



the **Luxe Life**
 FOUR REASONS A RESORT WEDDING MAKES FOR AN UTTERLY OPULENT UNION.
 by MARLENE MONTANEZ



(FACING PAGES)
 InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa in Scottsdale offers a complete wedding package, including on-site hair and makeup, a private bridal party suite, multiple ceremony and reception options and luxurious accommodations for your wedding guests.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF: (FACING PAGES) INTERCONTINENTAL MONTELUCIA RESORT + SPA, (TOP CENTER + FAR RIGHT) JEFF ZARUBA, (BOTTOM CENTER) PLATT PHOTOGRAPHY.

Arizona is often called a resort town, and with good reason—it's overflowing with beautiful hotel properties. Hosting your wedding at such a venue can be a glamorous affair. But aside from the beautiful scenery, we've got several knockout reasons why resort nuptials just might be the route to the wedding of your dreams.

FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE

Between the guest list, shopping for your dress and scouting out venues, planning a wedding can be beyond exhausting. So it comes as no surprise that one of the best perks of hosting your wedding at a resort is the easy planning. Most resorts, like the Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, offer full wedding packages that include everything from the catering, tables, linen and staff to valet service, florists and cake offerings.

"At some rental halls you have to find vendors for all of these individual items, which can sometimes turn into a planning nightmare. These are things couples should not have to worry about on their wedding day," says Kelly Masten, catering sales manager for the resort.

Bride Melissa Covarrubias, who wed at Royal

Palms Resort and Spa in June 2010, agrees.

"I did not want to have to go out and find a caterer and baker," she says. "I also love the spa services at resorts. I highly recommend brides take advantage of this because you get to escape the craziness that comes with the morning of the wedding, and it gets the day off to a fabulous start!"

BE OUR GUEST

The actual nuptials may be short and sweet, but that doesn't mean the celebration has to be. One bonus of a resort wedding is that you can make a weekend or even week out of the occasion. Both in- and out-of-town guests can enjoy a luxurious stay while celebrating your special event.

"As a bride and groom, you're both super-

busy, so it was nice that all the guests were outside, and we could see them hanging out and entertained with activities. We could then meet up in the evenings and mingle," says Neha Sitole, who wed at the InterContinental Montelucia Resort & Spa in Paradise Valley in November 2009. "It's a great way to treat your guests, giving them a chance to explore a new area that they may not [otherwise] go to, get a resort weekend away, at the same time as celebrating this great moment."

But perhaps one of the best perks of having guests stay at a resort is alleviating the stress of finding the time to entertain them. "It takes a lot of pressure off of the couple, because we have so many available resources at our fingertips," says Masten. "For example, if you need activities coordinated for the guests, we have

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many options and full concierge/golf/spa/pool teams available to assist with coordinating the activities.”

ALL IN THE DETAILS

When it comes to planning a wedding, getting everything perfect, down to the tiniest detail, is best left to the pros—which is exactly what you can do if you choose to wed at one of the Valley’s gorgeous resorts.

“Each event has its own private staff and bridal ‘shadow’ dedicated to ensuring that no detail is overlooked,” says Erin Stremcha, director of marketing communications for Royal Palms Resort and Spa. The bridal shadow acts as a personal butler on the day of the wedding, providing the bride and groom with water, champagne and cold towels to cool down while taking photos.

Other amenities you can expect when booking a resort wedding include personalizing even the smallest of details. Sitole was pleasantly surprised by how involved she could be when it came to planning the dinner menu. “The quality of the food was amazing, and we were able to customize our menu on such a personal level,” she says. “We had somewhat of an Indian fusion, which wasn’t on the standard menu, so we thought it was cool that we could customize it to friends and family.”

But perhaps most alluring for brides are the behind-the-scenes surprises and details that happen the day of the wedding. “We try to create little surprises throughout the weekend to ensure they feel important on their special day,” says Masten. “For example, a complimentary upgraded room [when available], champagne and strawberries with a nice note from the staff waiting for them in the room, a CD of their wedding song playing in the room after the reception—these are all little things that make a difference and really show how much we care about their experience.”

Brides like Covarrubias remember these touches well. “Because we were so busy at our reception dancing, greeting guests, etc., we never had a chance to eat our cake,” she recalls. “The [resort staff] wrapped up slices of cake and put them on dishes with ‘Congratulations Melissa & Tyeson’ written on the plates with chocolate and a bottle of champagne and rose petals in our room. It was so nice after such a fantastic whirlwind of a day!”

SPECIAL REQUESTS

If you’re looking for something a little out-of-the-box, there’s almost nothing the wedding planners of



Brides love the Spanish Colonial architecture, tasty Mediterranean cuisine and acute attention to detail found at Royal Palms Resort and Spa in Phoenix.



the Valley’s resorts can’t do—and haven’t done before. “There have been numerous unique requests for items like delivering fried chicken at midnight, fireworks, diamond-laced desserts and replicating a guest’s bathroom vanity so they felt more at home while getting ready,” says Stremcha.

Covarrubias had her own special request fulfilled when she married at the Royal Palms Resort. “We incorporated my small dogs into the wedding as our ‘flower dogs’ and the Royal Palms brought us water and food bowls for them that said ‘Royal Paws,’ ” she says. “It was such a cute touch and I really liked the fact that they were dog-friendly. My dogs are like my children, and they were given equally special attention.” *

RENOWNED RESORTS

These sophisticated resorts offer a glamorous setting and top-notch service.

FOUR SEASONS RESORT SCOTTSDALE AT TROON NORTH

10600 E. Crescent Moon Dr., Scottsdale
480.515.5700, fourseasons.com/scottsdale

SHERATON WILD HORSE PASS

5594 W. Wild Horse Pass Blvd., Chandler
602.225.0100, wildhorsepassresort.com

FIRESKY RESORT

4925 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale
480.945.7666, fireskyresort.com

ROYAL PALMS RESORT AND SPA

5200 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix
602.840.3610, royalpalmsresort.com

INTERCONTINENTAL MONTELUCCIA RESORT & SPA

4949 E. Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale
480.627.3200, icmontelucia.com

JW MARRIOTT DESERT RIDGE RESORT

5350 E. Marriott Dr., Phoenix
480.293.5000, jwdesertridgeresort.com

HYATT REGENCY SCOTTSDALE RESORT & SPA AT GAINNEY RANCH

7500 E. Doubletree Ranch Rd., Scottsdale
480.444.1234, scottsdale.hyatt.com

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