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75 Perfect Places to Say "I Do"

IF YOUR DREAM IS TO MARRY IN A TRULY romantic locale, you're not alone. Destination weddings now account for about 16 percent of all celebrations. By opting for a wedding away, you'll extend the party (most last three days), consolidate your guest list (the average is 70 people) and provide the friends and family who can make it with a minivacation (typically they pay for airfare and hotel rooms and you pay for all wedding-related festivities). To help you find the ideal destination to suit your fantasy, we've highlighted dozens of spots in the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

U.S. & Canada

SEASIDE BASHES

CALIFORNIA The Golden State has a 1,200-mile shoreline offering amazing sunsets. Four venues to consider: **L'Auberge Del Mar**, a just-renovated 120-room resort north of San Diego, has a tranquil ambience and reception sites that overlook the Pacific (doubles from \$355*; laubergedelmar.com). **Hotel Shangri-La**, the circa-1939 Art Deco classic in Santa Monica that's fresh from a \$30 million redesign, dazzles with glam decor and a rooftop space seating 50 (doubles from \$265; shangrila-hotel.com). **Malibu Beach Inn**, which rests above the surf in this celebrity haven north of Los Angeles, offers 47 rooms suitable for takeover

weddings for up to 100 (doubles from \$325; malibubeachinn.com). **The Ritz-Carlton, Half Moon Bay**, perched amid could-be-in-Scotland cliffs 45 minutes south of San Francisco, is a great spot for gazebo or bluff vows followed by a full-scale reception for 75 to 300, or an "Intimate Wedding" for 10 to 30 Monday through Thursday (doubles from \$329; ritzcarlton.com).

FLORIDA Beach venues abound—from the Atlantic Coast with its high-style resorts to the Gulf Coast with its blazing sunsets. MB's favorites: **The Brazilian Court**, two blocks from the sea in posh Palm Beach, offers historic sophistication in its courtyard conservatory for up to 50 or a ballroom for up to 120—with catering by Café Boulud (doubles from \$249; thebrazilian.court.com). **The Ritz-Carlton Ft. Lauderdale**, featuring sleek cruise-ship-like architecture, has sweeping ocean views, a tropical pool deck and the superchic Grand Ballroom for up to 400 (doubles from \$209; ritzcarlton.com). **The Ritz-Carlton, Key Biscayne** is a peaceful escape just across the causeway from Miami, where West Indies colonial decor, a fountain courtyard and a beachside gazebo and ballroom create an elegant setting for up to 600 (doubles from \$189; ritzcarlton.com). **LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort**, a

palm tree-studded, 189-room property in Naples, offers an oceanfront lawn, a poolside patio and indoor venues with water views for up to 300 (doubles from \$179; laplayaresort.com). **Hyatt Key West Resort and Spa** has Blue Mojito Beach or the Gulfside Dock for sunset ceremonies and the terraced Marquesa Room for receptions of up to 80 (doubles from \$295; hyattkeywest.com). **Ocean Reef Club**, a private club on Key Largo, allows nonmembers to wed with member sponsorship and a location fee starting at \$2,000—giving up to 230 guests access to a 2,000-acre condo/hotel resort with the feel of a small town (doubles from \$210; oceanreef.com).

HAWAII With five alluring islands, the Aloha State offers a wealth of romantic settings. We love: **The Royal Hawaiian**, Oahu's rejuvenated 528-room "Pink Palace of the Pacific," reopened in January, offering coconut grove "I Dos" for two as well as ornate indoor or outdoor galas for up to 400 (doubles from \$370; royal-hawaiian.com). *(continued on page 278)*

Sublime settings Clockwise from top: Hilton Los Cabos' vibrant lobby. InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa's Castillo Lucena. Sorrel River Ranch Resort & Spa's panorama. Coral Reef Club's charming entrance. The Wauwinet's windswept dunes.

Spa (doubles from \$195; lacala.com).

Rendezvous in Ronda, a favorite subject of artist Francisco de Goya and the birthplace of modern bullfighting. It is a vertiginous city perched across roaring El Tajo gorge and linked by a trio of bridges. Tragabuches restaurant takes avant-garde Spanish cuisine to new heights, and the tasting menu is worth the splurge (dinner for two from \$233; tragabuches.com).

Next stop: Cásares, a World Heritage City of medieval ramparts surrounding sugar-cube homes crowned by a castle. This is the spot to shop for ceramics and lace. Back toward the coast, past endless sunflower fields, check in to tile-roofed Finca Cortesín, a 67-suite hotel with a Zen spa and a nearby beach (doubles from \$340; fincacortesin.com).

MARBELLA One corner in Europe's triangle of jet-setter playgrounds—along with France's Saint-Tropez and Italy's Porto Cervo—the city's marina glistens with yachts and its streets are lined with luxury homes. Lap up the richness at Puerto Banús's designer boutiques, alfresco restaurants, glam bars and bustling casino. Step back in time at Plaza de los Naranjos (Court of Orange Trees), the ambrosial-smelling center of old town. When it's beach time, there's no need to cover up your bikini to enjoy a midday snack at Trocadero on La Carolina Beach (lunch for two from \$70; trocadero playa.com) or sip champagne next to socialites at Nikki Beach (dinner for two from \$120; nikkibeach.com). Less boistrous dining options include Finca Besaya, in a romantic villa surrounded by an avocado farm (dinner for two from \$127; fincabesaya.com), and Calima for chef Dani Garcia's haute Andalusian fare (dinner for two from \$230; restaurantcalima.com).

Resort-wise, the affordable yet indulgent Ritz-Carlton-run Hotel Villa Padierna is reminiscent of a Tuscan palace, with the three-Michelin-star La Veranda restaurant and the serene Thermae Spa (doubles from \$257; ritzcarlton.com). —Nicole Eddy
For more info, [spain.info](#)

(continued from page 266) **Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa** has the Big Island's only on-property chapel (holding 75 with reception space on the lawn), plus black-lava Sunset Cliffs (holding up to 12); you can have dinner on the Crystal Blue Terrace (doubles from \$167; sheratonkeauhou.com). **The Westin Maui Resort & Spa** offers wedding sites that include the romantic Hale Aloha Gazebo and stunning Lokahi Point, with indoor or outdoor reception space for up to 400 (doubles from \$290; westinmaui.com). **Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay** is a two-for-one locale: It's a chic beach resort where you can wed with your toes in the sand and have an alfresco reception for up to 600, but you or your guests can also stay at sister property The Lodge at Koele, a hilltop garden oasis (doubles from \$345; fourseasons.com). **Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa** on the Garden Isle's south shore, is the spot for gazebo vows and a beachside or ballroom reception for 10 to 300 (doubles from \$440; kauai.hyatt.com).

MASSACHUSETTS Gray-shingled cottages, windswept dunes and iconic lighthouses are romantic. MB's picks: **The Wauwinet**, a 32-room hotel on Nantucket, holds limited weekend weddings of 30, 50 or 90 to 200 guests (doubles from \$380; wauwinet.com). **The White Elephant**, a 53-room, 11-cottage resort with a lawn on Nantucket Harbor, can host intimate vows for up to 60, harborside parties for up to 150 or exclusive weekends for up to 300 (doubles from \$275; whiteelephanthotel.com). **Ocean Edge Resort & Club**, a Victorian mansion-turned-resort on Cape Cod with 335 rooms, is perfect for a clambake reception or a formal affair in the Mansion or Carriage House for 20 to 300 (doubles from \$99; oceanedge.com).

MOUNTAIN MERRIMENT

CANADA Alberta and British Columbia are home to snow-capped peaks and wildflower-filled valleys. Our favorite spots: **The Fairmont Banff Springs**, a 768-room, circa-1928 castle in the midst of Alberta's Rockies, offers

everything from an outdoor terrace to a half dozen richly detailed event spaces holding 10 to 220 (doubles from \$259; fairmont.com). **Moraine Lake Lodge**, with 33 rooms and timber construction, has one of Alberta's best vistas as a backdrop for lakeside I Dos followed by a dining-room reception for up to 100 (doubles from \$220; morainelake.com). **Nita Lake Lodge**, near Whistler Village in BC, is a modern-rustic hotel on a lake with reception sites for up to 150 (doubles from \$165; nitalakelodge.com).

COLORADO It boasts some of the Rockies' chicest resorts and options to suit most budgets. We like: **The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch**, a picturesque lodge near Beaver Creek, is ideal for nuptials for 35 to 350 in sites as varied as an ivory damask ballroom to a terrace with a view (doubles from \$229; ritzcarlton.com). **Limelight Lodge**, an Aspen newcomer, can arrange a fourth-floor sellout (30 rooms) with accommodations and reception space for 40 to 60 (doubles from \$200; limelightlodge.com). **Keystone Lodge & Spa**, a 152-room resort in the Keystone ski area, has venues for 20 to 300 and hosts ecofriendly weddings (doubles from \$149; keystone.lodge.rockresorts.com).

UTAH From easy-access ski resorts to adventure outposts amid red rock spires, this state is famed for its natural beauty. MB suggests: **Stein Eriksen Lodge**, with 180 rooms located in Deer Valley Resort, offers weddings during the summer value season, in both patio and ballroom settings (doubles from \$185; steinlodge.com). **Sundance Resort**, set on 6,000 acres owned by Robert Redford, can arrange back-to-nature vows in a cabin, or a formal gala (doubles from \$239; sundance.resort.com). **Sorrel River Ranch Resort & Spa**, a luxe lodge in Moab, has sites that include a deck above the Colorado River for 70, and a pavilion for 200 (doubles from \$399; sorrelriver.com). **WYOMING** Look no further for the ultimate in 360-degree vistas. Our top spots: **Four Seasons Resort, Jackson Hole** is a 181-room, art-filled prop-

erty with a cozy ballroom (it has a fireplace) holding up to 275 (doubles from \$275; fourseasons.com). **Hotel Terra**, a LEED-certified 132-room ecoresort, has a ballroom with floor-to-ceiling windows seating 150 (doubles from \$119; hotelterrajacksonhole.com). **Snake River Lodge & Spa**, a 93-room resort, lets couples wed atop a mountain or next to a waterfall, and then party in its 120-person Sundance Ballroom (doubles from \$128; snakeriverlodge.rockresorts.com).

CITY CELEBRATIONS

LAS VEGAS This elopement hot spot is the place to keep your party going 24/7. MB's picks: **The Venetian and The Palazzo** are Italian-inspired sister hotels where the artfully faux Grand Canal is the favored wedding site, but there's also a chapel for up to 150 and fine-dining reception locales such as Valentino and the poolside terrace at Bouchon (doubles from \$149; venetian.com). **Encore**, Wynn's new resort-within-a-resort, has a botanical motif and ceremony sites for 65 to 120 that include the Lavender and Lilac salons and Primrose Courtyard (doubles from \$169; encorelasvegas.com). **Red Rock Resort, Casino & Spa**, set on 70 acres away from the Strip, lets you

recite vows poolside, followed by a ballroom fete for up to 300 (doubles from \$140; redrocklasvegas.com).

NEW ORLEANS The Big Easy beckons couples back to its French Quarter. Our top spots: **The Roosevelt Hotel**, fresh from a \$145 million face-lift, is a 504-room, circa-1893 landmark, home to the supper club-like Blue Room, seating 250, and a trio of ballrooms for up to 650 (doubles from \$109; therooseveltneworleans.com). **Melrose Mansion**, a 14-room Victorian inn with a stunning staircase and courtyard, is ideal for take-over weddings of up to 150 (doubles from \$75; melrosemanion.com).

Windsor Court Hotel woos parties of 70 to 300 with its terraced, top-floor La Chinoiserie rooms (doubles from \$160; windsorcourt.com).

ORLANDO If you love to play, this theme-park mecca may be the ticket. Our favorite locales: **Walt Disney World Resort** offers a selection of Fairy Tale Weddings—from an Escape celebration for up to 18 to a Couture extravaganza for 300-plus designed by MB Trendsetter David Tutera (doubles from \$82; disneyweddings.com). **Loews Portofino Bay Hotel**, part of Universal Studios Orlando, has

Mediterranean ambience, where you can wed in a piazza or garden and hold a party for 12 to 300 just a short walk from the thrills (doubles from \$299; loewshotels.com). **Grand Bohemian Hotel Orlando**, an elaborate downtown landmark, features the Rooftop Bohemian Garden for vows and a ballroom seating up to 125 (doubles from \$189; grandbohemianhotel.com).

PHOENIX/SCOTTSDALE Fab weather reigns (aside from saunalike June, July and August) and this downtown-meets-desert locale provides a dramatic backdrop. Three places we adore: **InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa**, a new 293-room Andalusian-inspired property in Paradise Valley, offers indoor sites, such as romantic Castillo Lucena, for up to 150, and outdoor locales, such as the Camelback Wedding Villa and Lawn, for up to 230 (doubles from \$180; icmontelucia.com). **Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North** is a luxe, 210-room casita enclave that has a Fountain Terrace site with sunset views, plus banquet space for 30 to 500 (doubles from \$195; fourseasons.com). **Desert Botanical Garden**, with 50 tree- and cacti-filled acres, is the ultimate site for couples with guest lists up to 300

Destination Deals! SAY I DO TO THESE RESORT WEDDING OFFERS

The Cove Eleuthera Book a wedding for \$10,000 (up to 60 guests) at this 26-room Bahamas resort and enjoy "Bliss at The Cove," a free five-night stay in the Point House, valued at \$6,000 and valid through December 18, 2009 (thecoveeleuthera.com).

CuisinArt Resort & Spa This Anguilla resort offers couples the seven-night "A New Beginning" wedding/honeymoon package (from \$6,055), which includes a ceremony, room with daily breakfast, six other meals, a couples massage, a sunset sail and more (cuisinartresort.com).

Half Moon Get a romance package worth up to \$4,700 by booking 15 to 50 rooms for three nights (\$159, September–October) and marrying at

this Jamaica resort (halfmoon.com).

The Kessler Collection Book a wedding at any of nine luxe Kessler properties via its "Honeymoon Is on Us!" promo and receive a free stay (one night for every \$5,000 spent) at any resort (kesslercollection.com).

Ritz-Carlton Reserve the "Reconnect" wedding package (at least 25 rooms for three nights at \$259–\$439 per night—with breakfast and a \$100 daily resort credit per room—through December 20, 2009) at any Caribbean resort and receive a free three-night stay for your first anniversary. Also, give back with the companywide "A Vow to Others" program: Donate 5 percent of your reception-food expenditure by split-

ting it between the charity of your choice and the hotel's Community Footprints Fund (ritzcarlton.com). **RockResorts** Book a reception with catering of more than \$25,000 at any of nine properties in Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico or St. Lucia and receive a free four-night honeymoon at any RockResort (rockresorts.com). **Sandals** Opt for a Group WeddingMoon (at least 10 rooms for three nights) at any of its 13 Caribbean adults-only all-inclusives and get a free Carefree Package (officiant, license, bouquet/boutonniere, wedding cake, etc.) plus one room upgrade, bride's manicure/pedicure, groom's massage and more (doubles from \$534, all-inclusive; sandals.com).