

Romantic getaways: Bali has all the ingredients for a perfect wedding

Deciding on wedding venue offers choices including a resort, villa, jungle or beach wedding, each with their own attractions

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[Peta Tomlinson](#)

It's easy to see why Bali is one of the most popular overseas wedding destinations for Hongkongers. The picturesque island allows for dreamy wedding venues in spectacular locations, where after the nuptials, couples and their besties can stay on to enjoy a tropical holiday together.

Compared to Hong Kong's prices, it can also be cheaper to fly to Bali and host an event with all the trimmings.

But according to Sonya Yeung, a Hong Kong-based destination wedding specialist who has arranged many weddings in exotic locations, romance – rather than cost – is the main motivation. It's almost fairytale-like to run off and get married in a (not too) distant land, where a betrothed couple is treated like king and queen, and the celebration lasts for days.



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“Hiring a villa usually comes with fewer restrictions than resorts, so couples can be very creative with the décor and really enhance the space to suit their personalities,” says Yeung, founder of Bliss Creations.

Villas often have a private pool which is a great addition to any after-party, and private chefs who can tailor menus to suit all tastes and diets or create local specialities reflecting the culture of the destination.

For lovers of nature, a tropical garden wedding beside a river or waterfall can feel like their own personal Garden of Eden. “In Ubud, this often includes a view of the famous rice terraces

of Bali, giving the entire setting a unique atmosphere,” Yeung adds.

The location and relaxed atmosphere of a beach wedding “speaks for itself”, Yeung says. “Resorts with private beaches are often set further from the guest accommodation, so you can celebrate into the night,” she says. “This is great for smaller intimate weddings as it can be more cost effective.”

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JENNY CUTHBERTSON



For high-end luxury, internationally-branded resorts aim to surpass all expectations. Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort has revamped its beachfront wedding venue, Jewel Box, as a sophisticated, climate-controlled indoor space overlooking ocean views with outlines of the Nusa Penida Island on the horizon. The venue's luxurious design incorporates a water feature – symbolising life and fertility in Balinese tradition – and wedding set-ups are greatly customisable with attention to every detail.

But Bali is a beautiful island filled with traditions and prayers. For couples looking to tie the knot spiritually with a traditional blessing, The Mulia, Mulia Resort & Villas on the scenic Nusa Dua shoreline has introduced its Royal Balinese wedding.



On their big day, the bride and groom make a grand entrance carried on a Royalty Balinese palanquins accompanied by a flower bearer and traditional percussion. The high priest then leads a series of rituals performed to strengthen the bond between the couple, followed by a Balinese-themed banquet by the beach. The Mulia has been the venue for many high-society weddings and events, and the Royal experience is just one of its many wedding options. The resort also has all the facilities for guests to stay and kick on afterwards.



There are many reasons why Hong Kong couples choose to get married in Bali. For Jenny and Ryan Cuthbertson, the island was the scene of their first holiday together, so it's their "special place".

There were also practical considerations. "We had guests coming from Australia, the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam and Australia – so it was quite central for everyone to get to," Jenny says. The bridal couple and around 40 guests partied for three days in a private villa overlooking the ocean. They chose the villa option for privacy's sake – "we didn't want to look at our wedding photos and see people on the beach who were not our guests."

She says the occasion was faultless. "It was very beautiful – exactly what we wanted. We had a gorgeous villa facing the ocean, all to ourselves. The food was delicious, and everyone enjoyed it." Even though it was only three days, the bridal party and guests all had a relaxing time – just the experience the newlyweds remembered from their very first visit to Bali.

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