

G&G

Weddings

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Celebrate in Southern Style!



Bon Voyage



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HONEYMOONS *Thirteen joyful, restful getaways in the South and (far) beyond*



Room for Two Whether your dream honeymoon entails a cozy private retreat or a glamorous getaway, these romantic escapes let couples unwind in luxury

BY JENNIFER KORNEGAY

Sea Island
Sea Island, Georgia

This classic coastal resort’s allure for newlyweds could fill volumes. And it does. Forty-seven honeymoon albums (started in the early 1940s) contain the signatures of almost forty thousand couples who’ve celebrated the start of their new life at [Sea Island](#). Famous names like former President George H. W. and Barbara Bush join everyday joes. Yet Sea Island—which encompasses multiple sites, including the Cloister, the Lodge, and cottages—never plays favorites. The team serves every couple genuine Southern hospitality alongside other sweet traditions such as milk and warm cookies at turndown for enjoying pre- or post-rose-petal bath.

The fifty-acre Golden Isle’s tidal marshes and soft sea breezes invite guests to slow down and connect via garden strolls, couples massages, bike rides under the shade of live oaks, and leisurely beach walks. “After the whirlwind of a wedding, it’s the perfect place to unwind,” says Wheeler Bryan Jr., Sea Island’s historian and recreation assistant manager. “Our people delight in creating lasting memories. Many honeymooners return for anniversaries and special occasions, often bringing their families to relive those memories.”

One&Only Le Saint Géran
Mauritius

Like its volcanic mountains rising from the Indian Ocean, the island nation of Mauritius’s popularity is soaring, too, thanks to breathtaking beaches hugging turquoise waters, abundant flora (including otherworldly banyan trees), and thundering wa-

terfalls. Facing a quiet lagoon on a private peninsula and dotted with swaying palms, [One&Only Le Saint Géran](#) embraces its dreamy landscape. “The whole property looks like a love letter to nature,” says general manager Roman Goetsch. The suites take full advantage of the beauty, with private terraces opening to the ocean. Evenings might include candlelit dinners at the water’s edge, or even a personal fireworks show after a seafood feast.

Mauritius’s rich cultural stew (a blend of Indian, African, Asian, and European influences) comes to the forefront during the Shop, Cook, Eat experience, which invites guests to join one of the property’s chefs at a local market to select papayas, turmeric, coriander, and seafood before helping prepare a fresh curry. “For recent honeymooners, we then transformed their meal into a beachside picnic,” Goetsch says. These tailor-made moments echo the resort’s romantic roots; it’s named for the French ship *Le Saint Géran*, whose 1744 wreck off Mauritius’s shores inspired French writer Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s legendary love story, *Paul et Virginie*.

Anse Chastanet
Mamin, St. Lucia

St. Lucia lets you answer the “Mountains or beach?” question with “Both.” Here, towering volcanic Piton peaks blanketed in lush rainforest loom above white-sand shores fronting the crystal-clear Caribbean. A gem in the island’s tiara, the six-hundred-acre [Anse Chastanet](#) also bridges interests, inviting you to unwind with spa services, a serene sunset sail around the island, or a day lounging on one of two picture-perfect beaches. The staff created many of the re-

sort’s activities to bring couples closer, including art workshops with local creatives and guided dive trips to marine reserve coral reefs. Some guests may opt to simply wander through the jungle on twelve miles of trails, while others might indulge in cacao-harvesting excursions and chocolate making. “Romance here is about shared experiences, for memories that linger long after the honeymoon ends,” says Karolin Troubetzkoy, one of the property’s executive directors. Whatever adventure you choose, you’ll retire to one of forty-nine rooms filled with refined local character—handcrafted hardwood accents and vibrant madras (part of St. Lucia’s national dress tradition). For a splurge, book the Beach

House, which rests right on the sand and has its own private garden.

Auberge du Soleil
Napa Valley, California

At [Auberge du Soleil](#), proximity to Napa Valley vino is only the beginning of honeymoon bliss. On a hillside in the town of Rutherford, the adults-only retreat has South-of-France vibes, sweeping views of verdant vineyards and the Mayacamas Mountains, and chic suites that ooze low-key luxury. Its Michelin-starred restaurant pairs Napa wines with California-

countryside cuisine like ratatouille-stuffed squash blossoms and duck with cherries, fennel, and almonds. And the staff’s winery tour expertise makes drinking in the area’s viniculture and vintages effortless. Favorites include Schramsberg Vineyards, with its sparkling wines and winding wine caves, and Continuum Estate, where a family’s fourth generation turns out old-vine sauvignon blanc. Back at the resort, rosés, like the one from St. Supery estate, delight guests during courtyard tastings.

The resort’s spa services are equally intoxicating, says senior adviser of spa and wellness Helen Brown, who recommends



the Ultimate Indulgence spa service. The private after-hours couples experience begins with sparkling wine and a jasmine-infused bath followed by soothing aromatherapy massages and a starlit soak in an outdoor pool. “This intimate celebration in one of the most romantic settings in Napa Valley is ideal for newlyweds,” Brown says.

Hotel Yellowstone
Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Under big Western skies and alongside massive snowcapped mountains, little [Hotel Yellowstone](#) in Jackson Hole proves that good things come in small packages. The hotel comprises just thirty-six charming rooms, meaning there are often only a few dozen people at any time staying at the adults-only property. Its Olivia’s restaurant (offering such memorable meals as foraged-mushroom pasta and elk saltimbocca with buttery fondant potatoes) is exclusive to hotel guests, 90 percent of whom are couples. “This lets us provide personalized service, which makes any trip—but certainly a honeymoon—special,” says guest services associate Linda Podiak.

The seasonal cocktails, such as vodka and local huckleberry lemonades, handed to you upon arrival are best sipped on a cozy love seat in the living room, or while wrapped in a blanket around the firepit. Continue to wind down with a dip in the heated indoor pool, taking in the stunning surroundings through the window walls. And if your view of the Grand Tetons towering above a meadow from the Grand Re-

Anse Chastanet, Auberge du Soleil

Previous page: A serene spot at One&Only Le Saint Géran on Mauritius.
▼ Snorkeling near St. Lucia’s Anse Chastanet. ► Auberge du Soleil in Napa Valley, California.



flection Suite’s private patio tempts you to stay in, don’t. Hotel Yellowstone specializes in customized adventures like fly-fishing excursions and dogsled rides through powdery snow. “We get to know every guest and can set up a range of local tours,” Podiak says. “For one couple celebrating an anniversary with us, we created a private sunset trip to Jackson Lake with Champagne and charcuterie where the husband surprised his wife with a vow renewal.”

The Omni Grove Park Inn & Spa
Asheville, North Carolina

Love so anchors the stately Omni Grove Park Inn & Spa in Asheville that when E. W. Grove and Fred Seely were building it in the early 1900s, Seely’s new bride, Evelyn (Grove’s daughter), worked alongside her husband, designing room layouts and choosing bedding, finishes, and fixtures at a time when women often had limited input. “Grove Park was a shared passion project for a couple truly in love,” says the North Carolina author Joy Callaway.

A regular guest since she was a child, Callaway set her recent novel *What the Mountains Remember* at the Inn. The surrounding highland scenery adds enchantment, which guests can witness to glowing effect on the Sunset Terrace, with cozy seating nooks and peaceful perches for watching the sun slip below Blue Ridge peaks. Many couples add on a day trip to the nearby Biltmore Estate, with its French château vibe and Gilded Age opulence. “It’s such a wonder, steeped in romance, and a treat to wander there, marveling at the architecture, art, and antiques,” Callaway says. The author also advises cozying up around the two massive stacked-stone fireplaces in the Grove Park lobby, popular spots with lovebirds. “Around nine p.m., the crowds thin, and a nightcap there makes a wonderful end to the day.”

Ambergris Cay
Turks and Caicos

A private plane will pick you up at the Turks and Caicos Islands’ main Providenciales International Airport to usher you down to the all-inclusive Ambergris Cay resort,



Clockwise from top: Hotel Yellowstone in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, delivers unobstructed views from the Grand Teton Suite; bespoke details in a guest room at Coral Sands on Harbour Island in the Bahamas; it’s always happy hour at Ambergris Cay in Turks and Caicos; Asheville, North Carolina’s Omni Grove Park Inn & Spa features a subterranean pool.

the only thing occupying its namesake island’s 1,100 acres of pristine tropical paradise. Washed in soothing whites and wood tones, seventeen oceanfront bungalows and ten villas come with private pools, covered patios, and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking sugar-sand beaches. The tranquil haven inspires plenty of relaxing, but the property’s friendly staffers encourage some out-and-about activities too, with custom itineraries for whale watching, fishing, and gentle paddles under mangroves that combine play with an “island time” pace. Or drift away with a rum punch (or two) on the property’s floating tiki bar.

Emma Major Schroeder, founder of Major Traveler, an Atlanta-based luxury travel agency, says digging into freshly caught conch is a can’t-miss Cay experience. “Scheduling a boat day is always worth it,” she says. “Ask your captain to take you conch diving, and most will help you make citrusy conch salad right on the boat.” More of a conch-fritter fan? Take your haul back to the resort, where the chef will batter and fry it up for you.

Coral Sands
Harbour Island, Bahamas

If you’re after a post-vow getaway that lives up to the word, Harbour Island in the Bahamas delivers. “It feels worlds away but is still an easy trip, especially from the South and the East Coast,” says travel agent Emma Major Schroeder. Almost dead center on the slim spit of land, the Coral Sands resort boasts pink-sand beaches and a barefoot-luxury ambience, recently boosted by property-wide renovations. Nodding to the sand’s hue, shades of pale rose and bouncy bubble gum (and even Pepto pink on the pickleball courts) anchor fun yet elevated rattan and shell decor, matching the Bahamas’ laid-back personality. The Pink Mermaid bistro lures with stone crab scampi and local spiny lobster pasta. Passion fruit mojitos beg you to recline under blushing umbrellas seaside. But according to Schroeder, the resort’s surroundings entice guests off property, too. “There are a lot of spots in the Caribbean where you don’t leave the resort, but Harbour Island’s culture and community spirit make



resort-hopping popular.” After a pink pomegranate margarita at Coral Sands, head to the glamorous Dunmore for grouper with mango chutney, followed by a ginger martini at the Landing. “People are always riding their bikes or golf carts around to the various hotels, and it’s really fun.”

Hotel Emma
San Antonio, Texas

There’s something effortlessly romantic in a city’s constant hum and worldly style, and in San Antonio, historic hotels and refined districts drive it to the top of a honeymoon short list. The revitalized Pearl neighborhood distills the city’s culinary excellence and artistic flair into a walkable mecca, anchored by the illustrious Hotel Emma, once the Pearl Brewing Company and now a Five Diamond hotel. Also boasting two Michelin Keys, it has 146 rooms and seven top-floor suites that offer all manner of plush amenities, including margarita-stocked iceboxes, Frette linens, and claw-foot tubs. “We want people to feel like guests in our thoughtfully designed home,” says concierge Michele Jacob. Honor the hotel’s history by sipping craft brews at the handsome bar, Sternewirth, before taking a pool dip or exploring the nearby Museum Reach’s art collections and shops stocked with Texas-made goods. “We’re a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy,” Jacob says, “so I always suggest the ceviche-making classes and wine tastings at Pearl’s Pullman Market.” Bucket-list sips and nibbles abound, from mezcal con-



Clockwise from top: Robert Miller; Boz Gagovski; Ambergris Cay; the Omni Grove Park Inn & Spa

coctions at Michelin-starred Mixtli to the dessert-only tasting menu at Nicōsi, ideally followed by a country concert at Stable Hall or a nightcap at underground blues bar Jazz, TX.—*Grace Roberts*

Lion Sands Game Reserve
Sabi Sands, South Africa

The all-inclusive Lion Sands Game Reserve goes above and beyond your wildest African safari dreams. Abutting South Africa’s Kruger National Park, the spread crouches in Sabi Sands, the country’s first private reserve, promising glimpses of the “big five” animals—lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and Cape buffalo—with few sightings of humans. This vast untamed landscape contains quite stately accommodations and dining, with four lodges (each with its own character) and two full residences (complete with chefs and butlers), plus menus focused on fresh local ingredients. “You feel totally removed at the resort; there’s nothing like being in the bush to bring to mind how small we are, but in an incredible way,” says Lindsay Nation, a travel adviser with Major Traveler. “At the lodges, every detail is considered and [with a bit of preplanning] almost any request is accommodated.”

Elevate your stay with a night or two in one of the property’s tree houses. After an early-morning or late-afternoon game

drive, staff whisk you into the wilderness, where bird trills usher in slumber following an alfresco dinner. Once back at the resort, don’t sleep on the South African wine scene. “There are some stellar local wineries,” Nation says, “many of which you’ll find on the resort’s wine list.”

Hotel Santa Caterina
Amalfi, Italy

European honeymoon destinations abound, but among many promising options, Hotel Santa Caterina, an early 1900s Mediterranean-style mansion stitched into a low cliff above the Gulf of Salerno’s brilliant blues, sparkles especially brightly. Long renowned for its Italian hospitality, the property Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton chose as their escape during the height of their 1960s passion still rolls out an especially lush welcome mat. The seemingly unending view of sun-soaked sky bleeds into the sea, best viewed from the balcony of a stand-alone chalet suite, with its charming cotto tile floors. To amplify the *amore*, hotel manager Andrew Camera suggests a native-nature-infused spa service. “Our range of face and body treatments using Mediterranean herbs and local lemons leave you feeling energized and rejuvenated,” he says. Find those same ingredients at dinner in such sumptuous dishes as lemon-laced ravioli with mussels and pecorino at the on-site Michelin-starred Glicine. For lighter bites, seek out cocktails and warm pull-apart bread with cherry tomatoes, anchovies, and olives at the property’s new rooftop restaurant, Senzafine.

Six Senses Douro Valley
Samodães, Portugal

Where the Douro River winds through the gentle green slopes and vineyards of Portugal’s port-wine-making region, Six Senses Douro Valley combines old-world elegance with a modern focus on wellness. The hotel and spa’s European vibe is most evident in the exterior of the nineteenth-century manor at its center. “When the property opened in 2015, care was taken to preserve its character while adding sleek, contemporary decor and in-room amenities [such as

flat-screen TVs and minibars],” says Major Traveler’s Lindsay Nation. “It’s the perfect place to truly unwind.”

Check into the Vineyard Rooftop Suite and sink into a plush king bed draped in luxe linens after soaking in the hot tub on the private deck. Don’t miss the spa’s grape-seed oil and port-fueled vinotherapy exfoliation and massage. Once revived, tap into your inner child with a harnessed tree-climbing adventure, board a vintage boat for a seasonal river cruise, or pedal along shaded rural trails. Satisfying the appetite you will inevitably work up is a joy here, with dry-aged duck alongside veg-



▲ A leopard cub at South Africa’s Lion Sands Game Reserve. ► Hotel Santa Caterina in Italy.

MORE Family Collection

Hotel Santa Caterina

gies and herbs from the property’s organic kitchen gardens. And finding the perfect sip to savor alongside your meal is simple. “With direct access to some of Portugal’s best vineyards and tastings on-site with creative pairings, the wine experiences here are thoughtful, fun, and such a true reflection of the region,” Nation says.

Amankila
East Bali, Indonesia

Fans of the recent season of *The White Lotus* and its lush exotic setting will fall hard for Amankila. Fronting a dark-sand beach

in the shadow of a sacred mountain on Bali’s east coast, the resort’s environs serve a sensory feast: a dramatic ocean overlook, a three-tiered infinity pool, a dense tree canopy, and the intoxicating fragrance of frangipani blooms. The spacious suites, pools, and soaking tubs are all secluded, and even tabloid-weary stars approve. “Celebrities are in and out of here all the time thanks to the amazing privacy,” says Major Traveler’s Emma Major Schroeder.

Five on-site restaurants dish out Balinese flavors like fresh grilled catch for two with spicy, aromatic sambal matah, and spa services rely on the resort’s signature oils,

serums, and mists made from spring water and precious materials like pearl and jade. There’s little need to leave the resort, but if you do, the staff will help every step of the way. “Bali is known as a backpacker destination with so much to see and do,” Schroeder says, “but you can immerse yourself in the culture without the crowds and with luxury thanks to the resort’s private experiences, like snorkeling at the resort’s exclusive spots, or exploring Lombok Strait via the resort’s outrigger canoes.” For another layer of laid-back extravagance, while away an afternoon sunbathing on the deck of the resort’s 170-foot yacht, *Amandira*. ☯