



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

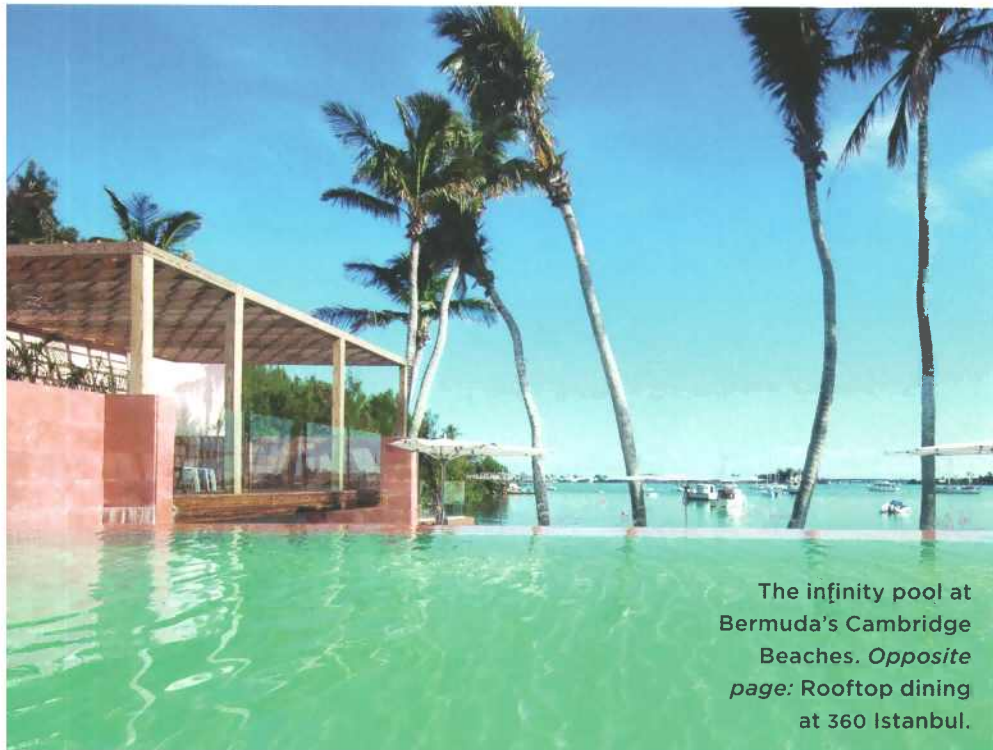
IF THE HONEYMOON IS THE REWARD FOR MONTHS OF arduous wedding planning, then shouldn't it feel like one? Instead of adding even more tasks to your lengthy to-do list, trust a professional to organize all the details. We asked three top travel agents to create their ultimate honeymoons, from the wineries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

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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 Decléor-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 Mōreson Farm vineyard. Enjoy fresh-baked breads, soups, terrines and home-cured charcuterie, and wash it down with Mōreson'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 soufflé—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

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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



