

360 West Weddings

TARRANT COUNTY'S LUXURY WEDDING MAGAZINE

SPRING 2012

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REAL LOVE

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The Happily Ever After

Honeymoons, real weddings, resources



Great Escapes

By Nancy Myers

The bouquet has been tossed, the reception was a smashing success, yet the honeymoon is far from over. Now, it's time for some much-needed R&R, and choosing the right diversion perfectly caps off the big event.

Whatever the destination, couples need to unplug and chill, advises Nancy Moody of Travel Experts. "Let people know you got there safely, then pack the iPad or phone away for a few days and just relax," she says. "After all the parties, showers, wedding, and reception, couples need to unwind and just get to know each other again, so plan a couple of days of relaxing at the beginning of the trip." Some prefer the Caribbean, with price ranges all over the map, while others may prefer adventures in Vancouver and the Canadian Rockies. Moody used to manage Neiman Marcus Travel, so she can help find the right fit. Ultimately, she says, "It depends on what they enjoy doing."

Adds Jordan Burton, of Gulliver's Travel, "Some have unlimited, generous budgets; some restricted. Basically, we find out where their choices will be. Most will give us a flat-out budget and let us know what they have in mind. They can specify if they want an adults-only beach, or an all-inclusive resort, then we assess the number of days to determine the destination. Direct flights to Mexico, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic lead to luxury, high-end properties that are closer to home, so spending three, four, or five nights is an option even for those with spending limits."

Personal questions ensure the right match, Burton adds. "Are they looking for a high-activity excursion, a more relaxed, quiet, quaint vacation?" Many adventure-seeking couples choose Africa, booking a private game reserve such as the family owned Lion Sands, or the boutique hotel Cape Grace. Other buzzed-about spots range from close-to-home hubs to more exotic ports: the South Pacific, Tahiti, Bora

Perivolos Hotel, Santorini, Greece

Photo courtesy of Perivolos, Bill Abramowicz

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Great Escapes



1 Pearl Resorts, Bora Bora
Photo courtesy of Eric Westerhoff, *Honeymoon Wishes*

2 Turtle Inn Resorts, Belize
Photo courtesy of Coppola Resorts

3 Canyon Road Gallery in Santa Fe
Photo courtesy of santafe.org

4 Honeymoon in Paris
Photo courtesy of *Honeymoon Wishes*

5 Cape Grace, South Africa
Photo courtesy of Cape Grace

6 Lion Sands, Africa
Photo courtesy of Lion Sands

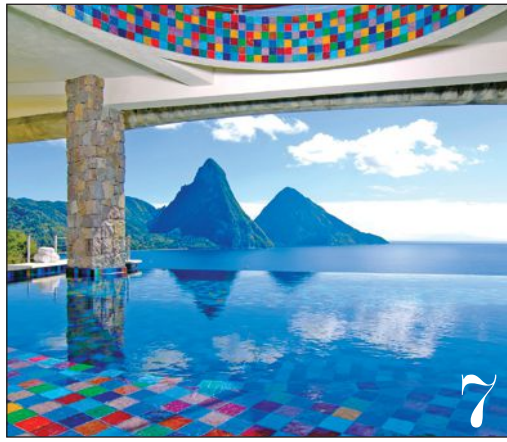
7 Jade Mountain, the Caribbean
Photo courtesy of Jade Mountain

Bora, the Greek Isles, and stateside locales like Santa Fe, New Orleans, and the California wine country. Most agree that you can't beat Belize, because it's a mere two-hour flight from Fort Worth—and the only country in Central America where English is the official language. Francis Ford Coppola fell in love with it, and honeymooners will, too, at Coppola's Turtle Inn Resorts.

Michelle Reilley, an associate at family-owned Dynamic Travel & Cruises in Southlake, recommends the Riviera Maya. "It's this beautiful area of Mexico, but away from the hustle and bustle, so you actually have more serenity about you. It's not far from Cancun, but a world away. Dreams Resorts and Secrets Resorts are also popular. The latter is couples-only, so they can do upscale, and Dreams is more family oriented."

Time can be as big a factor as budget, according to Roseanne Reilley, an associate at Dynamic. "With Cancun and Jamaica, we can get some nonstop flights," she says. "If you only have four or five days, you don't want to spend a good part of one day traveling. Surprisingly, there are a lot of couples that do honeymoons on

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A cruise ship outside Portofino, Italy

Destination: 'I Do'

One option is to pack up the entire party, and the trend toward destination weddings is big.

"The Caribbean (Jamaica and Bahamas) and Mexico seem to be the hottest," notes Kristen Stark of [Honeymoon Wishes](http://www.honeymoonwishes.com),

"and that's due in large part to the all-inclusives there...coupled with the economy, it's a great deal! Your friends and family get a great vacation, and you get a gorgeous wedding for a fraction of what you spend here. The resorts have a wedding planner, and some even have a stateside planner who will help you organize the wedding before you go down."

Dynamic Travel & Cruises specializes in destination wedding packages. "Everyone is wanting to go to Hawaii; I think that is my No. 1 request," says Michelle Reilley. "But, if they're looking for an all-inclusive, Hawaii doesn't offer it. Cruises are popular—you can either get married on the ship before it leaves port or on the island where that ship stops in."

cruises. People can save on airfare and just drive down to Houston or Galveston. Tahiti has some great over-the-water bungalows for a once-in-a-lifetime thing. What's nice is that many of those resorts have reps we work with who live right here, so it's easier for us, and we have more accountability to our clients."

Looking for something a little more far-flung? Jim Bendt, president of Travel Beyond recommends the Maldives or Fiji or Thailand. "Thailand is surprisingly popular, because it offers an exotic cultural stay with beautiful beaches and resorts, which makes for a nice combination. Europe is traditionally pretty strong," he notes, "from Ireland and the UK to Italy to France."

Don't forget to check with your betrothed, advises Kristin Stark, founder of [Honeymoon Wishes \(www.honeymoonwishes.com\)](http://www.honeymoonwishes.com). "The funniest thing we find is that people think they want to go somewhere, but they don't realize their spouse is really in active and thinking 'I just want to lie on the beach and read a book.' Also, I really feel like honeymoon couples over-plan their trip...like pack it to death and don't realize that after their wedding they're going to be exhausted. Leave a little time to rest; book a couples' massage. Also I think you have to leave enough time, especially when going to Europe (we have seen a spike in honeymoons to Paris!), for trains and taxis."