**MicroWeddings**

**WHEN LESS IS MORE**

A downsized celebration can still go big on bridal style

**By ANNE CHERTOFF**

**W**ITH the pandemic upending the wedding plans of thousands of couples in 2020, brides and grooms are getting creative, changing their ceremony and reception details to reflect a more intimate celebration. "We're seeing micro events for the rest of 2020 and early 2021 with an increase to back-to-normal guest sizes starting next summer," says wedding planner and event designer Annie Lee, owner of Plannie, an online platform with event planners available by the hour, ideal for couples who don't need a full-service package.

Micro weddings, Lee explains, are split into two categories: elopements with a handful of guests, or intimate dinner parties with around 20 guests, up to a maximum of 50. But the limited guest list doesn’t mean couples can’t plan a fabulous event that’s unforgettable.

"While many elements are being scaled back, such as a smaller band to provide background music rather than dance music, we are seizing the amazing opportunity for heightened personalization and customization that can be done only at small and intimate dinners," says wedding and event planner Lindsay Landman of Lindsay Landman Events. "We’ve been working with couples to create a

See GOWNS on Page 28

---

**ALTARED STATE**

These couples had to forego their elaborate plans, but found style, intimacy and memorable moments in a small celebration. p. 36

**TWO TICKETS TO PARADISE**

Head to the tropics for a romantic resort takeover or a luxurious villa elopement. p. 38

---

© Accentuate your curves in Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings "Pocahontas" sleek sheath. The slim-fitting silhouette has an all-over cotton-lace appliqué, sweetheart neckline, spaghetti straps and traditional bridal buttons down the back. $1,400 at Julie Allen Bridals, 154 South Main St., Newtown, Conn.; JulieAllenBridals.com

© DB Studio's crêpe jumpsuit features an off-the-shoulder cuff neckline and wide-leg pants with side pockets. $199.95 at David's Bridal, 45 W. 25th St.; DavidsBridal.com

---

© Têt Rouge, St. Lucia

© Disney's Fairy Tale Weddings and Allure Bridals; David's Bridal (inset)
Show off a fab pair of heels in this draped high-low gown with a strapless sweetheart neckline by Michelle Roth. $2,800 exclusively at Kleinfeld Bridal, 110 W. 20th St.; KleinfeldBridal.com

This fashion-forward style by Jesus Peiro (“Style 223”) pairs crêpe palazzo pants with an embroidered tulle top featuring a mock neck and kimono sleeves with drawstring cuffs. $2,570 at A Little Something White, 1292 Boston Post Rd., Darien, Conn.; ALittleSomethingWhite.com

“Delia,” a flowy silk-chiffon skirt by Catherine Deane, looks dreamy with marryandbride’s puffy-sleeved “Together Forever Sweater” in merino wool, mohair and silk. Skirt, $800, sweater, $368, both at BHLDN, 1230 Third Ave.; BHLDN.com

Part of Morilee Madeline Gardner’s just-launched The Other White Dress collection, “Blanche” is a strapless satin, knee-length sheath with an off-the-shoulder, three-quarter-sleeved jacket with vintage-style cuff neckline. $875 at Bridal Suite of Bay Shore, 7 West Main St., Bay Shore, LI; BridalSuiteOfBayShore.com

More elaborate wine pairing for the dinner, have monogrammed blankets available for each guest, and leave hand-written notes from the couple as a keepsake to make the experience feel special for everyone.

Re-planning a wedding can bring a lot of tension to an already stressful situation, but finding a dress to wear shouldn’t have to be.

“While some brides who have already purchased their wedding dress have chosen to wear them, brides who haven’t are looking for something chic and simpler to go with the times,” explains bridal fashion stylist Julie Sabatino, owner of the Stylish Bride.

While micro wedding dresses may be more understated, they still allow a bride to let her personal style shine through the silhouette, fabric and embellishments. Illusion fabrics encrusted in crystals or beads can add a bit of glamour, embroidered florals complement a backyard or garden setting, and for civil services, separates can be quite elegant.

“I’ve seen a tremendous increase in more sleek, close-to-the-body styles, with detachable dramatic sleeves or Watteau trains, which keep the romantic feeling but with a slimmer gown,” shares Mark Ingram, the owner of Mark Ingram Atelier. “With these smaller weddings, all the details become more special and curated, to give their guests a very special experience, and one that lasts a lifetime for them as well.”

Bridal salons are ensuring that the shopping experience follows health and safety guidelines but is still memorable. “During the state’s order to close all nonessential businesses we reconfigured the layout of the salon to add Plexiglas dividers and hand sanitizers to high touch-point areas,” explains Jennette Kruszka, director of marketing and public relations at Kleinfeld Bridal in Chelsea. “We also cut our capacity limitations in half, are limiting the number of people a bride can bring with her to two, and created a dress sanitation station so every dress tried on is sanitized in between appointments.”

Several salons are offering virtual appointments, as well as speaking with sales consultants in advance. David’s Bridal, with several stores in the tri-state area, partnered with Vertebras to enable brides and bridesmaids to see life-size digital images of what a dress would look like on them.

“We took the opportunity to reimagine the experience and help bring excitement to shoppers at home,” says Lizzy Ellingson, chief digital experience officer at David’s Bridal. “The renderings, in fine detail, help women narrow down options and buy online, which is something we know brides are becoming more comfortable with every day.”
Conrad Punta de Mita, Sayulita, Nay., Mexico: Say “I do” on a white-sand beach or discover beautiful indoor event space. Their Certified Destination Wedding Specialist and on-site event team can help plan every detail. With swaying palm trees and ocean views, it’s hard to find a more romantic setting for your special day.
conradpuntademita.com

Lessings, New York & Florida: When it comes to weddings, Lessings has followed one simple philosophy for over a century, “we take care of our couples and guests as if they were family.” From one-of-a-kind mansions and a medieval-style chateau to intimate country clubs and a breathtaking castle, venue locations span from Montauk to Westchester, and most recently, Florida.
lessingsweddings.com

Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa, Kauai, Hawaii: Whether you dream of a romantic ceremony for just the two of you on the beach or an elaborate ballroom affair, you’ll find our beautiful Kauai wedding venues, experienced staff, incredible cuisine, and impeccable attention to detail will make your dreams a reality.
grandhyattkauai.com

Playa Resorts, Mexico & Jamaica: They’ve created a variety of wedding packages, or you can customize nearly every detail of your dream wedding – right down to your own signature drink. Couples can wed in extraordinary venues such as romantic wedding gazebos, chapel, garden, or directly on the beach under a flowered canopy.
resortsbyhyatt.com/weddingbonus

Lark Hotels, New England to Napa: Everything you need for your perfect, intimate New England micro wedding. Lark Hotels has always offered the perfect venues for your intimate, unique, hand-crafted event—and we’re still here and ready to host your New England micro wedding or small group event!
larkhotels.com/microweddings

Verdanza Hotel, Isla Verde, Puerto Rico: Say your vows on their golden sand beaches. Framed by dazzling golden sand beaches and sparkling Atlantic Ocean waters, the Verdanza Hotel offers a stunning wedding location. Our newly renovated “tropical modern” design, a free-form pool and beautiful indoor and outdoor settings come together to create one of the most romantic wedding venues in Isla Verde.
verdanzahotel.com

Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa, Palm Beach, Florida: Every bride has her fairytale. Intimate or lavish, quiet or festive, the Palm Beach weddings at Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa are elegant celebrations beyond expectation. So savor every enchanting moment and step inside your imagination. Dreams really do come true.
eaupalmbeach.com/weddings
MicroWeddings

THINK INSIDE THE BOX

Send a curated care package to those who can’t make it to the wedding

By APRIL HARDWICK

Despite the challenges of planning a wedding during the current health crisis, for many brides, the show must go on. With shortened guest lists, many friends and relatives now join the festivities remotely via Zoom or video streaming. Finding ways to connect with virtual guests, like sending gift boxes or small mementos that are special to the couple, help make those remote revelers feel a part of the occasion.

Ariel Redmond, co-founder of Happy Box Store, an online source for custom gift boxes (shown right), planned a pandemic wedding and sent her own Happy Box to those who couldn’t attend.

“We had only 25 people,” she said. “I had my sister videoconference a few of our best friends who were not able to make it. In their Happy Box, each were given a champagne flute and an Italian spritz kit — our signature drink — so they could toast us and feel like they were there with us. We had to cull down the guest list, so this was a really fun way for them to join in and feel included in our celebration.”

Louis Sherry is renowned for its decadent chocolate truffles which come in beautiful multicolored tins that are regularly sought after as wedding favors and perfect to add to a wedding box.

“We recently had a bride send out our two-piece tins to her friends with an invitation inside asking them to be bridesmaids,” said Tim Tippin, president of Louis Sherry. Virginia Frischkorn, founder and CEO of Bluebird Productions luxury wedding and event planning, had to rethink her business when COVID-19 hit. She launched Bluebird in a Box, offering curated boxes or digital downloadable kits for themed events, with bridal and wedding coming Nov. 1. She recommends giving some thought to the presentation of a livestreamed wedding.

“Consider hiring a professional to handle this,” said Frischkorn. “Rehearse the technological part of your wedding day. Keep your rituals [first dances, toasts] — this makes the virtual streaming more intimate and special.”
Set on a two-mile-long stretch of beach, the brand new Conrad Punta de Mita offers a portal into the lush landscape and colorful cultural identity of Mexico’s Riviera Nayarit — and a stylish new option for discerning brides and grooms. Whether an intimate ceremony at the ocean’s edge or on the resort’s palm-lined lawn, ask about our selection of inspired, customizable microweddings packages for groups of up to 40, 70 or 80 guests.

For more information, visit www.conradpuntademita.com or email PVRPM.SM@conradhotels.com.

Conrad Punta de Mita | Carretera Punta de Mita - Sayulita Km 2, Litibu | CP 63734, Nayarit, Mexico
Amanda Chalhoub and Corey Levy spent two years planning a wedding for 150 guests, but opted for an intimate backyard ceremony instead.

By ERIKA PRAFDER

A

S many engaged couples are discovering, even a pandemic need not delay their wedding plans, and for many, that means looking no further than the backyard. Smaller weddings are perfect for being hosted at the homes of brides, grooms, family members or friends, said Danielle Rothweiler, owner and lead wedding planner, Rothweiler Event Design, based in Verona, NJ.

“Couples are renting out other folks’ houses, too,” she said. “Realtors are contacting me, telling me that their client’s home is on the market, and that it’s a great place to do weddings. They’ll even agree not to go into escrow until a wedding we’ve booked is done.”

For Amanda Chalhoub and Corey Levy of Wayne, NJ, a backyard wedding turned out to be especially significant because the couple met when Levy, a realtor, sold Chalhoub her house. “It was the perfect location,” said Rothweiler.

With 10 inquiries a day currently coming in, Rothweiler says hiring a wedding planner is still worth the outlay (roughly $4,500 to $8,000). “There are an incredible amount of moving parts and logistics,” she said. “It’s my job to know to call the chief of police to find out parking restrictions, and to comply with any noise ordinance dictating when music must end and permissible decibel levels. I find out from vendors how many amps, extension cords and additional electricity sources are needed. It’s worth the investment.”

Here’s Rothweiler’s advice for a successful day.

Plan site visits

“Once you’ve figured out your guest count, invite your table, tent, chair-rental and lighting-design vendors to your location. Will you need restroom trailers, water and electric sources, a generator? Develop a floor plan or you’re going to have a problem,” said Rothweiler. “If your event will be inside, your vendors will need dedicated spaces to operate, such as a driveway or garage.” For cooler weather weddings, she also suggested investing in heat lamps, or gifting pashminas as wedding favors.

Keep everyone safe

“Enforce social distancing and face coverings in advance through wording in your invites,” said Rothweiler, who said some couples have hired nurse practitioners to take guests’ temperatures upon arrival. “Custom masks can be taken to the next level,” she said. “I’ve worn LED ones — or you match the material to your linens and print your name on them.”

Have hands-free fare

All main food should be plated — no buffets, says Rothweiler. “You can still do passed hors d’oeuvres. Get creative with menus and display.”
SEAL THE DEAL IN 2021

Wedding Bonuses are Ringing

Hyatt Zilara™ and Hyatt Ziva™ offer incredible wedding venues at distinctive properties in the world’s most celebrated beachfront locations in Mexico, Jamaica and The Dominican Republic. Choose from a variety of wedding packages or customize nearly every detail right down to your own signature drink.

FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY  

Save an extra 10% Off

When you book an Intimate Elegance package or higher for value season dates.

-PLUS-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK 5-34 ROOMS</th>
<th>BOOK 35+ ROOMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wedding Party Receives a <strong>FREE</strong> 1-Hour Cocktail Party</td>
<td>Wedding Party Receives a <strong>FREE</strong> 1-Hour Cocktail Party &amp; <strong>FREE</strong> 2-Hour Dinner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE by HYATT

For more information, call or email our wedding center

1.800.466.1289  |  PLAYALEADS@PLAYARESORTS.COM

RESORTSBYHYATT.COM/WEDDINGBONUS

All-Inclusive resorts in Cancun | Cap Cana | Los Cabos | Montego Bay | Puerto Vallarta

For complete terms and conditions, visit RESORTSBYHYATT.COM/WEDDINGBONUS. Promotion applicable for new bookings only effective November 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. Applicable from Intimate Elegance package and higher. Bonus Events can be private or semi-private. Menu, location of events and timing is at the sole discretion of each resort. Bonus events must happen prior to the wedding date. From 5 to 14 rooms having at least three peak nights in common receive a complimentary 1-hour cocktail party. From 15+ rooms reserved, receive a two-hour dinner as well as the 1-hour cocktail complimentary. Valid only when the Promo Code: BONUS2020 is entered in Wedding Optimizer for tracking purposes. Bonus events cannot be used as wedding day events. May Not Be Combinalbe with Other Promotions (Revenue Management Discretion). Hyatt Zilara™ and Hyatt Ziva™ trademarks and related marks are trademarks of Hyatt Corporation or its affiliates. ©2020 Hyatt Corporation. ©2020 Playa Hotels & Resorts is the owner and exclusive operator of Hyatt Zilara™ and Hyatt Ziva™ resorts in Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Mexico. All rights reserved. PL66420120
Add stylish accessories to make your look unique

By ANNE CHERTOFF

ACCESSORIES can be exactly what you need to style and personalize a low-key wedding dress. “Accessories are the perfect way to take a minimal gown and make it feel festive and special,” said stylist Beth Chapman of Beth Chapman Consulting.

There are a variety of ways a bride can dress up her look. Short hemlines call for fabulous heels. Chilly weather needs a jacket or wrap. And a veil, whether birdcage or cathedral length, will complement any wedding-day look.

“The must-have fall bridal accessory is something to keep warm and still look great,” said wedding planner and event designer Lindsay Landman of Lindsay Landman Events. While a bride is sure to find a lot of options in stores and online, Landman shares that some of her brides are looking to their families’ closets for something warm and old. “One of our brides will be wearing a vintage fur bolero that was her grandmother’s, which adds some sentimentality.”

A jacket or stole can also elevate the look of an understated dress from simple to elegant, noted Chapman. But the easiest way to transform any outfit is with a statement earring. “It brings a little sparkle by your face for photos and adds some sparkle to the look of the simplest dress,” she said.

A new addition to a bride’s trousseau is a face mask. Whether decorative or medical, it’s just as essential now as your wedding rings.

A short hemline demands a fabulous pair of shoes. These white satin 3.5-inch pointed-toe pumps are encrusted with glittering crystals. $71.96 at David’s Bridal, 45 W. 25th St.; DavidsBridal.com

Ines Di Santo’s new jewelry collection with Ciner, Ines x Ciner, resembles her wedding gown collection – a mix of glamour and femininity. This modern take on the drop earring features three glass pearls and hand-painted glass flowers. $250 at Mark Ingram Atelier, 110 E. 55th St., 8th floor; MarkIngramAtelier.com

Toni Federici’s circular-style, tiered ballerina design is unadorned, making it the ultimate complement to any style dress, long or short, simple or dramatic. $450 at Lovely Bride, 182 Duane St.; LovelyBride.com

You’ll get a lot of use out of Bübish’s glamorous jacket made from ethically upcycled fur. The navy color makes it an ideal “something blue” on a cooler day (or night). $345 at BHLDN, 1230 Third Ave.; BHLDN.com

Store your wedding-day essentials in this rhinestone box clutch by Sondra Roberts. Available in silver (shown), gold or black with gunmetal, it has an optional shoulder strap. $160 at Bloomingdale’s, 59th Street at Third Avenue; Bloomingdales.com

Save money by renting instead of purchasing. Ever by Happily Ever Borrowed’s “Rafaela” headpiece features crystals formed into branches and leaves and is one of dozens of styles brides can rent. (See story, page 34.) From $45 at HappilyEverBorrowed.com

A fashion-forward take on the classic pearl wedding accessory, Jennifer Behr’s “Bailey” headband is hand-embroidered with Swarovski pearls. $325 at JenniferBehr.com
JUST YOU AND ME

Celebrate your love with an intimate mini-mony. Breathtaking views, tradewind breezes and the gentle lap of waves conspire to make the start of your lives together extraordinary.

Perfectly personal, Just You and Me is the ideal start to your new chapter together. Package includes a morning wedding in an ocean view garden venue, lei for bride and groom, one hour photography, officiant, wedding coordination and one complimentary ocean view room for one night.

Start planning now, call 808 240 6339 or visit grandhyattkauai.com

Terms & Conditions: Offer is valid from November 1, 2020 - December 20, 2021 and is not combinable with other offers. Rates may vary by dates of stay. All hotel reservations are subject to availability and must be made in advance. Hyatt® and Grand Hyatt® names, designs and related marks are trademarks of Hyatt Corporation. ©2020 Hyatt Corporation. All rights reserved.
HONEY, I SHRUNK THE
When the pandemic hit, these couples pivoted to pull off memorable nuptials

By HAILEY EBER

After getting engaged in December 2018, Stephanie and Connor Jones quickly began planning a destination wedding for upwards of 150 guests in Banff, Canada. They set a date for June 19, 2020, during one of the few months that Connor, a professional hockey player, has off. Connor, 30, asked 11 buddies to stand by his side on the big day, while Stephanie chose 10 bridesmaids and bought a long, flowy gown with floral accents by Hungarian label Daalarna. “We were supposed to get married at the Fairmont Banff Springs, a historic old castle, so I tried to go very fairy tale [with the dress],” said Stephanie, who has a degree to stand by his side on the Upper West Side, initially pushed their wedding to late July. “I was like, ‘Hey, guys, we’re getting married next Thursday in Brooklyn. Be there or be square,’” the bride said.

COVID-19 has upended the $74 billion wedding industry, with many couples having to cancel or postpone large, elaborate, long-planned nuptials. But some brides and grooms are opting for small, intimate alternative ceremonies and finding they’re uniquely special. “I came to the realization that this Brooklyn wedding we ended up doing was better than our Canadian wedding would have ever been,” said Stephanie, although the couple still plans to do a celebration of some kind in Banff next year. “It was more intimate. It was more personal.”

In a matter of weeks, the Joneses arranged to get married on the roof of the Bridgepoint event space in Dumbo. There was a self-serve bar and cake, masks with the couple’s initials, and hand sanitizer personified with their wedding date for the 21 guests. “It came out amazing,” said the newlywed. The quickly planned event also had some special moments that a more elaborate one might have lacked. Stephanie got ready in their apartment with her husband to-be, instead of in a hotel room with a gaggle of bridesmaids. Connor watched as she got her makeup and hair done and helped her put on her white Sarah Seven cocktail dress and slip into her shoes.

“It was very sweet,” she said. “That memory, I’ll never forget.”

Stephanie worked with planner Lara Mahler, who helps couples pull off memorable nuptials like this. Mahler, the founder of a Brooklyn-based wedding planning business called The Privilege Is Mine, had roughly three-dozen clients who had to postpone larger weddings from 2020 to 2021. But, she says, “I started finding my clients still wanted to get married.”

So, she launched a side gig called Alt. Weddings specializing in micro and virtual weddings. It offers a la carte consulting and everything-is-included packages with flowers, videographers and boxed meals at venues in Brooklyn, Manhattan and North Fork, LI. Prices range from $385 for one month of consulting to upwards of $15,000 for a four-hour event for 20 guests. Some, like Stephanie, are new clients, while others were working with Mahler’s other planning company, The Privilege Is Mine, on a larger event that had to be put off.

That was the case for Dan Langley and Nick Taylor. They initially hired Mahler to coordinate an 100-person Tiki-themed wedding at the Polynesian cocktail bar near their home in Hell’s Kitchen in November. When they had to postpone, the pair opted for an “alt wedding.”

With Mahler’s help, in early October they held a micro wedding on the terrace of a suite at the Bowery Hotel. Langley’s mom, Taylor’s dad, and seven friends from their quarantine pod joined them for a
MicroWeddings

**WEDDING**

they really got quality time with all of their guests.

“It was really nice to get to talk to everybody at the wedding,” said Taylor, 38, a software engineer.

The couple still plan to hold a big event at the Polynesian next year, and they used several vendors, such as Millers & Makers bakery and Flower Bodega florist, which they also plan to use again for the larger festivities.

“We kind of treated it as a dry run,” said Langley.

Heidi Schibuk and Taris Besse are also planning a big wedding in the future. But, after getting engaged on the Jersey Shore in June, they decided to throw a small wedding in the backyard of Bess’s parents’ home in Massachusetts in August.

“It’s just kind of a hard time right now,” said Schibuk, 30. “It felt good to move forward and celebrate.”

They both have large families, so they kept the event very small, just 10 guests, to avoid hurt ing feelings and keep things safe. The couple, who live on the Upper East Side, only invited their parents, their siblings, and their siblings’ spouses and young children.

“That was hard,” says Schibuk. “We both have cousins, aunts and uncles we’re really close with. But I was kinda adamant throughout the process being like ‘this isn’t our wedding, this is our legal ceremony.’”

Both of their mothers worked to organize the affair and make it special, doing everything from hiring a private chef for the post-ceremony meal to creating magic with flowers from Whole Foods. All the couple had to do was find a rabbi. Schibuk wore a white jumpsuit that her mother-in-law purchased for her on sale after seeing it in a shop window. It happened to fit perfectly.

“Besse, a 32-year-old actuary, ordered a jacket from the Nordstrom Rack Web site that also looked great. “We were almost beyond low-key about it,” said Schibuk.

The tiny size did present some technical issues. They wanted to be married under the same huppah that Schibuk’s sister’s husband had built for his wedding in Vancouver 10 years ago. Four people had each held a hand-carved, eight-foot-tall post that supported the canopy.

“But with social distance, we couldn’t do that,” said Schibuk.

So, Besse, Schibuk’s father, and his brother-in-law worked to engineer the huppah to stand on its own — no small feat.

“It involved a lot of wooden dowels that had to go deep into the ground and zip ties,” she says. “They got it to work. It was amazing.”

It all made for a truly special day. They laid out games for the two children — a young niece and nephew who had never met before — and watched the tots play.

“That was really fun,” said Schibuk. “And I hadn’t seen my family in a long time. It was the first time that each of our families were really spending more time together.”

The chef cooked a lovely summery meal, including an almond cake topped with berries and mascarpone. Four tables spaced out in the yard allowed for socially distanced dining.

Since Schibuk, a psychologist-in-training, and her father, a psychiatrist, both work in hospitals, safety was key.

“In pictures, it probably would look cuter if I had like a cute cloth mask on,” she says. “But, I knew that a surgical mask was going to be most effective.”

The PPE in no way detracted from a meaningful day. “I had the best time ever,” said the newlywed. “I’m so glad we did it this way. It was really memorable.”
By VANITA SALSBURY

MICROWEDDINGS CAN HAVE MACRO IMPACT IF YOU ARE EXCHANGING VOWS IN TROPICAL GLORY. THESE ARE OUR PICKS FOR OUT-OF-THE-WORLD NUPMTIALS.

MEXICO

Why here: Robust culture, delicious cuisine and scenery from beaches to ancient ruins.

Travel requirements: No COVID-19 test is required on entry, but travelers may need temperature checks and health screenings.

Where to get hitched: Create a splash with a wedding in a cenote — a freshwater sinkhole that the ancient Mayans believed to be entrances to the underworld. Book through planners such as My Playa Del Carmen Wedding (from $1,575 for two hours). Stay at the 40-room, upscale jungle wellness resort Chablé Yucatán, which features a cenote on the property, or dip at will at the breathtaking Hacienda Kancab, which comes with its own hole. The restored 19th-century sugarcane plantation home sleeps 10 and is available on Airbnb for $585 a night.

Tequila has fueled many a celebration and now it can be a special guest at yours. The 25-room Casa Salles opened in August 2019, adjacent to the scenic grounds of El Tequileño distillery in Tequila, a UNESCO heritage site. A buyout of all the rooms (approximately $4,053) is necessary for a ceremony on the property, but amenities include a tranquility spa, pool, sky bar and 150-year-old mango trees.

If you want to add a signature drink to your nuptials, just ask the mixologists at the newly opened Conrad Punta de Mita which sits on a two-mile-long beach of the Pacific coast resort of Riviera Nayarit. The themed cocktails are included in their wedding packages, which start at $2,200 and also include perks like a mariachi band and a spiritual ceremony.

HAWAII

Why here: Come for striking natural beauty and stay for native hospitality. Plus, you get to wear leis.

Travel requirements: Journey quarantine-free with a negative result from a COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of arrival. On the Big Island, a second test is required upon landing.

Where to get hitched: All the natural beauty of Kauai resides at the Na ‘Aina Kai Botanical Gardens and Sculpture Park. Choose to tie the knot under a canopy in its hardwood forest, alongside a koi-filled lagoon, in an oceanside meadow or on the white sands of Kalalau beach. The park is also home to 200 bronze sculptures and vast acreage including waterfalls and romantic blooms. Site rental for a three-hour ceremony for up to 25 guests is $1,500.

The secluded paradise island of Lanai was good enough for Bill Gates’ wedding. It has two Four Seasons resorts: the Four Seasons Lanai on the southern coast for a quiet beach ceremony, and the recently opened Sensei Lanai, for Japanese-inspired wellness. Weddings for up to 30 begin at $9,950. Or, ditch the guests — a four-night, dual resort experience for a couple is the same price.

ST. LUCIA

Why here: Those Piton mountains aren’t just photogenic — the trails that wind up them are one of the outdoor adventure offerings, as well as being home to the world’s only drive-in volcano.

Travel requirements: Tourists must complete a pre-arrival registration form and obtain a negative COVID-19 result within seven days of arrival.

Where to get hitched: Steeped in the vibe of the island down to tropical wood furniture made on-site, every room in the Ladera Resort is open to the elements, with a plunge pool and stunning views of the Pitons.

At Têt Rouge, choose from lush tropical gardens in a hilltop location or directly on the beach at the base of the Gros Piton. The entire oceanfront resort and its sunset views belong to your wedding of up to 12 people for seven nights, from $14,860.

BELIZE

Why here: Tiny Belize has big ecotourism, including the longest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere.

Travel requirements: COVID-19 tests can be taken within 72 hours of arrival or after landing. Visitors are required to download the Belize Health App for contact tracing and reporting health symptoms.

Where to get hitched: At Royal Belize, your 7.5-acre private island getaway comes with three luxe villas sleeping up to 16 guests. Prices starting at $11,500 for a full staff including a chef and an adventure ambassador for lobster-spear fishing. Wedding packages ($999) include a pig roast reception, local garifuna drummers for a procession, a full band, conch shell wedding aisle, private couple’s massage and more.

The sustainable Copal Tree Lodge is in a jungle attached to an organic farm, 12,000-acre nature preserve, and the Copalli rum distillery. Ceremonies are fully customizable for up to 75 people (with elopement package available) in locations including the lodge’s rustic thatched-roof palapa or under the farm’s towering Ceiba tree, which the Mayans called the Tree of Life. Packages can include a live band or snorkeling adventures for the wedding party. Prices start at $1,899 for the couple plus 4 guests, to $4,189 for up to 30 guests.

ST. BARTS

Why here: The Caribbean island is famous for celebrity-spotting from Beyoncé to Leonardo DiCaprio. Francophiles can go from daytime duty-free shopping to over-the-top nightlife.

Travel requirements: Visitors over the age of 11 must show a negative COVID-19 test taken within three days of arrival. Travelers staying longer than a week must take another on the eighth day.

Where to get hitched: If Paris had a beachfront, it would be LeBarthélémy, with each of the 44 easy, breezy rooms of the luxury hideaway equipped with its own plunge pool and oceanfront views. Wedding locations include the recently added rooftop bar to the two six-bedroom villas, complete with full kitchen, wine cellar and swimming pool, which can be combined to create a residence of 12 bedrooms. Villas start at $35,200 for 7 nights; packages from $6,146.

Or, be exclusive in a private villa. From $3,050 per night, a cozy six-bedroom villa in Petit Cul-de-Sac from Airbnb houses four
MicroWeddings

Get hitched in a cenote in Mexico. The Mayans believed these sinkholes to be entrances to the underworld.

COSTA RICA

Why here: Rugged and rainforested, this Central American country is a haven for surfers and biodiversity.

Travel requirements: Visitors must complete a digital health pass, provide a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure, and have COVID-19 travel insurance.

Where to get hitched: Wake up above an ocean-side jungle to the sound of howler monkeys at Tierra Magnifica. A takeover wedding at this surf-adjacent 14-room boutique resort (eight of them coming mid-December) requires a three-night minimum ($5,730 per night) plus $250 a head for a three-event package of welcome BBQ, rehearsal dinner, wedding ceremony and reception.

The Hotel Aguas Claras is a bohemian Caribbean coast hideaway with relaxed vibes, secluded beach access and accommodation for up to 40 wedding guests across luxury bungalows, themed suites and a two-story house. A waterfront wedding package includes a rehearsal dinner, multi-course and à la carte menu. A full buyout starts from $6,000.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Why here: Merengue on white sand beaches, tickle your taste buds, or tackle Pico Duarte, the tallest point in the Caribbean.

Travel requirements: No COVID-19 test is required for entry, but randomized rapid tests are implemented upon arrival. There’s a curfew weekdays from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., and 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. on weekends.

Where to get hitched: The 7,000-acre Casa de Campo resort boasts its own marina, private airport and on-site hospital, providing a big-wedding setting. For a ceremony on the sand or flanked by greenery with the soundtrack of chirping wildlife, prices start at $5,400.

PUERTO RICO

Why here: No passports required for natural wonders like rainforests, salt flats and the three out of five of the world’s only bioluminescent bays.

Travel requirements: Visitors must fill out a form through the health department’s online portal, and show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 72 hours before arrival. There is a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew in place until Nov. 13.

Where to get hitched: For true wow factor, find a ruin. Castillo San Felipe del Morro and Castillo San Cristóbal, both 400 years old, overlook Old San Juan Bay and can be reserved with the correct permits.

Or choose the elegant Hotel El Convento. Built in the mid-1600s and housing the first Carmelite convent in the Americas, old-world ambiance is imbued in every aspect. Couples can exchange vows outdoors in the private herb garden, with dinner on an outdoor patio under a 100-year-old níspero tree, or in the atmospherically hand-painted Salón Martorell. Wedding packages begin at $134 per person.

The former coconut plantation of St. Regis Bahia has an impressive entrance that’s only outdone by what sprawls beyond: 483 lush acres near the El Yunque national rainforest, a golf course, and two miles of secluded crescent beach. At this certified gold Audubon sanctuary, opt for a ceremony on the sand or flanked by greenery with the soundtrack of chirping wildlife. Prices start at $5,400.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Why here: Merengue on white sand beaches, tickle your taste buds, or tackle Pico Duarte, the tallest point in the Caribbean.

Travel requirements: No COVID-19 test is required for entry, but randomized rapid tests are implemented upon arrival. There’s a curfew weekdays from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., and 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. on weekends.

Where to get hitched: The 7,000-acre Casa de Campo resort boasts its own marina, private airport and on-site hospital, providing a big-wedding feel no matter the size of your guest list. Its unique all-stone cathedral, perched at the resort’s Altos de Chavón, a replica 16th-century Mediterranean village, boasts views above the Chavón river. Punta Cana’s modern Pearl Beach Club hosts weddings with six available venues, including a private beach, starting at $700, with complimentary personalized wedding-planning service. A good time is built in: The club is known for its pool bacchanalies.

COVID-19 requirements are subject to change. Check the latest advisories before traveling.

Your Day, Your Way!

At Verdana Hotel we will offer you the perfect setting so you can start creating new memories. Within our privileged location in the heart of Isla Verde, Puerto Rico you can find diverse spaces to make your special day memorable.

Our wedding specialist will assist you every step of the way. Along with our team, they will ensure to curate the best culinary experience, full of local flavor and the best service.

CONTACT US

weddings@verdanzahotel.com
(787) 625-9037
(787) 253-9000
Facebook Instagram eVerdanzaHotel
8020 Tartak, Isla Verde PR

WWW.VERDANZA HOTEL.COM
SOMETHING BORROWED

Savvy brides — and guests — are saving money with rented outfits

By ERIKA PRAFDER

Today's brides are finding that they can look as on-trend or traditional as they choose, without breaking the bank, by renting outfits instead of spending a ton of cash on what will likely be one-off wears. They're turning to sites such as Happily Ever Borrowed, a luxury e-rental site founded eight years ago by Brittany Finkle.

With a background as a buyer for Hermès and Chanel, she knew that brides often spend their whole budget on a dress and accessories.

"Veils are only worn for 30 minutes but can be so expensive — some cost $1,200," she said. "I figured that they only wear once."

"These brides are way more interested in saving the environment and making sustainable lifestyle choices," said Finkle. "I thought about how I could reduce waste in the wedding industry when launching this business."

The ability to shop a wide variety at Internet speed has also fueled the success of Finkle's business, which has serviced 1,500 brides to date.

"In a brick-and-mortar bridal boutique, you can only see so many things. Online, there are more options. It's so easy to see what's out there," she said — not to mention that in these times, it's a safe, non-contact way of shopping.

On her company's website, which showcases up to 400 items at any one time, "You can rent everything except the bridal dress and shoes. We offer veils, hair accessories, jewelry and clutches for 4 and 8-day rentals. The prices are typically 80 percent off retail," said Finkle. For example, a Sara Gabriel veil, usually sold for $410, can rent for $25 back towards your rental," said Finkle. Late fees for returns do apply, and if an item is damaged beyond repair, "Customers must pay for the item in full," she added.

"For those in need of styling advice, "we have two separate features. There's a style quiz to help brides identify their — boho, romantic, modern. You can also chat with a stylist on our team. Submit a picture of your dress and we'll give recommendations remotely."

As for the pièce de résistance, the wedding gown, RentTheRunway.com's wedding section displays a curated selection of bride and bridesmaid styles as well as guest options for the big day. Bridal bargains include designer brand names such as Monique Lhuillier, Badgley Mischka and Marchesa, with rentals starting at $250, says Blake Walsh, the special-occasion dress rental company's style director.

"Weddings have always been part of our concept," she said. "Women rent from us for all sorts of weddings — cocktail, city black tie, Arizona desert vibe or Aspen attire. Rental is a great tool to ensure you have the perfect look for all your special moments."

To ensure an ideal fit, "We don't advise at-home tailoring, but we do have great size recommendations on our website and an amazing community of real women who post images of themselves in our styles and make recommendations," said Walsh.

Knot so simple

Timely tips for pandemic couples

By HAILEY EBER

Planning a wedding can be stressful and overwhelming, and now, even more so. Here, local experts offer tips for those looking to get hitched in this unprecedented time.

Be prepared to cancel

"Negotiate vendor contracts that have clear and specific cancellation clauses and force majeure [a clause that frees both parties in the event of unforeseen circumstances]," said Ashley Douglass, a New York and Connecticut wedding planner. She also suggested "an option to reschedule to another date next year with little to no rescheduling fees. In some cases, this won't be possible. A compromise would be to choose a day other than Saturday or Friday."

She also suggested a clause for involuntary reduction in guests if a government entity limits numbers, so you're not on the hook for food and beverage minimums.

In addition, have a candid conversation with potential vendors, advised Alison Szleifer and Jonathan Stamper-Halpin of Two Kindred Event Planners. "It's important to understand how they are approaching these challenging times."

Stay informed

"Add yourself to the mailing list for updates with respect to COVID-19 in the state where the wedding is taking place," said Ang Weddings and Events' Tzo Ai Ang. "Sign up on the state governor's website, the New York Times and local news sources. The infection rates and, hence, event rules in each state can change quickly. Make sure you keep up to date with the state guidelines for indoor and outdoor events leading up to your wedding."

Be clear with your guests

"Give them information about whether the events are taking place indoors or outdoors, how many guests you expect, if masks should be worn when not eating or drinking, if there will be dancing, if guests will be asked to quarantine and/or have a COVID-19 test just prior to the wedding," said Ang. "That way guests can decide if they feel comfortable attending . . . [but] it is a lot of information, so communicate this in a digital format like Paperless Post, on your wedding website or an e-mail."

And, know that some of your nearest and dearest might opt out. "It isn't unreasonable to still not feel comfortable traveling and being in groups," said Amy Jones with Amy Champagne Events.

Keep guests comfortable

Making sure guests feel safe is key, said Ang. "At a recent wedding, we distributed custom printed cotton bags with PPE items including cloth masks with a chain, disposable masks and hand sanitizer."

Arrange guests in couples, families or with people in their quarantine pod. "Let guests have more control over who they sit with based on their comfort," said Jove Meyer with Jove Meyer Events.

Take care with food and drink

"Avoid all self-service buffets," advises Ang. "Have the buffet set up behind a plastic barrier and only the server touches the plates and food. Consider putting boxed slices of cake at each place setting."

Just do it

"Revisit your expectations and have the wedding. Perhaps a cliche, but tomorrow is not guaranteed," said Jones. "Have the party now, celebrate safely and enjoy the rest of your life's milestones."

Meyer also advises creating virtual links with those who can't be there. "Don't be afraid of Zoom," he said. "It can feel special and beautiful."
There are also styling services available through the company’s customer experience team, through which members can call or e-mail a team member, and chat with a stylist through the app.

Plus, “If there are any fit issues or if she wants to replace a style, we offer a two-day turnaround with shipping,” said Walsh.

Dresses can be rented for either 4 or 8 days, which works well for destination weddings.

If you’re confident in your choice, you can get your package delivered straight to your resort.

“For those hosting destination weddings or simply traveling for honeymoons, you can place a rental order with us, we’ll ship out and have your styles sent directly to your hotel,” said Walsh. “You would just be responsible for the return FedEx.”

Wedding party members and guests can also rent an outfit through StyleLend.com. CEO Lona Alia founded the peer-to-peer closet rental service in 2013.

“Women with designer clothing, accessories, jewelry and shoes rent to other women, making money in the process,” said Alia, whose company takes a 20 percent cut of each transaction. Lenders can earn upwards of $10,000 annually when they list designer items from Gucci, Christian Louboutin, Louis Vuitton, Chanel and the like.

“Sharing designer goods and fashion can be a bit more sustainable. It’s like Airbnb for closets,” said Alia.

With 70,000 current users, brides-to-be can borrow items such as a $5,000 Chanel bag for $150 for the week, or mid-tier dresses from Self-Portrait and Elie Saab for $50-$75 dollars, said Alia. “It’s very reasonable.”

To ensure size and fit before renting, site users rely on comments and feedback from previous renters, although temporary tailoring is allowed, provided it can be easily undone.

Looking ahead, “We would love to do more with matching people based on size and style. We want to use machine learning and artificial intelligence to propose merchandise based on other items users have rented in the past,” said Alia.

There are also styling services available through the company’s customer experience team, through which members can call or e-mail a team member, and chat with a stylist through the app.

Plus, “If there are any fit issues or if she wants to replace a style, we offer a two-day turnaround with shipping,” said Walsh.

Dresses can be rented for either 4 or 8 days, which works well for destination weddings.

If you’re confident in your choice, you can get your package delivered straight to your resort.

“For those hosting destination weddings or simply traveling for honeymoons, you can place a rental order with us, we’ll ship out and have your styles sent directly to your hotel,” said Walsh. “You would just be responsible for the return FedEx.”

Wedding party members and guests can also rent an outfit through StyleLend.com. CEO Lona Alia founded the peer-to-peer closet rental service in 2013.

“Women with designer clothing, accessories, jewelry and shoes rent to other women, making money in the process,” said Alia, whose company takes a 20 percent cut of each transaction. Lenders can earn upwards of $10,000 annually when they list designer items from Gucci, Christian Louboutin, Louis Vuitton, Chanel and the like.

“Sharing designer goods and fashion can be a bit more sustainable. It’s like Airbnb for closets,” said Alia.

With 70,000 current users, brides-to-be can borrow items such as a $5,000 Chanel bag for $150 for the week, or mid-tier dresses from Self-Portrait and Elie Saab for $50-$75 dollars, said Alia. “It’s very reasonable.”

To ensure size and fit before renting, site users rely on comments and feedback from previous renters, although temporary tailoring is allowed, provided it can be easily undone.

Looking ahead, “We would love to do more with matching people based on size and style. We want to use machine learning and artificial intelligence to propose merchandise based on other items users have rented in the past,” said Alia.
MINI WEDDINGS INSPIRED BY MYKONOS
ENDLESS MEMORIES AT CALISSA
Southampton
calissahamptons.com

Masks Are Beautiful