

Great escapes

Fantasy settings for starting life together

Hawaii, Mexico top honeymoon spots

By Tammy Marshall
Staff Reporter

The moonlight reflects off the ocean and lights up the beach that seems to stretch on forever. A man and a woman walk along holding hands and talking softly to each other. Suddenly they run laughing into the water, where the surf softly laps at them as they embrace.

This could be a scene from a romance novel or "The Blue Lagoon," but it isn't. The couple on the beach are honeymooners. This is a very special time in their lives — the few days between their wedding and their life together when the romance in their relationship is in full bloom and they can play out their fantasies.

Couples can choose any place in the world for their honeymoon spots, but Donna Rudolph, president of Contact Travel, and Jon Van Bloom, director of sales of Via Van Bloom Tour and Travel, agree that Hawaii and Mexico are the most popular places Lincoln newlyweds choose to go.

Van Bloom said many couples like Cancun, which is located on the east coast of Mexico in the Yucatan peninsula. Maui is the most preferred of the Hawaiian islands, he said.

Van Bloom said cruises are also very popular for couples. Rudolph said she thinks a cruise is "the very best honeymoon cost-wise and value-wise," because it "includes all your food, fun and transportation in an all-inclusive price that you know before you leave."

"Couples want to enjoy each other's company and not have a lot of hassle" with planning everything for their trip, she said. "On a cruise they can have either a lot of privacy or they can get in on all the activities."

"Eighty percent of people who go on cruises, go again," Rudolph said.

Rudolph said other popular honeymoon spots are Florida, California, the Ozarks, Colorado, Wyoming and the Poconos. Because of national advertising, many couples want to go to the Poconos at first, but when they find out the cost, they reconsider, she said.

Van Bloom said a couple's age makes a difference in where they choose to go. He said many younger couples choose all-inclusive resorts like ones in Jamaica and Hawaii. These are often advertised in bridal magazines and appeal to younger people. Van Bloom said many older couples like to travel to Europe.

"People in their 30s or 40s will often take a short honeymoon because of work, but they will pay more for luxury because they know that their time is precious," Rudolph said. "However, younger people will be more cost-conscious and choose a lower-priced honeymoon, but will spend more time because they have more time."

For couples who aren't sure where they'd like to go or wish they could see it first before deciding, Contact Travel has a solution — a video destination and cruise library.

Rudolph said Contact Travel has more than



Michelle Miklos/Daily Nebraskan

100 videocassettes of resorts, cruises and scenery from all over the world. They consist of such places as Athens, Spain, Switzerland, Disneyland, Africa, Morocco and the Caribbean islands, she said. People can rent the tapes overnight.

"We have a lot of requests for the tape on Hawaii," Rudolph said. "Our cruise ones are popular and so are the seven tapes on Mexico."

"We felt that today's traveler likes to have a

picture of where they're going. Our slogan is 'Watch Where You're Going.' It's what a library is meant to be."

Rudolph said most people who check out the tapes are future honeymooners.

Travel agencies can recommend interesting and exotic places that couples might overlook because they feel they can't afford such a place.

"We can find the good buys," Rudolph said. And agencies don't charge for advice, she said.

Honeymoon plans? Say no to Poconos

Just call it the Las Vegas for Lovers.

Almost every bridal magazine runs regular travel features on honeymoon hot spots. They always mention the typical tourist havens — Hawaii, Colorado, Europe, the Caribbean — and a group of small, grassy Pennsylvania mountains called the Poconos.

Scott Harrah



Just what are the Poconos, and why would anyone want to spend a honeymoon there?

Perhaps it's the resorts. Not just your average resorts, but "honeymoon resorts." These honeymoon meccas are filled with outlandish, romantic amenities: hotel rooms with private Olympic-size swimming pools, heart-shaped whirlpools, two-story hot tubs in the shape of huge champagne glasses, and mirrored ceilings and walls to make it all seem kinky.

An ad in a bride's magazine claims the Poconos have "the charm of Europe, the glamour of Hollywood, the excitement of New York. And everywhere, a special kind of magic." How come they don't mention the dinosaur playlands?

Let me explain. When I lived back East, my family always drove through the Poconos on our annual trip to visit all the hillbilly relatives in West Virginia. I loved the place, but my parents would never stop at any of the roadside attractions there because they said they were "tourist-trap trash." Maybe they were afraid my virgin eyes would glimpse two nude honeymooners in a giant champagne glass.

The Poconos are an Eastern version of the Black Hills, replete with trashy tourist traps like miracle caves, waterfalls that change color, Santa Claus amusement parks, anti-gravity houses. There's just one thing missing: Mount Rushmore.

The Poconos' popularity is the result of clever marketing.

"It was over 40 years ago that a man named Rudolf Von Hoevenberg first had the inspired idea that honeymooners deserved a world of their own," says Modern Bride magazine. "He couldn't have chosen a more

romantic setting than the Poconos."

My main question is this: Why honeymoon in the Poconos? They're hills, not mountains. The bridal magazines laud all the fun you'll have "meeting other newlyweds and sharing memories of your weddings with them." A honeymoon's purpose is to get away from it all. Who would want to waste time lounging around a pool with boasting brides who say, "Well, at our wedding we had live pink flamingos, and I wore a black corset and cape instead of a gown. What did you wear, darling?"

Wouldn't it be much better to fly to Vegas, get married by an Elvis impersonator at a wedding chapel (they do have Elvis impersonator priests there), then spend your honeymoon in singles bars across the country, telling all the sex-hungry people about all the AIDS-free, monogamous fun they can't have?

Then there's that other honeymoon haven, Niagara Falls. Again, why here? Who would want to spend a honeymoon next to an annoyingly noisy waterfall? Maybe the thought of water constantly falling off the side of a cliff and crashing below turns some people on. But if you think you'll need the sound of rushing water as an aphrodisiac on the Big Night because your spouse isn't enough to get you hot, maybe you should skip the wedding.

Harrah is a senior news editorial and English major and Daily Nebraskan night news editor.

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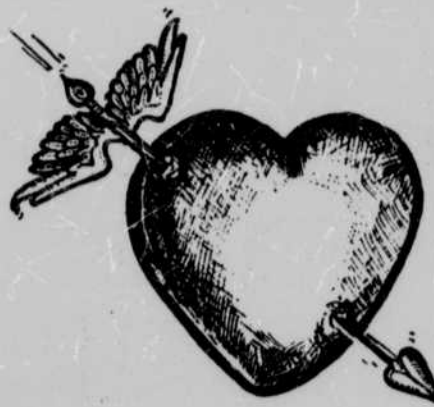
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