

## **Say "I Do" to an Exotic Destination Wedding in Paradise**

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### **Say 'I do' to an exotic destination wedding in paradise along The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel**

LEE COUNTY, FL – It is a perfect, magical day in paradise. Your wedding day!

Getting married in a beautiful beach setting is all about location and this popular wedding destination offers many choices and packages for a picture-perfect backdrop.

Balmy breezes, endless Gulf beaches and year-round sunshine make southwest Florida's Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel one of the world's most romantic wedding destinations. For those seeking a secluded spot for a wedding in paradise, the area offers every accommodation and setting to make your special day unforgettable.

With the popularity of destination weddings in tropical locales, area resorts and hotels offer special packages and options that make this the perfect time to plan a wedding that is affordable for the wedding party and guests. And no one has to travel out of the country!

Who can resist a wedding under a gazebo at Lovers Key, Florida's most romantic state park? Lovers Key's secluded Gulf-front setting resulted in recognition as Florida's most romantic state park and it is a preferred site for beachside weddings and the party that follows. Or sail away on the Sanibel Princess, a 100-foot luxury yacht that accommodates 103 wedding guests for a fairytale ceremony and reception surrounded by the beauty of the Gulf of Mexico. For a riverfront setting surrounded by history, the beautiful and tropical landscape of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates will make unforgettable memories with a ceremony surrounded by royal palms, historic bamboo, orchids and other exotic plants. Or exchange vows at sunset on a private island with all the details arranged by the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa.

The choices are endless depending upon the size and budget of the wedding. There are choices of world-class resorts, restaurants, services and facilities that cater to weddings of all sizes and types. From a simple sunset ceremony on the beach to a formal wedding with a reception in a luxury resort, the area is a popular destination for memorable weddings.

### **Get married on your own private island**

#### **Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa, Bonita Springs**

The Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa offers a tropical paradise

surrounded by lavish gardens, sparkling water and green golf course fairways. The resort also features an Asian-inspired spa, access to a secluded beach, three pools, six restaurants and lounges.

With impeccable service and attention to detail, the resort provides locations including the Wedding Pavilion, Cypress Courtyard and Royal Palm Courtyard, as well as ballroom settings. Dream weddings are planned by an on-site wedding coordinator who handles everything from start to finish.

Wedding ceremonies may also take place on the resort's private island located between Estero Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. The perfect location for sunset weddings for up to 100 people, this choice includes a private 20-minute boat trip out to the island, with possible glimpses of dolphins and bald eagles.

Receptions are held on the resort property.

**Packages:** A \$2,000 site fee is required and inclusive packages start at \$137 per person and include: passed hors d'oeuvres, cheese display and one hour open bar, champagne toast, appetizer, salad and entree, customized three-tier wedding cake, wedding night complimentary view room for the bride and groom, wedding coordinator, tables, chairs, ivory linen and napkins. For information call Mike Dolch, senior catering manger at (239) 390-4241 or (800) 233-1234 or visit [www.coconutpoint.hyatt.com](http://www.coconutpoint.hyatt.com).

## **Island weddings in paradise**

### **Casa Ybel Resort, Sanibel Island**

Gracing the secluded, shell-strewn beaches of Sanibel Island, Casa Ybel Resort weddings can be as grand or intimate as desired. Choose a site from swaying coconut palms on the beach, a grand old-island manor or under a lakeside gazebo.

The Thistle Lodge restaurant has been hosting weddings for more than 100 years. In fact, the romantic beachfront manor was built by a groom as a wedding gift to his betrothed. Today, from rehearsal dinner to honeymoon arrangements, Casa Ybel continues the tradition of romance in breath-taking beach side surroundings with top-notch service and distinctive catering.

**Packages:** Start at \$150 per person, and go up to \$175 per person and include:

- An outdoor ceremony site set up with chairs
- Bridal bouquet and groom's boutonniere
- Choice of an elaborate, plated four-course dinner
- An intimate and private setting for the dinner reception
- Champagne toast
- White linens
- Wedding cake

For information call (239) 472-3145 or (866) 748-8958. Contact the wedding planner at [Jessica@casaybelresort.com](mailto:Jessica@casaybelresort.com) or visit:

<http://www.casaybelweddings.com>.

### **South Seas Island Resort, Captiva Island**

With the resort's two-and-a-half miles of shell-strewn beaches, waterfront location and a well-rounded offering of recreational options, South Seas provides a truly intimate Captiva wedding location with all of the signature features to ensure lasting memories. Couples enjoy a wedding geared towards their individual tastes and styles, including the options of indoor/outdoor ceremonies and receptions.

**Packages:** The Romance on the Shores package begins at \$6,000 and includes:

- Choice of ceremony and reception for unlimited number of guests
- Lemonade and water station at ceremony
- South Seas amenity for bride and groom
- Personal wedding consultant team
- Traditional white chairs and white carpet aisle runner
- Dedicated trolley service for guests
- Indoor alternative location for inclement weather site
- Transportation to ceremony/reception for bride and groom
- Champagne toast
- Banquet tables and chairs, white linens, votive candles, Areca palms, dance floor
- Turn down service for bride and groom's room
- South Seas keepsake

For more information including details on food and beverage, call Amanda Deminie at (239) 472-7623 or (800) 524-7601 or visit "weddings" at [www.southseas.com](http://www.southseas.com).

### **Tween Waters Inn, Captiva Island**

Romantic sunset weddings directly on the beach are created by the inn's wedding coordinator.

**Packages:** Ceremony package begins at \$2,000 and includes:

- Private beach reserved for wedding ceremony
- Ceremony officiate to sign and file marriage license (couple must obtain their own license)
- Bridal bouquet and groom's boutonniere (choice of fresh flowers)
- Wedding day coordination (limited services)
- Decorated pair of tropical tiki torches for beach altar
- 20 beach chairs for ceremony
- 10 percent off bride and groom's accommodations for two-night stay

For more information and additional services, contact Sherry Lucht at (239) 472-5161 or (800) 223-5865 or visit [www.tween-waters.com](http://www.tween-waters.com).

### **Holiday Inn Beach Resort, Sanibel Island**

This quaint beachside resort, directly on the Gulf of Mexico, provides the

lush, tropical setting for outdoor beach weddings for as many as 50 people. Food and beverage is catered by Courtney's, the resort's on-site restaurant. Access to wedding planners may be found on the resort's Web site. Ceremony may be planned in front of live "Beach Cam" and viewed from around the world on website.

**Packages:** Quoted individually, based upon season and number of guests, from a basic package to tents with a sit down gourmet meal and reception. For more information call (239) 472.4123 or (800) 443-0909 or visit [www.sanibelbeachresort.com](http://www.sanibelbeachresort.com).

### **West Wind Inn, Sanibel Island**

Weddings are held at this Gulfside inn with a choice of locations including beautiful sandy beach, butterfly garden or under a tent on the lawn. The beach is the most popular location and sunset services the most coveted time. Reception areas include a conference room, poolside or on the lawn. The Normandie Seaside Caf provides catering.

**Packages:** Individual quotes are provided. Price depends upon the size of the wedding and season. For more information, contact Charlene Staton at (239) 472-1541 or (800) 824-0476 or visit [www.westwindinn.com](http://www.westwindinn.com).

### **Island Inn, Sanibel Island**

With services of a master chef and a wedding coordinator to oversee a magical wedding, the inn offers private locations and Gulf views along its 10 acres of breach front property that features picture-perfect sunsets.

**Packages:** Each wedding is created individually for parties up to 125 people for receptions and room availability from 10 to 40 rooms. Outdoor food service begins at \$2,500 for 40 people, plus bar service. Dining room reception with plated service for 40 begins at \$3,500 plus bar service.

For more information contact Jay Halcrow at (239) 472-1561 or (800) 851-5088 or visit [www.islandinnsanibel.com](http://www.islandinnsanibel.com).

### **Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa, Fort Myers**

Captivating island views, spectacular sunsets and a romantic setting in a tropical paradise all combine for the perfect wedding and honeymoon location at Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa. This 85-acre bayside resort, situated on a private peninsula overlooking Sanibel and Captiva islands, creates storybook weddings and receptions.

For the wedding ceremony, couples may choose a poolside terrace surrounded by lush foliage and fountains, a magnificent 100-foot private luxury yacht, an elegant ballroom or a secluded cove on the beach with swaying palms. The main ballroom may accommodate up to 965 people and can be easily divided into three individual sections, each with breathtaking views.

Luxurious receptions are created by the resort's award-winning chefs and catering staff. An in-house pastry chef creates customized wedding cakes for any theme. A favorite location is the Island Room which provides floor-to-ceiling views of the tropical setting. For out of town guests and the wedding party, arrangements may be made for services in the luxurious spa, as well as for golfing, kayaking and nature tours to nearby barrier islands.

**Packages:** Pricing for an intimate ceremony for two to 70 people in a private beach location begins at \$1,250. A tropical poolside location, providing a picturesque view of the resort and the back bay of the Gulf of Mexico accommodates up to 100 people and begins at \$1,250. A ceremony on the poolside veranda overlooking the back bay of the Gulf of Mexico begins at \$2,000 for up to 500 people.

For information call the resort's team of wedding planners at (239) 466-2252 or (888) 663-6285 or visit [www.sanibel-resort.com/weddingpackages](http://www.sanibel-resort.com/weddingpackages).

### **Captiva Island Inn, Captiva Island**

Located in the historic Captiva Village, the pastel painted cottages with gingerbread and white picket fences give this inn the charm that appeals to many wedding planners. The inn has been featured in Southern Living and Coastal Living magazines. With gentle breezes and a relaxed island style atmosphere, the inn has hosted everything from pool parties with guests in flip flops to romantic weddings on the beach for up to 100 people. The inn will assist with every detail including flowers, photography, food, music, accommodations, transportation and salon appointments. Accommodations for the wedding party or guests include the "Celebration House" with five bedrooms.

**Packages:** Customized depending upon size of wedding. For information call (239) 395-0882 or (800) 454-9898 or visit [www.captivaislandinn.com](http://www.captivaislandinn.com).

### **Tropical weddings on beautiful Fort Myers Beach**

#### **Lovers Key State Park, between Bonita Springs and Fort Myers Beach**

Just south of Fort Myers Beach, Lovers Key is Florida's most romantic state park. Overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, the recreation area includes more than 1,900 acres of breathtaking natural habitat and 2.5 miles of beaches. This provides a dramatic backdrop for a unique, turn-of-the-century gazebo/pavilion which is available for weddings. The picturesque, open-air structure and the park's secluded Gulf-front setting, have bolstered Lovers Key's recognition as Florida's most romantic state park and made it a preferred site for beachside weddings and the party after. For information contact Peggy Woods at (239) 463-4588 or visit [www.floridastateparks.org/loverskey](http://www.floridastateparks.org/loverskey).

#### **Lovers Key Resort, Fort Myers Beach**

Located on pristine Estero Bay across from Lovers Key State Park, this

resort's tropical setting allows for casually elegant locations that include a private beach and a bayside lagoon-style pool with waterfall.

**Packages:** The Royal Palm Wedding Package is designed for 10 to 60 people at \$150 per person, plus 18 percent service charge, 6 percent tax and \$350 coordinator fee and includes:

- Bayside patio and arch for ceremony
- Luxuriously appointed bridal suite
- Wedding officiant
- Guitar music for the ceremony
- Floral package
- Royal Palm reception room or Bayside Patio for reception
- Tables, chairs, linens, centerpieces
- Wedding cake
- Two hour open bar
- Champagne toast

For more information contact Jayson Rydell, wedding coordinator at (239) 765-1040 or (877) 798-4879 or visit [www.LoversKey.com](http://www.LoversKey.com).

### **Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa**

With its quiet beachfront, awesome sunset views, and elegant waterfront locations that may be arranged on land and boat, this Gulfside resort has all of the components for a tropical wedding and reception.

**Packages:** The Banyan Package begins at \$2,600 for up to 30 people and includes:

- Beach ceremony with decorated arch
- Tropical iced tea and water station
- Dinner for up to 30 people in JoJo's Restaurant
- Champagne toast for up to 30 people
- Welcome amenity for the bride and groom
- Select vendor list and on-site wedding coordination services

For information contact Dony Bruder or Sarah Cardenas at (239) 463-8638 or (888) 222-7465 or visit <http://www.pinkshell.com/weddings/>.

### **DiamondHead Beach Resort, Fort Myers Beach**

With white sandy beaches, emerald waters and bright blue skies, the pristine beauty of Fort Myers Beach provides a picturesque backdrop for the special day. DiamondHead Beach Resort is the only property on the island that can accommodate beachfront wedding ceremonies for up to 200 guests.

**Packages:** The Emerald Wedding Package begins at \$115 per person, with all food and beverage prices subject to a 20 percent service charge and 6 percent sales tax, and includes the following for a minimum of 50 persons:

- Ceremony on the beach with decorated white arch and white chairs for guests, followed by a four-hour dinner reception (cocktail hour included)
- Champagne toast

- Complimentary beachfront suite for the bride and groom on their wedding night

For information contact Josh Pankhurst at (239) 765-7654 or (888) 627-1595 or visit [www.diamondheadfl.com](http://www.diamondheadfl.com).

### **Lani Kai Island Beach Resort, Fort Myers Beach**

As a full service hotel offering beachfront rooms with private balconies overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, the resort's Island View Restaurant provides continental cuisine and a breathtaking view of the Gulf of Mexico. Private beachfront banquet rooms are available for receptions.

**Packages:** Lani Kai Sunset Beach Wedding begins at \$1,780 for 30 people and includes:

- Private ceremony on the beach at sunset.
- Beachfront banquet room
- White chair covers with satin bows
- White tablecloths with white or pink linen napkins
- Wishing well card/gift holder and decorated arch
- Champagne toast
- Dinner menu

For information contact Judy Goff at (239) 463-3111, ext 2020 or (800) 237 6133, ext. 2020 or visit [www.drfun.com/lani-kai](http://www.drfun.com/lani-kai).

### **Outrigger Beach Resort, Fort Myers Beach**

The Outrigger Beach Resort provides the perfect stress free wedding. A package includes everything, even the cake. When the bride and groom arrive all they need to do is enjoy, have fun and show up on the beach.

**Packages:** Wedding packages are designed to include all the basics for a romantic beach wedding and are affordably priced according to the size of each group. Each one includes:

- Romantic and personal wedding ceremony
- Professional photography
- Bridal bouquet and groom's lapel flower
- Wedding arbor
- Cake, champagne toast
- Recorded music
- Keepsake wedding certificate and a written copy of ceremony
- Consulting services
- Legal filing of license after the ceremony

For information contact Paula Poe or Glory Williams at (239) 463-3131 or (800) 211-8441 or visit [www.outriggerfmb.com](http://www.outriggerfmb.com).

### **Romantic weddings in a historic setting**

#### **Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers**

The beautiful and tropical landscape of the Edison & Ford Winter Estates make the memories of a special wedding day last forever. Guests will be surrounded by royal palms, historic bamboo, orchids and other tropical plants that create the perfect ambiance for a wedding. The Estates offer several outdoor site locations including the historic winter residence of legendary automobile maker, Henry Ford, friend and neighbor of inventor Thomas Edison.

Mr. Ford's beautiful two-story home with large covered porches was built in 1911 and the recently restored house is situated on the scenic Caloosahatchee River. Mina's Moonlight Garden provides an intimate, romantic setting filled with fragrant flowers and tall, bougainvillea-entwined trellises for photo opportunities and gatherings of 10 or less. The Edison Caretaker's House provides a quaint indoor and outdoor space with porches and gardens reflecting the charm of the historic setting.

**Packages:** Ceremony and reception packages are priced depending upon the number of guests (capacity: 600 guests) and include:

- Use of the Estates for two hours the day of ceremony or for five hours the day of the reception
- A wedding rehearsal on the property the evening before the wedding
- The opportunity to take photographs at the Estates before and after the ceremony
- Complimentary passes for an educational experience at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates for your guests on the day of the wedding
- An Estates representative to supervise during your event
- Security, housekeeping, grounds keeping and electrical personnel during the hours of the wedding

For more information and package pricing, contact Tori Lawless at (239) 334-7419 or visit <http://efwefla.org/wedding.asp>.

### **Gasparilla Inn & Club, Boca Grande**

Located on beautiful Gasparilla Island, The Gasparilla Inn & Club is an idyllic southwest Florida wedding venue. A full-service resort offering old-world ambiance since 1913, the inn is a Historic Hotel of America and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Whether the bride dreams of walking down a sandy aisle on the beach, or down the glamorous staircase inside the historic inn, the resort offers many options throughout the 170-acre property.

**Packages:** Each wedding is custom designed to suit the client. A starting price including site fee, hors d'oeuvres, four-course dinner, cocktails, modestly priced wines and custom designed wedding cake, is approximately \$200 per person, plus tax and service (based on 100 guests). Minimum guest counts and guest room may apply.

For more information call Anita Taggersell-Stiles, director of catering and conference services, at (941) 964-4575 or (800) 996-1913 or visit <http://www.the-gasparilla-inn.com/weddings.php>.

## **Burroughs Home, downtown Fort Myers**

The romantic backdrop of a historic Georgian Revival mansion on the Caloosahatchee River is the perfect setting for a garden wedding. Built in 1901 by cattleman John Murphy, the home has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1984. Brides may select the front porch or a garden gazebo for a sunset ceremony. Receptions accommodate as many as 250 guests under a tent. An event coordinator is available to assist with ceremony and reception plans.

For information, contact [uncommonfriends@mindspring.com](mailto:uncommonfriends@mindspring.com), call (239) 533-2130 or visit [www.uncommonfriends.org](http://www.uncommonfriends.org).

Great wedding package in Fort Myers

## **Crowne Plaza Hotel Fort Myers**

Convenient to the beaches airport and Bell Tower shopping, the Crown Plaza Fort Myers is the perfect centralized location for the wedding party and guests. With a professional staff to assist in organizing plans for the special day, the hotel offers its tropical patio or Fort Myers ballroom for the wedding ceremony and reception.

**Packages:** Boutique Wedding Package begins at \$55 per person for a minimum of 100 guests and includes:

- Half of the Fort Myers Ballroom
- Complimentary dance floor
- Reception display
- Choice of two plated dinner entrees served with choice of soup or salad
- Champagne toast for all guests ages 21 and older
- Breakfast for bride and groom the day after the wedding
- Optional hosted bar

For additional packages and information contact Dawn Kruis at (239) 210-2464 or visit [www.cpfortmyers.com](http://www.cpfortmyers.com).

Useful information for planning a wedding in paradise

## **Wedding planners**

To make it easy for out-of-town visitors to plan a destination wedding there are wedding planners and consultants throughout the area who can assist with everything from site selection and hotel reservations to flowers and photography. For a list of wedding planners, go to [www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/plan/wedding\\_services.php](http://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/plan/wedding_services.php).

## **Marriage license**

Getting married in Lee County is easy. Visit the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court to apply for a marriage license. Both parties must have valid photo identification, such as a driver's license and a Social Security number. International visitors who wish to marry in Florida must have a valid passport and a translator, if necessary, who has a valid U.S. driver's license. No blood

tests are required for a marriage license, and there is no waiting period unless you are already a Florida resident -- then you must wait three days. Once you have the license, you can get married at any time within the next 60 days. Cost: \$93.50 to be paid in cash only. For details and downloadable forms visit [http://www.leeclerk.org/Marriage\\_License.asp](http://www.leeclerk.org/Marriage_License.asp)

For more information on planning a wedding, honeymoon or a romantic getaway in paradise, call the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau at (239) 338-3500 or visit [www.FortMyersSanibel.com](http://www.FortMyersSanibel.com) .

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island & Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Wedding and romantic-themed images are available upon request.

Media contacts:

Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa: Joe Thompson at [jethompson@hyatt.com](mailto:jethompson@hyatt.com) or (239) 390-4280

Casa Ybel Resort: Kimberly Brock at [kim@paradesign.us](mailto:kim@paradesign.us) or (239) 395-5878

South Seas Island Resort: Kristen Vocelle at [kvocelle@zimmerman.com](mailto:kvocelle@zimmerman.com) or (850) 668-2222

Tween Waters Inn: Sherry Lucht, at [Sherry1@tween-waters.com](mailto:Sherry1@tween-waters.com) or (239) 472-5161 or (800) 223-5865

Holiday Inn Sanibel Resort: Danny Adams at [danny.adams@att.net](mailto:danny.adams@att.net) or (239) 472.4123 or (800) 443-0909

West Wind Inn: Charlene Staton at [sales@westwindinn.com](mailto:sales@westwindinn.com) or (239) 472-1541 or (800) 824-0476

Island Inn: Jay Halcrow at [marketing@islandinnsanibel.com](mailto:marketing@islandinnsanibel.com) or (239) 472-1561 or (800) 851-5088

Sanibel Harbour Resort & Spa: Autumn Mayfield at [autumn@proofcreative.com](mailto:autumn@proofcreative.com) or (850) 443-2212

Captiva Island Inn: Bill Cassel at [captivaislandinn@aol.com](mailto:captivaislandinn@aol.com) or (239) 395-0882 or (800) 454-9898

Lovers Key State Park: Peggy Wood at [MargaretWood@dep.statefl.us](mailto:MargaretWood@dep.statefl.us), (239) 463-4588.

Lovers Key Resort: Patricia Cunningham at [Pat@LoversKey.com](mailto:Pat@LoversKey.com), or (239) 765-1040 or (877) 798-4879

Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa: Sarah Cardenias at [SCardenias@PinkShell.com](mailto:SCardenias@PinkShell.com) or (239) 463-8634 or (888) 222-7465

DiamondHead Beach Resort: Dina Craig at [DinaC@sunstream.com](mailto:DinaC@sunstream.com) or (239) 765-4111

Lani Kai Island Beach Resort: Judy Goff at [lanikaigroups@aol.com](mailto:lanikaigroups@aol.com) or (239) 463-3111, ext 2020 or (800) 237-6133, ext. 2020

Outrigger Beach Resort: Jeanne Bigos at [dos@outriggerfmb.com](mailto:dos@outriggerfmb.com) or (239) 463-3131, ext. 145 or (800) 211-8441

Edison & Ford Winter Estates: Tori Lawless at [ylawless@efwefla.org](mailto:ylawless@efwefla.org) or (239) 334-7419

Gasparilla Inn: Lindsay Leibson at [lleibson@gasparillainn.com](mailto:lleibson@gasparillainn.com) or (941) 964-4631 or (800) 996-1913

Burroughs Home: Stephanie Hoffman, Uncommon Friends Foundation, [uncommonfriends@mindspring.com](mailto:uncommonfriends@mindspring.com), or (239) 533-2130.

Crowne Plaza Hotel Fort Myers: Karen Oliveira at [koliveira@cooperhotels.com](mailto:koliveira@cooperhotels.com), (239) 210-2470

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