

destination weddings & honeymoons

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE
FOR BRIDES AND GROOMS

20

BEACHSIDE BARGAINS

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Top row, from left: Hix Island House appeals to minimalist brides; a thousand feet of pristine beach await at Carambola Beach Resort; Long Bay's swim-up bar is a popular place to congregate. Bottom row, from left: Thatched-roof-chic is the vibe at Playa Azul; the Lodge Kura Hulanda's cliff-top perch affords endless views; Illinois natives Jamie Randolph and Matt Carson chose Amsterdam Manor for their July 2008 nuptials.

JAKE'S

JAMAICA

This boho resort with brightly colored, adobe-style bungalows sits on Treasure Beach on the undeveloped south coast. *Vogue* coined it “the chicest shack in the Caribbean,” thanks to stylishly funky rooms that embrace the outdoors with plentiful decks and terraces but welcome you indoors with handcrafted furnishings and netting-draped beds. Couples with smaller parties can marry directly on the spacious rooftop patio of their room (beautifully decorated with tiki torches and candles), while larger parties can take over the thatched-roof Calabash Pavilion, set at the water’s edge on a secluded part of the property. *Rooms from \$95, summer season; \$115, winter season.*

JUNGLE BAY RESORT & SPA

DOMINICA

Dominica is called the Nature Isle for its plethora of waterfalls, hot springs and black-sand beaches. Soak up the setting in one of 35 eco-style, stilted wooden

cottages built into the hillside, with perks like outdoor showers and hammock-strung balconies. Intrepid couples can hold their ceremony on the hotel’s stone beach, reached via a cliff-hugging wooden walkway with a dramatic backdrop of waves crashing against rocks. Or make it easy and exchange vows poolside, where a simple flower arrangement of pink ginger and birds of paradise sets the tone. On the deck of the Ocean Cabana bar, sip rum punches spiced with nutmeg before heading to the Pavilion (built around a huge royal palm tree) to celebrate over spicy chicken creole, shrimp in coconut sauce and fresh passion-fruit cheesecake. *Rooms from \$179, summer season; \$209, winter season.*

KU

ANGUILLA

With a prime spot on two miles of beachfront on Shoal Bay East, Ku’s whitewashed architecture and minimalist design give off a chic South Beach vibe. The 27 suites have fully equipped kitchens and ocean-view patios or balconies. The property also boasts the longest beachfront bar on

the island (a whopping 75 feet!), which attracts revelers with live music and plentiful rum punch. The white sand is so picturesque that couples not only opt to hold their wedding on it, but their reception too. Catering provided by the onsite Kuiah restaurant, located just steps from the beach, offers customized menus based on the couple’s preferences or favorite menu items like crayfish (an Anguilla staple), jerk chicken and curried goat. *Rooms from \$180, summer season; \$315, winter season. Note: Group rates are only available in the summer season.*

LITTLE ARCHES

BARBADOS

This adults-only boutique hotel was the recent winner of the Caribbean’s Best Luxury Hotel award on tripadvisor.com. Each of the 10 bedrooms feature king-size four-poster beds and colorful local artwork; the premium rooms have plunge pools as well. The preferred ceremony spot is the cliffside wedding garden overlooking the sea. For the reception, Café Luna will reserve a special section for your wedding



Top row, from left: Adventurous couples love Jungle Bay Resort's rustic flavor; Jake's breezy cottages ooze personality; low-key weddings are the specialty at Timothy Beach Resort. Bottom row, from left: The Inn at Robert's Grove is ideally situated for snorkeling and diving; German couple Angela Peters and Tony Spanu married at Sibonne Beach Hotel in January 2008; clear, balmy water and the La Palapa beach bar lure guests at Playa Azul.

feast, where you can indulge in top-rated pan-tropical cuisine. You can also rent out the entire restaurant or resort. It sleeps 25 total but can host events for up to 60, with overflow staying at nearby inns and B&Bs. Bonus: You're within walking distance of attractions like Miami Beach and Oistin's Fish Fry and a short taxi ride from the nightlife-filled St. Lawrence Gap. *Rooms from \$192, summer season; \$275, winter season.*

LODGE KURA HULANDA & BEACH CLUB

CURACAO

This semiarid island tempts couples with world-class diving and sandy beaches. Find both at this boutique property, situated on 350 acres on the isle's westernmost point. The 74 rooms and suites are outfitted with rattan furniture and 300-thread-count sheets, while onsite attractions range from scuba excursions to Indian rock art. Simple ceremonies take place on the intimate beach. After the I do's, climb 45 stone stairs to the cliff top for a reception on the Christoffel Terrace, where up to 75 people

can dine on Caribbean reef lobster or jerk chicken while enjoying breathtaking ocean views. *Rooms from \$165, summer season; \$199, winter season.*

LONG BAY

TORTOLA

The British Virgin Islands are known for being pricey, but there's an exception to every rule. Overlooking its own stretch of beach, Long Bay sits on a 52-acre hillside enclave on the northwest coast of Tortola. Walk down a flower-lined aisle and exchange vows at the water's edge, or hold an intimate ceremony in a gauze-draped gazebo that overlooks the sea. After you tie the knot, stroll the beach for your own private photo session; then join your guests for a reception on the pool deck, built on the hill to take advantage of the views. (The deck can be tented, so the site's a go no matter what the weather brings.) Groups of up to 24 also have the option of taking over a private area above the main beachside restaurant, where the gratis nightly entertainment adds to the fun. *Rooms from \$165, summer season; \$220, winter season.*

PLAYA AZUL

COZUMEL

This Mexican island appeals to kick-back couples who love to dive and snorkel. Playa Azul sits on the north shore, away from the hustle and bustle of downtown's busy cruise port, and offers 50 rooms and suites with ocean views, plus a separate four-bedroom house. (The onsite PADI dive center and free golf at nearby Cozumel Country Club are bonuses.) Weddings take place beneath a rustic wooden pergola decorated with billowing linens and fresh flowers, set up on the sand near the water. Enjoy cocktail hour on the beach, complete with sangria and margaritas, before mariachis lead everyone into the reception in the resort's open-air restaurant. *Rooms from \$175, summer season; \$245, winter season.*

ROCKHOUSE HOTEL

NEGRIL, JAMAICA

For funky culture, zesty food and a lush setting, look no further than the Rockhouse Hotel, situated on eight acres on the island's westernmost point. The 34 accommodations span from simple guest rooms

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