

# Casado en México

## Puerto Vallarta Provides Convenient Paradise

*By Kelli M. Donley*

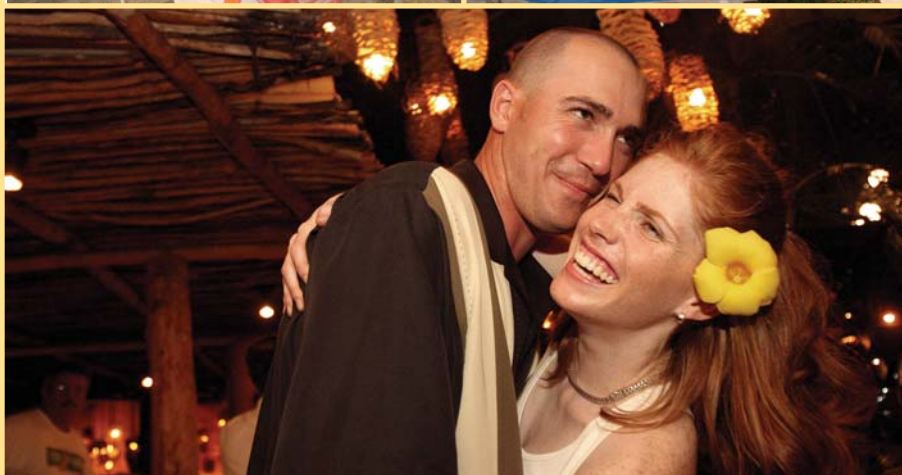
Eric Jamison and Laura Souter were married in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico on November 13, 2005 – seven years to the day after their first date. The couple, who met in college, chose a destination wedding for several reasons and Puerto Vallarta for one in particular.

“We decided on Puerto Vallarta because of the villa, Casa Valerie,” Eric says. “We knew we wanted to get married at a villa, in Hawaii, Mexico or some tropical place but once we found Casa Valerie online, Laurie knew it was the place. We found many great villas, but all were very expensive. Casa Valerie was priced a bit more reasonably and was just as stunning as any other villas we had seen. We liked the idea of having some of our family and friends stay with us and also having it serve as a social gathering point for all of our guests.”

Laura, who works as a retail division training manager for Wynn Las Vegas, traveled to Puerto Vallarta ten years prior; Eric had never visited the city. The pair booked the villa site unseen. Eric, a photographer, was hesitant to be so trusting considering he knew how photos could be altered, but thankfully the couple was not disappointed in their choice.



Photos provided by Stuart Thurikill, [www.cys2sephotography.com](http://www.cys2sephotography.com)



Photos provided by Stuart Thurlkill, [www.eyes2see photography.com](http://www.eyes2see photography.com)

“As it turned out the villa was just as stunning as the pictures seen online if not more,” Laura says. “We were very happy. It came with a chef, a waiter and a maid staff allowing us to be very lazy during our entire stay.”

The pair invited 100 guests and had 55 attend.

“Of course there were a few good friends that did not make it for various reasons, money, scheduling, etc...,” Eric says. “They were greatly missed. This is definitely a part of the sacrifice you will have to make when planning a destination wedding. Simply put, not everyone will be able to make it. Overall, we think most of our guests really appreciated the vacation; it was a good excuse to get away for many of our family and friends.”

The couple hired a local wedding coordinator to help select some of the vendors and assist with guests’ travel plans. However, they brought some imaginative help with them too.

“We phoned and interviewed two wedding planners and one grabbed us instantly — Zac Campbell with Eventful Moments Vallarta. He was incredibly professional, passionate and experienced,” Laura says. “We brought our own photographer because the portfolios we reviewed from photographers there didn’t quite cut it. We also brought our own minister, Father Jesse Vaughan. He has known Eric since he was in pre-school. We didn’t plan on having a videographer, but Eric’s cousin Diana offered to do some unique 8mm footage of the wedding for a creative effect.” Stuart Thurkill with Eyes 2 See Photography, based in Arizona, spent several days with the couple to photograph the event.

With the beautiful villa as a backdrop, complete with a 5,000-plus square foot patio serving as the ceremony and reception site and a view of the ocean, the couple exchanged their vows. The bride wore an ivory Suzanne Ermann wedding dress and the groom and groomsmen sported three button down tuxedos with Ike Bahr shirts, cuff links and melon colored ties. Bridesmaids wore Laundry dresses from Neiman Marcus in melon, with a fuchsia grosgrain ribbon tied around their waist.

As guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and an acoustical Spanish guitar group, the couple smiled at their good fortune.

While their week prior to the ceremony — filled with

### Plan a Mexican Viaje with a Pictorial Essay

Essence of Mexico, a tour company based in La Jolla, Calif., recently released a pictorial essay hoping to help eliminate “the foreign fear factor” for couples interested in getting married south of the border.

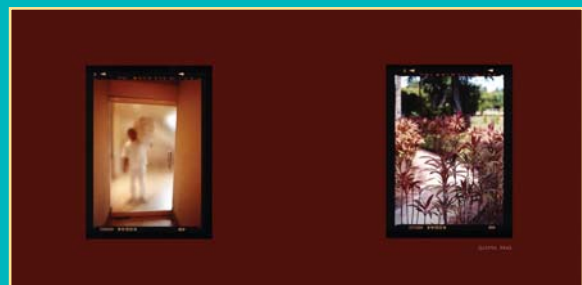
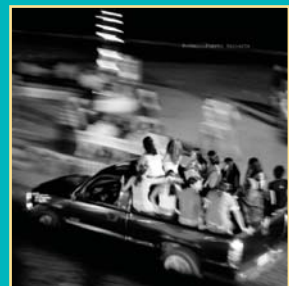
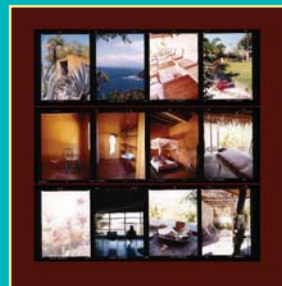
According to Essence of Mexico co-creator and creative director, Melissa Chiaro, Destination Mexico depicts the diversity of the country’s beauty.

“It reflects the style of Mexico,” she describes. “It is always a concoction of authentic old world, blended with new world indulgences. I believe in experiencing the best of both worlds when traveling.”

Chiaro says couples interested in a Mexican wedding can view the book when selecting their destination wedding city.

“The impetus for creating Destination Mexico was the need for a tool to let brides see Mexico,” she says. “This way couples do not have to go on ‘blind faith,’ nor will they carry the pocketbook expense of their own scouting trip.”

The book is available solely through Essence of Mexico. For additional information, visit: [www.essenceofmexico.com](http://www.essenceofmexico.com).



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fun golfing and spa outings — and their time after the wedding — honeymooning at the villa, were perfect, the couple says there are a few things they'd do differently if they'd only known.

“We had a travel planner who had encouraged us to try to help all of our guests with their transportation,” Eric describes. “We hired a van and a driver for four days to pick the guests up from the airport when they arrived and take them to their hotels. The van was supposed to be a much cheaper alternative for our guests. We soon discovered trying to schedule this van and orchestrate all of the pick ups was occupying all of our time, causing us the most stress and was failing right from the start. The van was missing guests at the airport, the delivery of guests was taking too long and flights were landing early or late and throwing the pickup schedule off entirely. In the end, all of our guests could have easily taken cabs for just a little more money and it would have been much more convenient. It also would have saved us a lot grief and anguish.”

Timing in Mexico, the Jamison's discovered, can be a cultural issue in itself.

“The ceremony was supposed to start at 5 pm but didn't start until 5:45,” Laura says. “We learned a hard lesson about Mexico — that everyone there is on ‘Mexico time.’ We experienced this many times in Puerto Vallarta, whether it was trying to get picked up or setting a meeting with the wedding planner, Mexico time is never on time. On a few occasions we had asked for a cab to be sent to the villa by noon and the staff would ask us, ‘Mexico time or American time?’”

The newlyweds are now on their time, living happily in Las Vegas. **IDo**

For more information about the Jamison's vendors, visit:

Casa Valerie: [www.casavalerie.com](http://www.casavalerie.com)

Eventful Moments Vallarta: [www.em-vallarta.com](http://www.em-vallarta.com)

Eyes 2 See Photography: [www.eyes2seepphoto.com](http://www.eyes2seepphoto.com)

Mexican civil marriages between two US citizens are valid in the US. Just like in the US, marriage regulations in Mexico vary state-by-state and even by city. This makes it very important to do your research well in advance of your wedding. To avoid surprises we recommend working with a wedding coordinator who is familiar with the local requirements for your destination to help you work through the details.

In general, the required documents include (but are not limited to) certified copies of birth certificates or valid passports and a copy of your tourist card or visa. A blood test taken within 15 days of your wedding is standard and some locations also require tests for STD's, blood type and some cities require an HIV test. Regulations also vary as to whether the tests need to be done in Mexico or be notarized by a Mexican doctor. Four witnesses are required and in some locations these witnesses must be Mexican. Each Civil Registry office has witnesses available for a fee. Generally the couple should arrive at least two days prior to the wedding to complete the requirements. Sometimes using a wedding coordinator can speed up the process and many Mexican resorts offer these services as part of their packages.



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