

HOT PROPERTIES

Say 'I do' in a foreign country (if not a foreign language) at one of our selection of hotels in EUROPE and further afield

WORDS EDWARD REEVES

Chateau Mcely, Czech Republic

An easyJet hop to Prague, then an hour's drive, takes you to this grand country house hotel in the St George forest. There are 23 rooms and suites and acclaimed chef Libor Krusinsky will cater for up to 80 guests (more if you hire a marquee). **Vow factor** Newlyweds get to sleep in the Legend suite, with a private balcony overlooking the parkland. **📞** Weddings from approx £5,150, including exclusive rental of the entire chateau; wedding menus from approx £50pp; rooms from £160. Visit mychateauwedding.com

The Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara

California is increasingly popular for destination weddings, but look beyond LA to hip Santa Barbara. The Spanish colonial Biltmore, a Four Seasons Resort on Butterfly Beach, is one of the most romantic hotels on the West Coast for either a wedding or a honeymoon. **Vow factor** Tying the knot in the palm-lined Palmera Garden. **📞** Wedding packages are on an à la carte basis; wedding menus from approx £86pp; rooms from £323. For more information, visit fourseasons.com/santabarbara

Lanzerac Manor, South Africa

South Africa offers great value for weddings, not to mention superb food and wine. Lanzerac is a historic 300-year-old hotel and winery set in 10 hectares of landscaped gardens on the outskirts of Stellenbosch. A fairytale location that'll blow your guests away. **Vow factor** Corkage is just £2.40,

so why not spend a few days touring the Cape's finest vineyards to buy your own big-day wine?

📞 Venue hire from approx £305; wedding menus from approx £12pp; rooms from approx £202. Visit lanzerac.co.za

Masseria Torre Maizza, Italy

Once a watchtower that guarded the Puglia coastline from pesky Ottoman Turks, the Maizza is now a 12-bedroom boutique hotel. There's tons to do, from horse riding to swimming, or you could have a pre-wedding treatment in the Aveda spa's Turkish baths – that's one Ottoman import the locals were happy to embrace.

Vow factor Treat your wedding party to a day trip down the coast on the hotel's own 14m yacht.

📞 Wedding packages from £122pp; the hotel can be booked exclusively from approx £8,600; rooms from £189. Visit masserialtorremaizza.com

St Regis Bali

The Cloud Nine Chapel at this brand-new resort on Bali is right on the beach, and surrounded by its own small cascading stream. After the ceremony, step onto the wooden terrace while staff prepare an intimate lunch for up to 12 guests. **Vow factor** The extremely sexy Cloud Nine beachfront honeymoon villa, with its own pool.

📞 Wedding packages from approx £1,315; rooms from £400. Visit stregis.com/bali

Ammende Villa, Estonia

If you can't find the perfect wedding venue, why not build one yourself? In 1905 one Estonian merchant did



From top Lanzerac Manor, at Stellenbosch, South Africa. A villa pool at St Regis Bali, which opened this year. Sala Phuket. Food at Ammende Villa, Estonia

just that, creating this Art Nouveau confection in Pärnu, about an hour's drive from Tallinn, for his beloved daughter's marriage. Now a 19-room hotel, it's still one of Estonia's most romantic venues.

Vow factor The Blue Dining Hall, illuminated by chandeliers.

📞 Comprehensive wedding packages from approx £164pp, for up to 50 guests. Rooms from approx £84. Visit ammende.ee

Sala Phuket, Thailand

You'll find Phuket's coolest new hotel right on Mai Khao beach (and just 15 minutes from Phang Nga Bay). The design is super-slick, the food delicious and good value, and 63 of the 79 rooms have their own private pools. Your guests will thank you for tying the knot here...

Vow factor Having the reception on the roof of the restaurant, on tables floating in a reflection pool.

📞 Take us to Thailand (0787 633 1225; takeustothailand.com) offers comprehensive wedding packages at Sala Phuket and other Thai hotels from £6,500 for 30 guests.

Aegialis Hotel, Amorgos, Greece

It won't win any design awards but the Aegialis's location on the beautiful island of Amorgos, where *The Big Blue* was filmed, makes it a contender. You can marry on the beach, in a white-washed chapel or the registry office before decamping back to the hotel for a poolside reception.

Vow factor Agia Anna bay, below the monastery of Hozoviotissa.

📞 Ionian Weddings (020 8755 3113; ionianweddings.co.uk) offers wedding packages on Amorgos from approx £1,000.

Cobblers Cove, Barbados

You want to get married in an English country house, but not in England? Cobblers Cove, on the northwest coast of Barbados, is the answer. One of only five Relais & Chateaux hotels in the Caribbean,

it has 40 rooms, old-school charm and wonderfully romantic gardens.

Vow factor The rum punch – regulars say it's the best on Barbados.

📞 Wedding packages from approx £520; wedding menus from £18pp; rooms from £177. Visit cobblerscove.com

The Reach, Key West, Florida

Can't decide between Florida or the Caribbean? Then say 'I do' on the US's only Caribbean island. The recently renovated Reach has 150 rooms and Key West's only natural sand beach, for bare-foot nuptials.

Vow factor Continuing the party late into the night on Duval Street.

📞 Wedding packages from approx £790; wedding menus from approx £92pp including wine; rooms from £144. Visit reachresort.com

Royal Livingstone, Zambia

After tying the knot in this luxurious Sun International hotel, retreat to the David Livingstone Boma on the banks of the Zambezi for your reception, with traditional African food prepared over an open fire.

Vow factor If the boma sounds too tame, why not have your wedding on the Royal Livingstone Express train as it steams through the bush?

📞 Wedding packages from approx £500; rooms from £452. £5,676 for exclusive use of the Express for 72-92 guests. Visit suninternational.com

Swissôtel The Bosphorus, Turkey

At the Swissôtel, you can marry like a sultan – or at least in the gardens that belonged to the Dolmabahçe Palace, the Ottomans' last residence. After the reception, jump aboard the hotel's yacht for a night-time cruise up the Bosphorus.

Vow factor Late-night cocktails at Gaja, the rooftop bar.

📞 Wedding packages from approx £127pp; rooms from approx £112. Visit swissotel.com ■

BOOK SMART

Hotel wedding packages vary hugely, so always **read the small print** and make sure you know what is and isn't included. **Ask lots of questions** – write a tick-list so you don't miss any important ones. Be cautious about organising everything yourself: **a specialist wedding organiser will almost certainly get better rates**. Think of your guests' budgets – if you're tying the knot at an expensive hotel, **are there cheaper hotels close by where friends and family can stay?** Are there cheap flights? Finally, if you're getting married in a city, **check that there are no big conferences or events at the same time**.



Above Chateau Mcely, in the countryside near Prague, Czech Republic. Below The Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara, California

