



The Warwick
Wine Estate,
in Stellenbosch,
South Africa.

Heavenly Honeymoons **SAMPLE**

OUR TRAVEL EXPERTS OFFER THREE CUSTOM ITINERARIES FOR THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFETIME. BY MEG NOLAN

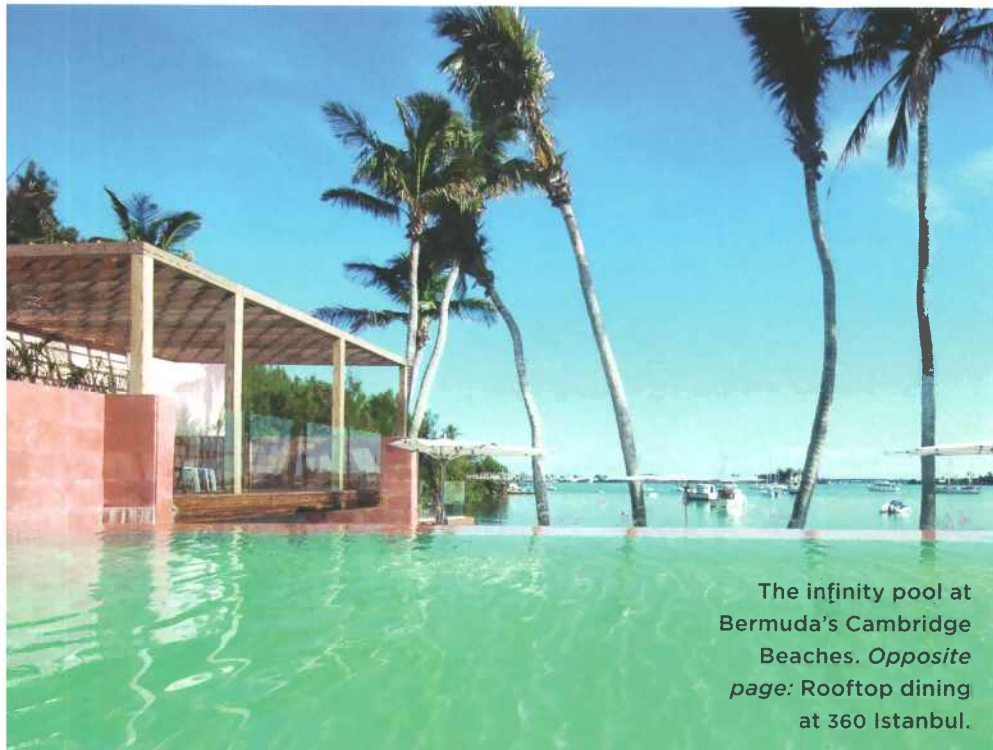
IF THE HONEYMOON IS THE REWARD FOR MONTHS OF arduous wedding planning, then shouldn't it feel like one? Instead of adding even more tasks to your lengthy to-do list, trust a professional to organize all the details. We asked three top travel agents to create their ultimate honeymoons, from the wineries of South Africa to the bazaars of Istanbul.

SYBARITIC SOUTH AFRICA

AGENT Lisa Lindblad, Lisa Lindblad Travel Design
Lindblad fell in love with Africa during a long stint in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park and Kenya's Maasai Mara when she was twenty. Since then she has written two books on the subject and returns to the continent regularly. Designing a trip for newlyweds is a favorite part of her job: "We are giving a couple a sensational experience they can look back on with affection throughout their lives." 212-876-2554; lisalindblad.com.

DAY 1 After your long journey to Cape Town, you deserve to sit back and relax as your driver takes you through the rolling vineyard-covered hills, set against a backdrop of stone-gray mountains. Once you reach the verdant Winelands of Franschhoek, in the Western Cape Province, check into the intimate **Le Quartier Français** (16 Huguenot Rd.; 011-27-21-876-2151; www.lequartier.co.za). Enjoy the beauty of the orchids in your spacious Four Quarters Suite (\$940), which has a separate lounge area and large granite and travertine bathroom. Dress up for a decadent dinner at the hotel's award-winning restaurant, the Tasting Room, where your four-, six- or eight-course meal will be paired with first-rate regional wines, like a Cabernet Franc or a Zinfandel. Sleep with the windows wide open to catch the nighttime performance of the South African crickets.
DAY 2 Following an indulgent breakfast of homemade sticky buns, you'll be ready for a day of wine tasting in the Franschhoek

SAMPLE



The infinity pool at Bermuda's Cambridge Beaches. *Opposite page: Rooftop dining at 360 Istanbul.*

Valley and in the town of Stellenbosch. Pick up your rental car and drive to the **Warwick Wine Estate** (011-27-21-884-4410; warwickwine.com), a family-run property in Stellenbosch whose original owner was the first female winemaker in South Africa. Sample the Trilogy, a Bordeaux-style blend and one of the flagships of the South African wine industry. To clear your slightly foggy head, stroll around Stellenbosch; when you're hungry, head into the hills above town for lunch at **Tokara** (011-27-21-808-5959; tokararestaurant.co.za), heralded local chef Etienne Bonthuys's Winelands spot. Afterward, take the road toward Simonsberg to the **Muratie Wine Estate** (Quoin Rock; 011-27-21-865-2330; muratie.co.za), which specializes in Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Chardonnay. Split a glass on the patio, and be sure to order the specially brewed coffee before getting back in the car.

DAY 3 Counter the wine's aftereffects with a low-key morning at the hotel's Treatment Room spa; the lavender aromatherapy massage (\$65), using products from Decl or-Paris, will work wonders. For lunch, drive ten minutes to the hotel's affiliated **Bread & Wine Vineyard Restaurant** (Happy Valley Rd., Franschoek; 011-27-21-876-3692; www.lequartier.co.za), at the M reson Farm vineyard. Enjoy fresh-baked breads, soups, terrines and home-cured charcuterie, and wash it down with M reson's acclaimed wines. Return to the hotel for a swim, followed by a complimentary movie in the private screening room.

DAY 4 To get your pulse racing, visit South Africa's famed Shark Alley with the professionals at Cape Town's **Shark Cage Diving South Africa** (\$160 a person; 011-27-28-384-1005; sharkwatchsa.com). If being lowered underwater in a cage for an up-close view of great white sharks is not your cup of tea, the four-hour tour also includes more serene activities, like whale watching (in July

and December) and visits to see Cape fur seals and African penguins. Back on land, toast your adventures at **Bouchard Finlayson** (011-27-28-312-3515; bouchardfinlayson.co.za), a vineyard in the valley of Hemel-en-Aarde (Heaven and Earth), on the way to Franschoek.

DAY 5 Bid the sticky buns adieu and hop in the car for the hour-long drive to Cape Town. Relish the view of the coast from the large terrace of your superior suite (\$900) at the eleven-room **Ellerman House** (180 Kloof Rd., Bantry Bay; 011-27-21-430-3200; www.ellerman.co.za); this magnificent 1912 mansion, on the slopes of Table Mountain, has been restored to its original grandeur with English antiques and custom fabrics. In the afternoon, explore the teak-filled spa and consider a Serenity Natural Clay Body Wrap (\$90) to calm the mind. For dinner, take a cab to **Jardine** (185 Bree St.; 011-27-21-424-5640), one of the city's best eateries; order the crayfish risotto and split a Grand Marnier souffl —it is your honeymoon, after all. **DAY 6** Grab your camera for your private day-long Cape Point and Peninsular Tour (\$180 a person) with **Paradise Tourings** (011-27-21-713-1020; [www.](http://www.paratour.co.za)

[paratour.co.za](http://www.paratour.co.za)). The itinerary begins with a scenic drive in a luxury car along the Atlantic coast, whose craggy terrain and panoramic vistas threaten to use up your film; it also includes visits to the Good Hope Nature Reserve (the variety of flora and fauna will amaze you) and Cape Point, where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans meet. Side trips to shop in Kalk Bay, sea-kayak in Simonstown or ride horses on Boulders Beach can be arranged.

DAY 7 Explore Cape Town, starting with its most iconic feature: **Table Mountain**. Press yourself against the window of the revolving aerial cable car (011-27-21-424-8181; tablemountain.net) as it ascends the mountain; at the top, follow the well-marked paths to the lookout points (with telescopes). Next, go to the cobblestoned Greenmarket Square, the site of a busy market filled with craftspeople selling original artwork. For lunch walk to **Wakame** (Beach Rd. and Surrey Place, Mouille Point; 011-27-21-433-2377; www.wakame.co.za), an excellent sushi spot that offers front-row seats for spying on seals and dolphins. Stop by the indoor **Pan African Market** (76 Long St.; 011-27-21-426-4478), where African crafts are displayed. For your last dinner, venture to the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront and splurge at the Cape Grace Hotel's **Onewaterfront Restaurant** (West Quay Rd.; 011-27-21-410-7100; capegrace.com). The towering Table Mountain and the tranquility of the surrounding water provide a romantic setting, and the knowledgeable sommelier will ensure that your final South African wine sampling hits just the right note.

BLUE-RIBBON BERMUDA

AGENT Will Jennings, Valerie Wilson Travel

For a delightful and accessible honeymoon, Jennings, who has been organizing luxury itineraries with Valerie Wilson Travel

SAMPLE

for the past two years (and for a decade and a half before that as a private agent), suggests the rum swizzles and pink-sand beaches of Bermuda. This trip is the best bet for those who want the ease of staying in one spot. "Bermuda's timeless beauty and elegance are sure to please even the most discerning couple," he says. "And the short flight from the East Coast is quite a relief for many weary newlyweds." 203-966-2688; vwti.com.

DAY 1 After a simple transfer at the airport, arrive at Bermuda's classic **Cambridge Beaches** (30 Kings Point Rd., Sandys Parish; 441-234-0331; cambridgebeaches.com) and settle into one of three brand-new secluded Luxury Pool Suites (\$1,645), with a private plunge pool, sunset views and whirlpool tub. Stroll around the immaculate grounds, sipping a Dark and Stormy—the island's popular rum and ginger-beer cocktail—and take in the clear-blue ocean.

DAY 2 You're no doubt still exhausted, so relax: set yourselves up for maximum sunbathing at the infinity pool overlooking Mangrove Bay. When it gets too hot, retreat to the **Ocean Spa** for an all-day couples' massage lesson (\$1,300, including Champagne and lunch)—you won't regret it. Go casual for dinner at the hotel's Breezes restaurant, where you can dine barefoot at a beachside table; be sure to order the crunchy conch fritters.

DAY 3 Rent a kayak from the hotel's on-site **Windjammer Watersports** (\$40 for two hours) and paddle to the nearby Isle of T.T. Have the resort pack you a picnic lunch of smoked chicken salad and crab claws with mango salsa. Later, for dinner, take a car to **Mickey's Beach Bistro & Bar** (60 S. Shore Rd., Paget Parish; 441-236-9884; mandarinoriental.com), at the Mandarin Oriental's Elbow Beach Hotel; the casual waterfront location complements the potent frozen rum drinks and such fresh fare as fried calamari and grilled swordfish with pineapple relish.

DAY 4 Explore the island in true Bermudian fashion: aboard a moped from **Oleander Cycles** (\$85 a day; 441-236-5235; oleandercycles.bm). Make a pit stop at nearby Horseshoe Beach, next to the Fairmont Southampton hotel, to go for a swim, then get on your scooter and head to **Blü Bar & Grill** (97 Middle Rd., Warwick Parish; 441-232-2323; diningbermuda.com/blu). Arrive in time to see the most incredible sunset over the Great Sound and the Belmont Hills Golf Course. Blü's cocktail bar is an island favorite; so are the Southwestern-inspired dishes, like spice-rubbed pork chops and pan-seared mahimahi.

DAY 5 Make use of the resort's complimentary morning ferry service to the island's capital, Hamilton (from April through October, departing at 8:45 and returning at 12:45), for some retail therapy. **Calypso** (45 Front St.; 441-295-2112) and **Boutique CC** (1 Front St.; 441-295-3935) will satisfy new brides looking for flirty resort wear, and the **English**

Sports Shop (49 Front St.; 441-295-2672) is the place for men to buy Bermuda shorts, knee-highs and cashmere cardigans.

DAY 6 Play captain and first mate for the day and rent a seventeen-foot motorboat from Windjammer Watersports (\$75 for the first hour, \$20 each additional hour, not including fuel). Ask the hotel to pack you some provisions, then cruise around the island in complete privacy. Stop at the Vixen, a shipwreck just off Daniels Head Beach Park. This is a protected area where fishing, diving and snorkeling are prohibited, but you can feed your leftovers to the thousands of parrot fish, angelfish, sergeants major and wrasse swimming below your boat.

DAY 7 Play a round of golf at the premier **Mid Ocean Club** (1 Mid Ocean Dr., St. George's Parish; 441-293-0330; themidoceanclubbermuda.com; open to nonmembers Monday, Wednesday and Friday), consistently ranked among the top fifty links in the world. If you're not golfers, rent bicycles from the hotel and glide past the course instead; you can check out the impressive pastel-colored mansions that line the nearby bluff. For your final evening meal, ask Cambridge Beaches to set up a romantic dinner for two on the beach (\$160 a couple; \$500 a couple on a private island); for dessert, have room service deliver Champagne and strawberries to your suite.

TURKISH DELIGHT

AGENT Lia Batkin, CEO of In the Know Experiences

Batkin, whose agency specializes in customized luxury trips, has visited Turkey countless times and considers it an ideal spot for honeymooners. "It's magical to soak in the history and the passion of the locals, who happen to be some of the nicest people you'll ever meet," she says. 866-634-9658; intheknowexperiences.com.

DAY 1 Arrive in Istanbul, where a driver will meet you and whisk you to the enchanting riverfront **Hôtel Les Ottomans** (68 Muallim Naci Caddesi; 011-90-212-359-1500; lesottomans.com).

Allow some time to unwind on a damask couch in your luxurious suite (from \$1,245), draped in rich silk curtains, or on your intimate terrace overlooking the lively Bosphorus. Once you're rested, take a twenty-five-minute cab ride from the hotel to the **Topkapi Palace and Archaeological Museum** to see the lavish costumes of Turkish sultans and the treasures of the Ottoman Empire. For dinner, try the rooftop restaurant **360 Istanbul** (Istiklal Caddesi, Misir Apt. K8; 011-90-212-251-1042; 360istanbul.com), whose view of the city's domes and ancient minarets is spectacular at night.

DAY 2 Immerse yourself in all things Turkish. Follow the well-trained English-speaking guide from **Guides of Istanbul** (\$770 a day; 800-315-0298; guidesofistanbul.com) on a private tour of the



primadonna
boutique

TRAVEL

SAMPLE

Basilica Cistern, the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque. Afterward, rest your tired feet in the therapeutic stone steam baths at **Çemberlitaş Hamami** (8 *Vezirhan Caddesi*; 011-90-212-522-7974; *çemberlitaşhamami.com.tr*). Later on, dress festively for a night on the town. Begin with a seafood dinner at the trendy **Kiyi Restaurant** (126 *Kefeliköy Caddesi, Tarabya*; 011-90-212-262-0002; *kiyi.com.tr*), in Bebek, and then work it off by dancing with the city's Beautiful People at the hot spot **Anjelique** (*Muallim Naci Caddesi, 5 Salhane Sokak*; 011-90-212-327-2844; *istanbuldoors.com*; open May through October), a nightclub on the Bosphorus.

DAY 3 Seek out bargains at the **Grand Bazaar**, where more than 4,000 stalls display the finest in Turkish handicrafts, jewelry, incense, carpets and bronze and brass work. The bazaar's main thoroughfare, *Kalpakistan Caddesi*, is a dizzying rainbow of colors, scents and people. Enjoy browsing, but be prepared to negotiate; never accept the asking price. Hit the **İç Bedesten** (Old Bazaar), in the Grand Bazaar, for a dazzling collection of antiques, jewelry and copperware. A kebab lunch at the famous **Hamdi** (17 *Tahmis Caddesi, Kalçin Sokak*; 011-90-212-528-0390; *hamdirestaurant.com.tr*) is a must: sample the chicken kebabs, and leave room for the baklava from the shop on the ground floor. Then walk downhill for about fifteen minutes or take a taxi to the **Spice Market**; don't miss the free samples of the sweet, nutty Turkish delight.

DAY 4 Wake up early to catch the one-hour **Turkish Airlines** flight (800-874-8875; *thy.com*) to Izmir, near the ancient city of Ephesus. Meet your guide from **Tayf Tours** (\$310 a person; 011-90-256-612-0935; *tayftours.com*) at the airport and take in the ruins, including the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Lunch will be served in the garden of a handicrafts center, where you'll see traditional carpet-weaving techniques (and where you can purchase a high-quality rug for your first home together). Go on a not-too-strenuous hike in the Aladağ Mountains to the House of the Virgin Mary, where it

is said Mary lived until her death. At sunset, board your own chartered *gulet* (sailboat) from the **Mediterranean Collection** (\$5,400 a day; *medcollection.com*), which will double as your transportation and lodging for the next two nights. Toast your good fortune over a dinner of fresh fish caught and cooked by your captain-chef; you'll sleep soundly in the boat's spacious double berth, lulled by the rocking waves of the Aegean beneath you.

DAYS 5 AND 6 Set sail early for the fashionable fishing village of **Türkbükü**, a two-day voyage from Ephesus. Lap up the scenery while lounging on board; stop at your leisure to explore the islands along the way and swim in the turquoise waters. On the second day you'll arrive in **Türkbükü**, where you'll be dropped off near the chic **Maçakızı Hotel** (*Kesireburnu Mevkii*; 011-90-252-377-6272; *macakizi.com*). Check into your all-white sea-view suite (\$660) and take a short break, then jump on the hotel's launch and head into town for an afternoon of shopping. For post-dinner entertainment, there's plenty of nightlife in **Türkbükü** as well: follow the crowd to the popular club **Ship Ahoy** (011-90-252-377-5070).

DAY 7 After a breakfast of exotic fruits and yogurts at **Maçakızı**, you'll be driven forty minutes to the airport for your hour-long flight back to Istanbul. On your last night, stay at the modern **Sofa Hotel** (double rooms from \$500; 123 *Tesvikiye Caddesi*; 011-90-212-368-1818; *sofahotel.com*), the first boutique hotel in the heart of the hip **Nişantaşı** district; its clean lines and neutral palette are a striking contrast to the city's vibrant colors. A final romantic night is in order: hop on the 8 P.M. boat from **Kabatas** to the 12th-century **Kız Kulesi**, or Maiden's Tower (*Üsküdarı, Salacak Sahil Yolu*; 011-90-216-342-4747; *kizkulesi.com.tr*), a restaurant in the middle of the Bosphorus. A dinner of veal carpaccio or grilled swordfish with Swiss chard in lemon sauce—in one of the city's most amorous settings, with views of the glittering coastlines of both Europe and Asia—ensures an unforgettable finale to your honeymoon. ✘

Table

Bed

Bath

Registry

The meticulous expertise of a personal shopper; the simplicity of the 21st century
Online

www.primadonnaboutique.com