

inside

YOUR BIG DAY SIMPLIFIED

SOCIAL ^{P18}
STANDARDS

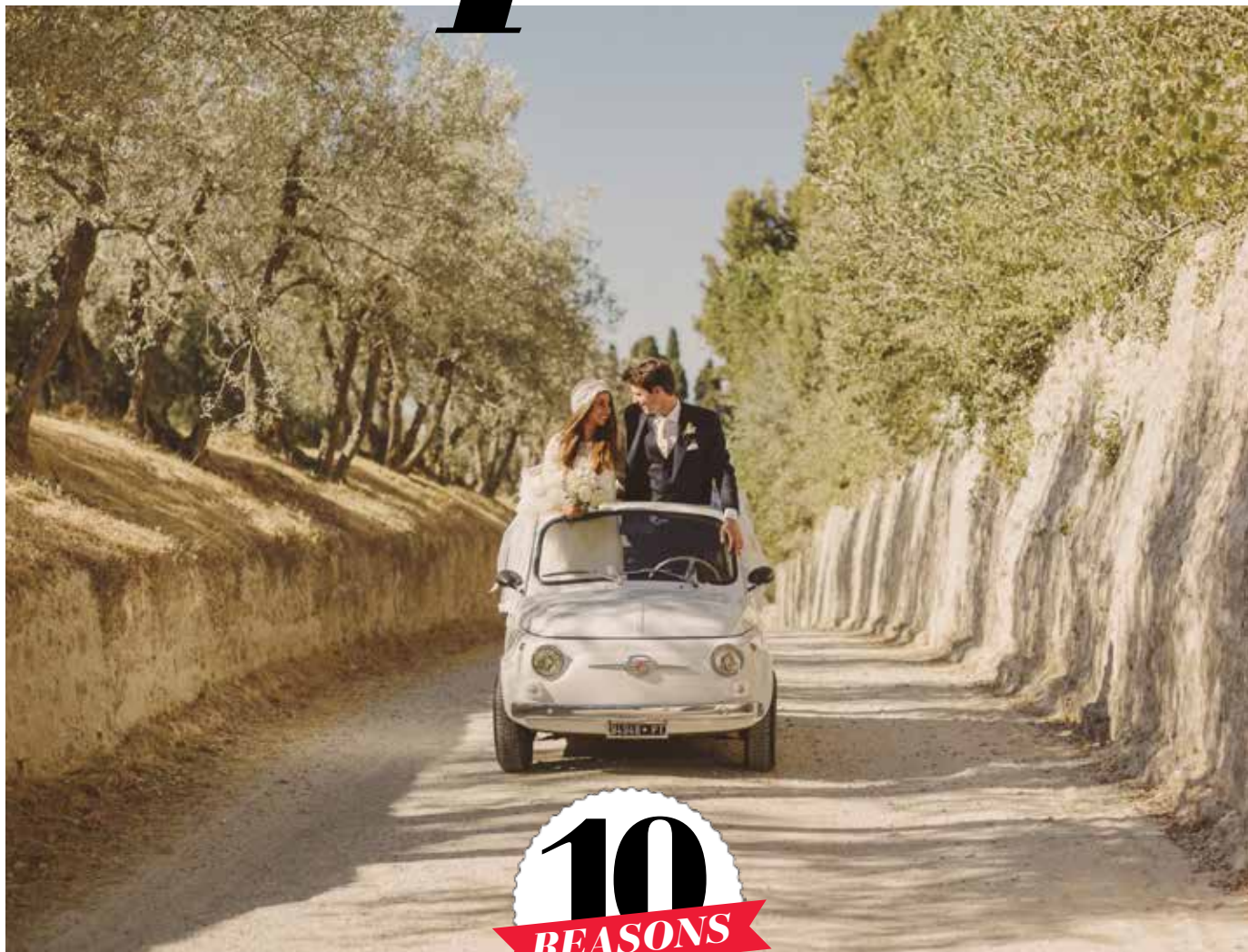


INNOVATIVE
INVITES ^{P22}



SWEET ^{P23}
SLICES

the *plan*



10
REASONS
TO HAVE A

DESTINATION WEDDING

Here's a little secret: There are actually dozens of reasons to wed away, from seeing jaw-dropping locales to spending real bonding time with your nearest and dearest. It's a trend one in four couples is now boarding (A plane! A boat! A helicopter!). Find out what factors fill our top 10 list of reasons to go global with your happily ever after.



by BROOKE SHOWELL

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MATT MILLER/DIAMOND EYES (WEAREDIAMONDEYES.COM); KIM KUHN; ED PEERS PHOTOGRAPHY

1 DIY — or not

Couples who wed away get good at making quick decisions — after all, when your DJ is in the Dominican Republic, meeting time is at a premium. Many details can be hashed out virtually, but navigating a different language, culture and customs from afar could compel you to relinquish control. A wedding planner can handle everything from vendor contracts to scheduling group excursions. “We help with room blocks, transportation ... we play the travel concierge,” says planner Marisa Manna Ferrell of So Eventful.

2 No blackout days

Most couples chase the sun for their big day (June continues its reign as the most popular wedding month), but traveling means you can take advantage of the weather worldwide, rather than relying on peak season in your hometown. Beyond climate, marrying away also means you’re not limited to the weekend. Your celebration will span several days, so the timing of the actual I do’s is flexible. If room rates are a concern, weekdays will net you the best balance between cost and climate.

3 It’s neutral ground

A wedding away isn’t in anyone’s hometown, so any prewedding friction or proprietary attitudes about being on the bride’s or groom’s turf (where your MIL knows exactly what flowers look best in the catering hall) can melt into a one-big-happy-family feeling where the entire group is having an adventure together. “Everything is new to everyone,” Manna Ferrell says. “This creates a nice, welcoming atmosphere.”

4 No suit, no shoes, no problem

Caftans? Saris? Shorts? Anything goes. Black tie still has its place at, say, a villa in Venice, Italy (*a la* Clooney), but even dressy duds can be relaxed. Think bridesmaids in floral maxi dresses and sandals in the Caribbean, with sport coats sans tie for the guys.



An all-white beach wedding in Spain's Canary Islands, photographed by Pablo Begléz. PREVIOUS PAGE: A getaway in a vintage Fiat near Villa le Corti, Italy.

8 EVERYONE IS A VIP

Far-flung weddings are usually intimate (Destination Weddings & Honeymoons readers average about 40 guests at their fetes), meaning less obligatory invites and more must-have loved ones. Friends and family who make the cut “often know that the list was limited, and they love feeling important to the couple,” says Antonia Christianson of Antonia Christianson Events.

9 No seating chart needed

Can Grandpa Joe and Cousin Bri can make conversation? Don’t stress. “The events leading up to the wedding have brought everyone closer,” Manna Ferrell says. Rather than a one-day event where you’re racing to greet everyone, you’ll have days of unrushed bonding time, as more than three-quarters of destination weddings last three nights or more.

10 Have two honeymoons

A wedding away doesn’t need to replace your honeymoon — in fact, almost half of DWH readers head to a different location for their ’moon. Stay a few extra days near your wedding locale for a minimoon (you’ve already paid the travel expenses to get there), or plan a separate trip a few months to a year later, so you’ll have a new adventure to look forward to together.

5 PHOTO OPS GALORE

The scenery around your local banquet hall can be pretty limiting. But open the options to, say, Old San Juan in Puerto Rico at sunset, and you’ve got the makings of some epic shots. Steal this idea: “While on your scouting trip, do engagement photos to use for save-the-dates,” says Irene Alvarez, director of catering and events at La Concha Resort in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

6 Check something off your bucket list

Dreaming of a yoga retreat in Bali or a dude ranch in Wyoming? Set your party there. Whether it’s a rooftop in New York or a castle in Ireland, the locale should fit your personalities. Carolyn Chen of The Special Day says one of her recent adventure-loving couples wed in a rainforest in Costa Rica, where howler monkeys were among the witnesses. Think outside the chapel, says Chen. “It can be in the mountains, the African savannah — glamping has become a very popular choice.”

7 A world of options

That said, *destination* doesn’t have to mean exotic. If you live in San Diego, think Sonoma instead of Santorini. You can still get that wedding-away feel without having to venture too far from home. Consider locales just a two-hour drive away, suggests Chen, who defines a destination wedding as anything that requires more than half of the guests to need accommodations. You’ll save on travel costs, which means you can lavish more of your budget on the bash.

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