



**LOCATION SCOUT**

## CASTLE HILL INN

*Newport, Rhode Island*

You'll feel all-American saying "I do" on the hydrangea-trimmed lawn of this crisp white 1870s-era estate, which sits on its own 40-acre peninsula that juts into the Atlantic.

You and yours can rent the entire property—that's all seven rooms, plus 24 private waterfront cottages—for an oh-so New England wedding weekend. And while the seaside venue sets the tone for nautical décor, there's room to get glamorous, too: Just look to the property's Grace Kelly Beach, a favorite lounging spot for the actress when she stayed here during the filming of *High Society* in the 1950s.

**THE DETAILS:** Venue rental from \$6,000, reception rates from \$195 per person, and room rates from \$465 a night, [castlehillinn.com](http://castlehillinn.com).

## GREAT ESCAPES

Where in the world to wed, honeymoon, and more

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## LOCATION SCOUT CASTLE HILL INN

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Fill out your wedding weekend with these Rhode Island-appropriate specialties.



### Big Day Prep

Relax with your girls at Castle Hill's spa and be pampered with Farmaesthetics' all-natural serums and oils (from \$12, [farmaesthetics.com](http://farmaesthetics.com)).



### Tennis, Anyone?

Host an alfresco rehearsal dinner near the manicured grass courts at the International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum ([tennisfame.com](http://tennisfame.com)).



### Starboard Style

Your 'maids—and his 'men—will fall hook, line, and sinker for Miansai's his-and-hers leather bracelets and brass cuffs (from \$80, [miansai.com](http://miansai.com)).



### Seaworthy Thank-Yous

Shell out for beach-themed chocolate favors from The Newport Sweet Shoppe (from \$1 each, [newportsweetshoppe.com](http://newportsweetshoppe.com)).



## TRAVEL SAVVY

Rewards guru Brian Kelly, known to his 85,000 Twitter followers as **The Points Guy**, has 25 credit cards, more than 3 million points, and loads of advice for booking smart and spending wisely.

AS TOLD TO JULIE VADNAL

**How can couples turn wedding bills into points?** If your reception is at a hotel that gives loyalty points, there can be huge payoffs. But planning anywhere is a massive expense. People can book their entire wedding on a points credit card and get double or triple earnings, making a big dent in honeymoon travel costs.

**Can you get rewards for booking a block of rooms for guests, even though you don't pay for them in the end?** Yes! Most chains have meeting-planner programs where if you book rooms, you get points. Often wedding coordinators will use their cards to hold the block, but then you'd lose out on the rewards. Write it in your planner's contract that those expenses will go on your points-earning credit card.

**Which credit card offers the best deal?** The key is to get points that are super-flexible. One of the best out there, period, is the Starwood Preferred Guest American Express. You can transfer those points to more than 30 airlines—and use them at Starwood hotels, obviously—or for experiences like concerts and sporting events. If you're having your wedding at a Starwood property, it's a no-brainer. The other is the Chase Sapphire Preferred,

which gives double points on all travel and dining, whether you charge your rehearsal dinner or honeymoon meals.

**Which card works best overseas?** Chase Sapphire Preferred; it has no foreign transaction fees, while some cards charge up to 3 percent of every dollar spent abroad!

**If a bride and groom each open their own cards, will it maximize rewards?** Absolutely. Sign-up bonuses are really, really high these days, though most require that you spend \$3,000 within 90 days. You'll be spending a lot on your wedding, so it's a good time to get new credit cards. Just make sure you can pay them off! Also, keep in mind that some programs let you combine points, meaning you and your spouse-to-be can pool them for flights or hotels.

**As airlines continue to devalue mileage programs, which one has the sweetest rewards?** American Airlines is the most lucrative, as a whole. They recently merged with US Airways, so those miles are now in one account.

Get more of Brian's tips, including the most affordable day to travel, at [marthastewartweddings.com/thepointsguy](http://marthastewartweddings.com/thepointsguy).



One New York couple designed a custom floral art installation for behind their bar.

WHY NOT?

## Add Your Own Art

Amal Clooney reportedly hand-picked modern art for her Venetian venue. Follow her lead with London-based rental service **Rise Art**, whose offerings include splashy Takashi Murakami prints and go for as little as \$40 ([riseart.com](http://riseart.com)). Or call upon Los Angeles's **Art Dimensions Inc.**, which leases paintings, sculptures, and photos for Hollywood sets ([artdimensionsonline.com](http://artdimensionsonline.com)). If you've got a specific vision in the Big Apple and beyond, **Prop Art New York** will commission something for you ([artforrentnyc.com](http://artforrentnyc.com)).

LEFT, FROM TOP: MIKE KRAUTER; COURTESY INTERNATIONAL TENNIS HALL OF FAME; BRYAN GARDNER (2). RIGHT, FROM TOP: COURTESY BRIAN KELLY; INGALLS PHOTOGRAPHY

## SECRET ISLANDS

If you've been dreaming about your own private getaway, consider these relaxed and exclusive stays. Even better, getting lost in paradise doesn't have to be pricey—some options go for as little as \$130 a night.



Kamalame Cay

### FOR SERIOUS BEACH BUMMING KAMALAME CAY, THE BAHAMAS

Once you've dropped your bags in your beachfront bungalow, you will be eager to venture out. Bone-fishing, snorkeling, swimming, sunning, and kayaking are just a few of the options at this 34-room resort nestled on a three-mile, white-sand strip that's a mere three-minute ferry ride from Andros Town. If that sounds too taxing, there's a lazier option: While being massaged with pine, juniper, and cypress essential oils in the overwater spa, you can sightsee through the clear glass floor at your sea-dwelling neighbors (from \$250 a night, [kamalame.com](http://kamalame.com)).

### FOR DINNERS WITH A VIEW VENISSA WINE RESORT, ITALY

This island estate isn't expensive—or even ultra-remote. The six-suite Venissa sits on the sleepy isle of Mazzorbo in the northern part of the Venetian Lagoon, a ferry ride from Venice's tourist-packed main islands. (The city itself is composed of 117 small islets occasionally laced together by bridges over canals.) Tucked between 14th-century walls and surrounded by its own vineyard and organic garden—and a Michelin-starred restaurant that utilizes the two—the simple lodgings leave room in the budget for gondola rides (from \$130 a night, [venissa.it](http://venissa.it)).

### FOR TOTAL SECLUSION VAHINE ISLAND, FRENCH POLYNESIA

How do we love Vahine? Let us count the ways: First, its 23 almost-empty acres are filled with coconut groves for walking and beaches for frolicking. Second, from wherever you sunbathe, you'll overlook a turquoise lagoon—but the more ambitious can play badminton, learn to weave palm leaves, or windsurf, all included in your waterside abode's rate. Finally, if you're up for exploring, sail to the nearby isle of Taha'a to visit a vanilla plantation or a pearl farm, where you'll pick up the Tahitian black variety (from \$395 a night, [vahine-island.com](http://vahine-island.com)).

COURTESY DANILLO SCARPATI



## SHORT + SWEET

Even if you can't take a two-week trip right after saying "I do," you'll want to go *somewhere*. Each escape here is an easy-to-reach mini 'moon—no matter where you depart from—that feels worlds away from home.



### IF YOU'RE LEAVING FROM THE SOUTH

#### ISLAMORADA, FLORIDA

**WHY HERE** This fishing-focused islet offers a Caribbean-style vibe and is passport-free: The drive from Miami is less than two hours.

**WHERE TO STAY** With its white sand and hammock-strung palm trees, the ocean-front Moorings Village & Spa (above) resort is a favorite of fashion and film types. Its 18

cottages are cushy and private, but still within biking distance of restaurants (from \$359 a night, themooringsvillage.com). At the 16-suite Casa Morada, weekend mornings start with yoga; afternoons can be spent in a kayak floating in the hotel's bay (from \$339 a night, casamorada.com).

**WHERE TO EAT** Whether you're enjoying a fancy dinner at Pierre's or casual lunch at the Morada Bay Beach Café, the neighboring waterfront spots have it all: sunset views, tiki torches, and fresh fish catches (moradabay.com).

**WHERE TO PLAY** Set sail from Casa Morada on a skip-jack and learn what Islamorada is really all about: The island's motto is *eat, fish, sleep*.



### IF YOU'RE TREKKING FROM THE WEST COAST

#### SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

**WHY HERE** Napa's little sister feels youthful and laid-back by comparison, but it's just as celebrated for food and wine.

**WHERE TO STAY** Nearby Farmhouse Inn (above) has 25 airy rooms—18 have four-poster beds and soaking tubs—and a new spa featuring deep-tissue massage (from \$395 a night, farmhouseinn.com).

**WHERE TO EAT** Between the pimiento cheese-topped burger and the pies on display at the counter, you'll want to try everything at The Fremont Diner (thefremontdiner.com).

**WHERE TO PLAY** Scribe Winery's smart young vintners underscore its cool, bohemian vibe—and the excellent pinot noirs, chardonnays, and rieslings don't hurt, either (scribewinery.com).



### IF YOU'RE FLYING FROM THE EAST COAST

#### PROVINCETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

**WHY HERE** Cape Cod's most popular destination is surrounded by Instagram-worthy Atlantic beaches.

**WHERE TO STAY** Salt House Inn (above), a New England

B&B gone minimalist, is a sunlit 15-roomer run by a couple, one of whom whips up pastries and breakfast burritos each morning (from \$160 a night, salthouseinn.com).

**WHERE TO EAT** Call Art's Dune Tours to book a romantic picnic of clams, lobster, and corn, with a side of killer sunset views (artsdunetours.com).

**WHERE TO PLAY** Borrow two-wheelers from Ptown Bikes and ride along the Cape Cod National Seashore (ptownbikes.com).



### IF YOU'RE DEPARTING FROM A MAJOR U.S. CITY

#### TULUM, MEXICO

**WHY HERE** Thanks to affordable direct flights to Cancun's airport, what was once a pre-Columbian walled city is now where *everyone* hits the beach.

**WHERE TO STAY** Be Tulum is one of the few boutique hotels in the area with A/C, plus a beach and palm-fringed pool and lounge (from \$465 a night, betulum.com). The charming 14-room Sueños Tulum embodies a barefoot-on-the-shore vibe (from \$220 a night, suenostulum.com).

**WHERE TO EAT** The pork ribs at Hartwood (above) draw crowds, but the restaurant doesn't take rezzies for groups smaller than eight; arrive between 3 and 6 P.M. to get in for dinner (hartwoodtulum.com).

**WHERE TO PLAY** Hike to and float down a lazy river in Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, the largest Mexican Caribbean protected area (cesiak.org).

## HONEYMOON DIARY

Sarah and William's  
BAHAMAS

On a Long Island beach

**The couple:** Sarah and William Smith, of Thomaston, Georgia.

**Married:** On September 28, 2014, in their adopted hometown, where Sarah, a wedding photographer, and her engineer husband stood ankle-deep in the Flint River as they said their vows. The next morning, they jetted to the Bahamas.

**Sweet stays:** The couple spent a week on Long Island at Bahama Dreamin, a beach house that they rented (complete with a Jeep) through vrbo.com. "Our place was on the water, so we spent several mornings snorkeling, fishing, and climbing Chimney Rock, the island a few yards off the coast," says Sarah. On either side of their trip, they checked in for one night at Meliá, in Nassau (meliá.com).

**Most memorable meal:** "We had the best lobster at Kenny's, a restaurant in Deadman's Cay on the west side of Long Island," Sarah says. (The official name is Seaside Village at Jerry Wells, but everyone calls it Kenny's.) "They bring your food to you while you watch the sunset." Adds William: "I could have eaten there all week!"

**Best way to spend a day:** "Stone canals link the sea to salt ponds, and they're like bathwater rivers that run for miles," William says. "We floated down them for a couple hundred yards."

**Special swimming spot:** "Dean's Blue Hole is the deepest salt-water sinkhole in the world," says Sarah. "The water suddenly goes from crystal clear to dark blue as the sea floor plunges to 663 feet deep. Locals won't go near it because of a legend that they'll get sucked in, but there's actually no current. We jumped in from a cliff!"

## TRIP STATS

**Length:** 10 days

**Breakdown:** Seven nights on Long Island, two in Nassau

**Flight time:** Two hours from Atlanta to Nassau, one more to Long Island

**Must-pack:** Snacks! "There's very little stocked at the grocery stores on the island, and what they do have is unfamiliar or marked up," Sarah says. "I'd pack some granola bars and cookies in your bag."

Sarah went from sand to romantic suppers in cotton cover-ups (Calypso St. Barth "Lektri" dress, \$395, calypsostbarth.com).



Long Island's shores



William bought fruit from a local

The pair brought back sea glass and shells they collected on Long Island (top). They spent a Saturday buying fruit (below) from the island's farmers.



COURTESY WILLIAM AND SARAH SMITH (SNAPSHOTS); BRYAN GARDNER (SEA GLASS); MIKE KRAUTTER (FRUIT AND COVER-UPS)