

# All abroad

Dreaming of a destination wedding? **Nikki Haynes** finds out what you need to know before you go.



*(Opposite and this page)  
The magical isle of Santorini is a great location for a destination wedding.*

**H**ave you ever dreamed of getting married in a European castle? Or barefoot on a tropical island under a palm tree? How about saying your vows in the midst of a snowstorm, or tying the knot Las Vegas-style with Elvis Presley as a witness? If an adventure abroad is what you are after, then a destination wedding may just be in order.

For Melbourne-based couple Tennille Wallace and Keenan McGrath, a stunning villa on the edge of Tuscany was the ideal location for their dream nuptials.

says the trend for couples to wed overseas has grown astronomically in the past 10 years as couples combine their love of travel with their desire for a glamorous and unusual wedding.

Traditionally, destination weddings were thought to be exclusive to the Hollywood elite, but an overseas union is often a less expensive alternative to the big white wedding, and is a great way to kick back and relax with your family and friends before and after the big day.

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“We had been to plenty of weddings in Melbourne, but we really wanted to do something different and exciting,” says Tennille.

“There is something about Italy, the scenery, the romance and ambience. It just seemed like the perfect place to have a wedding.”

Tennille and Keenan are just one of many couples choosing to tie the knot overseas each year.

Narelle Williams, from destination wedding specialists Global Weddings,

average cost of a destination wedding is between \$15,000 and \$35,000 for 100 people at some of the most amazing and exotic locations in the world.

And destination weddings are definitely on the rise. “We have almost doubled the number of destination weddings we organise,” says Narelle.

“I think people are starting to understand what their options are overseas. It’s cheaper, and often more intimate because there are fewer people in attendance.”



(TOP) DAVID FOWLER (RIGHT) CAM MILLS

DAVID FOWLER





## DESTINATION WEDDING PLANNERS

**Global Weddings:**  
www.globalweddings.com.au  
**Just Get Married:**  
www.justgetmarried.com  
**Marry Me Abroad:**  
www.marrymeabroad.com.au  
**Take Us to Thailand:**  
www.takeustothailand.com



### LEGAL EAGLE

While an overseas wedding is a great idea for couples looking for something a little less traditional, there is a lot of organisation and forethought required if you plan to wed on foreign shores.

Some countries are more difficult than others when it comes to securing permission and licences for marriage. For example, you have to be a resident for at least 40 days before you can

you cut through the red tape and take care of all the little details.

Tennille says she decided to hire wedding planner Paola Bamonte from Marry Me Abroad for her experience in organising European weddings.

“Paola was just brilliant, she organised everything, all the paperwork and the little wedding details,” she says.

“We’ve had other friends who also got married in Italy and they had such

ensure you have the right guidelines, directions and help so that the whole experience doesn’t become overwhelming,” she says.

And while some couples choose to organise destination weddings themselves, Narelle stresses caution.

“We only recommend a small number of resorts that we have been to and trust. They have great wedding coordinators and are really well set-up for weddings. You don’t want to get somewhere and be disappointed or have things go wrong.”

Hiring a destination wedding planner is money well spent, as not only will they take care of all the paperwork and recommend local suppliers but they can also manage you and your guests’ travel arrangements, accommodation and any post-wedding travel you may choose to do.

### GLAMOUR AND GLORY

A destination wedding is a great way to combine luxury and glamour with the exotic touches of your adopted nation.

Because your guest numbers are limited – Narelle says the average destination wedding has between 30 and 40 guests – and overseas locations

don’t charge more for weddings than they do for other functions, you can afford to have a five or six-star wedding with brilliant food and an amazing setting for less than half the price of a wedding in Australia.

Companies like Global Weddings, Marry Me Abroad, Take Us To Thailand and Just Get Married work with the resorts to make sure your dream day goes off without a hitch.

### LOCATION, LOCATION

When it comes to destination weddings, the world is your oyster. Popular locations include Bali, Fiji, the Cook Islands, Tahiti, Thailand, Hawaii, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Italy, Greece and France.

“For our clients, Paris, the Amalfi Coast and Tuscany are all popular choices,” says Paola, while Narelle’s clients prefer more tropical locations such as Bali, the Maldives and the Cook Islands.

“My tip is to plan early and give guests as much time as possible to make plans,” says Narelle, who recommends planning your destination wedding at least six months to a year in advance.

Narelle says Global Weddings have



A specialised wedding planner is highly recommended to help you cut through red tape and take care of the details.

marry in France; and Spain, Greece and Malaysia are also known for their lengthy and restrictive pre-marriage paperwork. You also need to consider the language barrier – in Thailand you need to have all your documents translated into Thai and approved prior to your wedding. In some countries you need to provide birth certificates or blood tests before you qualify for a marriage licence.

If you decide on an international affair, then a specialised wedding planner is highly recommended to help

trouble with all the legalities. We arrived a week and a half early to do some travelling and sort out paperwork, and Paola took care of the rest.”

Paola says specialised planners who are familiar with your country of choice can make planning your wedding stress free.

“You’ll get all sorts of information from government offices and off websites which can be mind-boggling and at times disheartening, making you think that it’s all too hard. And that’s why having a planner is crucial to



(TOP) DAVID FOWLER; (LEFT) LA VIE; SUSAN WRIGHT

(TOP) SUSAN WRIGHT; (RIGHT) CAM MILLS

held events in some of the most beautiful and luxurious hotels in Thailand, Bali and Fiji, including Laguna Phuket, the Anantara Resort and Spa and Sonaisali Island Resort, while Paola recommends Villa La Palagina in Tuscany and Villa Cimbrone on the Amalfi coast.

“Whatever your dream is – whether it be a wedding in a hot air balloon drifting over Kenya, in an Ice Chapel in Sweden, bungee jumping in New Zealand, marrying in a Tuscan olive grove or on a Tahitian beach – a destination wedding will make your big day truly memorable.” ◊

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