

The Leading Hotels of the World®

EVERY QUEST HAS A BEGINNING

I Do! I Do!

Leading Hotels Where Guests Can Marry



Barcelo la Bobadilla

Brides and their families are always looking for unique and different places to hold weddings. To help lead couples to the altar, we are delighted to present a selection of just a few of the Leading Hotels where wedding ceremonies can be performed.

Several Leading Hotels have chapels on property, making them especially attractive as wedding venues. Here are just a few:

For a winter wedding, what could be a better backdrop than the snow-covered Austrian Alps? The Snow Queen and her Consort would feel right at home at *Thurnher's Alpehhof* in Zürs Am Arlberg. Set 2,300 meters above sea level, the hotel creates a stunning setting with spectacular views of the surrounding peaks. The intimate Baroque-style chapel seats up to 110 guests, and an on-site wedding planner assists with all details – at no extra cost. Horse-drawn sleigh rides, torch-lit hikes through the snow to a cozy cabin, even paragliding and heli-skiing can all be worked into a wedding program. Non-residents can marry legally here, and the hotel staff is delighted to facilitate the necessary paperwork.

At *Schlosshotel Bühlerhöhe* near Baden-Baden, Germany, prospective couples have a choice of two chapels on the premises: St. Antonius, built in 1896, seating approximately 50 people; and the Maria Frieden, built in 1958 and accommodating up to 200. Situated on the Bühlerhöhe's "Marienfels" (rock of Mary), the latter has picturesque views and is popularly known as the Adenauer Chapel, since it was actively supported by ex-chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer. A personal donation from the Chancellor, the Madonna within the chapel dates from 1498 and comes from the Meersburg area, near Lake Constance. Other neo-classical venues include the Williams Tower and the Salon Van Dyck, an intimate parlor with a fireplace. Both religious and civil ceremonies can be performed at the hotel.

Sister hotels *Elounda Beach Hotel* and *Elounda Bay Palace* have a picturesque chapel in traditional Greek Orthodox style. The wedding ceremony, which takes about ten minutes, is usually held outside the chapel and is carried out by a local official, followed by a blessing by a Greek Orthodox priest. The blessing can take place in the chapel, or on board a traditional wooden *kaiki* or boat, which takes the couple and guests – up to 50 people – from the hotel's dock and sails across Mirabello Bay, while the priest blesses the bride and groom. When the blessing is completed, a glass of champagne is offered to all for the toast. Both Greek Orthodox and civil weddings can be arranged, and hotel staff can offer advice and assistance in securing the necessary documentation.

Lindian Village on the island of Rhodes offers several venues for idyllic weddings. Located on the premises, amid lush green gardens, is a small white chapel, constructed in traditional Greek island style. Built in 1990 by the owning family of the hotel, it is open to all guests. Other options for ceremonies include the Pool Dome set in the middle of the swimming pool area, with a direct view of the ocean, seating 40 people; Rivers Isle, a floral gazebo built in a flowing stream, reached via wooden bridges, seating 60; and the private beach can be appropriately set with a flower-decked wooden arch and accommodate 350 guests. To help the bride and groom capture a sense of place, the hotel is happy to organize a traditional Greek wedding, and staff can assist with necessary paperwork for non-resident couples.

Modern-day Romeos and Juliets need look no further than the *Byblos Art Hotel Villa Amista* in Verona, where they are assured of a happy ending – and beginning. The hotel's intimate San Rocco chapel is ideal for small weddings, seating up to 30 people. Built in the 15th century, it was once the private chapel of the Amista family. Surrounded by an ancient park, it offers a simple and dignified venue

for exchanging – or renewing – marriage vows. If couples should want to recapture some Shakespearean romance, the hotel can help them organize a civil ceremony in town in the gothic style Juliet’s house – complete with balcony.

Commanding a 1,000-acre estate, **Barcelo La Bobadilla** in Granada, Spain is evocative of a small Andalusian village. Winding walkways and courtyards with softly splashing fountains create a sense of place. Set in the midst of its lush gardens, the private chapel is built in Mudejar style, which incorporates the historic Christian and Muslim architectural influences of the region. Housing the largest privately owned pipe organ in the country, the chapel creates an enchanting setting for nuptial celebrations. Outdoor weddings for up to 140 guests can also be arranged, and the hotel is available for buy-outs, depending on the season. While local certificates are not required from non-residents, couples must consult their embassy for the necessary paperwork, and hotel staff can assist with the appropriate contacts.

For couples in Japan, **Hotel Okura** in Tokyo offers two wedding chapels. The larger one is in the main building, designed in oak and marble accommodating 90 people, while the smaller one in the south wing is done in marble and stained glass, and can seat approximately 70 guests. Evocative of the local culture is the lovely traditional Shinto Japanese wedding ceremony. Generally speaking, just the bride and groom and their immediate families are in attendance for this solemn and dignified celebration, during which the priest prays to the deities, the groom makes his marriage oath, the couple exchange nuptial cups, and rings. The hotel’s Shinto Shrine style wedding ceremony room will accommodate 30 to 40 people.



Couples can combine a wedding ceremony and exotic honeymoon when they choose **Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket**. Inspired by Thailand’s water-focused culture, the Chapel-on-the-Lagoon rises on stilts above the tropical waterways of the resort complex. Flooded by natural sunlight, its sliding glass doors can be opened for an al fresco ambience, or closed to provide air-conditioned comfort for up to 50 guests without interrupting the stunning lake view. With its lofty ceiling, glass walls, watery backdrop, lush tropical gardens and nearby beach, the Laguna Wedding Chapel offers countless memorable photo opportunities. It is also the perfect venue for a romantic sunset wedding.

The wedding chapels at **Bellagio** in Las Vegas offer intimate settings for couples wishing to be married in an atmosphere of beauty and romance. Created to provide elegant surroundings, both chapels are inspired by European design with colorful stained glass windows, ornate lamps and chandeliers of Venetian glass. The smaller East Chapel seats 30 guests, while the South Chapel can seat more than 100. The hotel also offers *Terrazza di Sogno*, an Italian balcony accommodating 34 and overlooking a Tuscan-inspired landscape and lake with soaring fountains, for couples wanting an outdoor wedding. Non-resident couples can legally marry as long as they have a valid marriage license from the state of Nevada. The hotel’s wedding packages even include limousine transportation to the Marriage License Bureau and back.

A myriad of other Leading Hotels – sans on-premise chapel – make great options for non-denominational weddings around the world. Here are just a few:

Hotel Sacher Wien in Vienna, Austria offers eight banquet rooms, which can be the settings for ceremonies – ranging from the intimate Salon Maria Theresia seating 20 guests, to the grand Marble Hall accommodating up to 100. In true Sacher style, the hotel staff is on hand to assist with everything from information on organizing the required legal paperwork to – should the need arise – standing in as part of the wedding party. There was an occasion when the bridal attendants did not arrive, so the hotel’s banquet team came to the rescue and took over in place of the missing maids. And to sweeten the celebrations, the patissier can create a special version of the legendary Sacher Torte as a wedding cake.

Built by Lord Jan Wellem as a symbol of eternal love and a present to his fiancé, **Grandhotel Schloss Bensberg** outside Cologne, Germany, creates a fairytale setting for weddings. Civil or religious ceremonies can be held in front of the rose gardens or in the wedding hall Salon Zanetti, featuring a breathtaking baroque décor and a marvelous view onto Cologne Cathedral. For couples from other countries, the hotel offers an excellent wedding concierge service to handle all the necessary formal details that have to be dealt with. For larger wedding celebrations the hotel features a magnificent ballroom with chandeliers and more than 300 square meters of space, and for these larger ceremonies, the hotel can be booked on an exclusive basis. The hotel also offers suggestions for creative marriage proposals: a trip in a hot air balloon where the gentleman pops the question over a glass of sparkling wine; or a private fireworks display in the Palace courtyard organized after a romantic candlelight dinner.

While London’s legendary **Brown’s** does not have a formal chapel, three of its dining rooms are licensed for civil ceremonies. The Clarendon Room, with a capacity for 70, is the largest and is named after the Earl of Clarendon, who resided on this site when it was





Byblos Art Hotel Villa Amista

Clarendon House in the 1860's. It is decorated with pictures of the founding members of the first gentleman's dining club in London, which still meets at the hotel when parliament is in sitting. Boasting tall windows over Dover Street, this sophisticated room is perfect for exclusive weddings and guests can make use of a private entrance. The Roosevelt Room is named after President Theodore Roosevelt, who first stayed at Brown's for his marriage to Edith Kermit Carow. Their wedding certificate hangs in the room. The interconnecting Niagara Room is similar in style and decoration; both have a seating capacity of 38.

The Biltmore in Coral Gables, Florida was built in 1926 and has a Mediterranean feel with Old World Spanish influences. Guests will find many locations that work well for wedding ceremonies on property, from ballrooms with vaulted ceilings or crystal chandeliers to outdoor locations with fountains and columns. There are 150 acres of lush tropical landscape and areas perfect for wedding ceremonies from 25 to 300 people. Couples from other countries can legally marry here, but they must bring necessary documentation with them, and obtain a local marriage license in person. With its golf course, spa, poolside cabanas, tennis, culinary academy, award-winning restaurants and complimentary bridal suite, *The Biltmore* is a perfect location for destination weddings.

For couples seeking an exclusive intimate venue, without traveling to the far reaches of the earth, Florida's *Fisher Island Club & Resort* offers the ideal solution. Situated just a ten-minute ferry ride from Miami Beach, the hotel is blissfully isolated from the rest of the world. The historic Vanderbilt Mansion at the heart of the resort is a dignified alternative setting to the social scene of South Beach. In the center of the Courtyard, the famous Banyan tree is as historic as the Mansion itself and makes the most romantic setting for wedding ceremonies. The tropical gardens, marina and view of the Miami skyline also provide a picturesque backdrop for outdoor events. Couples from other countries can legally marry here, and staff are happy to assist with securing requisite documentation.

And For Something Completely Different...

Thanda Private Game Reserve offers a choice of unique venues for weddings. The ceremony can be held in a bush location on the property under ancient Marula trees with plains game animals watching from a distance, in a starlit *boma* at night, or on a deck overlooking unspoiled African bush. Zulu drummers can usher the bride down the aisle and dance in celebration as the couple are announced husband and wife. Guests in attendance can be accommodated in the unfenced tented camp which is non-electrified and lit with paraffin lamps to create a sentimental old-world atmosphere. There are also luxury villas, each with a spacious lounge area and master bedroom, fireplace, a thatched outdoor game-viewing deck and infinity pool, private *boma* and outdoor showers. Due to its small size, *Thanda* requires that a wedding party book out the entire lodge.

For further information on reserving a Leading Hotel for a destination wedding, visit www.lhw.com or contact a travel professional.



Thurnher's Alpenhof

