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# *Romance* TRAVEL

GETTING  
MARRIED  
IN  
LAS VEGAS

**DESTINATIONS WEDDINGS**

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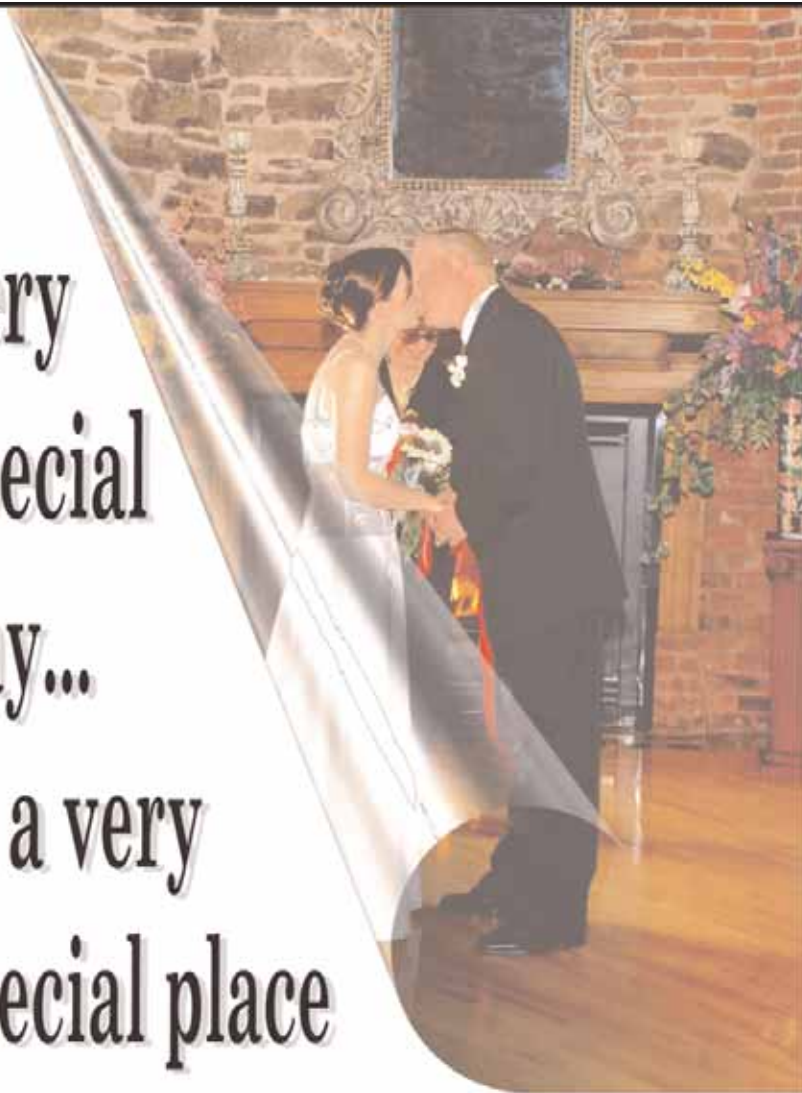
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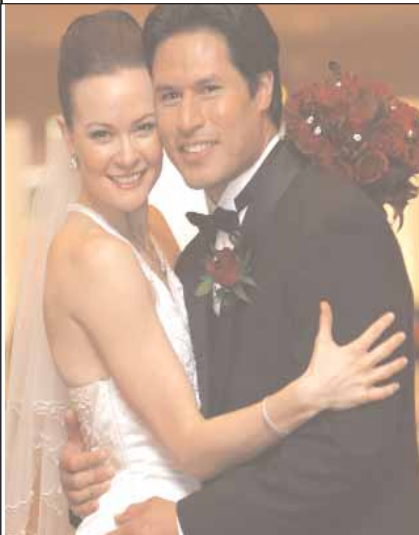
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**COVER:** Bride and groom on the casino floor at The Palazzo, Las Vegas.

**Photo:** The Venetian and Palazzo Photo Services.



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## Romance TRAVEL

SPRING 2009

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Photo: [www.tomasramos.com](http://www.tomasramos.com)

Travelers should make an appointment six months before traveling to the most exotic locations because some vaccines, such as hepatitis A and B, require six months to receive both the first dose and booster. However, if you do not have six months, getting the first vaccine will provide some protection.

For travelers visiting more mainstream destinations, such as the tourist areas of Mexico or the Caribbean check with your doctor who can tell you about any necessary precautions or recommended vaccines or prescribe important medications, such as an antibiotic to bring with you in case you develop traveler's diarrhea or a patch to prevent sea sickness.

Five healthy and safe travel tips

1. Pack smart: Make sure to bring plenty of your regular medications, both prescribed and over-the-counter, in your carry-on luggage. However, controlled substances must be in their original pharmacy container and over-the-counter liquid medications must meet the Transportation Security Administration ([www.tsa.gov/travelers](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers)) guidelines. In addition to your regular medications, don't forget the basics: pain relievers, medicine for nausea and heart burn, bandages, antibacterial ointment and antibacterial hand wipes.
2. Enjoy the sun, safely: Using a sunscreen with a minimum of a 30 SPF is especially important when visiting tropical destinations.
3. Keep the bugs away with a bug spray with 30 to 50 percent DEET is important if you are traveling to places where malaria is present.
4. Be cautious about what you eat and drink especially when traveling to Mexico and the Caribbean. In addition to water and ice, if it's not peeled, boiled or

# Travellin' News

By Anthony Verombeck

## Travel Health Tips

### The key to successful travel is planning

cooked, avoid it. This includes fresh vegetables and fruits, undercooked meats and raw fish. Be careful when purchasing food and drinks from street vendors and make sure the seal is not broken on bottled water.

5. Bring your personal health information: Store the information in your suitcase, on a USB drive or on a small card in your wallet, but make sure someone knows where the information is stored in case you are unconscious.

For more information visit our website at [www.WeddingsHoneymoons.com/Romance](http://www.WeddingsHoneymoons.com/Romance) Travel.

Tips courtesy H. Thomas Johnson, M.D., a Saint Louis University family physician.

- RT



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## HONEYMOON EXPRESS

# The Other Florida

*North Florida is something different and might surprise you with its gentle pace and southern hospitality, and its romantic atmosphere found in the picturesque scenery that combines the natural beauty with the lure of its sprawling plantations.*

**The Dancing Waters' Chapel which features 12-foot tall stained glass windows.**

*It's called The Other Florida, the Florida that isn't the party town*

**By Jeniva Berger**

**I**t's called The Other Florida, the Florida that isn't the party town of its more glamorous (and pricey) big resort hotels and condos of south Florida, or the lively cities of the east coast that beckon rambunctious college students during spring break, or the steady hum of Miami's colorful South Beach, or the hustle bustle of Disney's Orlando. North Florida is something different, a Florida you probably don't know, and might surprise you with its gentle pace and southern hospitality, its history (America's first Christmas celebration was held here), and its romantic atmosphere found in the picturesque scenery that combines the natural beauty of its lush rolling hills and forests with the lure of its sprawling plantations.

A leisurely driving tour is the best way to experience North Florida, starting with Florida's capital city, Tallahassee. With its nearly quarter-of-a-million residents, and the seat of the state government, Tallahassee isn't quite as laid back as its neighboring cities to the east, but its southern flavor is apparent.

Nestled in Florida's Panhandle, Tallahassee is a mere 14 miles south of Georgia and is closer to Atlanta than Miami. You can walk down Tallahassee's city lanes for a sampling of the south's famous moss-draped live oaks.

Tallahassee ([www.seetallahassee.com](http://www.seetallahassee.com)) has six "official" canopy roads listed among the Top 10 Scenic Byways in America. It also has America's largest concentration of original plantations that exist between Tallahassee and Thomasville, Georgia, just 28 miles away. Goodwood is one of Tallahassee's famous plantation gardens estate that is a picture perfect place for a wedding (nestled in a grove of live oak trees), with its reflecting pool and heirloom gardens. Along with Maclay State Gardens, where I spent a delightful few hours admiring its stunning floral show, you won't find anything prettier for a lazy day picnic or an afternoon walk about.

Like many of the cities in North Florida, Tallahassee has a wide variety of hotels, though I found the elegant B&B's a perfect place for honeymooners or

**Continued on the next page.**

## OTHER FLA from page 6

romantic sojourns through North Florida. My B&B, the Inn at Park Avenue, a beautifully restored Victorian home built in 1838 and located in the Historic District in Tallahassee, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I found its charm - large, high-ceiling rooms, seven beautiful fireplaces, hardwood floors, and a grand staircase - to be as ingratiating as its warm and spirited innkeeper, Ann Chittenden, who will plan your trip for you if you like, recommend what to see and where to eat at the city's many good restaurants, and even regale you with the latest political gossip.

If you want to take a piece of real southern Americana home with you, you need look no farther than Madison, Florida, a tiny perfect town of 3,000, nestled close to the Georgia border and only one hour away from Tallahassee. It's a city that was established long before Florida joined the union in 1845. Today, Madison enjoys all the amenities of a big city: arts, crafts, culture and history, without the hassle of big city crowds. Stroll the historic district and enjoy the many sites and shops, especially its superb antique shops that display everything from porcelain dolls and old jewelry to Civil War memorabilia.

Madison's appeal lies not only in its beauty, lush surroundings and photographic antebellum and Victorian homes, many 200-years-old, which dot the quiet streets, but in the friendliness of its people. "What can you do if you live in a big city?" asks Madison's public relations people, then answers, "We suggest you adopt our small town!" Madison's appeal to weddings planners is world wide

whose clients like the idea of having a real down home neighborhood wedding. "Your big day becomes a big deal for the whole neighborhood!" they boast. And they're not exaggerating.

Madison ([www.madisonfl.org](http://www.madisonfl.org)) calls its famous Four Freedoms Wedding Chapel and Bed and Breakfast a slice of a bygone era. The historic and romantic pre-civil war chapel was built in 1851 by many generations of local families and its simple elegance extends from its crystal globes, magnificent 1851 stained-glass windows and hand carved wooden pews to its beautifully landscaped exterior. Next door, the Four Freedoms Bed and Breakfast opens its doors to us for a tour of the richly decorative accommodations and a special lunch for which the mayor herself made homemade delicacies.

Once the home to Native Americans for 12,000 years, Madison is a city that thrives in its heritage. Named after U.S. President James Madison, its Four Freedoms Monument in the town square was inspired by President Franklin Roosevelt in the State of the Union Address he delivered to Congress on January 6, 1941. But beyond the city is another kind of heritage: a huge 716 square mile land mass which defines the whole of Madison County with its lakes, rivers, rolling hills and forests teeming with wildlife and birdlife,



**The Inn at Park Avenue**

untouched beauty is a testament to how well North Florida preserves its environment so that everyone can enjoy its many attractions.

Not far from Madison is one of North Florida's great cultural preserves that just happens to have a state park at its doorstep. The Stephen Foster Folk Culture Centre in White Springs is a jewel of a museum that pays colorful tribute to American's first original songwriter and troubadour. Foster composed 286 works, a 20-year prodigious output from a man who died a pauper on the streets of New York, but has managed to touch the hearts of everyone who loves folk music. Along with the amazing dioramas in the centre itself which illustrate the words of each of ten songs by Foster, The Center offers 45 beautiful campsites for RV's and tents, and five lovely cabins often booked by couples who want something out of the way and close to nature.

**OTHER FLORIDA**  
**continued on page 14**

## COVER STORY

# GETTING MARRIED IN LAS VEGAS

**Stars such as Bette Midler, Cher, Donny & Marie, Wayne Brady, George Lopez, Gladys Knight, Elton John and the Neville Brothers appear in Las Vegas.**

By Bill Cowper

If you are planning a destination wedding or a honeymoon, Las Vegas is one of the best spots for one stop shopping. The theme hotels let you stay in one place while experiencing the world.

The Venetian has nine wedding packages and they all include an officiate to perform the ceremony, 30-minute wedding rehearsal and use of the location for one hour (with the exception of the gondola weddings). There are 30+ restaurants capable to hold rehearsal dinners, receptions, bridal breakfasts.

The ceremony only packages start at \$800 (all prices U.S.) and go up to \$14,950. Customized packages start at \$5,000 and are available for any of their venues. Ceremony and reception packages start at \$11,500.

All weddings are all non-denominational in nature but can be modified to contain religious content if the couple chooses to do this. A Chuppa is available for Jewish ceremonies in their chapel weddings. A Rabbi can be booked for an extra fee that range from \$250 to \$350.

On-site amenities include floral arrangements for



Gondola Weddings



**A bride and groom on th terrace of a hospitality suite at The Palazzo.**

each location, wedding bouquets, photo services, reception locations – catering in hospitality parlors and private restaurant dining rooms.

Wedding accompaniments include champagne gift sets, wedding book, photo albums; videographer, limousine service, spa and beauty services, suite accommodations, choice of musical accompaniment - guitar, violin, accordion, or flute and live entertainment – gondoliers, opera singers, jugglers and more.

The Venetian has four ceremony locations: Chapels, The Gondola, bridge standing and Venezia Wedding Terrace.

- The three Chapels overlook the pool gardens and can accommodate between 40-50 guests or all three chapels can be combined to provide seating for up to 150 guests.

**Venetian WEDDINGS continued on next page**



Photography: The Venetian and Palazzo Photo Services.

**The terrace located outside one of the wedding chapels at The Venetian overlooking the Venezia Pool Garden.**

- The Gondola, a symbol of Italian tradition. The bride and groom float along The Grand Canal in a decorated white gondola while their gondolier serenades them to create the ambiance of Venice.

- Bridge Standing above the Grand Canal the Ponte al di Piazza, also known as “bridge over the square,” serves as a stairway to longevity and prosperity as man and wife. Accommodates seating for 50 guests.

- Venezia Wedding Terrace that overlooks the pool gardens. Accommodates 50 guests.

The Palazzo has a new pool ceremony and reception and hospitality suite and outdoor terrace.

I've been to Las Vegas several times and I personally was pleasantly surprised that this is the NEW Las Vegas NOT the Las Vegas of old. No where in the world has so

many billions of dollars been spent, to provide visitors with the ultimate breath taking experiences.

The event planners can help you with a budget you can afford for your special occasion whether it's for just the two of you or a wedding with friends and family.

Las Vegas is known for its entertainment and spectacular shows are also available at The Venetian including The Phantom that is celebrating two years in the \$40 million custom-built theatre.

They also have a World Famous Madame Tussauds featuring life like wax creations of celebrities from politics, entertainment and sports that you can take pictures with and much more fun. When you are checking the Venetian or Palazzo's websites click on

its entertainment section for up to star listings.

For more information for The Venetian or The Palazzo call toll free 1.866.548.1908 or visit [www.venetianweddings.com](http://www.venetianweddings.com), [www.palazzolasvegas.com](http://www.palazzolasvegas.com).

For more information on Las Vegas visit [www.lasvegas.com](http://www.lasvegas.com) or for shows visit [www.lasvegasshows.com](http://www.lasvegasshows.com). - RT



**A vanilla wedding cake topper with vanilla Bavarian cream and fondant icing from David Burke at The Venetian.**

## GREAT PLACES ON A BUDGET

# A Honeymoon in Slovenia



Preseren Square

**Slovenia is famous for its alpine beauty, lakes and romantic walks in the mountains. A wonderful place to spend a honeymoon.**

**By Irwin Patterson**

I chose a tour called Alpine Lakes of Slovenia and the eight day tour lived up to its expectations.

The capitol, Ljubljana, has a population of 350,000 and a café scene on par with Paris or Vienna. In 34 B.C., the Romans founded Emona on the this site of Ljubljana. A walk along the Ljubljana River in the city takes you past many cafes, willow trees and light architecture towards Preseren Square highlighted by the pink Franciscan Church, very visible as you walk around a curve in the river.

The cobblestone square is round with a statue of the great Slovenian Poet France Preseren dominating your attention. One of his poems is the Slovenian national anthem. Off the square is a walking street, and to the left of the Franciscan Church, and a few steps away is the empty former business bank with a

beautiful reddish painted wall and colorful designs around the windows.

Cross the impressive triple bridge in the square to the market and tourist office on your left. If you continue to walk straight across the bridge to the old town and turn right, you will see the Town Hall built in 1718. The courtyard is worth a visit.

Look to your left towards the fountain, modeled after one in Rome. Featured are male figures of vases and water. Cast your eyes up to the impressive Ljubljana Church, started in 1701. Not to be missed is the main door made of bronze and created in 1996 representing 1250 years of Christianity in the country. It was blessed by the Pope whose figure is on the door. The bronze side door is even more remarkable.

**SLOVENIA continued on page 11**

High above the city is the Ljubljana Castle, worth a visit if only for the view of the city in the morning sun from the tower observation deck. The Town of Skofja Loka is dominated by its castle overlooking the old town. The castle museum is worth a visit.

One of the most magnificent mountain resorts in Europe is Lake Bled, surrounded by forests nestled within a circle of mountains with a castle on one side and a lovely baroque church on an island in the lake. You may choose a romantic two-hour walk around the lake, past swans, water lilies flowers, chestnut and willow trees or take an old fashioned canopied wooden boat called plenta, propelled by oarsmen, to the island church.

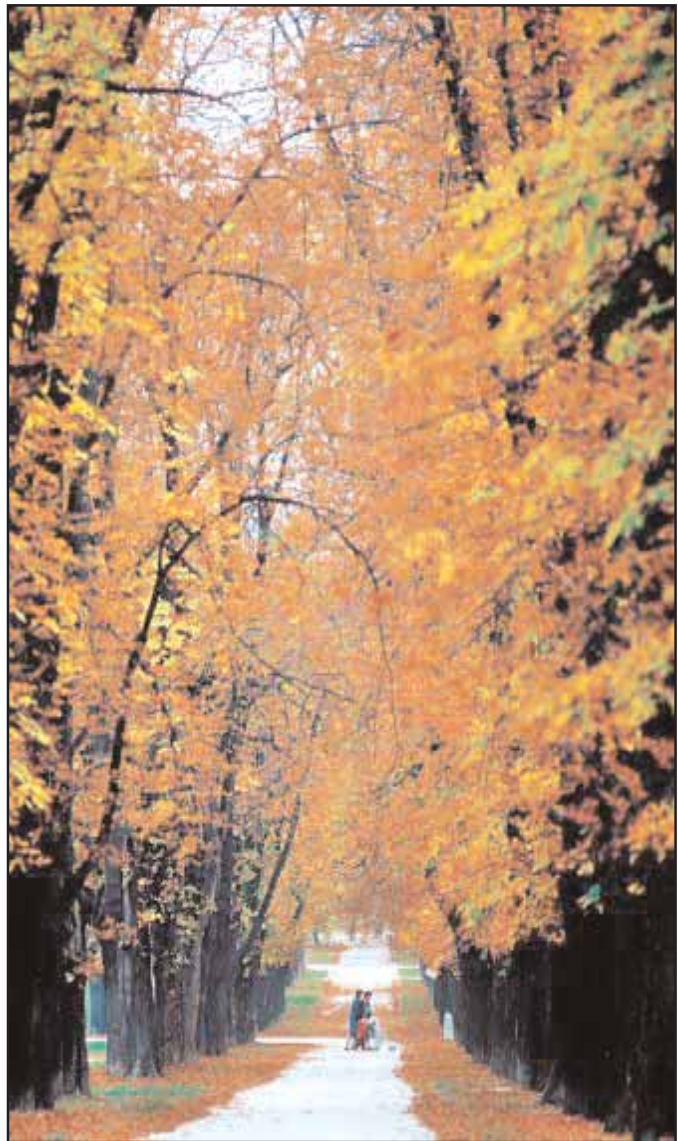
From Lake Bohinj we walked through the Julian Alps to the Savica Waterfall. The cascade of water tumbles into a pool 60 metres below.

Later, a walk through a village, past mountain harps, wooden structures to dry hay, and a trip on a cable car to enjoy lunch and a breathtaking view of the lake below. You will have an opportunity to go river rafting or horseback riding here.

A highlight is a 5 kilometre walk through the Skocjan Limestone Caves, the most impressive I have seen. A river flows below, some of the rooms in the cave are very large, and the stalagmites (carbonate of lime) and stalactites (carbonate of lime hanging like icicles from the roof of caves) grow one inch per 100 years.

Next stop is Piran, population 4,800, situated on the Slovenian Adriatic Sea and across from Trieste, Italy. The town is a gem of Venetian gothic architecture with narrow little streets, an oval square and the St. George Parish Church dominating the city from above. The view of the city and oval below and the old walls even higher above provides a romantic view. A statue of Giuseppe Tartini, the local violinist and composer is in the middle of the square that bears his name.

On the way back to Ljubljana we visited the Predjamski Castle, built into a mountain, a most impressive site. A robber baron hid himself in this castle perched on a vertical cliff. He had been taunting his besiegers, even sending down fresh fruit, until an aid was persuaded to reveal his schedule. He was killed sitting in his lavatory.



### **Tivoli Park**

#### **IRWIN'S TIPS:**

- The bus from Ljubljana to the airport leaves from bus stand 28 at the train station. The trip took 40 minutes through farmland, and was a pleasant short tour to the airport.
- Tivoli Park in Ljubljana is well worth a walk through.
- Explorer Worldwide Tours through the Adventure Centre, Toronto, Phone 416-922-7584 1-800-267-3347, email: [toronto@trekescapes.com](mailto:toronto@trekescapes.com) Website: [www.trekescapes.com](http://www.trekescapes.com).
- Ljubljana Hote: Pension Pri Mraku, Rimska cesta 4, 1000 Ljubljana, p.p.1623, email: [daj-dam@daj-dam.si](mailto:daj-dam@daj-dam.si), Website: <http://www.daj-dam.si>. - RT

# ROMANCE TRAVEL

## The Hidden Resort - a peace of mind lake "Where you ask?" - in Labella, Quebec

By Anthony Verombeck, editor

### GROOM

In driving to Blueberry Lake Resort in Labella, Quebec, from Toronto, we wanted to view the Ontario country side along our way to our romantic weekend holiday. It was a joy to see the many changes and new developments along the way. After a few coffee and washroom breaks we drove into Quebec. It was clean driving all the way., Hwy. 401 East to Quebec. We pulled into an information station for directions and was handed a new free map, along with a warm smile.

It took us just over eight hours after stops to rest, view the mountains and smell the fresh air of the Laurentians - there's nothing like it in this whole wide world.

When we drove up to the Blueberry Lake Resort we were amazed that it was just like the photos. It's a private hide away and one of the most magnificent and natural surrounding of any resort I've seen.

The log style homes are state-of-the-art luxury and

have all the bells and whistles including kitchens, bedrooms, internet, washer, dryers. Some homes come with hot tubes. All you're going to need are your groceries that you can pick up on the way to the resort.

We went for a swim at the private lake on the resort, and was so pleased that there wasn't any noise from jet boats. This is a peace of mind lake to relax. Their packages include activities, catering and a spa on-site.

For more information call 1-800-908-1413, visit [www.blueberrylake.com](http://www.blueberrylake.com) and read more on [weddingshoneymoons.com](http://weddingshoneymoons.com). - RT

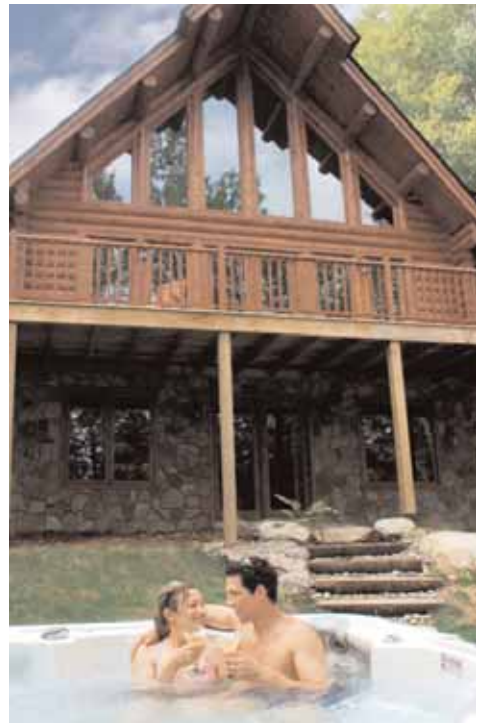


Photo: courtesy Blueberry Lake Resort



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A photograph of an outdoor spa area. In the foreground, several streams of water are falling from a Roman-style waterfall into a pool. In the background, there is a covered lounge area with several wicker chairs and a table. The chairs have floral patterned cushions and white towels with red stripes are draped over them. The structure is supported by stone pillars and has a brown and white striped awning. Palm trees are visible in the background under a clear blue sky.

# SPA *getaways*

## **AWARD WINNING SPA ON THE BEACH**

**ESPA the award-winning spa in the Acqualina Resort and Spa in Sunny Isles, Florida, features 11 multi-functional treatment rooms, four beauty suites, a private spa suite for two, outdoor terrace with a spa pool and heated jet pool with a Roman waterfall. The Spa combines ancient and modern therapies with the latest in skin care advances and has a full line of ESPA marine, aromatherapy and plant active products.**



## OTHER FLA from page 7

Though Foster was born in Pennsylvania and is buried there, Florida has adapted one of his songs as its state song (*Old Folks at Home*), and White Springs which houses the Cultural Centre, pictured above, has been called “The Land of the Swanee River.” Perhaps Foster’s best loved song, *Way Down Upon the Swanee River* (1851) wasn’t penned because of his love for it. In fact Foster had never seen the river. He found the name “Swanee” in a book and liked the sound of it! The rest is musical history. These days everyone can enjoy the beauty of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail which provides miles of opportunity for a variety of tours along the river. You can sleep under the stars (how romantic is that!), or under a tent, in a cabin, at a local motel or bed and breakfast.

Bed and Breakfast inns are the delight of couples who return again and again to some of the loveliest B & B’s found in the city of Gainesville. Looping southward from White Springs, Gainesville is a college town (one of the fifth largest universities in the U.S. and the oldest and largest in the state of Florida), the home of the Florida Gators, and the city that provided the first sports drink (Gatorade). But besides its medical research facil-

ities and marvelous schools, Gainesville is just plain lovely. Its preservation of historical buildings and its natural surroundings, parks, museums and lakes, make it a welcome town for tourists.

Located on a quiet street but within walking distance of Gainesville’s historic center, the Sweetwater Branch Inn “Devoted to guests who are seeking the exceptional,” is a dream B & B, promising absolute privacy, luxurious amenities and gourmet food. Comprised of two carefully restored Victorian-era mansions and surrounded by beautifully sculpted gardens, one of the two, the Mackenzie House, a magnificent three-story Queen Anne style Victorian home is known as one of the most elaborate Victorian buildings in Gainesville’s history, and has been featured on the popular PBS television show “Inn Country USA.” Not surprisingly, Sweetwater offers Romance Packages and will even customize weddings for that special day. ([www.sweetwaterinn.com](http://www.sweetwaterinn.com)).

Our route which starts to loop west after leaving Gainesville, has yet another surprise in store for us before we head back to Tallahassee. The tiny fishing village of Steinhatchee ([www.steinhatcheelanding.com](http://www.steinhatcheelanding.com)) lies in the very heart of Florida’s “Nature Coast,” unspoiled, and protected, free of urban sprawl and pollution. It’s a mere 85 miles south of Tallahassee,

but you might be in another world at Steinhatchee Landing Resort, whose 35 acres resemble a 19th century Southern village with its 40 charming completely equipped cottages and Victorian and Florida Cracker architecture.

Steinhatchee Landing in fact resembles a small town itself – without the commercial aspect. Narrow streets and paths wind between and around the property’s magnificent live oak, pine, palm, cedar, magnolia and cypress trees. Wooden bridge, creeks, picket fences, gazebos and swings, a vegetable, herb and spice garden, croquet lawn and a petting zoo are among its many country attractions. The Resort itself lies on the shady banks of the meandering Steinhatchee River which flows into the Gulf of Mexico, and its cottages offer wonderful scenery nestled in the woods along the Kings Creek, overlooking the river, or surrounded by landscaped gardens.

The serenity and beauty at Steinhatchee Landing is what attracts families and honeymooners alike. Families can take advantage of the recreational activities like the new Pool Pavilion and Fitness Centre, fishing, hiking, canoeing, swimming, kayaking and scuba and cave diving, as well as the many children’s programs, while honeymooners will find a romantic haven in one of eight honeymoon cottages that feature luxurious bedding, gas fireplaces and oversized hydrotherapy tubs. If the wedding is taking place at the Landing, what bridal couple wouldn’t fall in love with The Dancing Waters’ Chapel which features 12-foot tall stained glass windows, antique wood and Gothic architecture, a romantic setting for a memorable day.

Steinhatchee Landing lays claim to capturing the spirit and romance of Old Florida, but in remarkable North Florida, there’s always something to capture the spirit – and the heart.

For more information visit [www.visitflorida.com](http://www.visitflorida.com). - RT

# DESTINATION BRIDAL

## dresses that travel well

**Once you have decided on a destination wedding you have to consider the place, type of wedding, weather and how the dress will travel.**

**By Joyce Barslow**

If you are planning to shop at the destination ask the local wedding consultant to assist you and check out their websites before you go.

Dresses that work well on the beach or in gardens are slip dresses, mermaid shapes, soft ruffles and semi-ballgowns that barely touch the ground in fabric choices in silks, chiffon, light lace and organza. Long trains catch the sand and long veils get caught in the wind easily and usually get in the way of the cer-

emony and pictures. Short veils, tiaras, fancy headbands, flowers or jewellery make good head pieces.

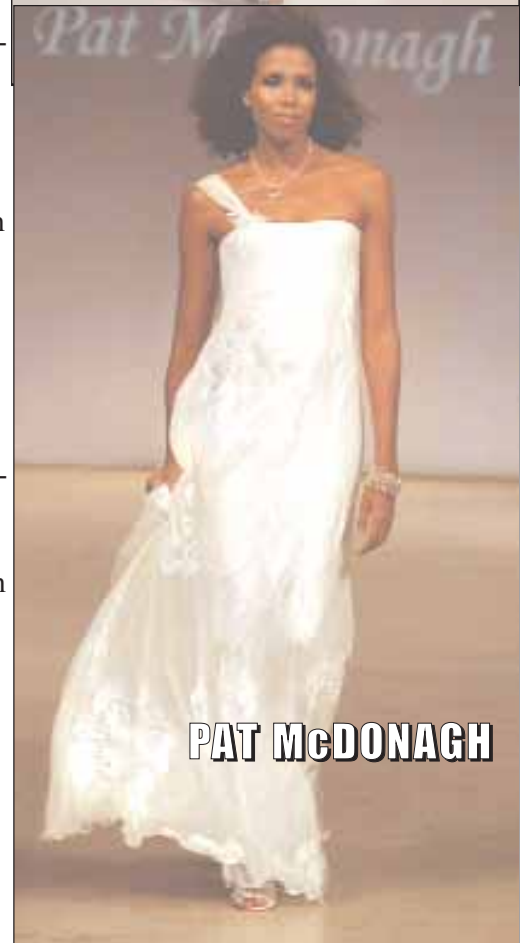
When you book your flight directly or with a travel agent, let the airline know that you will be carrying on your wedding outfits in garment bags and you require them to be placed in the first-class closet. There may be an extra fee for this and if your garment bags are oversized. Find out your guidelines before you start packing for the airport.

If you need to touch up your dress at the destination, try hanging it in the bathroom when you shower so that the steam will help the dress fall into place. Before you travel, ask the wedding consultant at the destination if they have steam irons to assist with wedding dresses.

Make a list of the fashion essentials you will be taking along with your dress such as your headpiece, wrap or stole, purse, shoes, bustier or undergarments, pantyhose, garter, and jewellery,

If you decided to get married in your bikini or sportswear on the beach - then check to make sure your outfits are accepted by the officiate and enjoy. - RT

**Photography by Kin Wong/WHNETWORK taken during Fashion Week**





February 21 & 22, 2009  
Saturday 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

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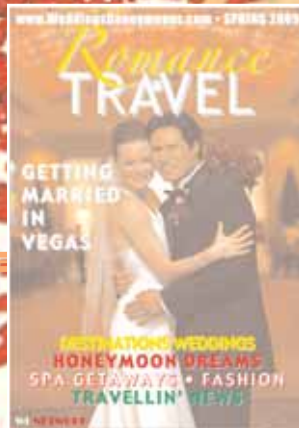
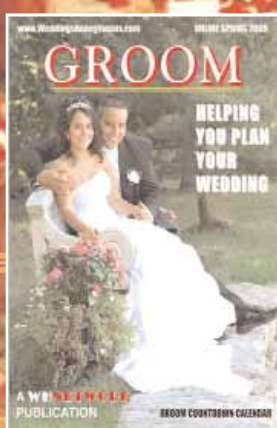
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