



You need a 4x4 to get to the secluded Shipwreck Beach on Lana'i but the reward is worth the effort.



CURT WOODHALL / VPOSTMEDIA NEWS

Wowee MAUI

Picturesque choice for intimate wedding

By Mhairri Woodhall

My fiancé and I struggled for months choosing a location for our destination wedding. We both wanted an intimate beach ceremony with our families and close friends, but the complicated legal requirements in Mexico and a vision of the Griswolds sunburnt and slurping piña colodas while watching us exchange vows had me panic struck. After three exhausting months of debate, which included a possible elopement and my husband-to-be begging for a decision to be made, the clouds parted and we joyfully decided on Wailea in South Maui. With its picturesque secluded coves, fiery sunsets and beachfront luxury resorts and restaurants, romance is easily kindled in Maui. However, anyone who has planned, or is planning a destination wedding will tell you the love and passion come easy, but selecting venues, officiants and photographers, obtaining licences and maintaining budgets tend to pose the real challenge. Fortunately, Maui has perfected the art of marriage and simplified the process for Canadian couples. There are a myriad of planners and coordinators in Maui offering both package and custom wedding services, and most of the island officiants require an on-site coordinator be present on the big day. Working with a local expert in some capacity will also help streamline the planning process as he or she can recommend and liaise with suppliers and help secure licences.

The sunsets in Hawaii are legendary and are a great opportunity to snuggle up to your honey. Researching and securing a coordinator online was somewhat daunting, so we focused our efforts on finding a photographer who captured our personal style. A picture is worth a thousand words, and a photographer's portfolio effortlessly communicates his or her approach, vision and style. We then asked our fabulous photographer to suggest a planner, florist and other wedding specialists, as we were confident that her recommendations would align with our particular taste. The result was a stress-free, picture-perfect sunset ceremony on the beach, followed by an intimate dinner for 25 guests at the Wailea Golf Club. Meeting with planners, touring venues, picking up wedding licenses and ensuring all of your guests are on time for the shuttle might prevent you from reaching your full relaxation potential before the wedding. Scheduling some time for romance and pampering, pre- and post-wedding, will help you relax and reconnect with your sweetheart.

Sunrise renewal: Champagne breakfast

Celebrate with a champagne breakfast poolside at the Westin Maui Resort in Ka'anapali on Maui's west shore. From the seclusion of a private cabana you can toast to the future while watching the sunrise and enjoying the Westin pool area.

The two-course champagne breakfast features a choice of four starters and seven main course items including lobster benedict and macadamia nut sticky bun french toast, accompanied by tropical fruit and a freshly baked pastry basket of cinnamon buns, butter croissants and pineapple bran muffins.

Spa Grande's romantic interlude for two

Often touted as one of the world's finest, Spa Grande at the Wailea Grande is a palatial retreat where the art of relaxation and wellness has been perfected. Treatments and therapies at this lavish 50,000-square-foot spa blend the traditions of Ancient Hawaii with the Eastern and Western worlds.

The 3-1/2-hour romantic interlude package starts with an hour in the Terme Wailea hydrotherapy circuit, which has five aromatic specialty baths with moor mud, tropical enzymes and Hawaiian botanicals, Roman hot tub, Japanese furo bath, cascading waterfall massages, eucalyptus steam room and redwood sauna. A side-by-side Sandalwood Serenity Wrap followed by Hawaiian Specialty Bath for two and 50-minute duo massage completes this well-deserved package of indulgence.

Cabana dinner at twilight

The Fairmont Kea Lani in Wailea offers a romantic four-course dinner in a private cabana on the pool deck outside of Ko restaurant. The twinkling lights from hanging lanterns and soft glow of candlelight dancing on the table sets the perfect atmosphere for an intimate dinner.

The chef's incredible menu is inspired by the Hawaiian, Filipino, Portuguese, Korean and Japanese cultures from Hawaii's sugarcane plantation era. Highlights of Ko's fusion fare include chicken and mushroom spring rolls with green papaya and spicy dipping sauce; spicy-sesame lobster tempura dipped in pineapple sweet chilli garlic and grapefruit soy sauce and plantation pineapple cake.

IF YOU GO

Maui is one of the most popular wedding destinations in the world so they have a multitude of great resources and local suppliers to help make your day special. Below are some links to help you start to plan your Maui wedding.

- **ADDITIONAL DESTINATION INFORMATION:** www.arrivalstravel.com
- **PHOTOGRAPHER:** www.annakimphotography.com
- **Wedding Coordinator & Officiant:** www.4mauiweddings.com
- **SUPER CHIC FLORAL DESIGN:** www.dellables.com
- **HAIR STYLIST:** www.dansanchezsalon.com
- **MAKEUP ARTIST:** www.makeupmaui.com
- **SHUTTLE SERVICE:** www.akinatours.com
- **THE FAIRMONT KEA LANI:** www.fairmont.com/KeaLani
- **WESTIN MAUI RESORT & SPA:** www.westinmaui.com
- **GRANDE WAILEA:** www.grandwailea.com
- **LANAI AT MANELE BAY:** www.fourseasons.com/manelebay
- **THE LODGE AT KOELE:** www.fourseasons.com/koele

Honeymoon on Lana'i

Celebrating with friends and family on Maui's sunny shores was the perfect way to start our married life. But after five days of barbecues and mai tais, we needed an escape to Lana'i for some one-on-one time.

A short, one-hour passenger ferry ride from Lahaina in West Maui, Lana'i is an exclusive romantic and tranquil paradise. Two of Lana'i's three hotels are spectacular Four Seasons Resort properties with world-class golf courses — the oceanfront Manele Bay resort in South Lana'i and The Lodge at Koele in Central Lana'i.

Overlooking Hulopoe Bay, the Manele Bay resort is the only beachfront hotel on Lana'i. The Four Seasons also provides guests with snorkel gear to explore the marine preserve. However, if the hundreds of resident spinner dolphins are frolicking in the bay, you'll have to soak up the sun on the white sand beach.

The Lodge at Koele, surrounded by Cook pine trees in Lana'i's cooler highlands offers the unique experience of staying in a country manor. Wandering the expansive grounds, curling up with a book on your private veranda, or having a nightcap by the stone hearth in the Great Hall are just some of the ways to unwind at Koele.

For an adventure, rent a 4x4 and explore the island. We picked up a delicious picnic lunch at Pele's Other Garden cafe in Lana'i City and drove from Shipwreck Beach on the northern tip, where a rusted oil tanker from the 1940s remains stranded on the coral reef, to Sweetheart Rock on the southwest side of the island.

I've always felt a special connection with the tiny tropical paradise of Maui. The relaxed island vibe, soft brown sugar sand and salty sweet scent of plumeria, pineapple and coconut oil mixed with the ocean breeze embraces visitors like a long-lost friend.

— Postmedia News

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