



JAMAICA'S EASY ESCAPES

Thanks to Jamaica's wealth of romantic attractions and high-comfort infrastructure, planning a **honeymoon** or destination wedding on the island is a breeze—a calm, cool, tropical breeze.

CIARA LAVELLE

Destination Weddings

Here in the land of all-inclusives, basic weddings often come without a price tag. Resorts like **Grand Lido**, **Breezes**, and **Sunset Resorts**, to name a few, provide everything your clients need to tie the knot—an officiator, a picturesque location, handling of paperwork, etc.—for free when clients meet their minimum stay requirements. But a few resorts go even further to provide unique and convenient wedding services.

Couples Resorts, for example, lets couples get in touch with wedding planners anytime—even months before they arrive on the island. "New for Couples is our stateside wedding services," explains Kristin Stark, wedding planner at Couples, "which means that before a bride goes down to Jamaica, they have a stateside wedding concierge who assists them with anything they need prior to departing, and then when they're there they also have a resort coordinator. Something frustrating about planning destination weddings is not having someone right there with you. Now, our brides don't have to worry about time changes." Not to mention trying to get an onsite planner on the phone. Because destination weddings are so popular throughout Jamaica, Stark continues, on-property planners at any property in Jamaica—Couples or otherwise—are incredibly busy and difficult to contact. The new stateside services, however, mean that "we respond to all brides within 24 hours, and we

have a response for whatever they ask," Stark says. "That probably sets us apart more than anybody."

Couples has also taken advantage of the Internet to connect brides, grooms, guests and even loved ones who can't attend the ceremony. The properties use the services of **Honeymoon Wishes**, a company that Stark started to give destination wedding guests the chance to give the newlyweds the gift of a spectacular **honeymoon**. Stark points out that many couples marrying today live together first, so they already have the household items that are traditionally given as wedding gifts. Thanks to her online registry, brides and grooms can now receive spa treatments, private romantic dinners and excursions to island attractions like swimming with the dolphins at *The Dolphin Experience*, rather than a ho-hum bread machine or knife sharpener.

And the high-tech advantages don't end there. **Honeymoon Wishes** also lets couples set up online photo albums, blogs, and even a live webcast of the ceremony. And agents can benefit from the site's online wedding calendar, too. "Agents can go online and put in a date or a range of dates, and see all the availability and the available times for weddings, then they can make their registration right then online....

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