with its Minoan Palace of Knossos and its famed labyrinth. At the Heraklion Museum on Crete, we finally succumbed to the buying frenzy, and my husband Frank bought me a gold pin or pendant copied from a 3,500-year-old jewel now in the Heraklion Museum. Crete appears to have been settled in the sixth millenium B.C.

Classical tour: *Sue (left) and Bruce Wilson and their daughter Wendy visit Olympia.*

3 handsome men: *At the wedding are groom Patrick Crocker (left), his brother Blake and Bill Vestevich.*

Quiet moment: *Parents of the bride, who planned this incredible 16-day wedding celebration, are Ann and Peter Vestevich of Bloomfield Hills.*

Temple of Posiedon: *Jackie (left) and Betty Andreae, sisters-in-law, enjoy magnificent view in Sounion.*

Statesman: *George Strumbos stands behind headless statue in Epheses archeological site, striking an orator's pose.*

The best island

What does Anne Vestevich, who spent summers on the Greek islands as a child, consider the best island? In her opinion, it's Santorini, with 1,000-foot cliffs where part of the island fell in the sea in an volcanic eruption before Christ. One can travel up the 1,000 foot cliff by donkey, by foot or by funicular. Four of Anne's close friends, Dodie Watson, Sally Van DeMark, Marge Cook and Judy Maxwell, were talked into the donkey ride by their friend Anne. "The donkey was *not* led," explains Dodie, "and he got as close to the edge as possible, winding up that steep cliff. I thought it was all over." The magnificent view as the sun was setting was no less than spectacular. Shops and tavernas cling to the side of the cliff in intricate engineering feats.

Many of our group stayed up on Santorini until 10 p.m., entranced with the moonlight on the Aegean and the flickering lights along the hillside, discussing the belief that the lost continent of Atlantic lies in the harbor below. Deep sea divers claim they have walked its streets, that it is like an underwater city intact. Terry Crawford, Boris Vasileff, Laura Kantigias, Jim and June Gulberg and Dick Yarmain loved awesome Santorini, a magical place overlooking the cerulean sea.

On Sunday we disembarked to the uninhabited and sacred island of Delosa, the legendary birthplace of the sun god Apollo and his twin sister Artemis (Diana). There was definitely a mystical feeling to the ruins of the desolate island.

Now in late afternoon we visited the fun-loving port of Mykonos where countless shops and tavernas line the seacoast. Barbara and Nancy Peabody, Frank and Stephanie Germack, Dick and Marian Cote, Fred and Jean Auch, Lew and Dody Wrenn hired two jeeps. The jeeps drove off on a wild ride to the other side of Mykonos, where we hear they all went swimming, changing behind the jeep. How did I miss that frolicking excursion?

The glory that was Greece and the grandeur of it all was experienced by appreciative travelers. The wedding will be recalled in memory over the years by the happy couple and all participants as an incredible once-in-a-lifetime experience.

When people ask Susie and Patrick what it was like going on their honeymoon with their family and friends, Susie answers, "This wasn't our honeymoon. This was the 16-day wedding celebration. We're going to Europe in spring for our honeymoon."

Meanwhile, the feted couple live in Birmingham, going over thousands of pictures taken by family and friends of their unforgettable wedding trip.

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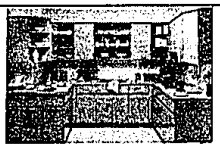

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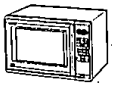

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