

AMA LA VIDA (Live Life, Love Life!)

La Bella BRIDE

100s

of event design ideas for every couple's budget

The Return to Romance Issue:

- + Real Love Stories from Brides Around the World
- + Fashion trends from Randy of TLC's "Say Yes to the Dress"
- + La Bella Bride's LITTLE WHITE BOOK

\$6.95 US & Can



Top 10

Most Romantic Honeymoon Destinations

by Kyle Matthew Mooney

1

Paris

No list of honeymoon destinations is complete without Paris. The City of Light gets our vote as the most romantic in the world. Pavillon de la Reine (www.pavillon-de-la-reine.com; from 380€) is a charming hotel off one of Paris's prettiest squares, Place des Vosges. The surrounding neighborhood, Le Marais, is wonderful for exploring. Also visit St-Germain for great cafes and rose macarons at Pierre Herme (72 rue Bonaparte, www.pierreherme.com). And the terrace at Georges (Centre Georges Pompidou, +33 1 44-78-47-99) is perfect for a glass of Champagne, with Paris at your feet.

2

Bali

The beaches are lovely but head for the fertile Ayung River valley, where the Four Seasons Sayan (www.fourseasons.com; from \$460) clings to a verdant hillside. See the best of Balinese paintings in nearby Ubud, a town teeming with independent artists; then relax in your villa's private plunge pool. The hotel's farming tour, a guided hike which gives a glimpse of traditional rural Balinese life, is excellent. Best bit: part of the tour is a riverside spa scrub and massage.

BERMUDA

the classic honeymoon never goes out of style

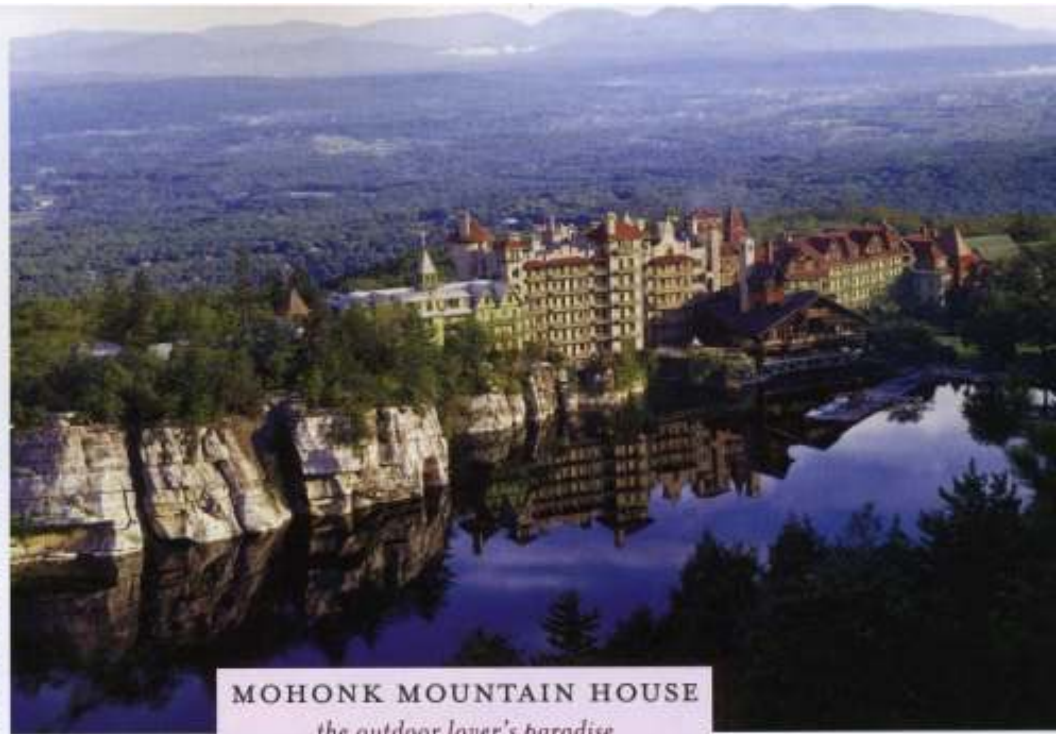
Just 650 miles off the coast of North Carolina is the classic honeymoon destination of Bermuda – a perennial favorite for East Coast couples seeking beautiful beaches, elegant accommodations, and quaint British charm. Of course, the short flight (less than 2.5 hours, direct, from New York or Boston) doesn't hurt either!

May to October is the beach season, when daytime temperatures are in the 80s and honeymooners can enjoy the pink sand beaches and clear blue water that Bermuda is known for. Adventurous types can dive the island's famous wrecks (more than 400) or swim with the dolphins; while history buffs can visit old forts, museums and churches; and nature lovers can explore Crystal Caves or the 37-acre Botanical Gardens.

From November to March, the nearby Gulf Stream keeps Bermuda's temperatures at a mild 60-70 degrees. Not so great for the beach, but perfect for playing golf (we're told the island has more golf courses per square mile than anywhere else in the world), shopping Hamilton's boutiques, and enjoying a gourmet meal or a pint at a pub.

Most honeymooners opt for elegant properties like the cottage-style accommodations at Cambridge Beaches or the contemporary luxury of Elbow Beach, but a unique new property called 9 Beaches is also turning a few heads. This ultra-casual resort features private over-water canvas-sided cabanas with plexi-glass floor inserts so you can watch the sea life underneath.

If your idea of a romantic honeymoon includes a quiet beach, a good book, and a cold drink, Bermuda should be on your short list!



MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE
the outdoor lover's paradise

3 Northern California Wine Country

San Francisco oozes romance from every foggy hilltop, but head north for a great honeymoon for couples with an interest in nature, food and wine. Healdsburg, a walkable small town with excellent restaurants, is a charming base to explore the Wine Country and is within easy reach of Point Reyes and Mt. Tamalpais parks, both ideal for hiking. Les Mars Hotel (www.lesmarshotel.com; from \$475), owned by the M&M candy family, is also the best bed in town.

4 Angkor Wat

Never mind that history and architecture buffs will be enthralled by the ruins of the Khmer Empire and what was once the largest pre-industrial city in the world. Few things are more romantic than seeing the sun rise in eerie stillness through the towers and colonnades of Angkor Wat and imagining what was. The colonial-era Grand Hotel d'Angkor (www.raffles.com; from \$150) has been beautifully restored, and the hotel's Elephant Bar is an institution.

5 The Adirondacks

The ideal spot for the naturalist couple or for those who want blissful quiet. The Point (www.thepointresort.com; from \$1,350 all-inclusive) was once the Adirondack getaway for William Avery Rockefeller. Now a small, luxurious hotel with just eleven rooms along the shores of Upper Saranac Lake, it's like being at camp, albeit one where the chef trained under three-starred renowned Albert Roux. It's best in the summer, when the weather is perfect for hiking, canoeing or just idling along the lake.

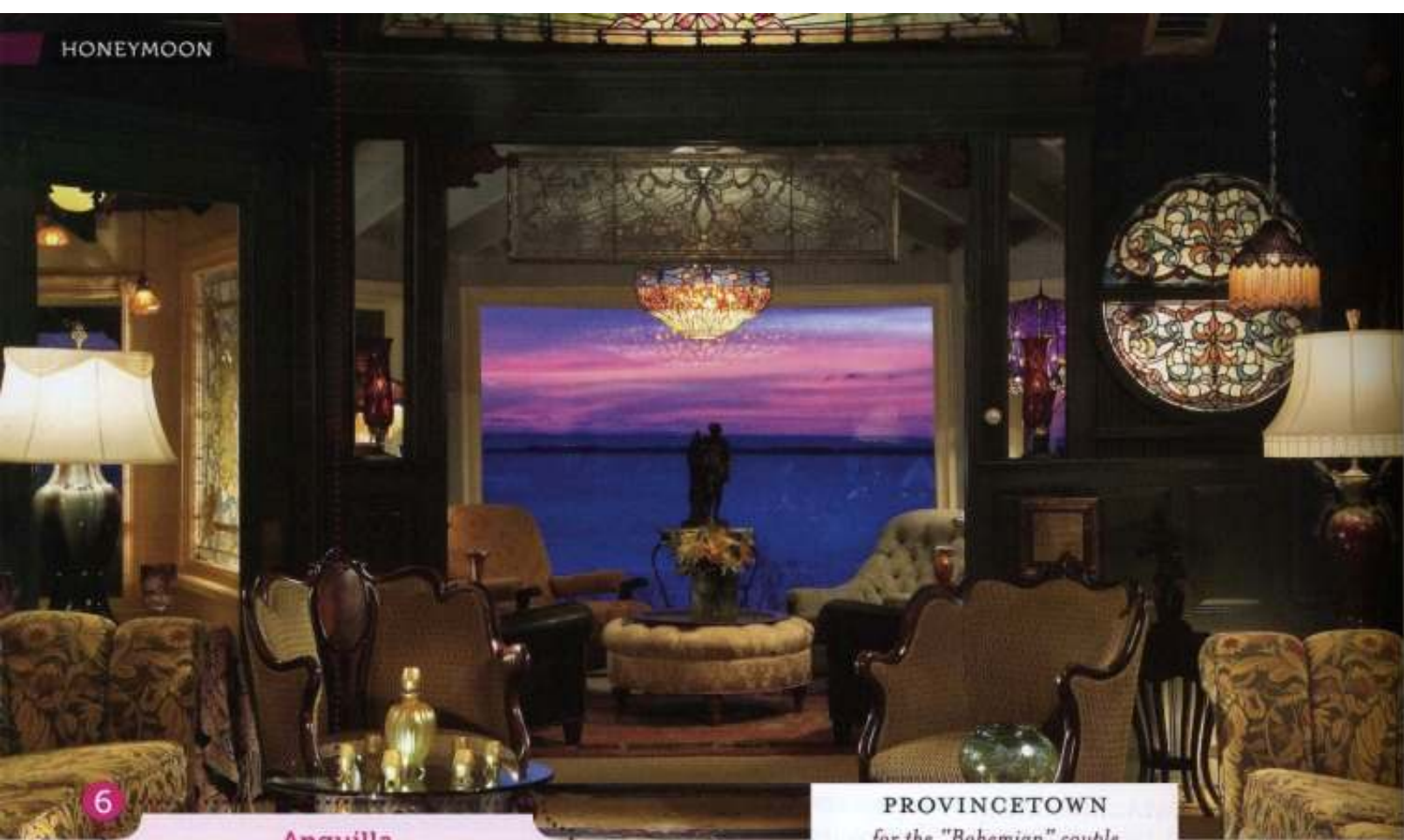
We know it's your honeymoon, but how long will you really hide behind the "do not disturb" sign? For active couples who think that a little adrenaline rush just adds to the romance, we've got a destination for you, too!

The Mohonk Mountain House, nestled in the Shawangunk Mountains in New York's Hudson Valley, truly offers the best of both worlds. Built in 1869 on the shores of Lake Mohonk (90 minutes north of New York City), it's a romantic Victorian castle set in an outdoor lover's paradise. Inside, it's cozy and warm, with 265 luxurious rooms and suites, gourmet dining, and a full-service spa. Outside, the resort offers 85 miles of hiking trails, an award-winning golf course, and seasonal activities like swimming, boating, tennis, ice skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and more.

Honeymooners can opt for cozy fireplace rooms, or splurge on a tower suite with wraparound views, and all rooms include three meals per day and afternoon tea and cookies. Optional add-on packages include spa treatments, horse and carriage rides, and room service breakfast in bed.

For those who can tear themselves away from the resort itself, there are guided rock-climbing excursions, nearby winery tours, antique shops, and the fun and funky college town of New Paltz, with its eclectic mix of shops, galleries and restaurants.

For a romantic honeymoon that leaves you breathless, check out the gorgeous scenery and non-stop activities at this mountain hideaway.



PROVINCETOWN

for the "Bohemian" couple

LANDS END INN

6

Anguilla

A beach-lover's and gourmet's paradise, Anguilla is a peaceful and understated island near St Martin. Stay at Malliouhana (www.malliouhana.com; from \$415) – to the Caribbean what the Carlyle is to New York – which anchors one end of Meads Bay beach, one of the prettiest stretches of powdery sand anywhere. Sunset at Malliouhana's bluff-top bar, followed by dinner at nearby Blanchard's (www.blanchardsrestaurant.com) – on par with top restaurants in New York or Boston – is the perfect romantic evening à deux.

7

Provence

Romance is everywhere in Provence, but St-Remy-de-Provence is special: it's what everyone dreams of when they envision a country French town, and is perfect for an afternoon stroll. Wineries dot the surrounding area and provide plenty of daytime activities, as does touring Les Baux, a medieval hill town; with Arles and Avignon close by. Oustau de Baumanière (www.maisonsdebaumaniere.com; from 200€), a charming inn with a fabulous restaurant, is housed in a 14th century farmhouse and makes for a perfect base.

For the unconventional couple who isn't tied to this year's "hot list", why not consider the breezy beaches and sizzling nightlife of Provincetown?

This historic fishing village at the tip of Cape Cod is probably best known as a gay-friendly vacation destination, but the welcoming atmosphere and laissez-faire attitude that make it perfect for same-sex couples is appreciated by honeymooners of all kinds.

Accommodations range from roadside motels to lovely B&Bs, and one of the best for honeymooners and weddings is the Lands End Inn, a lavishly decorated property with a commanding ocean views, a private sandy beach, and an ideal walking distance from town.

Daytime pursuits include whale-watching, biking, and enjoying the miles of beaches that make up the protected Cape Cod National Seashore. Along Commercial Street, couples can find unique art galleries, antique shops and boutiques.

After dark, P-Town (as it's known locally) really shines – with fine dining, live entertainment, busy nightclubs and more. For a fun and casual dinner, try Saki Sushi Bar and Lounge. If you're in the mood for something a little more romantic, make a reservation for a seaside dinner with a view at The Red Inn. Either way, since you're in P-Town, you've got to follow it up with drag karaoke at the Governor Bradford!

For a sand-between-your-toes, live-and-let-live, Bohemian honeymoon, there's no place like Provincetown! Ruby slippers optional. **LB**

8

Virgin Gorda

Ever wanted to escape to a deserted island? Secluded Biras Creek (www.biras.com; from \$700 all-inclusive) lets you do just that: the resort has a fleet of two-person motorboats for sailing the surrounding waters. The rooms, arranged in oceanfront cottages, are lovely and the dining is excellent, but those little boats make Biras unique. Take one out, explore unspoiled reefs nearby and then enjoy a picnic lunch on your own uninhabited beach.

9

Positano

It's an old favorite, with good reason: few seaside villages are as beautiful or dramatic as cliff-hanging Positano, on the Amalfi coast. Le Sirenuse (www.sirenuse.it; from 350€) is a picturesque hotel housed in an 18th-century villa overlooking the sea and is worth the splurge; the *al fresco* Champagne and oyster bar is especially delightful. There's a good cultural scene in town, but relaxing in the sun on a terrace at Le Sirenuse is heavenly.

10

Big Island of Hawaii

Laurence Rockefeller was deft at picking resort sites, and the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel (www.princeresortshawaii.com; from \$460) is one of his masterpieces. It fronts one of the best beaches on the islands and has a spectacular art collection. The Big Island is fantastic to explore, with its active volcano at Kilauea, rainforests, cowboy country in Waimea and great arts and crafts, and sunset-time dinner at the Mauna Kea is always a special treat.

fin