

April 2010

DESTINATION WEDDINGS & honey moons



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at a glance

california cool

Things to do and venues galore for Golden State soirees **BY MARYANN HAMMERS**

REGION	BIG EVENT	SWEET BOUTIQUE	OUTDOOR VENUE
<p>Los Angeles</p>	 <p>The landmark 726-room Century Plaza — aka Hotel of the Stars — has celeb-sighting opps, West LA's largest pool and outdoor bars for post-parties.</p>	 <p>After oceanfront nuptials, watch seals and sailboats from your room perched directly over the Pacific at the newly renovated Portafino Hotel & Yacht Club.</p>	 <p>Tie the knot on the beach or ocean bluffs in Santa Monica, with sea, Ferris wheel and pier as the backdrop.</p>
<p>Santa Barbara</p>	 <p>Alisal Ranch, an Old West-style hideaway near Santa Barbara's wine country (of Sideways fame), has 10,000 scenic acres of rolling oak-studded hills.</p>	<p>Say I do at Canary, a hip downtown hotel with arched doorways and hand-painted ceilings. Hit the rooftop terrace for the best sunset views in town.</p> 	 <p>At El Capitan Canyon, a "luxu campground" on the coast, guest overnight in creek-side cedar cabins and safari tents furnished with Jacuzzis and king-size beds.</p>
<p>Palm Springs</p>	 <p>The grande dame of the desert, La Quinta Resort, with 796 casitas, suites and villas, is Old California, with bougainvillea-lined archways, fountains, five golf courses and 41 pools.</p>	 <p>Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz owned a Spanish-tiled ranch in the heart of the Movie Colony district. The Lucy House is now a wedding venue and short-term vacation rental.</p>	<p>Ride the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway to wed in Mount San Jacinto's pristine forest wilderness. The Coachella Valley stretches below; majestic pine trees tower above.</p> 
<p>San Francisco</p>	<p>The historic Claremont Hotel in the Berkeley Hills looks like a storybook Victorian castle, with bay views and wedding/spa packages at all price points.</p> 	<p>Upscale Hotel Vitale sits on the Embarcadero waterfront, boasting water and city views.</p> 	 <p>UC Berkeley Botanical Garden is uncommonly pretty, with an oak knoll, rose gardens, bay views and a redwood-grove amphitheater for large groups.</p>
<p>Lake Tahoe</p>	 <p>Celebrate The Ritz-Carlton Highlands, Lake Tahoe's grand opening with a Winter Wonderland Wedding package.</p>	<p>A cozy lakefront cabin at Zephyr Cove Resort is the best spot in Tahoe for catching the sunset after a day spent snowmobiling through mountain meadows.</p> 	<p>Ride the tram 8,200 feet to the summit of Heavenly Mountain; move to The Cabin Dining Room for a reception with a bird's-eye view of the lake.</p> 

NO BOYS ALLOWED



Get A-list treatment with blowouts, manis, pedis and more in a private room or outdoor terrace at Frédéric Fekkai's new Melrose Place flagship salon.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Rent a Schwinn cruiser and take in the scenery along the bike path that runs from Santa Monica to Venice. Get your wheels at Perry's Cafe, where you can sign up for the Legends Beach Bike Tour.



COOL VENDOR

For 60 years, the fresh strawberry-whipped-cream cake at Phoenix Bakery in Chinatown has been an LA legend and everyone's favorite. They do wedding cakes too.



Throw a private spa party right in your hotel room with locally based Jacqua, which offers hand and foot treatments using their own delicious-smelling products.

Sip and stroll along the Urban Wine Trail, with 10 tasting rooms between downtown and the beach. Last stop: Coastal Winery, where the picnic benches overlook lapping waves.



Enjoy Cupcakes brings the bakery to you in a restored vintage trailer — and where else will you find wine, cinnamon-bun or chocolate-caramel-bacon cupcakes?



Reserve Desert Springs, a JW Marriott Resort & Spa's butler-staffed Sanctuary Suite, with a private entrance courtyard, hydrotherapy tub and fireplace.



Explore Joshua Tree National Park by night on a twilight jeep eco-tour with Desert Adventures, ending with wine and a picnic under the stars.

The Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway (aka Graceland West) has a '60s-era pool, midcentury memorabilia and a Mount San Jacinto backdrop. Newlyweds can spend their wedding night in The King's own honeymoon suite.



Have a ladies-only tea party at cute-as-a-button Crown & Crumpet Tea Salon in Ghirardelli Square, and enjoy party favors, sandwiches, sweets, themed centerpieces and a 19th-century gilded throne for the bride-to-be.

Cruise the San Francisco Bay on a chartered Hornblower yacht, complete with outdoor deck, dining-and-dancing salon and lots of windows.



Charter an authentic Classic Cable Car to transport guests in vintage style. You can even take everyone on a tour over Golden Gate.



Treat your maids to a night on the town at MontBleu's Opal Ultra Lounge, where custom-made cocktails up the celebratory spirit.



Go on a moonlit snowshoeing excursion at Camp Richardson Historic Resort, a turn-of-the-century lodge set along the lake's snowy shore.



Have an on-the-water ceremony aboard the Tahoe Queen, an authentic Mississippi-style paddle-wheeler with floor-to-ceiling windows. Hint: Check out Zephyr Cove's Cruise Wedding packages.