

SWEET SUITES

No need to travel afar to find the perfect spot for a romantic first night—some of the world's best are right here *By Bekah Wright*

The last waltz has been played. The final guest kissed. Your big day has come to an end. It's finally time to relax. Whether you honeymoon locally or out of town, don't skimp on the wedding night by spending it at home. Your special day should end with soft Frette linens, plush robes, and ahhh...turndown service. Steal away to a local treasure.

BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL AND BUNGALOWS

There it stands at the top of Rodeo Drive in all its pink majesty: the historic Beverly Hills Hotel. As you cruise up the palm-lined drive, you'll feel as though you're entering a bygone era of old-Hollywood elegance. Wander along the property's

gardens to the Presidential Bungalow Suite. There, you'll have your own pool and Jacuzzi. For pampering, book time at the hotel's spa or have a massage therapist tend to you at your cabana. Take lunch under the trees of the Polo Lounge, ordering up steak tartare prepared tableside. As dusk approaches, cozy up by the fireplace in your bungalow or cuddle on the patio under the stars.

9641 Sunset Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90210; 310-276-2251; reservations: 800-283-8885; www.thebeverlyhillshotel.com. Rates range from \$395 to \$5,200.

HOTEL BEL-AIR

Crossing the bridge onto Hotel Bel-Air's property takes you into a peaceful wooded

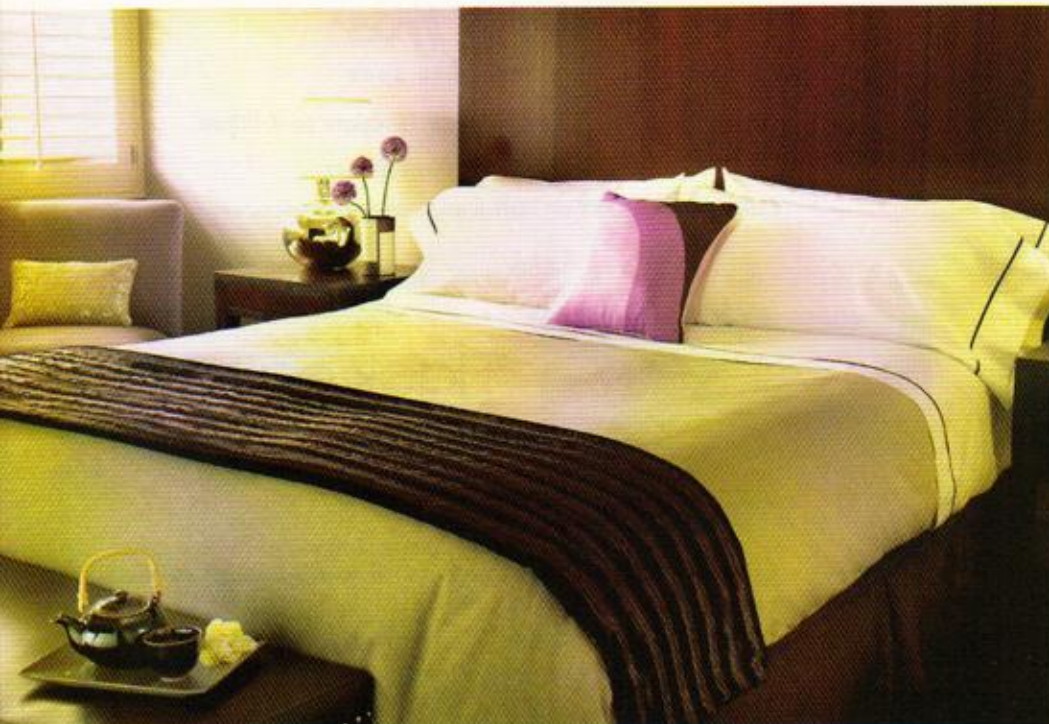
sanctuary. The smell of orange blossoms will follow you down pathways where you'll find swans swimming on Swan Lake. A cobblestone path leads back to the Mission-style hotel and your Grand Deluxe Guestroom. With the hotel's "Fleur-tation Package," you'll be welcomed with flutes of Fleur de Champagne for toasting fireside. Spend the next day in bed reading the newspaper, munching on Parisian pastries, and collaborating over the crossword puzzle until it's time for your afternoon in-room massage. Later, swap bites during a five-course farmers' market tasting dinner paired with wines from the hotel's cellar. Retire to the room and you'll find the lights dimmed, your bed sprinkled with rose petals, and a sweet snack of truffles and champagne.

701 Stone Canyon Road, Los Angeles, CA 90077; 310-472-1211; reservations: 800-648-4097; www.hotelbelair.com. Rates range from \$395 to \$3,500 ("Fleur-tation Package," \$1,995).

HOTEL CASA DEL MAR

From the moment you arrive at Hotel Casa Del Mar's front door, cupids and angels on the building's façade alert you to the romantic environs within. Check into one of the Penthouse Suites with sweeping views of the Pacific coastline. Partake in the hotel's "Romance by the Sea" package for a two-night stay filled with four spa treatments to work out pre-wedding stress. Linger over breakfast in bed, then stroll to the Santa Monica Pier and share kisses on the Ferris wheel as it takes you to the top of the world.

1910 Ocean Way, Santa Monica, CA 90405; 310-581-5533 or 800-898-6999; reservations: www.hotelcasadelmar.com. Room rates start at \$405; suites start at \$975 ("Romance by the Sea" package, \$1,420).



can be filled with semisweet, white, milk, or dark chocolate. An attendant and skewers accompany the fountain, but you or your caterer will be in charge of the "objets de dip." Rick Smith, Jr., co-owner of Sweet Fountains, recommends strawberries, marshmallows, cream puffs, biscotti, pretzels, and most fruits. "Anything that's not crumbly," he suggests. During outdoor receptions, make certain the fountain is shielded from the wind.

Many couples turn to Shelley Beals' melt-in-your-mouth hot doughnut holes. Beals' company, Hot Spot Mini Donuts, supplies a doughnut machine with an attendant, who fries up the morsels on the spot, sprinkling them with powdered sugar, cinnamon sugar, or granulated sugar in vanilla, raspberry, or chocolate flavors. "People especially like to hire us to offer guests doughnuts and coffee at the end of the night while they're waiting for the valet."

If flavors, designs, and alternatives become overwhelming during the wedding plans, Grode offers one last piece of advice: "It's not brain surgery; it's cake. Stay focused on what you're really doing—joining your souls together. Your wedding cake should be an articulation of the sweetness of your life and who you are."

RESOURCES > Cake Divas: 9626 Venice Blvd., Culver City; 310-287-2609; www.cakedivas.com; by appointment only. **Hot Spot Mini Donuts:** 213-590-1710; www.hotspotminidonuts.com. **Krispy Kreme Doughnuts:** 4034 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles; 323-291-4133 or 800-457-4779. **Layers Cake Design Studio:** 13944 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks; 818-784-3918; by appointment only. **Laura Moniz:** 626-799-0733. **Rosebud Cakes:** 311 S. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills; 310-657-6207; www.rosebudcakes.com. **Sweet Fountains:** 800-347-7131; www.sweetfountains.com. **Sweet Lady Jane:** 8360 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles; 323-653-7145; www.sweetladyjane.com. **Topozios Cake Artistry:** 422 N. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles; 310-652-2230; www.topozios.com; by appointment only. **Very Different Cakes:** 323-960-9039; www.verydifferentcakes.com.

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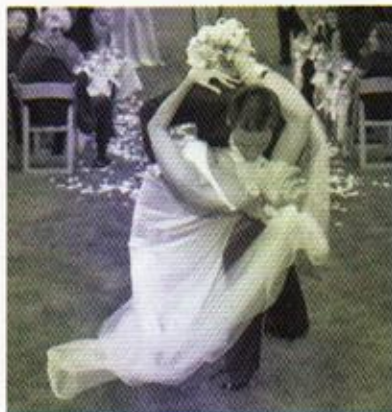
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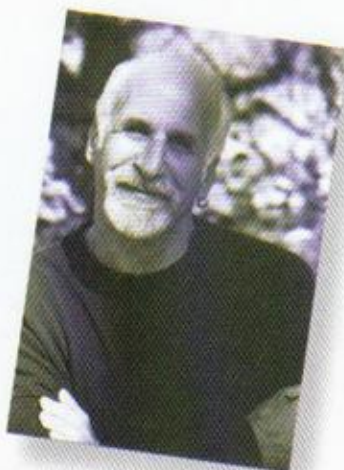
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HIDEAWAYS

MALIBU BEACH INN

A quaint jewel just ten steps from the beach, the Malibu Beach Inn is a true find. Stay in a first-floor room for a balcony with a hot tub overlooking the ocean and a view of the Malibu Pier. Bask in the morning sun with a continental breakfast on the terrace, then head down to the sand for a manicure and pedicure at the inn's nail cabana on the beach. End your day with dinner on a clifftop at a table in Geoffrey's romantic garden room. Back in your quarters, a champagne and rose-petal turndown will usher you into the evening.

22878 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu CA 90265; 310-456-6444; www.malibubeachinn.com. Rates range from \$190 to \$455.

MILLENNIUM BILTMORE

You'll find yourself surrounded by palatial elegance at the beaux arts-style Millennium Biltmore. Toast your big day with champagne and truffles in one of the hotel's one-bedroom suites. The next morning, have breakfast in bed before heading to the Biltmore's Visage Salon to partake in a Self-Renewal Facial and Stress Relief Treatment. Both relaxing and rejuvenating, the treatment involves a facial coupled with a scalp and foot massage. In the afternoon, make a grand entrance down the Biltmore's regal staircase leading to the Rendezvous Court for afternoon tea. Later, don evening attire for an elegant dinner at Engine Co. No. 28, a historic 1912 firehouse, then attend a performance at the stunning Walt Disney Concert Hall.

506 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90071; 213-624-1011; reservations: 800-245-8673; www.millenniumhotels.com. Rates range from \$309 to \$3,000.

MONTAGE RESORT & SPA

Resting atop a cliff in Laguna Beach, the Montage Resort & Spa will sweep you away with its views of the Pacific. The one-night "Pacific Overtures" package will treat you to breakfast in bed in an Ocean Suite, followed by a couple's massage at Spa Montage. Spend the day being pampered and enjoying the spa's steam room, sauna, whirlpool, and cold plunge, then



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soak in the sun by the mosaic pool. Before dinner at the resort's Studio restaurant, stop to warm your hands outside at the fire pit, situated high on a 50-foot bluff. When you return to your suite, you'll find the Montage's "Romance Artist" has prepared a candlelit botanical bath for two. As you tuck yourselves in for the night, open the door to your balcony, falling asleep to the gentle lapping of ocean waves. So what if it's a little chilly? It's just one more excuse to snuggle up.

30801 South Coast Highway, Laguna Beach, CA 92651; 888-715-6700; www.montagelaguna.com. Rates range from \$490 to \$5,500 ("Pacific Overtures" package, \$1,740).

REGENT BEVERLY WILSHIRE

Movie buffs will remember the Regent Beverly Wilshire as the location where Julia Roberts' and Richard Gere's characters fell in love in *Pretty Woman*. You'll fall in love, too, with this majestic hotel. For pure romance, stay in the Veranda Suite with its canopied bed and trail of rose petals leading from the threshold. That evening, have the concierge arrange for musicians to serenade you over a candlelit dinner on your private rooftop garden terrace, with its panoramic views of the sleeping city. Adjourn to tandem in-room massages, then share a bubble bath in the suite's oversized soaking tub.

9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA 90212; 310-275-5200; www.fourseasons.com. Rates range from \$415 to \$7,500.

RITZ-CARLTON, HUNTINGTON HOTEL & SPA

Discreetly tucked away in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, the 23-acre Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel & Spa recalls days when ladies wore hats and men checked watches pocketed in their vests. Stay in the Wisteria Cottage, a bungalow nestled beneath an 88-year-old weeping willow. Meander through the grounds to see the hotel's Japanese Garden, the Picture Bridge with its 40 painted murals, and the Horseshoe Garden. At The Carriage House, experience spa treatments that will leave you utterly relaxed. In the evening, stay for live jazz or rhythm and blues, or head into Old Pasadena

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HIDEAWAYS

to stroll past the charming shops and restaurants along Colorado Boulevard. Back at your bungalow, rose petals lead to the fireplace, where champagne and tuxedo chocolate-covered strawberries wait to be shared.

1401 South Oak Knoll Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91106; 626-568-3900; reservations: 800-241-3333; www.ritzcarlton.com. Rates range from \$310 to \$3,000.

SHUTTERS ON THE BEACH

Situated on the bike path of Santa Monica Beach, this gray-shingled hotel promises perfect vantage points for watching the sunset. The Presidential Suites come equipped with binoculars for scoping out dolphins at play in the bay. Toast one another with wine from your suite's private wine cellar. Arrange for a gourmet picnic on the beach, then spend the afternoon tooling down the boardwalk on a Segway HT, a two-wheeled human transporter. Luxuriate in decadent treatments at One, the hotel's spa. Then revel over that sunset as you savor dinner at One Pico. Conclude the perfect day with a late-night walk along Third Street Promenade, holding hands as you window-shop.

One Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90405; 310-458-0030 or 800-334-9000; reservations: www.shuttersonthebeach.com. Room rates start at \$405; suites start at \$905.

W LOS ANGELES

The W Los Angeles in Westwood has a philosophy when it comes to fulfilling the special requests of its guests: Whatever, whenever. With that kind of hospitality in mind, check into a two-story Penthouse Suite with floor-to-ceiling windows affording views of Westwood Village and the surrounding hillsides. Chilled champagne and chocolate-covered strawberries await you. Unwind over a candlelit dinner in a private poolside cabana, followed by a couple's massage. If traveling down Pacific Coast Highway under a moonlit sky tugs at your heartstrings, the hotel will arrange for a convertible to whisk you away.

930 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024; 310-208-8765; reservations: 877-946-8357; www.w-hotels.com. Rates range from \$299 to \$3,500.

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