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From Shimla to the Oscars', Pratibha Ranta's meteoric rise is almost serendipitous.

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70



16

18



56



96

## Contents

WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS 2024-25

- 10 **THE HONEYMOON PACKING GUIDE**  
A destination-inspired guide to help you pack the most stylish essentials and up your fashion game.
- 45 **THE ULTIMATE WEDDING DESTINATION LIST**  
These emerging wedding destinations are perfect for couples in search of an unforgettable celebration.
- 54 **PARADISE FOR YOUR VOWS**  
20 exotic hotels and resorts that provide a dreamlike backdrop for a luxe, intimate wedding ceremony.
- 62 **A 'MINI'MOON AWAY**  
Discover why newlyweds are opting for 'Mini-moons'—a curated short getaway after their grand wedding celebrations, before the longer honeymoon.
- 58 **ON HER OWN TERMS**  
Pratibha Ranta delves into details about her journey, turning dreams into reality, defying odds yet staying true to her roots.
- 74 **ADVENTURES WITH YOUR LOVED ONE**  
Denmark's foraging tradition is offering honeymooners a unique culinary experience that connects them to nature's bounty—and to each other.
- 79 **THE WEDDING BLACK BOOK**  
Arzoo Dina curates a comprehensive guide to the finest luxury wedding vendors for all your needs.
- 86 **DREAMING OF PARADISE**  
Henna Shah recalls her unforgettable three-week honeymoon, from Fiji's serene islands to New Zealand's thrilling adventures.
- 90 **PERSONALLY SPEAKING**  
Designer duo Falguni & Shane Peacock discuss 20 years of couture; Himanshu Patel of Epic Stories talks about the Ambani wedding and the future of wedding photography; Ankur Jain and Erika Hammond share their unforgettable love story as they tie the knot in a lavish ceremony before the Great Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza.
- 96 **YOUR BEST SHOT**  
These celebrity weddings truly caught our attention this year.

**ON THE COVER:** Pratibha Ranta's only true desire is to make something of herself.

ON PRATIBHA: Outfit, **Tarun Tahiliani**; ruffle cape, **Keya by Vidhi**; headband & earrings, **House of Tuhina**; rings, **Keiyura**. PHOTOGRAPHED BY: Gourab Ganguli FASHION EDITOR: Neelangana Vasudeva STYLING TEAM: Chandni Kumar Mehra HAIR STYLIST: Yashdeep Sharma MAKEUP ARTIST: Saba Khan LOCATION: Neuma, Mumbai

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# Letter from the Editor

THIS PAST MONTH, I found myself at a wedding unlike any other—a celebration of love sailing down the storied Hooghly River, its inky black waters reflecting the stars and city lights of Kolkata in the distance. Against this luminous backdrop, the bride stood on the bow of the boat, her silhouette a sharp white contrast to the dark embrace of the hallowed river. It was an intimate affair and a celebration of young love with nearly a hundred friends and family (yes, in India, a hundred still counts as intimate).

The couple chose a white wedding, a departure from traditional Indian ceremonies like *phas* or Anand Karaj. Instead, they walked down the aisle, exchanged heartfelt public vows, and were married by the bride’s younger sister. It was a nod to their faith and their unique vision—a perfect example of how weddings today are evolving to reflect the couple’s individuality.

Rituals and customs have always adapted with time, but what strikes me now is how the Indian wedding landscape has transformed into something truly personal. Where once families and relatives held the reins, today, customisation leads the way. Even the grandest “big fat Indian wedding” has become immersive and experiential, with intimacy found in thoughtful details rather than scale.

This shift is being driven by a younger, cosmopolitan demographic with access to the internet and global trends. Weddings are no longer just about grandeur; they’re about creating moments that feel authentic. Global brands are taking note, courting the Indian wedding market with a focus on these imaginative experiences.

In this new era, the cacophony of wedding planners, stylists, chefs, photographers, and entertainment artists has become the modern *baraat*. Armed with fresh ideas, they bring all the joy and noise, helping couples craft celebrations that are as unique as their love stories. Couples, with their fresh takes on love, renewal of vows, and off-the-beaten-path destinations, are rewriting the rulebook.

This is highlighted by our cover star Pratibha Ranta (P.70), who espouses the new-age Gen-Z aesthetic as a modern Indian woman as she skips the traditional garb and dons avant-garde looks for our annual Weddings & Honeymoon special issue. She talks about her journey from Shimla to the Oscars, her breakout performance in *Laapataa Ladies* that is taking her there, staying true to her roots, and her idea of an ideal wedding.



Destinations are now as important as the events themselves, catering to the intergenerational dynamics of Indian weddings. With itineraries planned months in advance to accommodate diverse groups of guests across a dozen festivities, these celebrations are as much about the journey as they are about the big day.

In this issue, we celebrate the vibrant and ever-evolving world of weddings. From insights into the industry to the inspiration of innovative celebrations, we hope these pages bring you as much delight as we felt putting them together. I share with you my top three must-haves—in keeping with the essence of the season: Individuality.

*Akshita M. Bhanj Deo*

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From grand receptions to intimate pre-wedding events, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport offers the ideal setting for your wedding celebration.  
By Uttara Gangopadhyay



**LOCATED MINUTES AWAY** from Delhi's Indra Gandhi International Airport, the Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport hotel is an ideal wedding venue for those who prefer a well-designed lavish celebration in a customisable setting. The hotel's strategic location, near the airport and the Aerocity Metro station, makes it easy to reach from other cities as well as take a ride into the heart of the national capital.

The hotel's versatile 20,000 sq feet of event space, including the striking Crystal Ballroom, and an outdoor garden setting, can accommodate up to 800 guests in a reception set up. The flexibility of the event space makes it convenient to plan intimate pre-wedding parties and ceremonies during the run up to the wedding day. Geared towards the intricacies of an Indian wedding, the hotel offers special facilities for the convenience of the wedding parties. The *porte-cochère* offers easy access to the ballroom, which is also wheelchair accessible. It also has pre-function areas to accommodate rituals or a processional entry. On the day of the wedding, the *baraat* may arrive with traditional fanfare as the hotel offers a separate entrance for them.

With 261 meticulously designed rooms and suites, ranging from 317 to 610 sq feet, guests at Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport are assured of a luxurious stay. With its specialty restaurants, bar and lounge, pastry shop, and much more, the hotel offers a wide choice of food and drinks. The award-winning Soy x Neung Roi is known for its Thai and pan-Asian cuisine while the Great Kebab Factory is known for its Indian cuisine. NYC is popular among those who prefer the culinary diversity of vibrant New York City.



The Crystal Ballroom, with a capacity of up to 800 guests, is ideal for both large receptions and intimate ceremonies. Above: The Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport offers skilled in-house beauticians and make-up artists to ensure the bride looks her best.

No Indian wedding is complete without a grand dinner for guests. The hotel promises an array of curated dishes—vegetarian and non-vegetarian—from across the globe prepared by their in-house chefs. The hotel also occasionally invites visiting chefs specialising in Indian cuisine so that guests may enjoy an immersive dining experience.

Before the wedding or afterwards, the couple tying the knot and their guests can indulge in rejuvenating wellness therapies at the hotel's spa. They can avail facilities such as massages, facials, manicures, pedicures, reflexology, and detox therapies to wear their best look on the grand day. The picturesque outdoor pool is also ideal for a relaxing dip after a hectic day.

To remain stress free prior to the wedding, the couple and their families may avail the services of the hotel's wedding planners. Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport has a dedicated team to take care of the details, right from the planning stage to managing every detail, from the décor to elaborate menus, so that you can enjoy the ceremonies fuss-free. The bride may avail the services of skilled in-house beauticians and make-up artists as well.

And as a gift to the newlyweds, the hotel offers a free honeymoon night at any Radisson Hotel worldwide. [www.radissonhotels.com](http://www.radissonhotels.com)

COURTESY OF RADISSON BLU PLAZA DELHI AIRPORT



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Weddings at  
JA The Resort





# A CHIC VENUE THAT WILL MAKE YOUR WEDDING DAY MEMORABLE

Elegance and luxury combine to make Andaz Delhi one of the most fulfilling wedding destinations in the city.

**CONVENIENT LOCATION,** grand customisable venues, great food, impeccable service—Andaz Delhi ticks all the boxes for planning a dream wedding. Choose this five-star luxury property and let their expert wedding planners take care of the details while you indulge in last-minute grooming and beauty sessions ahead of your big day.

The hotel offers diverse venues that can be customised to suit various wedding styles, whether for large or small gatherings, traditional or contemporary. Delight your guests with an impressive baraat procession led by a friendly jumbo along the dedicated ‘elephant path’, ending at the pre-function area, which opens into the ballroom. The majestic, oval-shaped, pillarless ballroom offers unobstructed views and a customisable design to suit any theme, accommodating up to 2,000 guests. The ballroom also features an event courtyard, ideal for cocktails, mingling, or floral displays.

Cutting-edge lighting, sound, and stage design enhance wedding events into mesmerising celebrations. The hotel’s



Andaz Delhi offers grand, customisable venues for both large and intimate weddings.

expert chefs will craft bespoke menus featuring both Indian and global flavours, from lavish buffets to personalised food stations. Culinary excellence is a key highlight at Andaz Delhi. Beyond ceremonial dinners, guests can visit the earth-friendly AnnaMaya Foodhall, Juniper Bar (India’s first gin bar), or enjoy healthy flatbreads alongside creative cocktails and coffee at Soul Pantry.

Located in Aerocity, Delhi, just minutes from the international airport, the hotel is easily accessible for outstation guests. The accommodation and dining options at Andaz Delhi are exceptional. The rooms and suites, with views of the airport or courtyard, are well-appointed and offer a range of amenities.

The over 2,000 square-foot Signature Suite can be booked for the wedding couple as their post-wedding retreat. The suite includes separate areas for entertainment and dining, making it convenient for the couple to meet special guests or invite them to a meal before saying goodbye. [www.andazdelhi.com](http://www.andazdelhi.com)



With 7,000 sq ft of event space, the Grand Sangam Ballroom at JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu offers a stunning setting for your wedding. (Right) Teesta is thoughtfully designed to be the perfect bridal room, with every detail carefully curated and luxurious furnishings that create an idyllic setting as you prepare for your special day.



With more than 24,000 square feet of banquet space, JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu offers a combination of multiple indoor and outdoor venues to be the perfect backdrop for your dream wedding. The lavish décor and state-of-the-art audio-visual technology at the banquets elevate both ceremonial celebrations and musical events, creating an unforgettable experience. The stunning Grand Sangam Ballroom can accommodate up to 1,000 guests. Mahi, another property inside the hotel which overlooks the serene Salt Water Pool, is known for its breathtaking sunset views. With a team of expert chefs on hand, planning a bespoke menu, including live stations, is a seamless experience.

The wide selection of luxurious accommodations, especially the sea-view rooms, offer the perfect sanctuary for the wedding couple and their guests to relax. For those looking to unwind, the infinity pool and spa services offer the ultimate relaxation, while children can enjoy their own pool. Located at Juhu Beach in North Mumbai, the hotel remains at the heart of the city. The ideal location allows guests to take early morning strolls on the beach. [www.jwmarriottmumbai.com](http://www.jwmarriottmumbai.com)

# A Flawless Wedding Experience by the Arabian Sea

World class facilities and premium accommodation coupled with personalised experiences make JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu a dream venue.

**LOCATED ON THE** shores of the stunning Arabian Sea, JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu, with its luxurious accommodation and facilities, is one of the most sought-after addresses in the city. Along with exquisite event spaces, certified wedding planners, and event managers to look over every detail, JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu excels as a grand wedding venue that ensures everything is taken care of from the very beginning. While preparations unfold behind the scenes, you can pamper yourself at the Quan spa and salon facilities in the hotel.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF ANDAZ DELHI; COURTESY OF JW MARRIOTT MUMBAI JUHU (2)



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# A CELEBRATION AS TIMELESS AS THE MOUNTAINS

Nestled in the serene embrace of the Himalayas, JW Marriott Mussoorie offers an enchanting setting for your dream wedding. From breathtaking views to bespoke experiences, every detail is crafted to perfection. Exchange vows amidst nature’s grandeur, celebrate love with curated menus from our master chefs, and let our dedicated team bring your vision to life.

To create such memorable moments with us, please contact our wedding specialist at +91 135-2635700 or email at [jw.dedjw.reservations@marriott-hotels.com](mailto:jw.dedjw.reservations@marriott-hotels.com)

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Village - Siya, Kempton Fall Road, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand - 248179, India.





◀ If the Tamara Kodai is perfect for a grand wedding, Tamara Coorg is ideal for a cosy honeymoon.

# A LUXE APPEAL

From offering a wedding venue to being a honeymoon destination, the unique appeal of The Tamara Resorts makes them a complete package.

**THE SERENE AND** gorgeous properties offered by The Tamara Resorts are all about charm. Tucked away in two of the best hill stations in India down south, the properties are a blend of luxury, sustainability, and bespoke hospitality. If the Tamara Kodai is perfect for a grand wedding, Tamara Coorg is ideal for a cosy honeymoon.

The Tamara Kodai, a five-star retreat located in Kodaikanal, fuses colonial charm with contemporary luxury. The 53 suites are designed to evoke timeless charm while offering the highest standards of comfort. The lawns, with the misty hills and verdant forests of this old hill station in the backdrop, are perfect for an outdoor ceremony. The lawns open up from the restaurants, and can be set up with seating, a DJ console, and a dance floor. If you want an indoor setting, the Puliyan hall with its wooden rafters

and large bay windows, offers an old-world charm. A large pre-function area and customisable light and sound equipment allow the hosts to plan a grand celebration. You may avail their wedding packages, which take care of every detail, from venues to food to service, for a seamless experience.

Once you're done with your nuptials in the mist of Kodaikanal, your honeymoon destination awaits. Nestling among the forests and coffee plantations of Coorg, The Tamara Coorg is a beguiling sanctuary, ideal for newlyweds to escape the noise and crowd and relax in the most tranquil setting. Sprawling across 184 acres of pristine natural beauty, this eco-luxury resort takes their guests' privacy very seriously. The cottages are spread across the hill-slope with forest views. Mornings filled with the aroma of fresh coffee, evenings under starlit skies, candlelit dinners by waterfalls, and exclusive couple's spa therapies are some of the highlights of your stay. Go on a long romantic walk along the mountain slope to connect with your better half, or enjoy a tailor-made trek in the hills if you want to enjoy the adrenaline together. You can also go on a Blossom-to-Brew coffee tour, to learn all about the aromatic brew and maybe buy some as souvenirs. [www.thetamara.com](http://www.thetamara.com)



Located in the heart of Delhi-NCR and just minutes from Indira Gandhi International Airport, the hotel combines elegant surroundings, tailored wedding experiences, and gourmet dining to make your ceremony memorable. The experienced team ensures that all the varying demands of a luxury wedding are flawlessly executed on the big day.

The hotel offers luxurious rooms and suites for the couple and their guests. The Presidential Suite, spread over approximately 2,960 square feet, can be transformed into a bridal suite, offering a private retreat for the couple. The hotel's chefs, skilled in both local and international cuisines, can curate a sumptuous menu for the reception. Sustainability is central to the hotel's culinary philosophy, and menus are crafted using fresh, locally sourced ingredients. This farm-to-table approach also supports local communities and reduces environmental impact.

While relaxing, guests can enjoy the various restaurants and bars, including a modern Japanese restaurant helmed by Michelin star winner Chef David Myers. If all the relaxation and indulgence by the pool makes you feel guilty, you may visit the hotel's fitness centre and spa. [jwdelhi.com](http://jwdelhi.com)

# Glamour & Grandeur

Convenient location and bespoke services make JW Marriott New Delhi Aerocity an excellent choice for a grand wedding ceremony.

THE GRAND CRYSTAL BALLROOM at JW Marriott New Delhi, with its impressive décor, is an ideal venue to say your vows in a glamorous set-up. Spread over approximately 12,000 square feet, it can be adapted for various events, from pre-wedding functions to the main ceremony. The spacious ballroom accommodates a large gathering without guests jostling. For intimate ceremonies, the ballroom can be divided into a smaller, customised space.

Top: The Grand Crystal Ballroom at JW Marriott New Delhi offers 12,000 sq ft of versatile space, perfect for both large and intimate wedding celebrations. Right: The hotel combines luxurious surroundings with bespoke services.



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE TAMARA RESORTS; FROM TOP: COURTESY OF JW MARRIOTT NEW DELHI AEROCITY (2)

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Designed with inspiration from Nandi Hills and Bangalore's silk, the resort's architecture exudes elegance and simplicity.

## CELEBRATE LOVE IN LUXURY

A combination of outdoor and indoor spaces makes JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa an idyllic wedding venue.

NESTLED IN THE SERENE NANDI HILLS, **JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa** sets a new standard for luxurious weddings in India. With its unmatched blend of natural beauty and sophisticated design, the resort offers a destination that rivals the world's most celebrated venues.

The property features a **pillarless convention center** spanning 22,000 sq. ft., accommodating over 1,500 seated guests or 3,500 for receptions. Smaller halls and meeting rooms cater to gatherings of 40 to 200, while the expansive **60,000 sq. ft. outdoor lawn** provides an idyllic setting for open-air celebrations, all with breathtaking vistas of the hills and lake.

Designed with inspiration from Nandi Hills and Bangalore's silk, the resort's architecture exudes elegance and simplicity, creating a seamless flow across its grand spaces. Its expert wedding team ensures every detail is flawlessly executed, creating an experience tailored to your vision.

The resort's dedicated culinary team curates bespoke menus for your guests, offering a range of cuisines crafted to delight every palate. Complementing the celebrations are world-class amenities, including luxurious pools, the rejuvenating SPA by JW, and a variety of activities to engage guests of all ages.

Having earned numerous accolades as one of India's premier wedding venues, the resort stands as a true fairy-tale destination. Whether you dream of a grand celebration or an intimate affair, **JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa** offers an unparalleled setting to celebrate love and create memories to last a lifetime.

[www.jwmarriottgolfshire.com](http://www.jwmarriottgolfshire.com)

## A Grand Wedding Marked by Spiritual Bliss

Elevate your wedding with unique experiences, from a Ganesha welcome to a tree-planting ceremony at Hyatt Regency Dehradun Resort and Spa.

NESTLED BENEATH THE HIMALAYAN slopes, the Hyatt Regency Dehradun Resort and Spa is an ideal venue for those who want a chic, relaxed ambience woven into their grand wedding plans. The hotel's unique wedding package, aptly titled 'Devbhoomi Weddings', includes intriguing options such as a propitious welcome with idols of Ganesha, an exclusive helicopter ride to Kedarnath, an evening *aarti*, and more. The hotel's dedicated team of wedding planners can help with the planning and arrangements.

Covering 4.25 acres, the property is located on the Dehradun-Mussoorie Road, the gateway to many scenic and spiritual destinations in Uttarakhand. Thanks to the hotel's versatile wedding venues, it is possible to host events in customised settings. The larger of the two lawns, the Regency Lawns, with the sprawling hills in the background, can hold up to 1,000 guests and is suitable for large gatherings. The smaller Vista Lawn, with the Malsi Forest on one side and the skyline of Dehradun on the other, can accommodate up to 450 guests. If you prefer an indoor celebration, the Regency Ballroom, with a capacity of up to 700 guests, looks resplendent bathed in natural light, modern décor, and a high ceiling. The ballroom, which has an attached pre-function area, can be divided into two to accommodate smaller parties and events.

Guest rooms, at this 263-key hotel—including 32 suites—offer views of the surrounding mountains or forests and are decorated with local



Hyatt Regency Dehradun Resort and Spa offers versatile wedding venues, including the expansive Regency Lawns and the intimate Vista Lawn.

art and craft. The culinary spread includes an assortment of local *pahadi* flavours as well as *dham*-style dinners. Apart from a classic banquet, the hotel can also arrange a 'farm-to-table' spread for those who wish to honour the environmental significance of the region.

Under the special wedding package, the celebration concludes with a tree-planting ceremony by the newlyweds in the hotel's kitchen garden, marking the auspicious beginning of a new chapter in their lives—and a reminder of an eco-friendly future. [www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)

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## A VERSATILE VENUE FOR YOUR DREAM WEDDING

Bring your unique wedding vision to life at the elegant and flexible Pullman New Delhi Aerocity.

**A GRAND WEDDING IN THE** kaleidoscopic setting of the Peacock Ballroom, with its high ceiling and lighting inspired by the national bird's feathers, or a simple ceremony in an open-air verdant setting—the Pullman New Delhi Aerocity has something for every taste.

The hotel's versatile venues provide the perfect backdrop for weddings of all sizes. The Peacock Ballroom, one of the largest pillar-less ballrooms in the city, covers over 1,100 sq metres and can be divided into three sections, ideal for rituals like mehendi or sangeet, or cocktail parties. State-of-the-art audio-visual technology is available



▲ The Courtyard offers a picturesque open-air setting for smaller, more intimate weddings; (left) the versatile venues at Pullman New Delhi Aerocity cater to weddings of all sizes, from grand celebrations to intimate gatherings.

to arrange spectacular shows, while ceiling projectors allow couples to share their stories in photos or videos. The pre-function area accommodates up to 600 guests.

For a more intimate celebration, the Courtyard offers a picturesque open-air setting. Smaller gatherings can make use of 13 co-meeting rooms. On the culinary front, the hotel offers bespoke culinary options and six dining venues.

The peacock theme runs throughout the hotel's interiors, from ceilings and walls to furnishings. With 670 rooms and suites between Pullman New Delhi Aerocity and Novotel New Delhi Aerocity, the hotel offers ample accommodation for larger weddings. The couple can also enjoy a quiet retreat in the Presidential Suite after the celebrations. A dedicated team of wedding planners works closely with couples to ensure their wedding is executed flawlessly. [pullmannewdelhi.com](http://pullmannewdelhi.com)

## Luxury Redefined

Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences is ideal for an urban destination wedding in a luxurious setting.

**CONVENIENTLY LOCATED**, within easy driving distance from both the airport and the city centre, Novotel Kolkata Hotel & Residences is ideal for an urban destination wedding in a luxurious setting. The property offers a versatile 30,000 square feet of banqueting spaces, across indoor and outdoor venues, to match all kinds of requirements. You may plan an intimate ceremony or a cocktail party on the rooftop terrace while the brilliantly decorated Eiffel Ballroom is an apt setting for a grand wedding and reception. Let the hotel's expert chefs curate bespoke menus ranging from traditional Indian dishes to global cuisine—be it for lavish dinners or small parties. To enjoy a stress-free time before the wedding, avail the services of the in-house wedding planners who will take care of all details, ensuring seamless planning and flawless execution.

The hotel offers 340 elegant rooms and suites as well as serviced apartments for the wedding couple and their guests to relax amidst luxury. The restaurants, cafes, and bars offer a wide choice of menus and drinks, which guests may enjoy during their stay. Guests may enjoy a light moment at Café Joy which serves a range of hearty dishes ranging from Bengali classics to global favourites, which you may pair with premium tea, fresh brew, wines and cocktails. Another popular dining den is the Ministry of Kebabs, which



offers signature kebabs made with premium ingredients using traditional recipes.

To ensure you feel fit and are glowing for the big day or for a relaxed feel after the wedding, the hotel offers a pleasant swimming pool, a state-of-the-art fitness centre, and a rejuvenating spa. For any last-minute shopping, the hotel is in close proximity with the best shopping malls, that offer both local and international brands. *For queries and reservations, reach out to our wedding specialist at- M: +918584077036 | E: rohan.shaw@accor.com*

▲ From a rooftop terrace for intimate ceremonies to the beautiful Eiffel Ballroom, Novotel Kolkata has it all.

# A Dream Wedding by the Red Sea

**Four Seasons Resort Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt**, with its picturesque setting and expert services, is a dream destination for a fairy-tale wedding.

By Uttara Gangopadhyay



*Clockwise from left:* The lobby of the Four Seasons Resort Sharm El Sheikh, the Royal Palm Garden and the stunning pool are perfect for those dreamy wedding photos.

make for a unique and memorable experience for all the guests.

After the wedding, the newlyweds can check into their one-bedroom suite, complete with a private pool and views of lush gardens and the Red Sea, where traditional Arabian luxury meets sleek, modern décor.

Guests can enjoy time at the resort's four swimming pools, including a spa pool with poolside service, or even go for a peaceful stroll along the two private golden-sand beaches.

Said to shelter some of the healthiest coral in the Egyptian Red Sea, Sharm El Sheikh is a world-renowned diving centre. Thanks to the arrangements with the resort's PADI dive centre, the bridal party (even beginners) have the option to explore the underwater treasures of the Red Sea.

A dream wedding takes careful planning. From designing a creative menu and selecting wedding cakes to arranging floral decorations and handling transport and accommodation, each detail requires meticulous attention. It's best to make use of the expert services offered by the hotel's on-site specialists to ensure every element is flawless.

**L**OOKING FOR A GLAMOROUS destination which is far from the ordinary? Nestled on the shores of the Red Sea and overlooking stunning mountain vistas, Four Seasons Resort Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, may be exactly what you're looking for. With an incredible beachfront, a choice of wedding venues, ultra-luxurious accommodation, a world-class spa, and swimming pools, alongside leisure and adventure activities, this resort promises an extraordinary wedding

experience. The renowned global brand ensures impeccable service every step of the way.

For those seeking an intimate gathering, the Pearl Garden can host up to 30 guests, while larger celebrations can be held with up to 1,500 guests in a private setting, with the breathtaking Red Sea as the backdrop. The luxurious spa offers not only the perfect pre-wedding pampering for the bridal party and guests, but also a venue for a cosy bachelorette party. The exclusive couples' suite works ideally for all private functions.

Up the fairy-tale quotient by exchanging vows on the beach under the stars, surrounded by lush swaying palms. Add excitement with a sunset cruise aboard a private yacht or embark on a desert safari adventure.

The hotel's 12 restaurants and bars offer a wide variety of dining experiences, including al fresco seating options. The venue also offers a beachfront Bedouin breakfast that will



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF PULLMAN NEW DELHI (2); COURTESY OF NOVOTEL KOLKATA HOTEL & RESIDENCES



# GET SET FOR AN URBAN FAIRYTALE WEDDING

Located in the heart of Bengaluru, The Ritz-Carlton is a five-star property that offers a mesmerising backdrop for an enchanting wedding ceremony.

WITH ITS ENTHRALLING design and artistic sense, The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore is perfect for bringing your most colourful wedding vision board to life. Its opulent décor, from glistening chandeliers to bespoke furnishings and curated art pieces, creates a charming backdrop for nuptial ceremonies and events. Whether it's a black-tie affair or a themed party, the property offers a wide range of venues that can be customised for both large and small gatherings. Take your pick from the selection of venues to host a cocktail reception, sangeet, mehndi, or other ceremonial events. The Ritz-Carlton offers well-appointed, luxurious accommodation, spread across guest rooms and suites for the wedding party to kick back and relax. The hotel's professional wedding planner and banquet concierge are available to assist the bride and groom with all the planning and execution of the events, from lavish floral arrangements to open-air ceremonies in the fountain-decked lawns or bespoke celebrations in the pillarless grand ballroom. The ballroom features an adjoining pre-



Host your dream wedding in the opulent and versatile venues of The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore, where luxury meets elegance.

function area and an open foyer, ensuring ease of movement for the bride, groom, as well as the guests. Go ahead and treat your wedding guests to customised menus that cover everything from local flavours to global cuisines, as well as gourmet cakes and confections, all prepared by the hotel's award-winning chefs. Pre-wedding celebratory feasts, indulgent farewell brunches, and every meal in between are meticulously designed to add an elegant touch to the celebration. Outside of the wedding feasts, guests can explore some of Bengaluru's finest dining spots located within the hotel. Riwarz specialises in Northwest Frontier cuisine, Izu offers contemporary Japanese, and also has a ceviche bar, The Lantern is an inspired Cantonese dim sum house, and The Market presents a global spread. Sip exquisite cocktails served at the rooftop bar, Bang, while enjoying the stunning cityscape, especially at night. For more information, log on to [ritzcarlton.com/bangalore](http://ritzcarlton.com/bangalore) or contact +91 9591801445.

## Regality Reigns

Located in the Pink City, Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre rolls out the red carpet for the ultimate luxe wedding.



MATCHING THE REGAL yet charming vibes of the Pink City of Rajasthan, the Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre is the perfect address to hold a memorable wedding. A 15-minute drive from Jaipur International Airport, the property stands tall, with services to make your big day a memorable one. With elegant lawns and lavishly decorated interiors, you can plan intimate celebrations or grand ceremonies with ease. The 70,000 square feet sprawling Mugdha Lawn is the apt choice for grand ceremonies, or for an intimate evening programme. Your *haldi* or mehndi ceremonies will shine bright at the sprawling poolside area, one of the largest in Jaipur. Let the *baraat* enter in style through the spacious area specially earmarked from them. Mugdha The Grand Ballroom is a pillar-less ballroom where you may host the wedding, *sangeet*, and reception. Attached to it is a large pre-function area. When it comes to food, your guests will enjoy the perks of royalty when they savour the delectable Rajasthan cuisine with a menu prepared by their Marwari Maharaj chef. One of the banes of a large wedding is finding enough space for guests to park their cars. The Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre's car parking area can hold up to 5,000 cars, and has a dedicated check-in lobby and an exclusive wedding entry for a seamless experience—a much needed respite when one travels to another city for a destination wedding. The Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC), managed by Accor, and operated by Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre, is located within the same complex. With two pillar-less exhibition halls, it is also perfect for large-scale weddings. [all.accor.com](http://all.accor.com) With elegant lawns and lavishly decorated interiors, you can plan intimate celebrations or grand ceremonies with ease at Novotel Jaipur Convention Centre.

FROM TOP : COURTESY OF RITZ CARLTON; COURTESY OF NOVOTEL JAIPUR CONVENTION CENTRE

COURTESY OF SHANGRI-LA



## TAILOR-MADE WEDDINGS, FLAWLESSLY EXECUTED

Bandhan by Shangri-La eliminates the stress of planning a grand wedding with its bespoke services. By Uttara Gangopadhyay

WHETHER YOU'RE PLANNING an elegant, traditional wedding in an Indian city or envisioning a contemporary destination celebration, Bandhan by Shangri-La is here to manage every detail of your luxury wedding. This service provides personalised assistance and takes into account the cultural traditions and preferences of both the couple and their families throughout the planning process. As Chris McFall, VP Sales for India and the Middle East, explains, "Bandhan by Shangri-La is a service designed to craft extraordinary wedding experiences, tailored down to the finest detail in key destinations that Indian couples desire." With over 90 luxurious hotels and resorts worldwide, Shangri-La is perfectly positioned in some of the most desirable wedding destinations, including New Delhi, Bengaluru, Muscat, Colombo, and Istanbul. For those seeking a traditional wedding in a modern setting, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi offers a newly revamped ballroom with cutting-edge lighting and sound systems. The flexible layout of the ballroom ensures seamless customisation. Shangri-La Bengaluru features bespoke offerings like a Skydeck and a grand ballroom that seats up to 300 guests, making it an ideal venue for luxury Indian weddings.



Bandhan by Shangri-La provides bespoke dining options, from curated menus to live stations, to suit every taste and preference.



Clockwise from left: With dedicated wedding specialists at each property, Bandhan by Shangri-La ensures every ritual is flawlessly executed, Shangri-La's venues offer flexible layouts to accommodate your guest list; whether you're celebrating in India, the Middle East, or beyond, Bandhan by Shangri-La offers a range of stunning wedding venues to suit every preference.



In Muscat, Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah is set against the dramatic Hajar Mountains and the Gulf of Oman, offering verdant gardens and amphitheatres with breathtaking views of rugged cliffs or tranquil ocean waters. Shangri-La Bosphorus in Istanbul provides a romantic backdrop by the Bosporus River—perfect for exchanging vows. Shangri-La Colombo, located between the Galle Face Green promenade and Beira Lake with stunning views of the Indian Ocean, boasts a variety of venues, including the grand, pillar-less Main Ballroom, the elegant Lotus Ballroom, intimate Spice Rooms, and the Level 4 Lawn. In addition to these spectacular venues, Bandhan by Shangri-La offers customised wedding services that cover every aspect of your celebration—from exquisite décor and gourmet dining to luxurious accommodation. Each Shangri-La property has dedicated wedding specialists who guide couples and their families through the planning process, ensuring every ritual is flawlessly executed. The team can also arrange pre- and post-wedding events, making the entire experience joyful and stress-free. Participating hotels offer attractive room and suite rates for the couple and their guests, along with specially curated menus to suit all tastes and preferences. The newlyweds are also presented with a celebratory gift. Thanks to partnerships with top industry brands, guests can enjoy top-tier services with minimal hassle. Leading partners include Tarun Tahiliani (trousseau partner), Tailor Made Experiences (wedding planners), Tribhovandas Bhimji Zaveri (jewellery), Dewar's Experiences (beverages and entertainment), Occasion Xperts (wedding décor), Kilta Coffee Co. (coffee), Khoya Mithai (sweets), and Expression India (gifting). [www.shangrilaindiaweddings.com](http://www.shangrilaindiaweddings.com) 🌐





## VIEW OF A KIND

Tucked away in scenic Gulmarg, The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa offers a picture postcard setting as a wedding venue.

**THE KHYBER HIMALAYAN RESORT & SPA** in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir, is proof that a picture-perfect setting for a wedding need not always be a remote location. Tucked beneath the snow peaks of the Pir Panjal mountain range, this luxury resort looks upon pine-clad hill slopes and verdant meadows. In summer, the hillside is covered with a profusion of colourful blooms. The property is a 10 minute-walk away from the famous golf course of Gulmarg and is within easy reach of the ski-lift, one of the highest in the world.

With more than 10,000 square feet of events spaces, the property offers a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities. The events spaces range from the Paradeez Gardens and an amphitheatre to stylishly designed banquets. Depending on the number of guests, the wedding



◀ *From left:* Tucked beneath the snow peaks of the Pir Panjal mountain range, this luxury resort looks upon pine-clad hill slopes and verdant meadows; the resort also provides services for hair and makeup, mehndi, wedding photography, and more.

couple can also host pre- and post-wedding events indoors, at the House of Sapphire or the Den. You may also choose from other venues such as the Banquet Garden or the garden with the Presidential Cottage. The property is equipped to handle up to 200 guests, and provides services for hair and makeup, mehndi, wedding photography, and more—so you don't have to go looking for anything and can be present in the moment to enjoy the celebration.

Sign up for a session at the Mediterranean themed spa by L'Occitane not only for the treatments from around the globe but also for the fantastic view from the treatment rooms. Other facilities include a temperature- controlled pool and a fitness zone. Kids of the wedding guests may drop in at the Igloo stocked with a range of games—so there's something for everyone to make memories at. [www.khyberhotels.com](http://www.khyberhotels.com)

## A French Connection

Do you need a reason to plan your wedding in France? Experience the picturesque landscapes, diverse locales, and exquisite food with your nuptials

**FROM PICTURE-PERFECT POSTCARD** settings to fine wine and food, France is one of Europe's charming countries. With a host of elegant locales set against some of the most picturesque backdrops, from chateaus and villas to vineyards and lavender fields, from quaint villages to cultural centres, wedding couples will find the perfect location for their dream wedding. From 49 UNESCO World Heritage sites, more than 40,000 castles and manors, and 8,000 museums

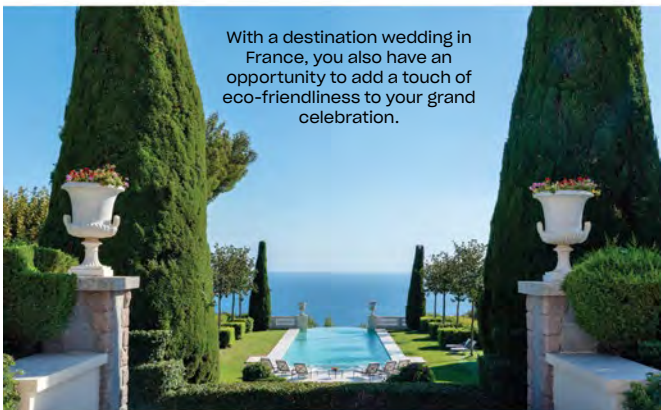


From quaint villages to cultural centres, wedding couples can find the perfect location for their dream wedding in France.

to host your pre-wedding and wedding festivities, you will be spoilt for choice. An exquisite collection of 31 palace hotels with elegant services are perfect for the much-desired fairy tale wedding.

In fact, over the past few years, France has been the destination of choice for several high-profile Indian weddings, one of the key reasons being easy air connectivity. The French capital, Paris, is linked with key Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru through direct flights—and a wide range of flight options are offered by other European and Middle Eastern carriers operating from India, which ensures connectivity to Paris and Nice as well. With efficient domestic connections, excellent roads, and an extensive rail network consisting of 2000 km of high-speed train tracks, travelling within France is a breeze. Wedding guests will also find it convenient to extend their stay and enjoy a short vacation in the beautiful country.

With a destination wedding in France, you also have an opportunity to add a touch of eco-friendliness to your grand celebration. French cities and town are all adapting eco-friendly measures in hosting big events. You can expect to receive guidelines, best practises, and a checklist all ensuring eco-friendly celebrations. France is committed to becoming Europe's first carbon-free economy by 2050—so the eco-conscious wedding planner knows they're making the right choice by picking France as their wedding country.

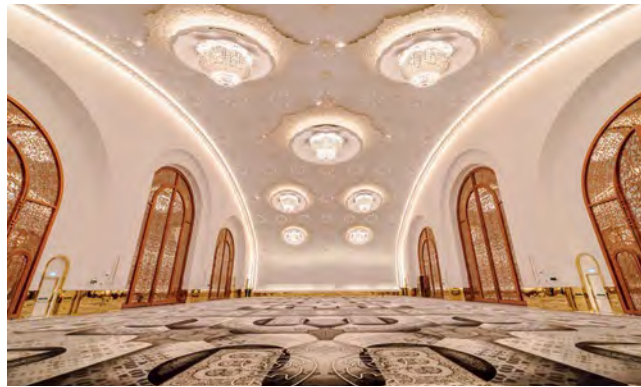


With a destination wedding in France, you also have an opportunity to add a touch of eco-friendliness to your grand celebration.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE KHYBER HIMALAYAN RESORT & SPA (2); COURTESY OF FRANCE TOURISM



*Clockwise from left:* Raffles Doha is one of city's most prestigious all-suite hotels with 132 bespoke suites; The Katara Hall is the largest ballroom in Doha; The Bridal Suite is perfect for brides and their crew to prepare for the big day.



## A Luxurious Escape for a Fairytale Wedding

Qatar's capital, Doha, offers the ultimate backdrop for a lavish wedding, thanks to the grandeur and charm of Raffles Doha, finds **Charu Chowdhary**.

**O**NE OF DOHA'S MOST prestigious all-suite hotels, Raffles Doha is opulence personified, making it the ideal destination for those looking to etch their love in the sands of time.

Imagine exchanging vows in lush gardens overlooking the gleaming skyline and the Arabian Gulf or hosting a grand soirée in the regal Katara Hall—the largest ballroom in Doha—boasting soaring 21-metre ceilings and intricate arabesque design, accommodating up to 2,500 guests. For a more intimate setting, the rooftop terrace promises an unparalleled experience, enhanced by dedicated Wedding Butler services that cater to every need.

Accommodations are equally impressive, with 132 bespoke suites,

including the Royal Suite—a duplex penthouse that spans two floors and is ideal for bridal showers. This lavish space features palatial domed ceilings, an outdoor terrace, and a private swimming pool, comfortably hosting up to eight guests. The Bridal Suite is designed to be your private haven on your special day. Couples can also indulge in the Spa Suites, complete with private pools, hammams, steam rooms, and jacuzzis. The Raffles Spa and Wellness offers luxurious skin treatments collaborating with world renowned brands to curate specialty treatments, ensuring brides radiate beauty on their special day.

Brides-to-be can join the renowned Dr Burgener's Skin Society a month prior to their wedding, enjoying 12 tailored spa rituals, including personalised facials and body treatments. This holistic approach combines ancient wisdom with advanced techniques for glowing, healthy skin. The Fitness Suite is also available for private wellness programmes, ensuring couples feel their best.

A harmonious blend of modernity and tradition, Raffles Doha reflects Qatar's rich heritage while providing a world-class bespoke experience. Guests



can immerse themselves in curated books adorning the gallery walls, savour customised refreshments from the in-suite boutique, or select their preferred scents from the in-suite scent library, creating a truly personalised stay. It's the meticulous attention to detail and warm hospitality that make Raffles Doha a favoured destination for couples.

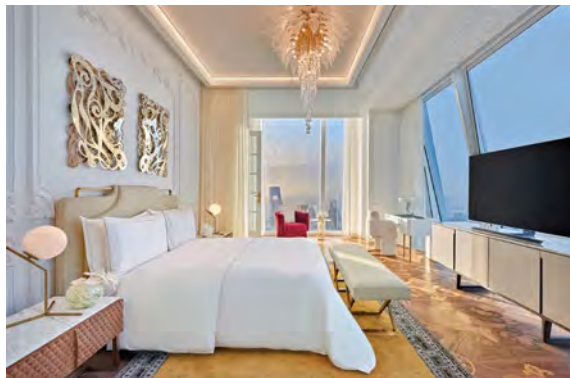
Dining options abound, catering to every palate with six diverse restaurants serving culinary delights around the clock. From fine dining at Alba, inspired by North Italian cuisine, to leisurely lunches at L'Artisan and Arabian-inspired afternoon tea at Malaki Lounge, there's something for everyone. For a relaxed evening, the Blue Cigar Writer's Lounge offers crafted beverages and Cuban-inspired nibbles.

At Raffles Doha, every moment is designed to create lasting memories, making it the ultimate destination for your dream wedding.



**RAFFLES**  
DOHA

**The Royal Suite features an outdoor terrace and a private pool.**



For more information, email [groupsales.rafflesdoha@accor.com](mailto:groupsales.rafflesdoha@accor.com)



# A MAJESTIC WEDDING IN THE HIMALAYAS

Celebrate your dream wedding at JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa, where luxury meets breathtaking mountain views.

**IF YOU AND YOUR PARTNER** love the mountains and dream of a wedding in the hills, look no further. Set against the scenic Garhwal Himalayas, JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa is a luxurious venue that perfectly complements your wedding plans. Whether you envision a romantic ceremony under the stars or a grand indoor celebration, the property offers a range of versatile venues that can be customised to suit the couple's preferences.

Completing the beautiful setting is a diverse culinary experience that blends local Garhwali flavours with international menus, ensuring that every event is a feast for the senses.

Located a two-hour drive from Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun, the resort sits in the picturesque town of Mussoorie, a nostalgic hill station surrounded by verdant slopes and valleys. The rooms and suites,



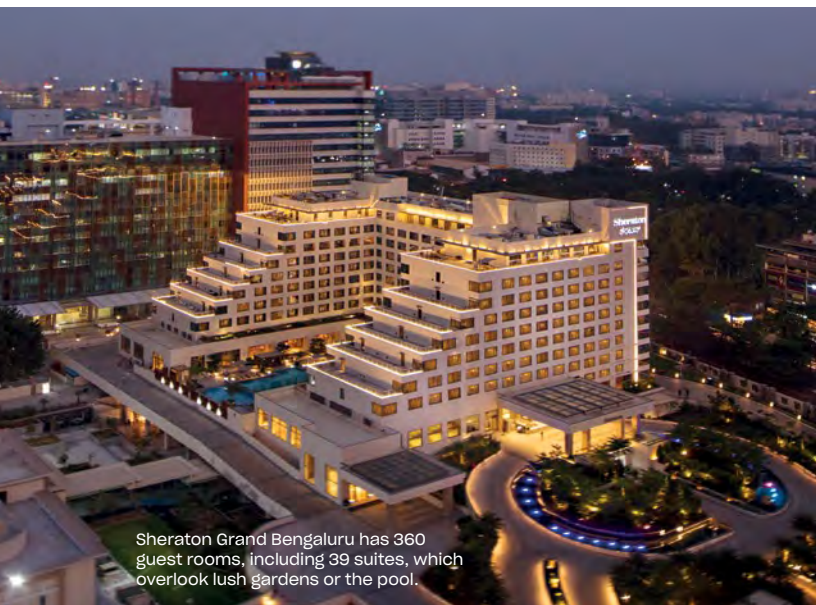
JW Marriott Mussoorie Walnut Grove Resort & Spa offers a luxurious mountain retreat for your wedding.

some featuring private balconies with views of the hill town, offer the highest levels of comfort. Large families or groups of friends will find the luxury suites, complete with living areas, particularly convenient. Guests can enjoy a variety of dining options at the property, with Teppan offering pan-Asian cuisine, the Wisteria Deck specialising in Mediterranean dishes, and the Trout House Grill & Bar serving delectable Indian fare made with locally sourced produce. The JW Café, an all-day dining option, offers an extensive buffet of Indian and international dishes.

For those looking to unwind, the Perch offers an alfresco seating area with views of the Himalayas, perfect for enjoying small bites and artisanal tea blends. Guests can also relax at the temperature-controlled indoor pool, visit the fitness centre, or indulge in rejuvenating treatments at the onsite Cedar Spa by L'Occitane. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)

**WHEN PLANNING A CITY WEDDING**, you often want the luxury of a destination, but the convenience of a location just a stone's throw away from your place. Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel and Convention Center is exactly a blend of that—with the twin advantage of a five-star luxury resort and an attached grand convention center, making it convenient to plan a wedding in a stylised urban setting. While the wedding couple and their families prepare for the grand occasion, guests can relax in the luxurious setting offered by the hotel. The property has 360 guest rooms, including 39 suites, which overlook lush gardens or the pool. The wedding couple may choose the Presidential Suite for themselves for a quiet getaway. Apart from enjoying the grand wedding feasts, guests can also explore the various dining options. Discover the essence of India with their restaurant Zarf, savour delicacies at their all-day dining restaurant Feast, and bask in the evening breeze at the outdoor poolside restaurant, Plunge. At the Shine Spa for Sheraton, the wedding party can indulge in signature treatments, such as foot baths, manicures, and body scrubs, to prep well for the hectic functions. The spa also offers personalised wellness therapies—so say goodbye to wedding stress, and look your best.

The convention center stands out with its expansive and versatile event spaces, including elegant ballrooms, which makes it easy to plan an elaborate ceremony. It can accommodate up to 2,000 people. They also have smaller event spaces that can be further customised to hold an intimate wedding or small scale pre-event functions. All event spaces are fitted with various state-of-the-art features. With the help of the property's culinary team, you may plan an elegant party or a lavish dinner with a menu embracing the various cuisines on offer. Engage in the services of trained wedding planners, who can help you to plan an elaborate function with personalised services, customised décor, and other requirements, and ensure your vision board is executed flawlessly. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)



Sheraton Grand Bengaluru has 360 guest rooms, including 39 suites, which overlook lush gardens or the pool.

## A Special Wedding Story

Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel and Convention Center's offerings make hosting a breeze



**Clockwise from left:** Brazilian Victoria's Secret Model Isabeli Fontan married Diego Ferrero in a gorgeous seaside wedding at Soneva Fushi resort; celebrate love in the lap of luxury with a Soneva wedding, where every detail is tailored to perfection; from champagne to sunsets, Soneva creates the perfect setting for your dream wedding.

## 'I Do' with a View: Stunning Island Wedding Venues

Soneva's award-winning luxury resorts across Maldives and Thailand offer a range of facilities and bespoke wedding packages that will make planning destination weddings a breeze.

**By Uttara Gangopadhyay**

**P**LANNING FOR A DREAM destination wedding? It can be great fun poring over travel brochures and selecting a beautiful locale of your choice. Then the reality check kicks in. Planning the package—from transportation to accommodation to food to ceremonies—is not easy. Soneva, with its award-winning luxury resorts across Maldives and Thailand, could be the answer to your problems. Set on remote islands, Soneva's properties are breathtaking in their natural beauty and exquisite design. Their wedding coordinators are trained to take care of the smallest details.

Do you want an intimate wedding celebration with a close group of family and friends? Or, a large gathering with lots of fun and frolic? For those who prefer to celebrate in complete privacy, entire island and resort buyouts are also available.

Soneva Fushi, on Maldives' Baa Atoll, is their first barefoot luxury resort—setting the tone for connecting with the natural world and ensuring an ecologically sustainable holiday—located in the UNESCO-recognised Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve. Apart from the overwater villas with their own pool decks and a waterslide that plunges into the blue ocean below, the resort also has island villas ranging from one bedroom to a vast nine-bedroom complex, an

ideal option for those who want a small gathering for the wedding. For a surprise party, you can take your guests on a fine dining zipline experience at the elevated dining platform overlooking the ocean.

Soneva Jani, in the Noonu Atoll of the Maldives, is creatively designed across the turquoise lagoon, and includes a mix of overwater villas and vast island residences. Ranging from one to five bedrooms, each villa or residence offers a panoramic view of the surroundings. The one-bedroom beachfront villa, tucked away among the mangroves, is an ideal getaway for the newlyweds when they want to escape the crowd around them.

Personalised service and privacy are the hallmarks of Soneva Secret 2024 in the remote Makunudhoo Atoll of the Maldivian archipelago. With only 14 villas, ranging from overwater to island settings, each villa is serviced by a dedicated staff of three—a Barefoot Guardian, a Barefoot Assistant, and an expert chef. One of the most sought-after accommodations here is the one-bedroom Crusoe Villa with its retractable roof—ideal for enjoying the night sky—and private pool, among other things.

Located in Thailand's Koh Kood Island, Soneva Kiri is ideal for the large gatherings, with its 32 eco-friendly private villas, ranging from one to five bedrooms. The resort offers multiple natural settings, from beachfronts to tropical jungles to cliffs.

All Soneva resorts offer a range of facilities, from a selection of fine dining with meals curated by expert chefs, wellness packages, and activities, including water sports.

Each bespoke wedding package also includes a wedding celebrant to guide the couple through the ceremony and make sure every detail is perfect, be it delicate bouquets with handpicked flowers, ceremonial decorations with candles, jungle foliage and local coconuts, a framed wedding certificate and photograph of their wedding day, a wedding cake made to the couple's choice, a bottle of champagne or sparkling wine to celebrate their union. Each resort has a team of digital storytellers, whose services may be availed on request. The team will create memorable stories of the celebration through a combination of traditional wedding shoots, drone videography, and underwater footage.

FROM TOP: JW MARRIOTT MUSSOORIE WALNUT GROVE RESORT & SPA; COURTESY OF SHERATON GRAND BENGALURU WHITEFIELD HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTER







## LUXURY WEDDINGS WITH A TROPICAL TWIST

Shangri-La Colombo offers a blend of luxury and convenience for a well-planned wedding.

**SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO IS A** luxury address on the picturesque Galle Face Green, offering an ideal setting for those seeking to say their wedding vows in a tropical locale with the conveniences of an urban environment in the Sri Lankan capital. Guests can explore the Indian Ocean seafront, local attractions, and regional cuisine. A blend of modern luxury, exceptional service, and versatile venues make it a one-stop destination for a grand celebration. The hotel's wedding planners ensure a flawless event.

Shangri-La Colombo offers a variety of sophisticated venues for intimate ceremonies or extravagant receptions, from the



◀ Shangri-La Colombo's luxurious accommodations offer stunning views of the Indian Ocean, Beira Lake, or the city skyline. (Far left) The hotel's blend of modern luxury, exceptional service, and versatile venues make it a one-stop destination for a grand celebration.

grand ballrooms to a stunning rooftop lawn. The pillar-less Shangri-La Ballroom, the largest in the country, is bathed in natural light, with a high ceiling and exclusive pre-function areas. The Lotus Ballroom features beautiful flower-shaped chandeliers. The rooftop lawn, with views of Colombo's skyline, is perfect for garden weddings or al fresco receptions.

The hotel offers a range of accommodations, from guest rooms and suites to serviced apartments, with views of the Indian Ocean, Beira Lake, or the city. Pamper your guests with a curated bespoke menu, from exquisite dinners to indulgent buffets, prepared by the hotel's expert chefs who helm the award-winning restaurants. The hotel is directly connected to One Galle Face Mall, Sri Lanka's premier international shopping and entertainment destination, should the wedding couple need some last-minute accoutrements or guests desire a spot of shopping or entertainment. There are also spas.

When the memorable celebration draws to a close, the newlywed couple may choose to stay back at the hotel for their honeymoon. [www.shangri-la.com/colombo](http://www.shangri-la.com/colombo)

## A Celebration of Love in Zanzibar

Enjoy a dazzling beachside destination wedding and then stay on for a cosy honeymoon at the picturesque Neptune Pwani Beach Resort & Spa located in the archipelago off the coast of East Africa.



◀ Neptune Pwani Beach Resort & Spa offers a stunning setting for a dream wedding. Below: Enjoy romantic meals by the beachfront.

**ENJOY A DAZZLING BEACHSIDE** destination wedding and then stay on for a cosy honeymoon at the picturesque Neptune Pwani Beach Resort & Spa on the north-east coast of Zanzibar, on the Kiwengwa shoreline.

With breathtaking ocean views, lush gardens, and luxurious facilities, the resort, located 45km from the international airport, offers an unforgettable experience. The property combines traditional Zanzibar style with modern design. All rooms have a balcony with a partial ocean view, while the beachfront suites feature an in-room Jacuzzi.

From extravagant weddings to intimate ceremonies, the resort offers versatile venues to suit every style. Along with the beachfront, there's a tranquil garden surrounded by tropical greenery and an elegant banquet hall. Some venues accommodate up to 1,000 guests. If you're keen to serve Indian cuisine, the hotel offers a dedicated, authentic Indian menu, alongside international fare. Guests can explore various bars and restaurants, including a beach bar at the resort.

After the wedding, newlyweds can extend their stay for a honeymoon in luxurious beachfront rooms, enjoy rejuvenating spa treatments, and personalised services. Relax by the infinity pool, savour romantic dinners, or explore the island's natural beauty. [neptunehotels.com](http://neptunehotels.com)



◀ Clockwise from left: Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay offers stunning beach and cityscape views for weddings; the hotel is located just 15 minutes from Bahrain International Airport; the Al Bahrain Ballroom can host up to 450 guests.

## A Private Island Paradise For Destination Weddings

The Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay is the perfect location for your dream nuptials, perfectly blending exclusivity, luxury and culture, all in one dream destination.

**T**HE FOUR SEASONS Hotel Bahrain Bay is what dream weddings are made of. Set against the pristine backdrop of white sand beaches and stunning cityscapes, if elegance and exclusivity is what you seek, then this is the perfect venue for your wedding vows. Located just a quick 15-minute drive from the Bahrain International Airport, this luxurious oasis, inspired by the Art Deco era, perfectly blends the beauty of the sea and the vibrant energy of Bahrain's capital. Situated on its own private island in the heart of the city, the hotel is an ideal venue for exclusive buyout weddings, offering a unique and intimate setting that ensures your special day is nothing short of extraordinary.

### OPULENT ELEGANCE

The Al Bahrain Ballroom is the perfect setting for your grand celebrations as it can host up to 450 guests. The Ballroom has a grand entrance for an unforgettable Baraat procession and spacious dining area adorned with sparkling chandeliers, while the adjacent terrace offers stunning views of lush gardens and the shimmering sea, perfect for intimate gatherings of up to 180 guests. The lush lawn, set against the stunning backdrop of Bahrain Bay and the cityscape, provides an elegant dining experience for up to 250 guests.

Conveniently located next to the Ballroom is the luxurious Bridal Suite, designed for relaxation and pampering. Complete with multiple changing rooms and a private photo studio, it's the ideal space for the bride and her family to prepare for the big day. The location of the suite ensures a seamless transition for a truly memorable entrance.

### CULINARY EXCELLENCE

No wedding is complete without exquisite dining, and Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay excels in this area. The talented culinary team offers a range of customised menus tailored to your preferences, featuring delicious Indian Cuisine and more that will impress your guests. For an extraordinary experience, the hotel can even bring in renowned chefs to create a culinary masterpiece. Additionally, the hotel's award-winning restaurants, including the celebrated chef Wolfgang Puck's offerings, provide even more delightful options.



### ROMANTIC HONEYMOON RETREAT

After the celebrations, the wedded pair can continue their love story with a honeymoon at the 230 sq m Royal Suite at Four Seasons Hotel Bahrain Bay, known as the Honeymoon Suite for exclusive buyout weddings. It features breathtaking panoramic views of the Manama skyline. The many services offered by the hotel ensure that romance flourishes in every corner, whether you are strolling along the beach, enjoying a private dinner at the seaside cabana, or indulging in the Night Spa experience at the hotel's luxurious indoor pool, which is reserved just for you.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF SHANGRI-LA COLOMBO; COURTESY OF NEPTUNE HOTELS (2)





Lizard Island offers serene, luxurious island accommodations, providing private beach access and an idyllic setting for a secluded honeymoon getaway; (left) enjoy a scenic helicopter ride with Nautilus Aviation to a private sandy cay in the Coral Sea.



# A HONEYMOONERS' DELIGHT

An exciting holiday or a quiet hideaway? No matter what your choice of honeymoon is, Queensland has something for everyone.

**SWIM WITH THE COLOURFUL** coral or relax on a secluded beach; or stay in a Luxury lodge in an ancient rainforest. Queensland, especially Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef region, offers world-class hospitality and exclusive experiences, making it perfect for any honeymoon.

If solitude is what you seek, head to Queensland's northern islands. Experience barefoot luxury at Lizard Island, Pelorus, or Orpheus Island. Each resort provides intimate villas with private beach access. Other coastal hideaways include Thala Beach Resort and Pullman Port Douglas Sea Temple. Alternatively, immerse yourself in the lush Daintree Rainforest. Eco-luxe suites, wellness spas, and private pools at Silky Oaks Lodge ensure a relaxing stay.

For a deeper connection to the rainforest, sign up for the Mossman Gorge Dreamtime Walk, where local indigenous guides share their culture and traditions. Enhance the romantic atmosphere with a candlelit, chef-prepared dinner under the stars at a rainforest retreat in Cairns.

Enjoy a gourmet picnic on a private cay in the Coral Sea, with a helicopter ride from Nautilus Aviation. For wildlife encounters, Hartleys Crocodile Adventures will get you up and close to native Australian animals and some very famous crocs. Take a private charter to the UNESCO-listed Great Barrier Reef for an unforgettable swimming, snorkelling, or a diving experience in crystal-clear waters.

# Vows In Thailand

With more Indians choosing Thailand as their preferred destination wedding country, the host country is reciprocating with the best offerings.

**THAILAND, WITH ITS MESMERISING SCENERY** and attractions, has always been a favourite travel destination for Indians, which gradually progressed to choosing it as a preferred country for a destination wedding.

The choices for wedding locations in Thailand range from pristine beaches of Khao Lak, Koh Samui, Phuket, Krabi, Pattaya, Rayong, and Hua Hin, to lush green mountains of Chiang Mai and Khao Yai—or a city and riverside wedding in Bangkok. It is said that over 400 Indian couples have tied the knot in Thailand over the past few years, with number of guests ranging from approximately 200 to 500.

The ease of travelling to Bangkok from India, including visa exemptions, has also been one of the key reasons that an increasing number of Indian couples are choosing Thailand as their preferred wedding destination.

Thanks to a close link with Indian culture, Thailand appreciates the nuances of Indian weddings and the customs. As a result, wedding venues in the country can easily cater to the various requirements of Indian weddings, such as the space needed, the importance of a lush setup, elaborate decor, celebrity entertainers, floral arrangements, ice sculptures, a memorable culinary experience, and more. Different venues offer competitive pricing without cutting corners about arrangements.

Interestingly, Thailand also encourages wedding hosts to be eco-friendly and contribute to the society. 'Celebrations with Care', a Thailand-based project initiated by TAT New Delhi, raises awareness



With a close link with Indian culture, Thailand appreciates the nuances of Indian weddings and the customs.

and encourages Indian wedding groups to celebrate their memorable moments with good deeds, such as environmental support. The campaign focused on sustainable and eco-friendly activities like zero food wastage, converting food into manure, and feeding underprivileged locals.

Thailand Tourism has truly extended a hand to Indian wedding parties by several benefits. Thailand not only offers facilities to Indian couples to hold their weddings in their country, but has also adopted an incentive scheme for weddings and celebrations. Wedding planners organising a destination wedding in the country for a minimum of 150 people and minimum stay of three nights will receive a host of incentives, as well as other benefits. Currently, the plan will run till August 15, 2025.



A couple enjoys a private moment on the beach as the sun sets over the tranquil waters of D Maris Bay. Below: D Maris Bay is perfectly positioned on Turkey's stunning Datça Peninsula.

# Wedding by the Bay

Nestled between the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, D Maris Bay offers a breathtaking setting for a dream destination wedding, where natural beauty meets unparalleled luxury. **By Uttara Gangopadhyay**

**P**ERCHED ON A cliff off turquoise beaches, the charming D Maris Bay is located on the Datça Peninsula on the south-western coast of Turkey.

The cerulean waves—the Aegean and the Mediterranean seas meet here—and the silver beach form the perfect backdrop to a grand destination wedding doubling up as a venue for a grand wedding reception. For a small gathering, the Green Hill perched on elevated grounds and surrounded by pine forests, offer a more genial setting. The verdure setting of Green Hill is also perfect for a champagne reception in the evening.

As part of the wedding festivities, you may surprise your guests with a sunset gathering on the beach or plan a soiree accompanied by curated drinks and dishes.

The Mytha Spa, with its menu of wellness therapies, an indoor pool, a steam room and sauna, is ideal for those seeking nourishing and rejuvenating treatments.

Accommodation at D Maris Bay includes rooms, suites and a sprawling villa, each overlooking the scenic surroundings, from the bay to the volcanic mountains. Post wedding, the newlyweds may choose one of the elegant suites as their private sanctuary. Should they want to escape the crowd altogether, the couple may take off in D Maris Bay's private yacht, Alia Open Sea. Those looking for some fun activities during their honeymoon may go wakeboarding, surfing, or catch a panoramic view of the bay and its surroundings by taking a private helicopter ride. As you touch down on the

helipad, your exclusive dinner awaits, with a personalised menu.

The hotel's diverse facilities—ranging from pools and fitness centres, to culinary delights and adventure activities—ensure that everyone has a wonderful time. The hotel has world-famous restaurants, bars and lounges serving a range of culinary delights including Zuma, the Greek tavern Manos and La Guérite for French cuisine.

If there's some last-minute shopping you need, then D Maris Bay invites you for an exquisite retail experience with its wide selection of global designer brands including 100% Capri, Dior.

D Maris Bay is less than two hours' by road from Dalaman International Aiport and a little over two hours' from Milas-Bodrum Airport.

**Green Hill provides the perfect backdrop for an intimate champagne reception, offering guests a peaceful, verdant escape. (Right) Discover pristine white-sand beaches, including Maris Beach and Silence Beach, each offering its own unique charm.**



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF QUEENSLAND (2); SHUTTERSTOCK





◀ Clockwise from left: Host your dream wedding in the expansive Summit Ballroom, with stunning city views; whether it's a grand suite or a cosy room, Novotel Mumbai International Airport ensures your guests experience comfort and luxury; the 190' AMSL Rooftop Lounge is an elevated space for unforgettable cocktails and after-parties.



## YOUR PERFECT WEDDING, SET AGAINST THE STUNNING MUMBAI SKYLINE

Let the city of dreams be the backdrop to your perfect day, with tailored services and world-class amenities at Novotel Mumbai International Airport. **By Charu Chowdhary**

**FOR THOSE LOOKING** to etch their wedding soirée into the sands of time, Novotel Mumbai International Airport presents itself as an exceptional choice, merging modern architecture, contemporary design and personalised service to provide a truly bespoke experience. Located near Mumbai International Airport, the property offers 268 well-appointed, luxurious rooms, creating an oasis of comfort and style which is ideal for family and friends gathered to celebrate the union of love.

Versatile event spaces such as the hotel's architectural masterpiece, the Summit Ballroom, expands over 5,135 sq ft and can host up to 650 guests. Designed as a pillarless space, it stands unrivalled for elaborate wedding setups, seating arrangements and décor. Thanks to its location on the 11th floor, it is bathed in natural light during the day, while transforming into a stunning space by night, allowing the entire cityscape of Mumbai to serve as the backdrop. It also includes a large pre-function area, and is conveniently located for cocktail receptions or welcome ceremonies.

For more intimate gatherings, there's The Harbour Room, located on the ground floor, offering seamless access to the hotel lobby and an adjacent private pre-function area, making it perfect for pre-wedding functions like *mehendi* and *sangeet* for up to 200 guests. The Carmichael Room, also situated on the 11th floor with picturesque city views, is ideal for hosting up to 100 guests.

Adding a touch of exclusivity, the hotel's 190' AMSL Rooftop Lounge is perfect to enjoy the stunning Mumbai skyline. This elevated space is ideal for cocktail parties and after-party celebrations, allowing guests to unwind

completely. With a menu that features delectable cuisine, an extensive selection of premium spirits, and lively music, 190' AMSL sets the scene for a memorable night.

Accommodation is a vital part of the wedding experience, and Novotel Mumbai International Airport ensures that guests feel right at home. The spacious rooms, from cosy single rooms to family suites, are inspired by Mumbai's vibrant culture and pay homage to the spirit of "Aamchi Mumbai," while being crafted with complete attention to detail. The comprehensive amenities too, enhance the guests' experience to another level: a luxurious spa, a fully equipped gym, and the outdoor pool offer a moment's escape from all the beautiful chaos.

The dining experience at the hotel is as exceptional as it is varied. Food Exchange, the hotel's buffet restaurant, offers a rich variety of local and international dishes, live stations, and a menu that adapts to the preferences of the guests. The Gourmet Bar, on the other hand, offers an elegant and casual ambiance, with a menu that highlights regional flavours and global favourites. The culinary team works closely with the guests to create personalised menus, making every meal a memorable one.

The hotel's dedicated event-planning team manage every detail, from coordinating travel and accommodation arrangements to creating exquisite décor, floral arrangements, and entertainment. With custom-designed menus and seamless execution, Novotel Mumbai International Airport ensures that each wedding celebration is a unique and stress-free occasion that feels deeply personal and unforgettable. 🌐

COURTESY OF NOVOTEL MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



◀ **OBLU SELECT Sangeli** combines vibrant luxury with stunning beaches; (below) it delivers unforgettable experiences in the Maldives for every type of traveller, be it budget or luxury.

## A Slice of Paradise in the Maldives

Colours of Oblu is a vibrant collection of Maldives resorts, offering a range of experiences from budget to luxury for every traveller.

**C**LOURS OF OBLU is a vibrant collection of island resorts in the Maldives offers something truly special for travellers from all walks of life. The properties span a range of sub-brands, from budget-friendly options to 5-star, premium, all-inclusive resorts. With a mix of engaging experiences, from adventure and lively party vibes to tranquil corners, pristine beaches, and pure escapism, this collection truly brings honeymoon dreams to life in the exotic islands of the Maldives.

If you're in the mood for romance, the multiple award-winning, adults-only haven of OBLU SELECT Lobigili is the ideal destination. In the Maldivian language of Dhivehi, 'Lobi' means love and 'Gili' means island. Lobigili is, in essence, the island of love. This new five-star resort boasts 68 picture-perfect villas, with views of pristine white beaches and sparkling

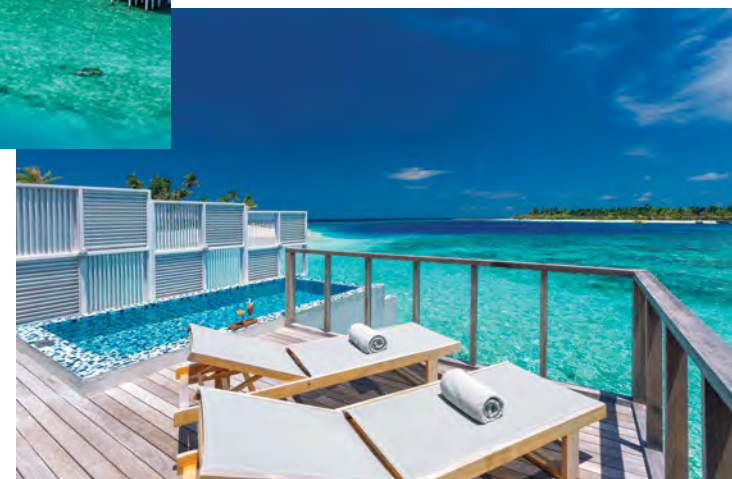
turquoise waters. When you're ready to step out of your secluded paradise, there are plenty of delightful choices. Indulge in all-day dining at Ylang Ylang, relax by the pool at The Swing Bar, or enjoy mouth-watering seafood grills from the Gaadiya-17 Food Truck. With the Lobi Plan™, you can savour a secluded getaway, from colourful sundowners to exotic undersea dining at Only BLU—the largest underwater restaurant in the Maldives. Immerse yourself in the easy-going Maldivian rhythm and allow our team of island hostesses to care for you while you create heartfelt connections and rediscover love, again and again.

At OBLU SELECT Sangeli, you'll have the best of both worlds. you'll experience the best of both worlds. After a scenic 50-minute speedboat ride from Malé International Airport, you'll be warmly

welcomed on Sangeli Island. Stay in one of the 137 luxurious and vibrant villas, each offering a fully stocked complimentary minibar and direct beach or lagoon access.

The six fabulous honeymoon villas are particularly popular with couples, featuring design highlights such as a red circular bathtub beneath a mirrored skylight, along with a range of special services.

You can also visit One Banyan, a delightful mini-island with a garden spa and an adults-only pool. A blend of flavours awaits you under the Indulgence Plan™, which includes all-day dining, pool bars, and two speciality restaurants—Just Grill and Justwok. Explore the sparkling white beaches and turquoise lagoons at leisure, meet the resident marine biologist to learn about coral conservation efforts, and take a swim around the island's exotic coral gardens.



◀ **Far left: OBLU SELECT Lobigili** is an adults-only haven in the Maldives, ideal for couples looking for romance and tranquility; it offers stunning beaches, underwater dining, and unmatched serenity.





With breathtaking views and luxurious settings, Della Resorts is a top destination wedding venue in Lonavala; (left) it offers over 20 unique venues for an unforgettable wedding experience.



## WHERE LOVE MEETS LUXURY

Della Resorts in Lonavala offers bespoke wedding venues, exceptional service, and unparalleled luxury for your dream celebration.

**DELLA RESORTS, NESTLED IN THE SERENE** hills of Lonavala, offers one of the country's most luxurious wedding destinations. Surrounded by tranquil views, it provides an ideal backdrop for couples seeking an unforgettable celebration of love, whether intimate or grand.

With over 20 indoor and outdoor venue options, Della Resorts offers a diverse array of settings. Exchange vows with breathtaking mountain views or host an extravagant reception in a grand ballroom and outdoor garden that accommodates over 2,000 guests. Whether it's a private garden ceremony or a chic poolside event, every venue is designed to deliver a unique experience.

As the recipient of multiple awards, Della Resorts is a leader in

destination weddings. With exquisite venues, exceptional culinary options and expert wedding planners, Della Resorts turns your matrimonial dreams into reality. Exclusive bridal spa packages and stunning backdrops ensure that your celebration is nothing short of extraordinary.

What truly sets Della Resorts apart is its unwavering commitment to personalisation. Each wedding is treated as a bespoke story, with culturally relevant planning, professional entertainment choreography, expert photography, and seamless post-wedding management. From consultation to the final dance, every detail is meticulously crafted, ensuring that you get to be present in the moment on your big day. [dellaresorts.com](http://dellaresorts.com)



▲ The brand's signature bridal umbrella, complete with golden kaleeras, adds a touch of magic to the bride's entrance. (Below) Pataaree's bridal collection also includes elegant jewellery boxes, smaller storage trunks, and luxury accessories.



## Celebrating Timeless Traditions

Discover timeless bridal gifts that beautifully blend tradition with modern elegance.

AS THE WEDDING SEASON draws to a close and the new year beckons with its celebrations, finding the perfect gift for the bride can seem like a daunting task. However, Pataaree offers a beautiful solution with its exquisite collection of bespoke, handcrafted bridal keepsakes. Designed to combine elegance, heritage, and personal significance, Pataaree's creations are more than just gifts—they are meaningful treasures that celebrate the bride's unique journey

### Handcrafted with Love and Care

The name "Pataaree" is derived from the Punjabi word "Pitaara," meaning a box or container. But these are no ordinary boxes. Pataaree's pieces are vessels of love, tradition, and memory, each one carefully crafted to become a cherished family heirloom. At the heart of Pataaree's bridal collection are its signature trousseau trunks—spacious yet refined, perfect for storing everything from wedding attire to precious jewellery or sentimental keepsakes. With intricate designs and luxurious finishes, these trunks are not only practical, but also a personal statement, reflecting the bride's style and family heritage.

While the trousseau trunks are a standout, Pataaree offers much more. The collection



▲ At the heart of Pataaree's bridal collection are its signature trousseau trunks.

also includes elegant jewellery boxes, smaller storage trunks, and luxury accessories—all imbued with a sense of continuity and love. For example, the brand's signature bridal umbrella, complete with golden kaleeras, adds a touch of magic to the bride's entrance, while delicate keepsake boxes provide a safe and beautiful place for rings, perfumes, or other precious mementoes.

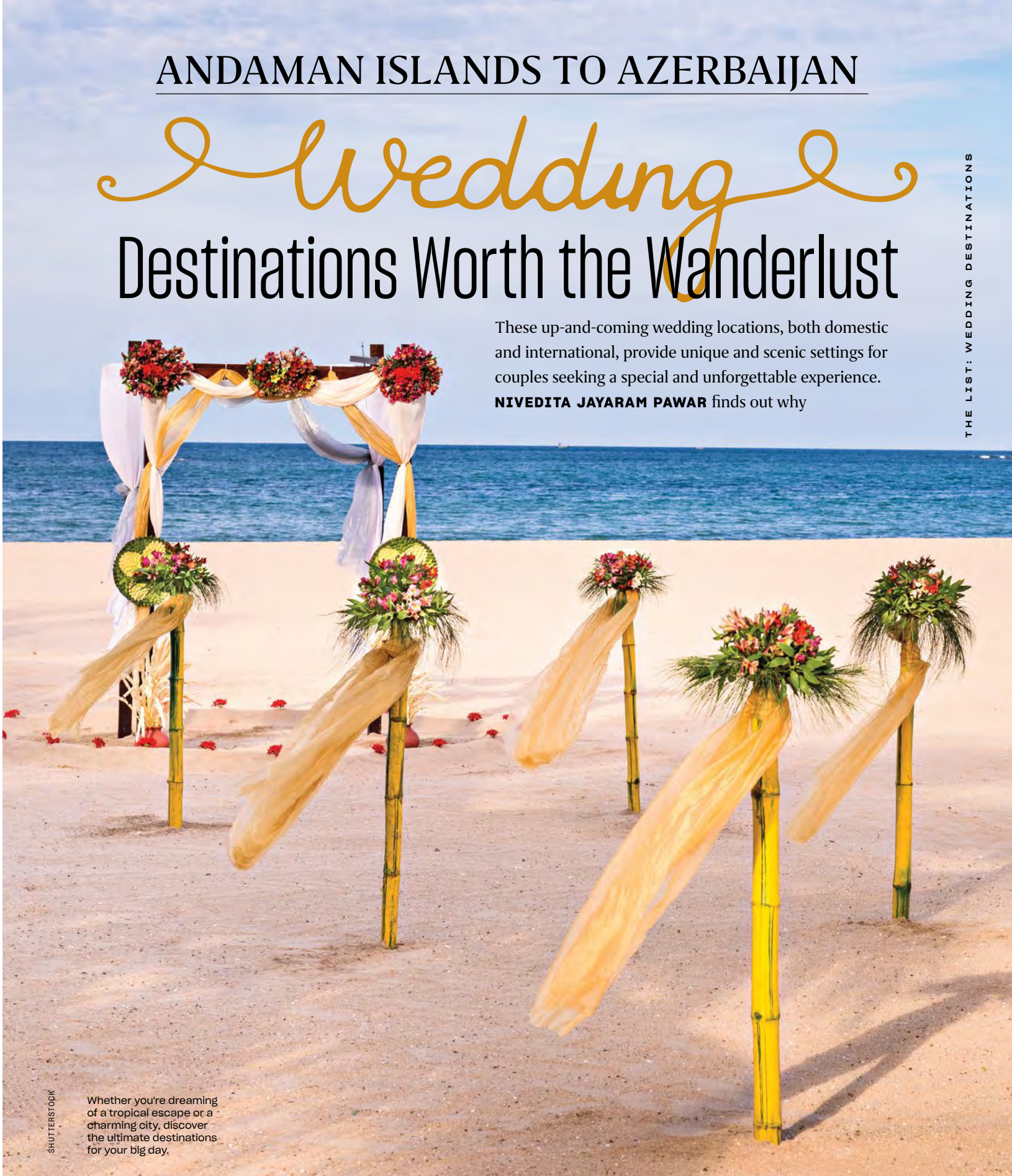
What truly sets Pataaree apart is its focus on legacy. Each handcrafted piece is designed not only to mark a special day, but to be passed down through generations, carrying the memories and love of the wedding day into the future. 🌿

## ANDAMAN ISLANDS TO AZERBAIJAN

# I Wedding Destinations Worth the Wanderlust

These up-and-coming wedding locations, both domestic and international, provide unique and scenic settings for couples seeking a special and unforgettable experience.

**NIVEDITA JAYARAM PAWAR** finds out why



SHUTTERSTOCK

Whether you're dreaming of a tropical escape or a charming city, discover the ultimate destinations for your big day.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF DELLA RESORTS (2); COURTESY OF PATAAREE (4)



## 1. Leh, Ladakh

Leh is known for its breathtaking views of the Himalayas, majestic monasteries, turquoise blue waters of Pangong lake and sand-hued mountains. But when it comes to weddings, it offers so much more. The luxurious Grand Dragon Hotel in the heart of Leh, is one of the most popular wedding venues in the region, followed by Ladakh Sarai a traditional Ladakhi home converted into a boutique hotel. Shanti Stupa located on a hilltop with panoramic views of the city is yet another stunning location. The Leh Palace and the bylanes of the Leh market provide ample opportunities for pre-wedding photoshoots. In addition to picturesque wedding venues, couples can enjoy a variety of activities, from scenic treks and mountain biking to serene drives through the Nubra Valley. The region's rich cultural heritage, including traditional Ladakhi dance performances and local cuisine can be incorporated into the wedding festivities, adding a touch of authenticity and charm.

## 2. Baku, Azerbaijan

If you are looking for a destination wedding which is off the beaten track then Baku in Azerbaijan should be your



first choice. The flamboyant architecture, cobblestone streets, spectacular sea views and the breathtaking skyline of this capital city offer an exceptional setting for a wedding filled with antiquity and novelty. Azerbaijan has an array of venues, from luxury hotels (read Fairmont Baku, Four Seasons Hotel and Boulevard Hotel) to mid-range hotels, en-suite bungalows, provincial motels and even

private homestays for a dream wedding. There's also the majestic Buta Palace and a 19th century Hindu-Zoroastrian Fire Temple. A favourable currency rate, first class infrastructure, experienced wedding planners and an easy visa policy add to the allure. Heading to Azerbaijan from India is incredibly convenient, with direct flights available from major cities like Mumbai and Delhi.



TOP: TOP: SHUTTERSTOCK



## 3. Puducherry

Puducherry's fusion of French and Indian influences can add a unique touch to a destination wedding. This 'French Riviera of the East' has a collection of 11 beaches including Auroville Beach, which is famous for surfing, Paradise Beach that offers backwater boating, and Veerampattinam Beach that boasts mesmerising sunsets, each making for beautiful wedding venues. The historic French Quarter with its vibrant streets and picturesque vistas provides a lovely backdrop for pre-wedding photoshoots. Couples keen on an intimate wedding can also get hitched at one of the beautiful churches or the charming old mansions such as the Palais de Mahe. The numerous diving spots and great French food are sure to keep the guests entertained.

## 4. Sri Lanka

Imagine exchanging vows barefoot on the sandy shores, surrounded by swaying palm trees and the gentle rhythm of the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka, with its breathtaking coastline stretching over 1,500 kilometres, is a paradise for beach lovers seeking a romantic destination wedding. From the

popular beaches of Tangalla, Mirissa, and Bentota to the more secluded shores of other regions, Sri Lanka offers a diverse range of options for luxury, budget, and boutique accommodations. For those who prefer city life, Colombo is a convenient

base offering an array of hotels and easy accessibility. Pristine beaches, coral reefs, and a plethora of water activities like snorkelling, scuba diving, kayaking, and, dolphin and whale watching make Sri Lanka a perfect blend of romance and adventure for an unforgettable destination wedding. Beyond its stunning beaches, Sri Lanka boasts scenic mountains, lush tea gardens and soothing waterfalls. The destination is just a short flight away from Mumbai and Delhi and its visa-free status makes it convenient for guests.

## 5. Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

Few wedding venues offer the sacred serenity and old-world charm of a temple wedding. For a truly unique experience, the ancient temples of Khajuraho—Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Chaturbhuj Temple, and Dulhadev Shiva Temple—in Madhya Pradesh provide a culturally rich backdrop. The UNESCO World Heritage site is home to intricately carved monuments depicting some of the finest art in the world. Hosting a wedding here adds a profound sense of spirituality to the celebration. The city, with its fort and nature sanctuaries, blends culture, history, and romance. It is easily accessible from Delhi by an overnight train or an 8-hour road journey. The city offers a range of accommodation, from heritage hotels like



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truly unforgettable. Havelock Island in the Andamans is one of the loveliest with pristine beaches and experienced wedding planners. Those looking to take things to the next level can choose the seabed as their wedding venue. Exchanging rings and vows beneath the crystal-clear waters of Havelock Island—now known as Swaraj Dweep—will be an unforgettable experience for both the couple and their guests.

Clarks Khajuraho and Bundela Resort to contemporary options like Radisson Jass and The Lalit.

6. **Doha, Qatar**

Doha, the capital of Qatar, is home to many luxurious venues that create an unforgettable wedding experience. For an extravagant setting, the Museum of Islamic Art, located along the Corniche waterfront, offers panoramic views of the city skyline. For a more traditional atmosphere, Qatari palaces and desert resorts like Al Hazm or Desert Palm provide opulent settings combining Arabian elegance with luxury. Couples can choose a desert wedding under the stars or a more cultural

celebration with Qatari hospitality as the backdrop. The city's lavish hotels, such as the St. Regis and Four Seasons, along with the services of local and international wedding planners, make Doha an excellent wedding destination.

7. **Andaman & Nicobar Island**

Head to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands if you want to exchange vows in a serene and romantic setting. Known for their tranquil ambiance and secluded charm, these islands provide the perfect backdrop for an intimate beach wedding. Surrounded by lush greenery, swaying palm trees and stunning blue waters, your wedding photos will be



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Availability of good resorts like Tilar Siro Andamans-CGH Earth and Taj Exotica Resort and Spa with ample inventory ensures a stress-free wedding. This relatively undiscovered destination is also surprisingly affordable when compared to other wedding hotspots.

8. **Antalya, Turkey**

This charming seaside city is a dreamy setting for couples who want to get married while taking in the breathtaking vistas of the Mediterranean Sea. Wedding venues here range from stunning sandy beaches and medieval fortresses, to charming vineyards and majestic mountains. The city's historic castles and fortresses, which provide a unique and enchanting backdrop for couples' special day, are most popular. These well-preserved architectural marvels, such as the Antalya Castle and Kaleici Old Town, transport guests back in time, creating a sense of timeless elegance and grandeur. For couples seeking a more natural and serene setting, Antalya's picturesque vineyards and olive groves provide a charming alternative. The city also boasts



a talented pool of wedding planners, photographers and caterers who specialise in creating unforgettable weddings. Additionally, the cost-effective nature of weddings here compared to other popular European destinations makes it even more attractive. The city features swanky properties to choose such as Regnum Carya, Rixos Premium Belek, Titanic Mardan Palace, Calista Luxury Resort and others. The warm and welcoming Turkish

hospitality add to the overall experience, making couples feel at home as they celebrate their special day.

9. **Ranthambore, Rajasthan**

At Ranthambore nature and history seamlessly converge to set the perfect backdrop for a memorable wedding. This unexplored wedding destination makes for a serene getaway from the hustle and bustle of other big cities in the state. The historic Ranthambore Fort and ancient temples add a touch of grandeur and mystique as well as provide an idyllic setting for outdoor weddings and pre-wedding photoshoots. The pleasant climate from November to February makes it an ideal location for a winter wedding. Expect a range of wedding venues, from opulent palaces to serene wildlife resorts and eco-conscious retreats all blending luxury with nature. Some noteworthy properties include the iconic Taj Sawai Ranthambore, the palatial Nahargarh Ranthambhore where elephants, horses, and camels welcome guests, the uber luxurious Aman-i-Khas and the newest addition, Aamaghathi Wildlife Resort. From wildlife safaris and nature walks to exploring the historical fort, there are plenty of activities to keep the guests entertained. The best part—the newlyweds don't need to switch to another destination for their honeymoon.

10. **Mamanuca Islands, Fiji**

With its white sandy beaches, turquoise waters, and lush landscapes, Fiji stands out as one of the most enchanting places



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on Earth to tie the knot. On the exotic Mamanuca Islands, couples can exchange vows on a private sandbank or beneath the stars, with the sound of the waves as the soundtrack. How about an underwater ceremony or a mountaintop wedding accessed by helicopter? Accommodations range from multi-storey hotels to beach bungalows known as *bures*. From scuba diving to snorkelling and kayaking, there's plenty to keep guests engaged. The Malolo Barrier Reef is just a few minutes' boat ride from many of the resorts, and the reef is shallow enough in many places for exceptional snorkelling. One of the biggest advantages is the excellent connectivity. Located in the heart of the South Pacific, Fiji is easily accessible from major cities like Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, making it an ideal meeting point for guests from different parts of the world. The incredibly friendly and welcoming Fijians, coupled with dedicated wedding planners who specialise in Indian weddings, elevate this destination even further.

### 11. Bhutan

How about beginning your 'happily ever after' life in the land of happiness—Bhutan. This alluring Himalayan country is an incredibly special place to say, 'I do'.



Bhutan's lush greenery, snowcapped mountains, crystal-clear lakes and meadows dotted with wildflowers set the stage for a wedding celebration that is both ethereal and captivating. The destination is also known for its range of breathtaking wedding venues, from grand palaces to serene temples and rustic outdoor settings. Whether you envision your wedding in the ornate courtyards of Punakha Dzong or the tranquil gardens of Gangtey Palace, Bhutan provides the perfect backdrop for a dream wedding. There are several world-class resorts as well as traditional Bhutanese farmhouses that offer an authentic experience. The

hospitality and welcoming nature of the Bhutanese people add a touch of warmth to the celebrations, while the visa-free status ensures ease of travel for everyone involved. The best part is the variety of activities for guests to enjoy during the wedding. From sightseeing to trekking or simply relaxing, there's plenty in Bhutan to keep both the couple and their guests busy throughout the wedding weekend.

### 12. Ras Al Khaimah, UAE

One of the most diverse and naturally beautiful destinations, Ras Al Khaimah is rapidly emerging as a top wedding destination in the UAE. Couples can

exchange vows on the rugged Jebel Jais mountain, at the 19th-century hilltop fort Dhayah, or on the golden dunes. The emirate features over two dozen beachside resorts with private beach access for events. Secluded spots like Al Hamra Beach and Al Rams Beach provide an ideal setting for an intimate ceremony with close friends and family. The gentle sound of waves against the shore creates a serene backdrop for the occasion. Couples can time the ceremony just before sunset to witness the spectacular display of colours as the sun dips below the horizon. The golden light of the setting sun that illuminates the sea and sand also creates a warm glow for wedding photos. Ras Al Khaimah offers a variety of experiences for guests. Adventurous visitors can hike, kayak, zipline, camp under the stars, or enjoy water sports. The local markets, Suwaidi Pearls Farm, and the beautiful beaches provide a more relaxed experience.

### 13. Muscat, Oman

For a wedding filled with elegance, beauty and the allure of the sea, consider the stunning port city of Muscat. Renowned for its mountains, deserts and the captivating beauty of white sandy beaches, rock cliffs and magnificent mosques, Muscat offers a truly enchanting setting for



your special day. No wonder this land of coffee, dates and shisha is fast becoming a sought-after destination for luxury weddings. There is a variety of fantastic venues including hotels and resorts with grand ballrooms, beautiful gardens and private beaches that can cater to every style and budget. Ease of travel with direct flights under three hours, from both Delhi and Mumbai, and online visa within 10-12 working days make the deal even sweeter. Some popular wedding venues in Muscat include the Al Bustan Palace Hotel, the Chedi Muscat, the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa and the Muscat Hills Resort.

### 14. San Sebastián, Spain

For those seeking a culinary and cultural adventure, San Sebastián is the perfect wedding destination. Known as the gastronomical capital of the world, the city is home to several Michelin-starred restaurants as well as regional gems of Basque cuisine. It is also home to beautiful beaches, mountains and historic sites. Couples have the option of getting married at Miramar Palace with views of La Concha Bay, the picturesque Maria Cristina hotel on Urumea River—its bedrooms have slept celebrities like Coco Chanel and Bruce Springsteen—the charming gardens



TOP: COURTESY OF PUNAKHA, BHUTAN. BY MARCUS WESTBERG

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF RAS AL KHAIMA; COURTESY OF AL BUSTAN PALACE HOTEL





of Murguia Palace or the spectacular vineyards of Hika Bodega. Apart from warm weather, amazing food and hospitality, the breathtaking coastline has some great spots for photoshoots. Post the wedding rituals guests can indulge in a *pintxo*—small snacks on sticks—crawl experience, eat at a cider house or visit a secret gastronomic society.

**15. Lisbon, Portugal**

Portugal’s picturesque coastal capital, Lisbon, with its meandering Tagus River running through as the beating heart of the city, presents a diverse array of wedding venues, each with its own unique character. Filled with plenty of history and charming pastel-coloured buildings, it’s hard not to fall in love with the quiet buzz of this city. From modern and stylish spaces to historic landmarks, Lisbon provides a rich tapestry of options to choose from. Its proximity to beaches and vineyards makes it an ideal location for a city destination wedding. The breathtakingly beautiful Palácio Marquês de Fronteira is lovely for a cocktail reception of up to 156 guests, while the beautifully botanical Estufa Fria makes for a magical spot to get married. History buffs will love the Manor House with an intimate chapel and dramatic gardens, or the magnificent Gremio Palace with the most beautiful works of art. In Portugal, LGBTQ+ rights are among the most progressive in the world. Same-sex marriage has been legal here since 2010.

**16. St. Moritz, Switzerland**

For those who appreciate stunning landscapes, Swiss precision, and elegant design, the glamorous town of St. Moritz in the untamed Engadin Valley is a perfect

wedding destination. Whether you envision a winter wonderland or a serene summer lakeside celebration, the Engadine transforms your wedding fantasy into reality. Venue options are plentiful, ranging from a rustic cabin ceremony surrounded by glowing candles and twinkling fairy lights, to one of the country’s many luxury hotels for an evening of extravagance and charm, or even on a frozen lake. You could exchange your vows in one of St. Moritz’s charming churches or in the picturesque Kulm Park. Make a grand entrance in a horse-drawn carriage or a classic vintage car. It is also just over the border from Italy, so the cuisine is exceptional. In winter, St. Moritz and the Engadin become a snowy wonderland, blanketing everything from the forests to the mountaintops, while the summer brings temperate weather, glistening mountain lakes, and colourful wildflowers. In St. Moritz, wild nature is combined with unbridled luxury.

**17. Puglia, Italy**

With its pristine beaches, olive groves, charming villages and medieval castles,



Puglia makes the ideal setting for a wedding. It is a less-travelled alternative to Tuscany and the Amalfi Coast, which means fewer crowds and a more intimate experience. Whether you prefer an intimate ceremony at a local restaurant, a grand celebration at a *masseria*—an ancient, fortified farmhouse, or a larger event at a luxury resort, Puglia offers the perfect backdrop for a memorable wedding. The cone-shaped houses of Alberobello, which make the town a UNESCO World Heritage site, provide another enchanting setting. Puglia’s rich culinary traditions offer an unforgettable gastronomic experience. From exquisite cheeses and cured meats to fresh pasta, seafood, and a delightful array of sweets, the region’s food and wine are known for their quality and diversity. Local crafts, such as ceramics, papier-mâché and mosaics, make perfect wedding gifts for

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guests. Same-sex couples can choose to commit to a civil union in Italy, which provides the same rights, benefits, and obligations of marriage, except for joint adoption rights.

**18. Malta**

This small island nation, located between Sicily and Tunisia in the Mediterranean Sea, is gaining popularity as a wedding destination. Malta’s beautiful churches, renovated farmhouses, coastal mansions, and Baroque palaces offer stunning wedding venues. Pleasant weather, bright blue skies, and spectacular sunsets add to the charm. The Italian-influenced cuisine will be a highlight of the celebrations. Given the compact size of the Maltese islands, guests can easily reach the wedding venue within a short 20-minute drive, making it a convenient destination for all. The beautiful beaches, traditional churches, and historic venues, all with breathtaking views, provide not only incredible settings for the wedding



wedding. The region is also renowned for its exceptional food and wine, with the first Michelin star in Croatia awarded to an Istrian restaurant. Beyond gourmet experiences, guests can explore medieval towns, engage in water sports, or simply relax and enjoy the scenery. Whether you choose a luxury hotel, a 15th-century church, a beautiful archaeological site on the seashore or even a boat in a Croatian harbour, your wedding in this enchanting region will be unforgettable. With international airports in Pula and Rijeka, Istria is easily accessible by air from around the world. Additionally, daily boat routes to

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ceremony but also ideal locations for memorable wedding photography.

**19. Istria, Croatia**

Istria considered to be one of Croatia’s well-kept secrets has a lot to offer. The delicious wines, traditional gastronomy, striking beaches and rich cultural heritage are just the tip of the iceberg. Istria has fortresses and castles, churches and chapels, manors and palaces, some of which can serve as the perfect setting for a dream destination

Italy and convenient road connections from neighbouring European countries make this region easily reachable.

**20. Bali, Indonesia**

Bali’s stunning natural beauty and diverse locations have made it a popular wedding destination. The beaches and lush landscapes provide the perfect setting for a magical wedding. Couples can exchange vows right on the beach and capture unforgettable moments amidst the natural surroundings. Many popular honeymoon resorts here also offer exceptional venues for destination weddings. Choose from luxury resorts with panoramic views, intimate ceremonies on a secluded beach, the lush rice terraces of Ubud, or the dramatic cliffside temples of Uluwatu – Bali offers a venue to suit every couple’s vision. Those hosting an intimate wedding could book a private villa and enjoy an extended weekend with their closest family and friends. With its accessibility and convenience, guests can easily travel from major cities around the world. One of the benefits is the affordability compared to other beach destinations. 🌐





# Eternal Vows With A View

**LUBNA SALIM** DISCOVERS INDIA'S TOP HOTELS AND RESORTS  
THAT BLEND INTIMACY WITH GRANDEUR FOR THE PERFECT LUXURY WEDDING

The Tamara Kodai dates  
back to the 1840s and  
was once a bungalow,  
later transformed into  
rest houses for priests.



COURTESY OF TO THE AISLE



## Seaside Celebrations ITC Grand Goa, Goa

Picture a romantic beach wedding in Goa, with ceremonies set to the sound of the sea in a Portuguese-inspired resort. The ITC Grand Goa makes this dream a reality, offering direct access to Arossim Beach. Nestled in serene South Goa, this 246-room exquisite resort is ideal for a relaxed, intimate wedding vibe. There's a choice of four indoor venues with capacities ranging from 30 to 350 guests in various settings, in addition to a tropical garden, seaside lawns, and a private beachfront.

ITC Grand Goa provides a dedicated team to help couples customise every detail of their wedding, from décor to menus and entertainment. [www.itchotels.com](http://www.itchotels.com)



## Lakeside Love The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel, Kollam, Kerala

What could be more romantic and intimate than a floating *mandap* on the azure backwaters of God's Own Country? The Leela Ashtamudi, A Raviz Hotel, a traditional Kerala *nalukettu*-style hotel canopied with coconut trees, is an opulent heritage property set on the banks of Ashtamudi Lake, making it the perfect dreamy wedding venue.

Counted among the best luxury family resorts in Kerala, the property's distinctive architecture and lush gardens offer stunning, Instagram-worthy captures for the couple.

The Leela Ashtamudi offers bespoke floral arrangements and gourmet menus to help celebrate the special day in great style. [www.theleela.com](http://www.theleela.com)

## Eternal Favourite The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra, Uttar Pradesh

Make the world's most iconic symbol of eternal love, the Taj Mahal, your witness as you say 'I do' at The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra.

Located only 600 metres from the historic monument, this luxury hotel draws

design inspiration from Mughal palaces, with fountains, terraced gardens, and reflection pools. Enhancing the wedding experience, all rooms offer unrestricted views of the Taj Mahal for guests.

The hotel's ballroom is best suited for a close-knit wedding, seating up to 190 people. It also includes an attached pre-function area for food and beverages. [www.oberoihotels.com](http://www.oberoihotels.com)



COURTESY OF TO THE AISLE (2)



# *Palatial Extravaganza* **Raffles Jaipur, Jaipur, Rajasthan**

Looking to skip the Delhi pollution and celebrate your wedding in the royal hues of Rajasthan's heritage? Raffles Jaipur, just an hour's flight away, will sweep your loved ones off their feet with the signature services of Raffles Butlers. This intimate palace serves as a tranquil oasis for a destination wedding in the Pink City, with breathtaking views of the Aravalli mountains. The hotel boasts 50 rooms and suites, all handcrafted by local artisans.

Raffles Jaipur offers both indoor and outdoor wedding venue options—reserve the elegant grand ballroom or opt for a sophisticated garden ceremony. [www.affles.com](http://www.affles.com)



# *Far from the Madding Crowd* **JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa, Bengaluru, Karnataka**

If you're looking to combine pleasant weather with an opulent wedding venue, without straying too far from the city, consider JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa. The 22-acre

resort, located in the scenic Nandi Hills, is just 20 minutes from the airport and offers a family-friendly setting. Experienced and highly detail-oriented Marriott-certified wedding planners are on hand to help you customise your dream wedding, covering everything from the event budget and menu selection to florists, photographers, and entertainment, leaving you to relax, and be present with your loved ones in your celebrations. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)

# *Head Over Hills* **The Tamara Kodai, Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu**

If you're planning an intimate destination wedding in a luxurious yet serene setting, The Tamara Kodai should be on your list. Perched on the Kodaikanal hills, this luxury hotel dates back to the 1840s and was once a bungalow, later transformed into rest houses for priests.

Imagine tying the knot in the rustic Puliyan Hall, illuminated by natural light streaming through large bay windows. Simple and elegant, this 1,700-square-foot hall features high wooden rafters and offers both theatre and reception-style seating arrangements.

The hotel also offers a spacious pre-function area for cocktails and canapés, along with light and sound equipment. Wedding planners, bespoke menus, and relaxing spa services make this a tranquil setting for your special day. [thetamara.com/kodaikanal-resort](http://thetamara.com/kodaikanal-resort)





## A Magical Mountain Wedding Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort, Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh

Imagine a quaint European-style wedding with fairytale vibes, minus the long flight. Add a dreamy arrival with your loved ones floating into the stunning Shivalik range in Swiss Gondolas. Moksha Himalaya Spa Resort, nestled in the picturesque Shivalik range, is the secret ingredient to such a dream wedding.

Picture walking down the aisle amid elegant garden terraces and manicured lawns, or saying your vows in gorgeous indoor settings. The resort offers two options—The Mansion Hall and the Royal Ballroom, with windows overlooking the mountains.

Whether it's a balmy afternoon wedding outdoors or a glamorous indoor sangeet night, Moksha makes it possible. The hotel's spa and salon ensure the bride and groom are pampered before and after the celebrations, while friends and family can relax by the infinity pool and enjoy the outdoor jacuzzi, all this just five hours away from New Delhi. [mokshaspa.com](http://mokshaspa.com)



## Himalayan Haven Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas, near Rishikesh, Uttarakhand

If the idea of getting married on a lush lawn with the majestic Himalayas as your backdrop appeals to you, look no further than The Westin Resort & Spa, Himalayas.

Located on 12 acres of Himalayan foothills, this resort is a 45-minute drive from Dehradun airport. Enjoy a snug wedding ceremony in the resort's idyllic garden setting, organise bridal showers and gift openings at the resort's event rooms, and round it off with a family reunion or reception at the opulent Grand Ballroom.

Relax at the swim-up bar, enjoy Asian and international cuisines at the resort's two restaurants, or book a spa treatment to recover from the pre- and post-wedding celebrations. [www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)



## A Regal Affair Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar, Jaipur, Rajasthan

For a swish wedding venue featuring Rajasthan's royal architecture, modern amenities, and interiors, look no further than Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar, located right in the heart of

the state's capital. The hotel combines classic architecture with contemporary interiors, offering the best of both East and West.

The Manor, located close to the hotel's main block, is the ideal space for private gatherings of up to 100 guests, complete with an attached pre-function area. The Navras Bagh, a landscaped lawn, can accommodate up to 400 people for an intimate event. [www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)



## Riverside Reverie Statue of Unity Tent City-1, Kevadia, Gujarat

Picture a small wedding ceremony with views of Gujarat's iconic landmarks—the Statue of Unity and the Narmada River—at Statue of Unity Tent City-1 by Evoke Experiences. The elegant hotel, located on the banks of the Narmada River, features 60 Swiss cottages offering all modern amenities, and is ideal for couples looking for a venue surrounded by nature.

To ensure a hassle-free celebration, the venue's packages include everything from décor and catering to transportation. Thoughtful add-ons such as a decorated couple's suite and e-invites make it even more special. [statueofunitytentcity.com](http://statueofunitytentcity.com) @



# Mini moon to heaven

Newlyweds are seeking quick getaways post their lavish wedding celebrations and opting for 'Mini-moons', a perfectly curated short vacation that allows them time to plan their honeymoon. **NAYARE ALI** lists the best destinations for these mini-moons

**W**ITH INDIAN WEDDINGS being long-drawn affairs, often spanning several days and taking place in exotic locales, newly married couples are so caught up with pre-wedding preparations and ceremonies that it drains them out. Once they are done with the rituals and celebrations, all they yearn for is a quick break that allows them time to just relax. This is why mini-moons have become popular. It is not the honeymoon, but an in-between break that enables couples to recoup for a few days, giving them ample time to plan a more elaborate and longer vacation later.

We have handpicked a special list of destinations that don't require more than four to five days of travel, are under 12 hours of flight time, and don't have to be exorbitantly expensive.

## 1. Minicopy Island, LAKSHADWEEP

This is one of the most exotic destinations in India, offering an unexplored option that is fast becoming a mini-mooners' paradise. It is a crescent-shaped island with one of the largest lagoons, known for its beautiful private white beaches, underwater adventures, romantic sunset walks, and a relatively quiet atmosphere, making it the ideal place to spend time with your partner in a breezy ambience surrounded by swaying palm and coconut trees and the soothing sounds of the sea. The island has a historic lighthouse, built by the British in 1885, offering a panoramic view of the landscape. A quaint feature is the Jaha House, built in the traditional Maldivian style. Given its proximity to the Maldives, the cuisine is also strongly influenced by the region, offering delectable seafood. There are direct flights from Kochi to the Lakshadweep islands, and you can opt for a helicopter or boat ride to the location.



## 2. SINGAPORE

A trending getaway for Indians, Singapore is the go-to destination for mini-moons. Just a four-hour flight from India, Singapore is a modern city and a true marvel of sights and sounds. The contemporary architecture, billion-dollar gardens, and vibrant nightlife make it an ideal post-wedding vacation spot. In fact, many luxury hotels offer customised romantic packages, making it even more appealing. Couples can walk down the famed Changi Point, opt for a leisurely Singapore River cruise, cuddle up on the beaches of Sentosa, soak in the scenic views at Fort Canning Hill, or savour a wide variety of cuisine at the city's popular restaurants. And of course, round it all off with high-end shopping on Orchard Road.







### 3. Munich, GERMANY

One of the most picturesque locations in Germany, Munich has a fairytale vibe with its cobbled streets, quaint churches, and lush green parks. And yet, it is a city that has evolved with modern times. From Michelin-star restaurants to lively bars and designer boutiques, Munich is a little piece of paradise that is worth a visit. The Bavarian capital is home to ancient but well-preserved buildings and countless museums. The central Marienplatz square contains many such landmarks. If you are fortunate enough to wed just before Oktoberfest, then this is the city to head to. You can head out to Hofbräuhaus in the Altstadt to experience an authentic Bavarian lifestyle and partake in one of the most fascinating events. You can never get bored in Munich, as it has so much to offer. And with direct flights from Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, the journey is a smooth one.

### 4. The Boracay Islands, PHILIPPINES

A tiny island in the Philippines, Boracay is as close as you can get to utopia. It is surrounded by surreal, clear waters on three sides. The beach has a long stretch of powdery white sand, from where couples can witness the most stunning sunset. This tropical island is only 11 kms in size but boasts 17 beaches, where you can indulge in fabulous beachfront dining, selecting from many eateries that offer great views. It is a perfect getaway to spend your time soaking in the sun and indulging in water sports during the day, and going bar hopping at night, partying until you watch the spectacular sunrise. It is a two-flight journey from India: you fly into Manila and then hop onto a one-hour flight to Caticlan, Boracay.



### 5. Malacca, MALAYSIA

An ideal city for couples united by their love for ancient history, Malacca is one of the oldest cities in Malaysia, and was once a prominent international trade centre. Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it's just a two-hour drive from Kuala Lumpur. The city offers the perfect opportunity for walking tours to explore its breathtaking sights, including the popular Jonker Street, which comes alive at night with its night market, live music, and friendly hawkers jostling for attention. Couples can also enjoy an exciting boat ride to discover ancient structures and heritage buildings. Malacca is also a great place to savour delicious local cuisine at cosy cafés, where you can relax all day long..

### 6. Pammukale, TURKEY

Pamukkale is most suitable for couples seeking an idyllic retreat, as they experiment with the thermal hot springs and capture surreal pictures against the mineral deposits that resemble snow-capped mountains. The city, which means 'Cotton Castle' in Turkish, offers an unreal landscape with pristine white cliff towers and a sacred pool set amidst a beautiful garden. The thermal pools lead you to the ruins of the ancient Roman spa town, Hierapolis, which still has gates, a theatre, and a temple that you can visit for a more adventurous mini-moon. You can even walk up the travertines or terraces, which are essentially carved mountains or rocks covered with white minerals. A seven-hour flight from India, followed by a short flight, brings you to your destination. Alternatively, you can consider a scenic six-hour drive from Istanbul, which is incredibly appealing.





## 7. Oia, GREECE

One of the prettiest Cycladic villages, Oia offers breathtaking views of the sun dipping into the Aegean Sea. Relatively unexplored by tourists, this Grecian village is peppered with blue and white houses along with churches with pink and ochre details, hanging on the caldera. The sunset view from Oia is incredibly romantic, and couples make it a point to watch this beautiful moment together, which makes them feel one not just with each other but also with the universe. Lying on the northwest coast of Santorini, it is just a 20 km ride from the city.



## 8. Le Morne Brabant, MAURITIUS

Le Morne Brabant is a peninsula in Mauritius and has been declared a World Heritage site. It offers extraordinary views of the island, lagoon, and coral reefs, making it ideal for hiking or simply walking by the beach. It is also recognised as one of the best spots for kitesurfing, thanks to its steady winds and protected lagoons. If you're willing to explore the Morne Brabant mountain, which was once a sanctuary for runaway slaves, you can take up to four hours to reach the summit. However, if that's not your scene, you can simply enjoy the unique flora and fauna of the region and do your own thing. While the flight time to Mauritius is 11 hours, Le Morne Brabant is only a one-hour drive from the airport.



## 9. Tuscany, ITALY

There is something magical and incredibly romantic about Tuscany. It offers visitors a soothing ambience with its picturesque meadows, solitary abodes, and enchanting history. Tuscany is about visiting the languid vineyards, where you can indulge in multiple glasses of the finest wine in the region. From the stunning Maremma Hills to the golden beaches of Tuscany and the unmissable Chianti region, it is a destination every mini-moon couple aspires to visit and soak in the Italian vibe. You can fly directly to Tuscany from Delhi.



## 10. SEYCHELLES

A fabled island country with boulder-lined shores alongside azure waters, Seychelles is filled with granite and coral islands, offering a wide range of activities that make it a favourite among honeymooners. An archipelago in the Indian Ocean, it boasts staggering mountain rainforests and nature reserves. It is also a haven for wildlife lovers, where you can spot giant tortoises, exotic birds, and rare plant species. If none of this interests you, you can while away your time indulging in water activities like diving and snorkelling. It's well worth the 4.5-hour flight from India. 🌴





# Rising from the Ranks

On a balmy Colaba morning, **Alfea Jamal** finds out how **PRATIBHA RANTA** dreamed a dream, nurtured that dream, and rose above all odds to become the 'go-getter' in the world around her

Pratibha Ranta's only true desire is to make something of herself.

Outfit, **Tarun Tahiliani**; ruffle cape, **Keya by Vidhi**; headband & earrings, **House of Tuhina**; rings, **Keiyura**, all prices on request.

Photography: Gourab Ganguli  
Fashion Editor: Neelangana Vasudeva  
Styling team: Chandni Kumar Mehra  
Hair stylist: Yashdeep Sharma  
Makeup Artist: Saba Khan  
Location: Neuma, Mumbai



# It's

A SLOW WEEKDAY morning in South Mumbai's Colaba, a part of town that is usually bustling with tourists, hawkers, residents, explorers, and city walkers, especially with the holiday season is in full swing. At 6AM, the streets of SoBo seem more quiet and serene than usual, the calm before the storm if you will—the collective sound of the shoes of our crew on the pavement are perfectly synchronised, like we're soldiers in a marchpast.

As we arrive on set, our chaotic energy swallows up the silence, and the crew gets to work, striving to prepare the set before our cover star for this special issue, Pratibha Ranta, arrives. Much to our surprise, she is right on time, and in sync with us. No waiting for a star? Truly a breath of fresh air.

As I make my way to introduce myself, I find Ranta huddled over a plate of *poha* she brought along, her hair up in curlers, her morning skin radiant and unaltered. She greets me with a warmth that makes me feel like we've known each other for years.

From Shimla to the Oscars', Pratibha Ranta's meteoric rise is almost serendipitous. One might think that she appeared on the

cinema scene seemingly out of nowhere after the breakout success of her critically acclaimed debut *Laapataa Ladies*, but the truth couldn't be further from that.

"Everyone thinks *Laapataa Ladies* is my first time on screen. I think very few know of my struggling days, the years I spent doing *Qurbaan Hua* on television, or how long it took for me to finally get *Laapataa Ladies*," she quips.

We talk while she gets her glam done, the sounds of the set provide a comforting backdrop to our conversation. Ranta requests us to play Taylor Swift, beaming as soon as we follow suit.

She tells me how she absolutely loves our 'Gen-Z Bride' brief for this shoot, admiring the ensembles she is about to wear. While she doesn't plan on marrying anytime soon and admits that her idea of an ideal wedding is something very simple and intimate rather than something lavish, she shares, "Gen Z brides are all about personalisation, I really love how they are not confining themselves to conventional norms and practices. Instead, they incorporate what's meaningful to them and represents their journey to truly make their special day their own."

I can't help but see Jaya, her character in *Laapataa Ladies*, in Ranta, or maybe it's the other way around, as she says, "There's both: flower and fire". Like Jaya, Pratibha Ranta's only true desire is to make something of herself, I tell her she already has, but it seems the actor has her eyes set on the world, and with her dedication, she just might get it too.

Coming from humble beginnings in Shimla to the city of dreams, Ranta navigated a highly competitive industry all on her own, although she credits her family for being extremely supportive, admitting that while she loves the glitz and glamour of Mumbai, she would never give up her heritage, values or morals for anything. "True success is when you can be who you are, be proud of where you come from and still forge your way ahead".

I nod along. Success and stardom often appear effortless, almost as if all you need is luck and a pretty face, and the road ahead will be easy, straight, and well-lit. What often gets missed is the resilience, rejection, self-doubt, perseverance and sleepless nights behind the success stories. Once you're successful, people can't seem to see beyond the flashing lights. But for Ranta, the hard days are what make her success all the sweeter.

In a candid conversation, Pratibha Ranta opens up about her journey, the highs and lows, her thoughts on love and relationships, what she thinks of marriage, success, and her plans ahead. Excerpts from the interview:



From Shimla to the Oscars', Pratibha Ranta's meteoric rise is almost serendipitous.

All clothing, **Rajesh Pratap Singh**, all prices on request



Ranta loves how Gen Z brides are not confining themselves to conventional norms and practices.

Outfit, **Roseroom by Isha Jajodia**; hair accessories, **Keiyura**; *kaleera*. **Amama**; footwear, **Fizzy Goblet**, all prices on request.





Ranta is very proud of her Pahadi culture—and believes it's what nurtures and grounds her.

Outfit, **Rahul Mishra and Rajesh Pratap Singh**; earrings, **House of Popli**; rings, **Amama**, all prices on request.

**What inspired you to pursue a career in acting, and how did your family's concerns and your early experiences in Mumbai shape your journey?**

I've always been fascinated by films and cinema. It was something I really needed, and I also feel it's genetic. My grandmother was a Hindi teacher and would organise Hindi plays, and my father would watch so many films. It all just flowed to me. When I shared this decision with my family, they weren't sure about it at first. It wasn't that they thought I couldn't do it, but they were concerned for my safety.

It was definitely challenging, but my passion kept me going. I realised that if I stayed in Shimla, nothing would happen. I had to take the leap, come to Mumbai, and get into auditions.

I had no idea what to expect when I first came. It was a real struggle in the beginning, but I saw it as a learning experience. There was a lot of uncertainty, but I knew I had to be resilient.

**Looking back, do you think your rebellion was a strength or did it cause doubt?**

I've always been rebellious. My siblings were great at studies, but I was average. My focus was always dancing and extracurricular activities. But I realised I can't just be 'good', I have to make an impact. I realised that to make people believe in me, I actually had to do something. For a long time, I was also seeking validation in my life. I thought my rebellious nature could be a way to prove myself to my family. So, I made a personality switch. I developed a 'go-getter' attitude. I never doubted myself. I always knew that if I was able to think about this, there was a future in it.

**How does it feel to work with Aamir Khan, Kiran Rao, and Sanjay Leela Bhansali so early on in your career?**

It was a beautiful experience. I didn't work as much with Aamir sir, but definitely with Kiran ma'am. She has an incredible understanding of exactly what she wants from an actor, and from her team as well. With Sanjay sir [in *Heeramandi*], I think he's someone who really improvises during the process. You could see him thinking about where the scene was going, constantly making changes on set. He was always fully engaged in the moment, which was inspiring to witness.

**Did transitioning from TV to film feel like a leap into the unknown?**

When I moved from TV to films, my family was skeptical as I was giving up a stable career for uncertainty. I explained to them that I can only experiment at this time. When I took that leap, I was also very unsure. I hadn't even signed a film. There were anxious days when I wondered, 'What am I doing? Was this a good decision? Should I just pick up another TV show to at least feel secure?' But I knew that in the long run, it would be worth the risk. Today, I'm glad I took that leap.

**How do you manage the duality of roles like Jaya, and what do you connect with the character on?**

I think Jaya is a mix of both flower and fire. The flower represents her attitude towards people, how she nurtures them, and how beautifully she helps them move forward with her. The fire, however, is for herself.

It's the injustice that has been done to her. The fire is for her own cause. She says a powerful line in the film: "If we steal, we steal a chance for ourselves, from life." What that means is that all she's doing is for herself, not with the intention of harming anyone. If I have taken this opportunity, it's something I've taken from my own life. I have risked my own life to do this. It's not easy to take the plunge, but you do it. She had to break free from her small world and achieve something for herself. And I really relate to that.

**How has your heritage and upbringing shaped your approach to tradition and modernity?**

You know, I am very proud of my Pahadi culture and all the rituals and family values that come with it. I've grown up practising them, and they've always been around me. I think your culture is something that sets you apart from others, and I just don't understand why anyone would want to lose that. I am a proud Pahadi, and I want to say that out loud. I want to take my culture forward because it's so beautifully crafted—from the handlooms to the textiles, everything in the mountains is so stunning. These things nurture me and keep me grounded. They help me stay connected to reality and remind me that we're all just passing through.

**What advice would you give to young women trying to make it in the industry today?**

A lot of boundaries break when a person from a small city achieves something big. There are so many girls in Shimla who constantly message me asking for advice. Why can't anyone fulfil their dream? Of course, you can. You can think about it, but it's about getting that opportunity and the confidence. When I do something, my friends' and family's confidence also grows. If I can do it, they believe they can too. It's not about everyone coming through; it's about chances. At least, when you do something, you feel happy with yourself, which is really important. Everyone deserves an opportunity, but you have to work very hard and not give up.

**How has the journey from Shimla to the Oscar's been?**

Growing up in Shimla, I never imagined that one day I'd be walking a journey that leads to the Oscars. My hometown, with its serene beauty and supportive community, has always been my source of strength and inspiration. Moving to Mumbai and stepping into the world of acting was daunting at first, but it was also a dream I couldn't ignore.

I owe a lot to the people who believed in me along the way, especially for *Lapaataa Ladies*. To represent such a powerful narrative on a global platform like the Oscars is surreal. This journey has taught me that no matter where you come from, passion and perseverance can take you places you never imagined.

**How has travel changed your life and perspective?**

Travelling gives you a lot of confidence, helps you to explore yourself and understand aspects of yourself that you didn't before. You learn not only about other people and cultures, but also a lot about yourself and how you perceive the world. ☺





◀ Copenhagen's modern foraging experiences combine nature and luxury. Above: Dyrehaven, a UNESCO World Heritage site, offers a prime location for foraging.

thick forest, plucking fresh carrots from the wet earth and fresh berries from the bushes—with your loved one by your side. As someone fresh out of the anxieties of planning a wedding—guest lists, *sangeet* performances and wedding shopping will do that to you—a honeymoon with hygge was the stuff of dreams.

### THE FORESTS OF DYREHAVEN

The foraging adventure begins in Dyrehaven, a dense forest, just a 15-minute train ride north of central Copenhagen. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site on account of its unique cultural and natural landscape. Dyrehaven is home to around 2,000 wild deer who are surprisingly comfortable around humans. As they approach you without hesitation, you're bound to feel like the first humans to roam these lands.

Guided foraging tours, such as the ones offered by **Sanketure** ([sanketure.dk](https://sanketure.dk)) provide a luxurious introduction to the experience. Guided by a trained chef and a wild food expert, you'll start the tour by foraging for a cornucopia of mushrooms—from oysters to umami-laden Chanterelles. Your guide will ask you to slow down, touch, smell and feel every edible plant—allowing you and your partner to truly connect with the forest's bounty.

Johannes Ruggaard, an expert forager and the founder of **Vilde Krydderier** ([vildeskrydderier.dk](https://vildeskrydderier.dk)) also offers foraging, bonfires and workshops to travellers. Johannes says, "Foraging puts people in a primal state. You are forced to be in the present, where your natural senses are heightened. There's a fundamental shift in mindset, where you snap out of the drudgery of beeping phones and incessant reminders to connect with something far more meaningful."

Foraging is an all-season activity—summer brings with it blood-red berries and fruits, autumn brings wild mushrooms and

# BECOMING ADAM AND EVE: LUXURY FORAGING IN COPENHAGEN

The Danish tradition of foraging, coupled with the comforting embrace of 'hygge', offers honeymooners a unique culinary experience. One that helps them connect with nature's bounty and ultimately with each other, **NAINAA RAJPAAL** discovers

SHUTTERSTOCK

COURTESY OF JACOB LISBYGD AND THE COPENHAGEN MEDIA CENTER

Denmark's love of foraging has existed since the time of the hunter-gatherers. In the Viking Age, the tribes relied on nearby forests, seas and the wild foods within them—from mushrooms and roots to fruits and seafood.

Today, this age-old tradition is being rediscovered, especially in Copenhagen, where it is presented as a modern sensorial journey—albeit with all the luxury the Vikings never knew.

Copenhagen is regarded as the birthplace of the New Nordic Movement, a celebration of simplicity, purity, and the resonance of local food from the land. It draws from the national philosophy of 'hygge' which has no direct translation, but roughly means 'enjoying the simple pleasures of life.' Imagine meandering into a





root vegetables, and winter brings herbs like chives, mint, sage, and thyme.

As you walk deeper into Dyrehaven, turn into treasure hunters together and try spotting the Black Trumpet Mushroom—a rare and gourmet variety, usually found to the north of the forest. When the season is right, you’ll get a chance to pick juniper herbs for your glass of gin, fall fruits for jams, and elderberries for syrups.

Continue walking through the dense oak and beech forest with hidden lakes—full of swans sunbathing in the glistening waters. Go jaunting up the hill and you’ll be greeted with sweeping views of the Øresund strait. Perched on top of the hill is the beautiful ‘**Hermitage**’, one of Denmark’s most iconic Baroque structures. Don’t be fooled by its name though. The ‘Hermitage’ has nothing hermit-like about it. It is in fact, King Christian the VI’s opulent hunting palace—where he invited neighbouring royals for grand game hunts and banquets.

### A HYGGE MEAL IN THE WOODS

After you and your partner have explored the soft grass with your hands and unearthed herbs, tarty lingonberries, and season-friendly mushrooms, make your way to a clearing deep in the forest, where you begin preparing the starters for your five-course gourmet meal. The food is slow-cooked over fire and wood—in true Viking style.

Your culinary guides help you whisk together a feast served alongside signature Danish *smørrebrød*—flatbreads topped with herbs and artisanal cheese. Choose to pair your meal with the local alcoholic brew ‘Kryddersnaps’—or ‘Snaps’ as the locals call it. It is infused with berries, dill, rosemary and other spices you’ve foraged—adding a touch of magical earthiness to every sip.



▲ The ‘Hermitage’ in Dyrehaven, once a royal hunting palace, now serves as a cultural landmark with sweeping views of the surrounding forest. Below: After foraging, guests can enjoy a five-course meal in the forest, cooked over firewood and served with traditional Danish *smørrebrød*.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF MARK TANGGAARD AND THE COPENHAGEN MEDIA CENTER; COURTESY OF DANIEL RASMUSSEN AND THE COPENHAGEN MEDIA CENTER

Now it’s time to curl up with blankets and soft cushions as you begin your supper. Dig into the spread expertly set on a rustic wooden table, decorated with lanterns that emulate the fireflies from the forest. As the bonfire crackles beside you, sit back and savour the flavours of the Scandinavian wilderness—every bite a testament to your hygge experience.

### RIDE INTO THE SUNSET

As you dwell on the rich tapestry of tastes from your foraged supper, it’s time for another adventure. As the golden hour sets, ride around the ancient woodlands in the most luxurious way ever—on Icelandic horses. These purebred horses are known to have travelled long distances on Viking longships owing to their resilience and sure-footedness.

The **Krathusgaard** ([krathusgaard.dk](http://krathusgaard.dk)) offers two-hour rides around the forest for ₹8,350 per person. You can choose to go with a guide or ride with your partner in complete solitude.

Alternatively, you could travel like the Danish royals did—in open horse-drawn carriages. The drivers will even customise the route based on your preferences. Rides start from ₹1,800-4,800.

After your ride, unwind with your final refreshments. Head to **Kilden i Skoven** ([kilden.kirstenpiils.dk](http://kilden.kirstenpiils.dk)), a restaurant that is like an oasis in the forest, and is true to its name that literally means, ‘a spring in the forest’. According to Kilden’s sommelier Lea Sandby, the name refers to a healing spring that pilgrims found in the area in the year 1583. Today, she



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF JASON CHARLES HILL AND THE COPENHAGEN MEDIA CENTER; COURTESY OF ANDERS BØGGILD AND THE COPENHAGEN MEDIA CENTER



▲ The deer in Dyrehaven are remarkably tame, often approaching humans without hesitation. Below: Horse-drawn carriages, available for custom routes, provide a royal touch to exploring Denmark’s ancient woodlands.

and her team have proudly turned this water into wine. Sit back on the deck chairs and enjoy classic and natural wines from the vineyards around.

Look around at the rich, unspoiled forests that make one think of the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve perhaps had the same experience you did—foraging for wild foods, basking in the sun, dipping their feet in crystal-clear waters, and idly watching the deer graze. 🍷

### GETTING THERE

**Air India** ([airindia.com](http://airindia.com)) offers direct flights from Delhi to Copenhagen daily. In Copenhagen, the S-train offers great connectivity to urban and semi-urban areas. Self-drive is also a good option.

### WHERE TO STAY

At 125 years old, **The Kurhotel Skodsborg** is known as Denmark’s original spa and is located next door to the Dyrehaven forest. *Doubles from ₹22,407 including breakfast;* [skodsborg.dk](http://skodsborg.dk)

**Hotel D’Angleterre** is a 30-minute drive from the forest and a great base to explore the heart of the city too. Michelin-starred restaurant Marchal is on its premises. *Doubles from 57,407;* [www.danglerterre.com](http://www.danglerterre.com)

**Bernstorff Castle Hotel**, located eight minutes away from the forest, is next door to the iconic Bernstorff castle—where your breakfast is served. *Doubles from ₹20,907 with meadow view rooms;* [bernstorffslot.dk](http://bernstorffslot.dk)



# TL'S WEDDING BLACK BOOK

## Your Guide to the *Best in the Industry*

**ARZOO DINA** puts together handy access to all the luxury wedding vendors that you need to pull off your picture-perfect nuptials

The A Cube Project is known for creating eye-catching and unconventional wedding experiences.







A Shaleena Nathani bride, Nathani is a celebrity stylist who specialises in custom wedding looks for brides and grooms.

Planning that much-awaited wedding involves more than just beautifully curated Pinterest boards, finding the perfect tone of ivory for your wedding lehenga, one-off pieces for your trousseau, or adding elements of personalisation—from the invitations to the décor. After all, you want your wedding to be anything but ordinary. Besides having everything perfectly aligned with your vision, you also need the right people who will work closely with you to help bring your dreamy nuptials to life. We're here to make things simpler with our little black book of luxury wedding vendors that will help you choose from bridal stylists and caterers, hair and makeup artists to photographers and more. Take notes.

## WEDDING STYLISTS

### Style by Ami

Renowned stylist Ami Patel's sartorial fashion choices have graced several well-known celebrities, from Alia Bhatt to Priyanka Chopra and Athiya Shetty. Her bridal services include helping you craft custom looks for your wedding functions to decoding your style and understanding what works best for you. *For bookings, email: [info@stylebyami.com](mailto:info@stylebyami.com). Instagram: [@stylebyamibrides](https://www.instagram.com/stylebyamibrides)*

### Shaleena Nathani

Seasoned fashion stylist Shaleena Nathani is a celebrity favourite, having extensively worked with Bollywood actors like Deepika Padukone, Shah Rukh Khan,

and Katrina Kaif. She's recently ventured into wedding styling, helping brides and grooms with custom looks for their big day. You'll have access to a dedicated team that will help you put together holistic looks for your celebrations. *For bookings, email: [work.shaleena@gmail.com](mailto:work.shaleena@gmail.com). Instagram: [@shaleenanathani](https://www.instagram.com/shaleenanathani)*

### Mohit Rai and Aastha Sharma (THE WEDDING STYLE PROJECT)

Well-known Bollywood stylists, Mohit Rai and Aastha Sharma have joined creative forces to offer a luxury wedding styling service for brides, grooms, and their families: The Wedding Style Project. With a keen eye for what's on trend, styling pieces that will flatter your silhouette, and helping you navigate colour palettes, the expert team will put together looks tailored to your tastes. *For bookings, email: [reachus@weddingstyleproject.com](mailto:reachus@weddingstyleproject.com). Instagram [@weddingstyleproject](https://www.instagram.com/weddingstyleproject)*

### CLAD by Tanya Vohra

Tanya Vohra has been styling brides, grooms, and families with her extensive expertise in the wedding and fashion industry. Trust her to put together ensembles that are tailored to your



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE LIGHTSMITHS; COURTESY OF BRIDELAN

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE A CUBE PROJECT; COURTESY OFSAM && EKTA



Left: Ambika Gupta's The A Cube Project specialises in luxury event design and wedding planning. Below: Shaadi Squad offers end-to-end wedding planning, from venue scouting to conceptualising decor and gifts.

## WEDDING PLANNERS & DESIGNERS

### The A Cube Project

Over the past 10-odd years, Ambika Gupta, founder of The A Cube Project, has carved a niche for herself as an ace luxury events and wedding designer. Her affinity for eye-catching aesthetics and thinking outside the box has earned her a strong reputation. She has designed celebrations, including Alanna Panday and Ivor McCray's dreamy *haldi* brunch as well as South actors, Aishwarya Arjun and Umapathy Ramaiah's wedding. *For bookings, email: [team@thea3project.com](mailto:team@thea3project.com) or call: +91 9962619519. Instagram: [@thea3project](https://www.instagram.com/thea3project)*

### The Wedding Design Company

Founder Vandana Mohan, along with her daughter and creative director Vedika Mohan, has been at the forefront of planning and designing some of the most exquisite Indian weddings, including several celebrity couples. With a presence in cities such as Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, and Kolkata, they specialise in dreamy, one-of-a-kind décor, set-ups, and signature concepts. *For bookings, email: [info@wdcindia.com](mailto:info@wdcindia.com). Instagram: [@theweddingdesigncompany](https://www.instagram.com/theweddingdesigncompany)*

### Shaadi Squad

Co-founders Tina Tharwani, Saurabh Malhotra, and Manoj Mittra are the trio behind the much-lauded Shaadi Squad. The expert team will design your nuptials—from helping you scout for the right destination and venue to budgeting your wedding, choosing décor, and even conceptualising wedding favours and gifts. *For bookings, visit: [shaadisquad.com](https://www.shaadisquad.com) or email: [hello@shaadisquad.com](mailto:hello@shaadisquad.com). Instagram: [@shaadisquad](https://www.instagram.com/shaadisquad)*

### Devika Narain & Company

Devika Narain, has built a steady reputation as one of the top wedding designers in the country. Her eye for detail and creating one-of-a-kind,





artful weddings has made her a much sought-after name. Her teams curate personalised mood boards, interspersed with storytelling that goes beyond customisation. *For bookings, email: [weddings@devikanarain.com](mailto:weddings@devikanarain.com). Instagram: [@devikanarainandcompany](https://www.instagram.com/devikanarainandcompany)*

**Motwane Entertainment & Weddings**

Motwane Entertainment & Weddings will tailor-make your dream celebration for you. They designed Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra’s palatial wedding at Suryagarh in Rajasthan, as well as Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas’s royal-inspired nuptials. *For bookings, email: [zoe@motwane.co](mailto:zoe@motwane.co) Visit: [motwane.co](https://www.motwane.co). Instagram: [@motwane.co](https://www.instagram.com/motwane.co)*

**INVITATIONS & STATIONERY**

**Ravish Kapoor Invitations**

A long-standing name in the wedding industry, Kapoor’s Delhi-based firm specialises in bespoke, one-of-a-kind



invitations. No two invites are the same, and their USP lies in crafting luxurious invitations that push creative boundaries. *For appointments, email: [delhi@ravishkapoor.com](mailto:delhi@ravishkapoor.com) or visit: [ravishkapoor.com](https://www.ravishkapoor.com). Instagram: [@ravishkapoorinvitations](https://www.instagram.com/ravishkapoorinvitations)*

**The Entertainment Design Co.**

This luxury invitation brand, founded by Kapil and Sandy Khurana, creates innovative invitations and stationery tailored to your liking. The brand has a presence in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Dubai. *For appointments, email: [info@edc.co.in](mailto:info@edc.co.in) or visit: [edc.co.in](https://www.edc.co.in). Instagram: [@theentertainmentdesigncompany](https://www.instagram.com/theentertainmentdesigncompany)*

**The Bombay Lettering Company**

Founded by Mumbai-based Sanjana Chatlani, The Bombay Lettering Company is known for its bespoke calligraphy artistry. The boutique studio caters to a range of wedding-related needs, whether you want a live personalisation table at your wedding, hand-written letters, custom calligraphy, personalised menu designs, or even custom engraving—she does it all. *For appointments, email: [contact@bombaylettering.com](mailto:contact@bombaylettering.com) or [sanjana@bombaylettering.com](mailto:sanjana@bombaylettering.com). Call: +91 8291988792. Instagram: [@bombaylettering](https://www.instagram.com/bombaylettering)*

**Itchha Talreja Designs**

Mumbai and Dubai-based Itchha Talreja Designs has spent over a decade crafting exquisite wedding invitations, ranging from traditional to contemporary. She has

*Clockwise from left: Sanjana Chatlani’s Bombay Lettering Company is renowned for bespoke calligraphy and custom wedding stationery; Siddharth Sharma’s House on the Clouds creates cinematic wedding films and portraits with a personalised approach; Itchha Talreja Designs offers personalised, exquisite wedding invitations with both traditional and modern elements.*

crafted invitations for several celebrities including Parineeti Chopra and Raghav Chadha, as well as for Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant’s pre-wedding events. *For appointments, email: [info@itchhatalrejadesigns.com](mailto:info@itchhatalrejadesigns.com). Instagram: [@itchhatalrejadesigns](https://www.instagram.com/itchhatalrejadesigns)*

**Radhika Pitti Studio**

Hyderabad-based Radhika Pitti’s eponymous design and print studio specialises in one-of-a-kind wedding stationery and invitations. From boxed invites to elaborate, custom creations, personalised logos, and even digital invites, Pitti will curate everything in line with your vision and aesthetic. *For appointments, visit: [radhikapittistudio.com](https://www.radhikapittistudio.com). Instagram: [@radhikapittistudio](https://www.instagram.com/radhikapittistudio)*

**PHOTOGRAPHERS & VIDEOGRAPHERS**

**House on the Clouds**

Siddharth Sharma is the creative genius behind House on the Clouds, crafting cinematic wedding films and portraits with a contemporary approach. Each wedding is whimsical and beautifully captured, weaving in the couple’s story



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF THE BOMBAY LETTERING COMPANY; COURTESY OF HOUSE ON THE CLOUDS; COURTESY OF ITCHHA TALREJA DESIGNS



Cupcake Productions offers stylish, detailed wedding photography services.

as the focus. *For bookings, email: [hello@houseontheclouds.com](mailto:hello@houseontheclouds.com) or call: +91 9964787383 Instagram: [@houseontheclouds](https://www.instagram.com/houseontheclouds)*

**Cupcake Productions**

Husband and wife duo, Shruti Khanna and Jayant Chhabra, are known for their stylish wedding photography, with an eye for details and capturing moments that are gram-worthy. From heartwarming candids and pre-wedding shoots, to cinematic teasers and editorial portraits, this luxury photography studio does it all. *For bookings, email: [cupcakeproductions13@gmail.com](mailto:cupcakeproductions13@gmail.com) or call: +91 9560452929/9899334472. Instagram: [@cupcakeproductions13](https://www.instagram.com/cupcakeproductions13)*

**Sam & Ekta**

Husband and wife duo, Sam & Ekta, love to tell a good story. Their creative vision and approach involve keeping things as natural and raw as possible and letting the emotions of the couple and their families shine on camera. They believe capturing real, honest moments on film is what makes a wedding unique. *For bookings, email: [sam@samandekta.com](mailto:sam@samandekta.com) or [ekta@samandekta.com](mailto:ekta@samandekta.com) or call: +91 9819611417 / 9004393290. Instagram: [@sam\\_and\\_ekta](https://www.instagram.com/sam_and_ekta)*

**Badal Raja Company**

Delhi-based Badal and Raja Jain are known for capturing some of the most

exquisite Indian weddings including celebrities, industrialists and more. With heartwarming love stories and visual storytelling at the centre of it all, the duo has been shooting and narrating weddings on film for well over two decades. *For*

*bookings, email: [info@badalraja.com](mailto:info@badalraja.com) or WhatsApp: +91 9810776275. Instagram: [@badalrajacompany](https://www.instagram.com/badalrajacompany)*

**ShutterDown**

Gurugram-based ShutterDown captures magical moments with its gram-worthy frames. Headed by Lakshya Chawla, the ShutterDown team believes that every wedding deserves its own unique approach, and they are known for combining new-age techniques with classic aesthetics. *For bookings, email: [info@shutterdown.in](mailto:info@shutterdown.in) or call: +91 9599314849 / 9599744949. Instagram: [@shutterdown.in](https://www.instagram.com/shutterdown.in)*

**CATERERS**

**Sage & Saffron**

Ideal for intimate weddings and pre-wedding events, this Mumbai-based boutique catering company by Aditi Dugar, makes for an apt pick if you’re looking for elevated, gourmet fare with a contemporary spin. Think wild mushroom and truffle doughnuts or sweet potato pockets with butternut squash. They’ll go the extra mile to personalise



Sage & Saffron offers gourmet, contemporary catering for intimate weddings.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF CUPCAKE PRODUCTIONS; COURTESY OF SAGE & SAFFRON GRAZING TABLE



beautiful tablescapes as well. *For bookings, email: [chef@sagesaffron.in](mailto:chef@sagesaffron.in) or call: +91 9136012030. Instagram: @sagesaffron*

Single Thread Catering

Celebrated Bengaluru-based chef, Manu Chandra, offers curated experiences for intimate weddings or gatherings. Whether you want to opt for a Chettinad-inspired sit-down meal, live stations that showcase India’s vibrant street food culture, or an interactive hot pot meal, they do it all, including tablescapes and food and cocktail pairings. *For bookings, email: [info@singlethread.in](mailto:info@singlethread.in) or call: +91 8792381999. Instagram: @singlethreadcaterers*

FoodInc by Yum Yum Tree

Apart from running a chain of restaurants under Yum Yum Tree, Varun Tuli’s catering arm, FoodInc, is known for putting together trendy concepts featuring an array of cuisines. Live stations, sit-down meals, grazing tables and buffet spreads—whatever your choice, they will be happy to customise menus tailored to your tastes and even collaborate with renowned restaurants around the world for a one-off culinary experience for your guests. *For bookings, email: [info@foodinc.in](mailto:info@foodinc.in) or call: +91 9810077019 / 9810077020. Instagram: @foodinc.yumyumtree*

The Kitchen Art Company

The Delhi-based luxe catering company, which has been around since 1997, puts together extensive menus for your wedding celebrations that are crafted to your preferences—from gourmet bites for your *mehendi* and *sangeet* to live stations for the wedding and reception, etc. *For bookings, email: [tkac@tkac.in](mailto:tkac@tkac.in) or visit [tkac.in](http://tkac.in). Instagram: @thekitchenartco*

Foodlink Luxury Catering

Foodlink by Sanjay Vazirani has been at the forefront of revolutionising culinary experiences at Indian weddings. For over two decades, the Mumbai-based firm has been catering glamorous and lavish spectacles be it the Ambani-Piramal nuptials, or Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone’s cross-cultural celebration in Italy, or more intimate, relaxed affairs. They also cater to overseas weddings and can easily have their local teams set up at



Good Earth offers homeware, accessories, and textiles that are perfect for gifting or home décor.

the location. *For bookings, email: [sales@foodlink.in](mailto:sales@foodlink.in). Instagram: @foodlinkcaterin*

GIFTING  
Good Earth

This homegrown design house has been crafting exquisite homeware, accessories, tableware and textiles that are rooted in India’s rich craftsmanship and design heritage. These make for the perfect addition to your new home, or even if you’re looking to gift exclusive pieces to the bridal party or close family. *Shop at: [goodearth.in](http://goodearth.in) Instagram: @goodearthindia*

Swarovski

The iconic crystalware brand is an ideal choice for wedding gifting—from luxury tableware and glasses to crystal-studded jewels, necklace sets and figurines. If you want to gift something to your bridesmaids, their chic jewellery pieces make for a great option. *Shop at: [swarovski.com](http://swarovski.com). Instagram: @swarovski*

Jo Malone London

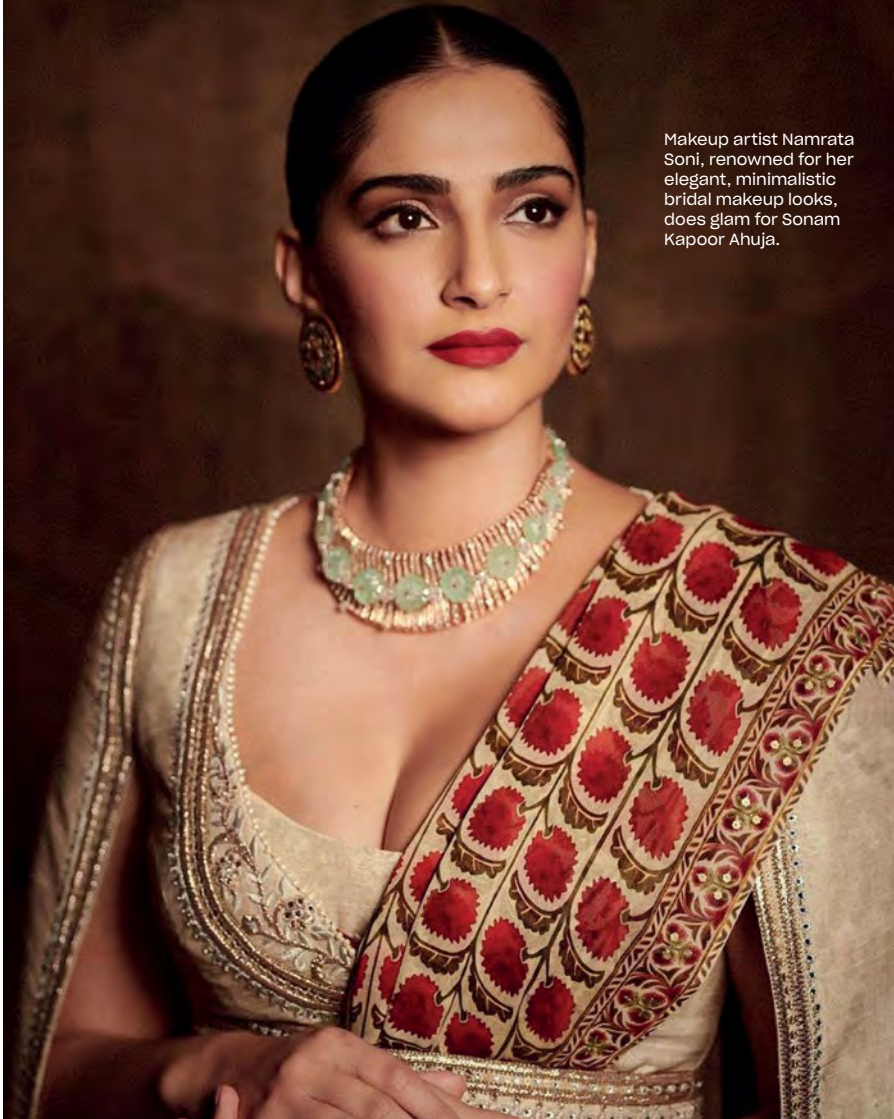
The renowned British fragrance house crafts sophisticated scents that make for perfect gifts. To ensure you can enjoy your

perfume as a cherished keepsake, the brand offers bespoke personalisation services such as bottle engraving, initial charms, and even handwritten notes. You can also work with them to scent your wedding with your very own custom fragrance—in line with your theme, the season, or the venues. *Visit: [jomalone.in](http://jomalone.in). Instagram: @jomalonelondon*

Faaya Gifting offers bespoke collections of serveware, tableware, home décor, and accessories



FROM TOP: COURTESY OF GOOD EARTH; COURTESY OF FAAYA GIFTING



Makeup artist Namrata Soni, renowned for her elegant, minimalistic bridal makeup looks, does glam for Sonam Kapoor Ahuja.

Faaya Gifting

This Mumbai-based design studio offers bespoke collections of serve ware, tableware, home décor, barware, and accessories. Think pretty-looking cake stands, serving trays, cheese knives, photo frames, and votives, among others. The studio is happy to work with couples and their families to personalise wedding favours. *Shop at: [faayagifting.com](http://faayagifting.com). Instagram: @faayagifting*

Taste Retreat

Tasheen Rahimtoola’s boutique firm creates custom wedding favours, gift hampers and other bespoke experiences that are sure to leave your guests impressed. Food gifts and experiences are her forte, as well as themed events. *For bookings, email: [tasteretreat@gmail.com](mailto:tasteretreat@gmail.com). Instagram: @tasterereat*

HAIR & MAKEUP ARTISTS  
Namrata Soni

Celebrity makeup artist Namrata Soni is known for her approach to keeping

makeup minimal but elegant with her delicate brushstrokes. Trust her to put together a cohesive look for you—whether you’re aiming for red-carpet glamour, or something more understated. *For bookings, email: [soninamrata@gmail.com](mailto:soninamrata@gmail.com). Instagram: @namratasoni*

Bianca Louzado

Another celebrity favourite, Louzado has crafted looks for several well-known personalities, including Gauri Khan, Radhika Merchant, and Riddhima Kapoor Sahni, among others. She is also quite the ace hairstylist when it comes to bridal hairstyles. *For bookings, call: +91 9821033531 or email: [louzado.bianca@gmail.com](mailto:louzado.bianca@gmail.com). Instagram: @biancalouzado*

Meera Sakhrani

Delhi-based Sakhrani is sought after for her radiant bridal looks that will give you that lit-from-within glow. If you’re a bride looking for that dreamy glow-up, with a focus on enhancing your natural features,

Sakhrani fits the bill. *For bookings, call: +91 8448229694. Instagram: @meerasakhrani*

Pooja Khurana

Delhi-based Pooja Khurana is known for her delicate artistry when it comes to bridal makeup. From crafting bold looks for a cocktail or reception to more toned-down glamour for your *phas*, leave it to her expert team to create a unique bridal look for you. *For bookings, email: [poojakhurana11@gmail.com](mailto:poojakhurana11@gmail.com). Instagram: @poojakhuranaabeauty*

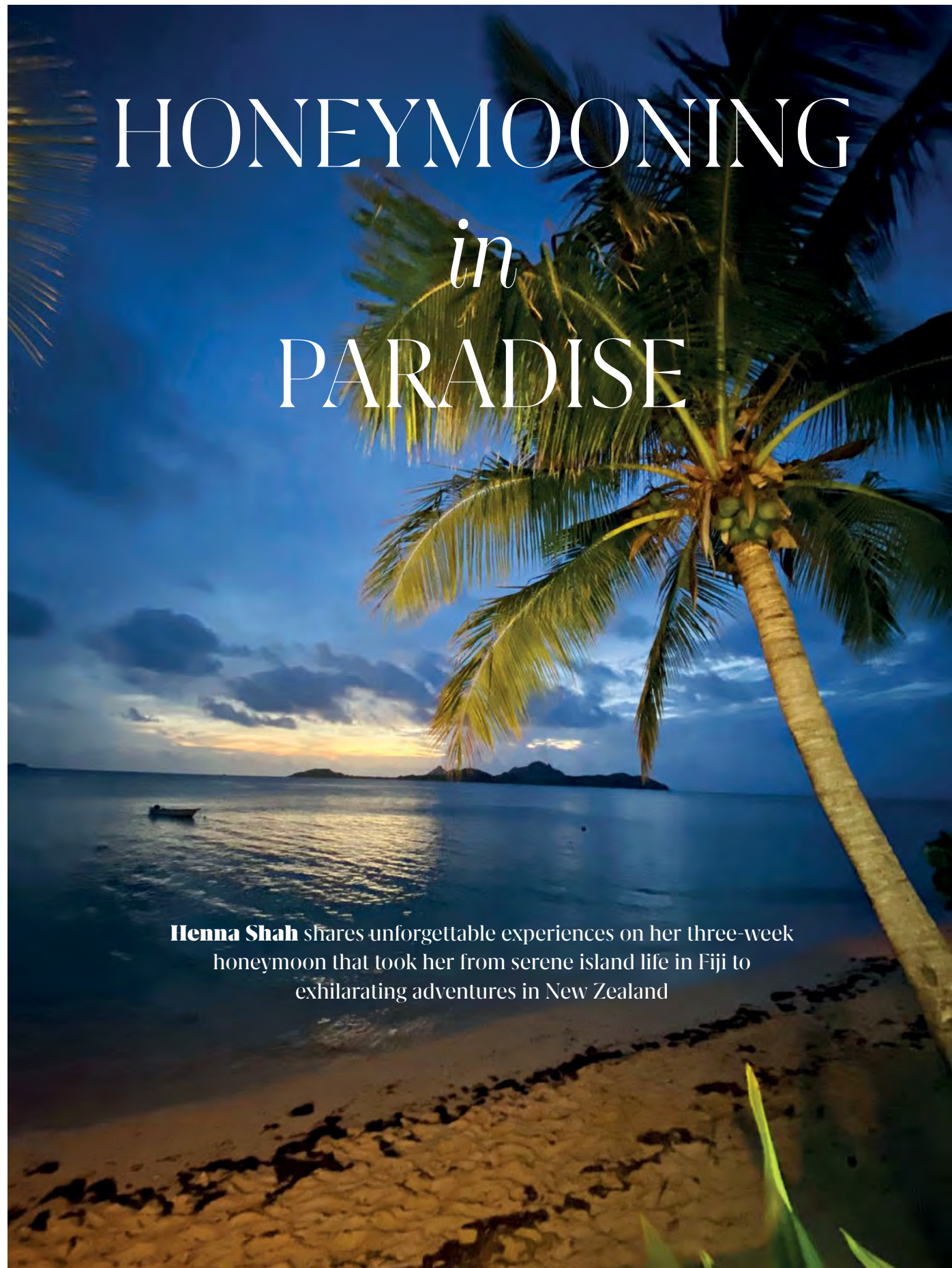
Shradha Luthra

Mumbai-based Shradha Luthra creates exquisite bridal makeup looks that are aimed at enhancing your natural beauty, complete with that fresh-faced glow. Her artistry lies in creating looks that are centred around subtle glam, but at the same time, letting your natural features shine. *For bookings, call: +91 9152008008. Instagram: @shradhaluthra* 🌐

Shradha Luthra specialises in creating fresh, glowing bridal looks, as seen on Alanna Panday.

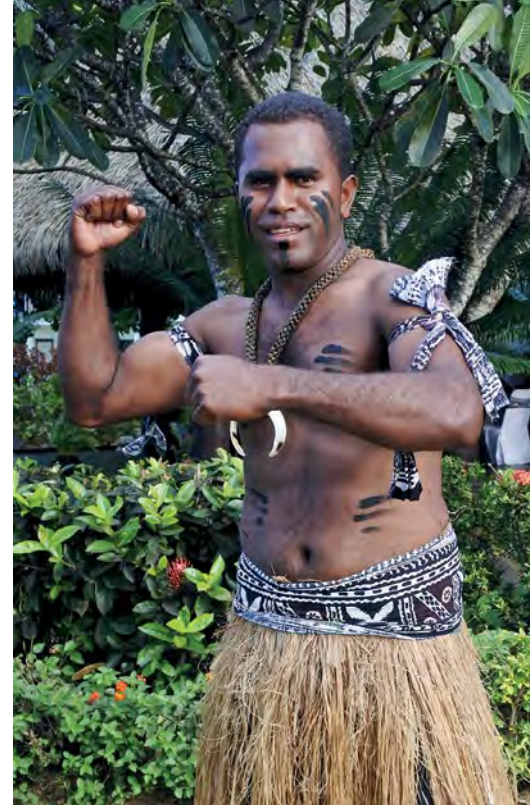






# HONEYMOONING *in* PARADISE

**Henna Shah** shares unforgettable experiences on her three-week honeymoon that took her from serene island life in Fiji to exhilarating adventures in New Zealand



From far left: Nadi is perfect to and immerse yourself in vibrant Fijian culture; the Fijian custom of Kava, a traditional ceremonial drink that's shared among locals, offers guest a taste of island culture and community; explore secluded beaches and enjoy the untouched natural beauty that surrounds Tokoriki Island.

AS THE WEDDING BELLS faded and our elaborate Gujarati wedding wrapped up, my husband Yash and I yearned for a hiatus from our newfound reality. We crossed six time zones for our first stop on our long and “leave-us-alone” honeymoon, watching the Indian winter melt into a Pacific summer in Fiji.

“Bula! Welcome to Nadi, Mr. and Mrs. Merchant,” beamed our bellboy, glowing on account of his crimson undertone. I almost mirrored his complexion as I let my brand-new identity sink in. After spending half a day soaking in the Pacific flora, Melanesian culture, and the déjà vu of taking off our shoes at the Sri Siva Subramaniya Temple, we hopped aboard a catamaran to touch down on the white sandy shores of Tokoriki Island.

“We’re so glad you chose Sheraton Tokoriki ([marriott.com](https://www.marriott.com)) for your honeymoon. Did you fly in from Sydney or Melbourne?” our friendly receptionist asked during check-in. While we were puzzled by this assumption, we discovered that the few Indian faces we encountered during our week at the resort were from neighbouring Australia, making us an exception.

Our first impression of Tokoriki was painted in orange and pink as we watched a classic Fijian sunset from the resort’s helipad. For aspiring castaways like us, Sheraton Tokoriki had blissful *bure*-style rooms only a heartbeat away from the ocean, with hammocks and sun loungers beneath the palm fronds lining the resort’s periphery. We embraced the mellow vibes of island time, letting the clock fade away and our wishful hearts take over to mark the rhythm of the day.

Our day began with decadent breakfasts with cerulean views, followed by a serene duo therapy at the spa that whetted our appetite for lunch. We then spent a leisurely afternoon indulging in cocktails by the pool, toasting under the blazing Fijian sun. As tropical twilight took over the skies, the resort came to life with a game of mini golf alongside fellow honeymooners, which led to a communal *Kava* ceremony, where we realised that the earthy drink was an acquired taste. Nibbling away at some cassava fries, we watched the delightful Meke dance.

At the tail end of our week in Fiji, we set foot in the glistening ocean on a kayak, trying not to lose sight of the coastline. As adrenaline renewed in our laid-back bodies, we jet-skied our way to the neighbouring Monuriki Island to uncover secluded beaches. If our 11-year love story with all its ups and downs were a movie, I would serendipitously end it here—zooming out from our time in Fiji.

However, since weddings are not happy endings but happy beginnings, our week in Fiji was the stepping stone to another two enchanting weeks spent across the sea in New Zealand.

As we refreshed our memory of Middle-Earth by watching a Hobbit movie on our flight from Nadi to Auckland, we gazed out at the rolling fields of the





◀ From here: From exploring the magical Hobbiton Movie Set to relaxing in geothermal pools in Rotorua, New Zealand offers an adventure for every traveller—whether it's black water rafting through glowworm caves in Waitomo, jetboating through Queenstown's rugged terrain, or other thrilling activities set against the stunning backdrop of the Southern Alps and pristine lakes.



North Island. Both the second week of our honeymoon and New Zealand are best experienced on four wheels, except for Auckland, which is best navigated on foot to avoid steep parking charges.

Since it was New Year's Eve, we spent our first evening in Auckland finding the perfect spot by the harbour to watch the Sky Tower light up with fireworks, ushering in the New Year in a new country. The next day began with a swig of velvety flat white at Sky Café on the 50th floor of the Sky Tower ([skycityauckland.co.nz](http://skycityauckland.co.nz)) while observing the city's striking skyline.

With Auckland in the rearview, our road trip came alive as we approached Waitomo for a three-hour blackwater rafting and cave-tubing experience through the Waitomo caves to spot the bioluminescent glowworms. We continued on to Matamata, passing fields devoid of humans and dotted with sheep, as we geared up to dive into the Middle Ages at the Hobbiton Movie Set ([hobbitontours.com](http://hobbitontours.com)). Along with a refreshing gulp of the English Ale at The Green Dragon Inn, we savoured one of the best vegetarian burgers in New Zealand at The Shire's Rest. After another scenic hour-long drive, Yash surprised me with a stop at the Polynesian Spa as we entered the lake city of Rotorua. The unmistakable smell of sulphur engulfed us as we dipped into our private mineral pool overlooking the lake, soaking in the geothermal goodness that healed our long-drive fatigue.

While the Shaky Isles had been nothing short of heavenly, we found ourselves at Hell's Gate ([hellsgate.co.nz](http://hellsgate.co.nz)) in Rotorua, witnessing the earth come alive with spitting geysers, bubbling mud volcanoes, and the earth hissing beneath our feet. After this brief tryst with hell, we grounded ourselves at Agrodome, where sheep walked the ramp to take their respective places on their social pyramid, with the Merino sheep at the top for its superior wool. We left, reeking of the barn after taking a selfie with the black sheep, frolicking with ducks, and feeding the endearing alpacas on the farm tour. Our otherworldly experiences in Rotorua culminated in conquering a Grade 5 rapid in the raging white waters of the Kaituna River before heading back to Auckland to board our flight to Queenstown.

"William, come here, honey. This lovely couple from India is visiting our favourite Cardrona Hotel ([cardronahotel.co.nz](http://cardronahotel.co.nz))," an elderly woman with crinkled cheeks, highlighted with blush, called to her husband at a pit stop on the Crown Range Road. We had stopped to give in to the allure of the lupins, a beautiful weed that lines the roads of the South Island. As our road trip continued, we took in the late evening daylight on a coastal drive from Glenorchy to Queenstown. We visited the Gibbston Valley Winery to sample some wine in a rustic wine cave and stopped by a charming lavender farm run by an old Kiwi couple, who gently warned us about the bumblebees buzzing amid the lavender. Our senses, now somewhat jaded by all the breathtaking beauty of the past two weeks of travel, responded only to surreal vistas perceived from different travel perspectives.

We marvelled at the urban silhouette of Queenstown merging with the mountainous terrain from the Skyline Gondola, and then zoomed in on the landscape from a luge cart. While Yash took



▲ Cruising through Milford Sound's dramatic fjords feels like stepping into a dream, with towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and playful dolphins.

the plunge, leaping out of a plane to take in the aerial views of Queenstown, my acrophobic self was content navigating the rugged terrain in a high-velocity jetboat.

Indeed, the land is best viewed from the water, and we were captivated by the majestic fjords plunging into the sea, roaring waterfalls cascading with mist, dolphins flipping away, and sea lions sunbathing on boulders from aboard the Milford Sound Cruise boat. As we set off from Queenstown, we stopped by Lake Wanaka for a hearty Indian meal to soothe that twinge of homesickness, before making our way to Glacier Country.

We then took a helicopter ride to observe the Franz Josef Glacier up close, encountering a breathtaking glacier landing, and witnessing the glacial waters melt into the sea. While I thought nothing could surpass the stunning helicopter views, our final journey on the TranzAlpine train from Greymouth to Christchurch offered dramatic panoramas. During the unperturbed five-hour train ride, we gazed at the beauty of the Southern Alps, bore witness to the formation of deltas along the coast, and passed by the scenic Arthur's Pass National Park, pondering how life would unfold after our honeymoon. With tan lines from the fierce Antipodean sun and a stash of Whittaker's bars tucked away, we stepped onto our flight back to reality. ☹



# Falguni & Shane Peacock

## Style, Reimagined

As Falguni Shane Peacock reaches a new milestone, the designer duo talk to **SAMREEN TUNGEKAR** about completing 20 years, launching their first prêt brand, and how travel influences their creativity

**You launched your first exclusive prêtwear store. What did you want to highlight through this venture?**

This is our first prêt store, and we're really excited because it is born out of our travel to Italy last year, during this time. While we were there, we really felt that this is something that we should bring into our aesthetic, and so we brought a part, a slice of Italy to the brand's perspective.

**20 years of Falguni Shane Peacock: How would you describe your journey in couture and fashion so far?**

I think that 20 years is when you look back, and you realise that it's 20 whole years, you know? But for us, every day just feels like a new day. We feel like there's a lot more to achieve for us and for the brand, and there's a lot more things to leave back for fashion.

**What are the biggest challenges for the fashion industry today?**

That depends on how you see things, and what 'challenge' means to you. If you see them as challenges, there are a lot of challenges. We've always been competing with ourselves and we're trying to improve our brand, and take it to another level. We want to keep taking our brand a notch higher. There are no challenges that we face—we are very clear about what we want to do, and what we don't want to do. If we want to do something, we'll find a way. If not, we remove it out of our system. I think once you sit down and think and you know what you want, you know exactly where you're going and you know what you want to do, then nothing feels like a challenge.

**What does travel mean to you?**

Travel means everything. It opens up a different dimension. Sometimes we're very closed to a certain perspective, but when you travel it changes how you see something. You can be travelling within India or abroad—this change can happen anywhere; travel just inspires you to do many things. Be it the food, clothes, the way people dress, or by visiting stores—we're inspired by all of it. When we travel, we keep an open mind.

▼ The brand's latest pret collection is inspired by their travel to Italy.



▲ The designer duo always finds inspiration in different cities and cultures; Falguni and Shane with Gauri Khan at their first ever prêt store; with this new collection, the brand is adding a different slice to their design perspective.

**How do you see travel influence couture today especially when social media has made travel so accessible?**

As an example: it's one thing to see food on social media, and another to go to a restaurant to eat it. There's a world of a difference—you may look at a channel and think you want to travel to Spain, but when you pack your bags and actually go to Spain, there's a world of a difference. Social media allows you to see the place beforehand or experience it in a different manner, but actual travel is a very different experience, so you just can't compare the two. Couture is the same way. If you're seeing couture firsthand—when you actually creating, making, and showing and meeting the people around you it's different—but when you see it on social media, it's not the same feeling. It's like some people love to read the book, while others prefer watching the movie.

**What are the cities that have inspired your creations?**

I think at different times and years, and different time zones, we've been inspired by many things. There was a time when we were so taken in and inspired by Korean and Japanese influences. At that time, we launched the collection Colony. There were times when we were inspired by the Renaissance period. So I think it's just a matter what time, which year you are in, and you'll find a place that inspires you.

**What do you like doing when you travel for inspiration?**

We just keep an open mind. There can be a poster stuck in the middle of the road or a saying written on the pavement, or a billboard that's put up that could inspire us. If you've visited our house, you'll see a lot of pictures of New York or London, clicked and framed. The inspiration is everywhere, you just have to find it.

**If you're going for a holiday, what are five outfits you'll not miss out on?**

When you're travelling, one thing is that you want to let loose. You want to be cool, chilled out, and you know that you're going to do a lot of walking. We walk a lot when we travel. So comfortable shoes are a must. I like to layer up, so it's usually a bomber jacket, a t-shirt, or a trench coat, and a good pair of jeans. Falguni likes to take good pictures, so she always packs things that are comfortable and look good in pictures. ☺





# Himanshu Patel

PHOTOGRAPHER, STORYTELLER, ENTREPRENEUR

## Wedding Wows

With more than 150 weddings in his portfolio, Himanshu Patel of *Epic Stories* hardly needs an introduction. But when you cover what's been touted as the 'wedding of the century', it certainly adds a feather to the cap. He talks about the Ambani wedding, wanderlust, and how travel is impacting the world of wedding photography with **MANSI SHAH**

### What are some of the challenges you faced, given the sheer scale and grandeur of the Anant Ambani-Radhika Merchant wedding?

I hadn't anticipated the scale of the wedding initially. We knew nine months prior to the wedding that we were shooting it, but we learned more details gradually. The most challenging aspect was managing the size and complexity of the events. It was vital to be prepared and vigilant in capturing raw and emotional moments while respecting the guests' privacy. Being discreet was of utmost

importance; we needed to be invisible yet present, capturing moments without disrupting anyone or interrupting the ceremonies. To achieve this, we strategically positioned each team member at key locations and minimised unnecessary movements during the ceremonies. We anticipated important moments and utilised telephoto lenses to capture intimate scenes from a distance, allowing us to get close-up shots without intruding. Although this shooting method is quite unusual for weddings, it's essential for professionals like us to adapt our techniques to meet specific expectations. This experience has reinforced the importance of being flexible and mindful of the unique needs of each event, enabling us to deliver the best possible results.

### Take us through the debriefing process before the wedding. Did Radhika and Anant have a vision for their wedding pictures?

Radhika and Anant had a clear vision. They wanted to capture the tiny, intimate moments of fun, love, and emotion that would create beautiful memories for a lifetime. On our part, we got a thorough

understanding of the flow of each event, and we were able to anticipate key moments. We ensured we were in the right place at the right time, ready to capture spontaneous expressions of joy. The family had a special request: they wanted the photos to be cherished long after the memories faded, hoping these images would evoke the experiences and emotions of the day.



COURTESY OF HIMANSHU PATEL

### Travel and wedding photography are coming together in a big way. Tell us about the challenges of covering a wedding that spans across cities and continents.

The main challenge is coordination. Logistics become complex when multiple locations are involved, from transporting equipment safely across borders to managing tight schedules and venue restrictions. Working in different time zones, languages, and weather conditions requires quick adaptability. Another significant challenge is ensuring consistency. Couples want cohesive storytelling that blends the different locations seamlessly, so I focus on maintaining a consistent style and narrative while adjusting to each place's unique qualities. Lastly, as each region has its customs and traditions, it's essential to approach every ceremony with cultural sensitivity and an understanding of the protocols to respect the families involved.

### Taking off from that, what are some of the trends you're noticing when it comes to the wedding industry and travel?

Travel and wedding photography have become deeply intertwined, especially with the rise of destination weddings. Couples now look for unique and meaningful settings that reflect their stories, whether it's a palace in Rajasthan or a serene beach in the Maldives. These locations add an element of grandeur and cultural richness that's hard to recreate otherwise, transforming the wedding into a beautiful experience not only for the couple but also for the guests. Some trends we're seeing include destination themes that embrace local aesthetics and traditions, personalised to tell the couple's story. There's also a growing appreciation for editorial and documentary-style photography, where the focus is on high fashion and authentic emotions. Cultural fusion is another trend—couples often incorporate elements from the locale, creating a celebration that's both traditional and inspired by the destination.

### How has social media impacted wedding photography? Could you tell us the pros and cons?

Instagram has had a huge impact on wedding photography, shaping how people



▲ Clockwise from here: Radhika with her father Viren Merchant; Radhika and Anant Ambani share a tender moment as their families look on; Anant and Radhika's wedding was a seamless blend of family traditions and contemporary flair, reflecting their personal tastes.



envision their weddings and the photos they want. In terms of pros, it's been amazing for exposure. Instagram allows photographers to reach a global audience and showcase their work instantly. It has also fuelled creativity, as couples are more willing to experiment with unique concepts they've seen online. The platform helps photographers gain recognition, especially for distinct styles, and clients are more likely to connect with us when they see our work and how it resonates with their vision. On

the downside, Instagram has created a bit of a "template" effect, where certain shots or themes become trends, and couples sometimes want those exact images, which can stifle creativity. There's also the pressure to capture "Insta-worthy" moments, often prioritising aesthetics over the natural flow of events. It can sometimes overshadow the authenticity of the experience itself. Social media also makes our work vulnerable to unauthorised use, with images often reshared without proper credit. ☹





# A Grand Egyptian Elopement

After years of dating and companionship, Indian-origin billionaire tech entrepreneur Ankur Jain and former WWE wrestler Erika Hammond come together in a grandiose ceremony before the Great Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza. They share the story of their big-fat wedding with **SHRADDHA CHOWDHURY**



place was fully transformed with candles, roses and a massive ‘Will you marry me?’ sign.”

## PLANNING D-DAY

Soon after the magical proposal, the couple began to plan their wedding extravaganza. The grand nuptials included a seven-day trip across two countries, starting with a three-day trip to South Africa to go on safari, followed by events in Cairo, Egypt. Over 130 guests came to Cairo to celebrate with them.

“Ankur and I both were very involved in the planning. We wanted our guests to have the most amazing experience and designed each day with a

▲ Ankur and Erika chose Egypt for their wedding. (Below) Their wedding reception took place under the stars, with the Pyramids as the stunning backdrop.



WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER: PIERMARCO RINALDI



▲ Erika was styled by Yasmine Kenawi for her wedding. (Below): The couple tied the knot in front of the Great Sphinx of Giza.

detailed run of shows that covered everything from lighting and music to the experience,” says Erika. “We wanted every moment to be fun and constantly evolving and were willing to rethink any ‘traditional’ elements that would take away from that.”

But she advises, “Make planning a team effort and enjoy the process—the wedding is just one day or weekend. Be ready for unexpected changes, embrace those moments as a part of your unique story, and don’t be afraid to keep it true to you as a couple.”

## CELEBRATIONS IN EGYPT

After narrowing down on Egypt as their wedding destination, the couple planned a series of unforgettable events, including a night at the Grand Egyptian Museum, a welcome party at Prince Muhammad Ali’s Palace, a wedding ceremony in front of the Great Sphinx, and a reception with an after-party at the Pyramids.

But like every such grand celebration, their wedding wasn’t without hiccups either. “We almost missed our welcome party in Egypt,” Erika laughs. “Ankur and I, and 65 of our guests had some major travel delays with our chartered plane from South Africa to Cairo. But we all ended up still making the party at 2.30am. It’s one of our favourite memories.”

Styled by Yasmine Kenawi, Erika’s wardrobe was a showstopper at every event. She wore a sparkling purple Elias Riga gown for the safari night, a stunning Elio Abou Fayssal bridal couture gown for the welcome party, and a Cleopatra-inspired bead gown the following night. For the ceremony, she wore a gold-accented Rahul Mishra sheer gown with a peacock train, finishing the celebrations in a custom Sahara-inspired dress by Grete Henriette.

## PERSONALISATIONS GALORE

The two personalised the entire shindig to their liking—even shelling out fake money with an image of their dog on it at their bazaar night-themed welcome party. Guests were also pampered with a note and gift each day of the festivities that pertained to the following day’s itinerary. Among them were personalised hieroglyphic pyjamas and necklaces, as well as Nike Air Force Ones branded with their initials, ‘AE.’

“We didn’t feel the need to follow every tradition. There were no bridesmaids, groomsmen, wedding cake, or bouquet toss, but it was important for Erika’s dad to walk her down the aisle, and for us to exchange our vows in front of our loved ones,” says Ankur.

Even their menu for the wedding day was based on their favourites from New York including hot dogs and pretzels. Violinist Lindsey Stirling performed, while Robin Thicke and DJ Gryffin entertained at the after-party.

“Our relationship grew through shared experiences and deep conversations. It’s so important to spend quality time together and ensure that your values and life goals align,” says Erika. “So, enjoy the journey of planning and building a life together. You should both be equally excited to begin a lifelong journey together as partners.” ☯





## UNMISSABLE NUPTIALS

These celebrity weddings truly caught our attention this year.



*Zaeden and Nina Shah's beautiful wedding in Goa in sync with their personas.*

### ZAEDEN & DJ NINA SHAH

Photos: Joseph Radhik  
Baraat and Sangeet: Faraz Manan  
Wedding day: Tarun Tahiliani



*PV Sindhu Venkata Datta Sai's fairytale wedding in the majestic city of Udaipur.*

### PV SINDHU & VENKATA DATTA SAI

Planning, Design & Decor: @rvreventzdesign  
Photography: @rvrpro; Venue: @rafflesudaipur  
Styling: @bornaliicaldeira  
Makeup and hair: @sandyartistry  
Wedding, Outfit and jewellery: @manishmalhotra05,  
@manishmalhotraworld, @manishmalhotrajewellery



*Viraj Ghelani and Palak Khimavat's intimate celebration, filled with love, laughter, and joy.*

### VIRAJ GHELANI & PALAK KHEMIVAT

Wedding Planning & Management: Shreem Events  
Photography: Raabta by Shrey Bhagat

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A couple in traditional Indian wedding attire stands in a ornate, domed pavilion. The bride wears a white lace sari with a long train, and the groom wears a white kurta with a gold necklace. The pavilion is decorated with large floral arrangements of pink, white, and purple flowers. The background shows a hazy landscape with hills.

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