

Going the Distance

From a heritage hotel in London to a private island in Cambodia, *Rik Glauert, Rachel Read* and *Melissa Twigg* highlight some luxe options around the world to celebrate your big day





PERIOD STYLE

Clockwise from far left: The facade of The Lanesborough in London; the elegant Belgravia Room; the Grosvenor Suite; the fine-dining restaurant Céleste



LONDON

The Lanesborough

It's elementary, my dear Watson—for a quintessentially English wedding, The Lanesborough delivers British sophistication like no other. Located just minutes from Buckingham Palace, this elegant London hotel is the perfect setting for a wedding, with opulent, Regency-style interiors and impeccable service to match.

With soaring ceilings, views overlooking Hyde Park and an atmosphere of stately grandeur, the Belgravia room is ideal for larger ceremonies and seats up to 90 guests. For a more intimate wedding party that seats up to 50 guests, the charming St George's room boasts original period details (including a stunning Regency fireplace and Georgian window frames), gorgeous chandeliers and stunning views of the Wellington Arch.

Once there, guests will enjoy a three-course plated lunch or dinner—with a half-bottle of wine selected by the hotel's sommelier for each guest and a glass of Taittinger champagne to toast the happy couple. The hotel's pastry chef can also create you the cake of a lifetime, which looks every bit as exquisite as it tastes.

The Lanesborough's dedicated wedding planner will take care of every last detail of your ceremony, from start to finish—and what a start and finish it will be. Brides can arrive in style thanks to a complimentary chauffeured car transfer in one of The Lanesborough's fleet of vehicles, the pride of which is a Rolls-Royce Phantom. Meanwhile, the hotel can also arrange for a beautiful couple's suite post-wedding, where you'll have a personal butler on call, and the option of a private family breakfast or brunch the following day. lanesborough.com



PARIS

Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris

They say Paris is the city of love—so where better to say “I do” than at Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris? Make a romantic rendezvous at this luxurious hotel, which is just steps away from the Champs-Élysées. With interiors designed by Philippe Starck, Le Royal Monceau combines contemporary class and comfort, with plush carpets leading the way to spacious suites, an ethereal spa, and the hotel’s own gallery and private art collection.

Le Royal Monceau features a unique 1,600sqft reception room bathed in natural light, which can be reserved in its entirety (accommodating up to 100 people) or split into three smaller salons for more intimate ceremonies. Sprinkle a dusting of silver-screen grandeur over the proceedings by taking your party to the hotel’s 99-seat private cinema, equipped with top-class technology ideal for screening wedding videos, slide shows or speeches on your big day.

You can be guaranteed haute cuisine to remember, too, with gourmet menus created by the hotel’s Michelin-starred restaurant and its team of chefs—plus the crème de la crème of wedding cakes courtesy of the Picasso of Pastry himself, Pierre Hermé. Wines are selected by Le Royal Monceau’s chief sommelier, recently awarded the prestigious title of Meilleur Ouvrier de France.

Brides can ensure their blushing is just so with special hair, make-up and pampering services at the hotel’s relaxing Spa My Blend by Clarins. And although you’ll never want your wedding experience to end, be sure to cap it off in style with a wonderful breakfast or brunch the following day... *àdore*.

leroyalmonceau.com



FRENCH FLAIR
 Clockwise from top left: The hotel’s entrance; a bedroom in the Presidential Suite; a glimpse at what the hotel can create for a wedding; the stairs leading up to the rooms; a wedding set-up at one of the salons; the La Cuisine restaurant



Banyan Tree Lang Co

Tucked behind the Truong Son mountains in central Vietnam, the Banyan Tree Lang Co is a secluded playground of nature and unbridled luxury perfect for your big day.

The hotel's location boasts all the majesty and drama of the Vietnamese coast—jungle-clad hills stretch up suddenly and majestically from a long, wide beach. The rawness of the natural surroundings is countered by the pure plushness of the resort. The villas (each with their own private pool) mimic a Vietnamese garden house. They face the beach or the lagoon, or are strewn along the hill. Dotted around the resort is a treasure trove of delightful areas that are perfect for a wedding.

The wedding chapel is perched on the rocks at far end of the resort's vast beach. White lattice walls mean the crashing of the waves on the rocks and a refreshing sea breeze are the backdrop to your nuptials. The chapel can seat up to 20 for a wedding banquet or 40 for a service.

If you're going to have a larger ceremony, head to the beach. With kilometres of sand stretching into the distance, the number of guests is pretty much infinite, although the

hotel suggests that couples limit the guest list to 200 so you can dash into the grand ballroom should foul weather intervene. There is also a host of intimate areas for spectacular photo sessions—a hidden archway among the canal's foliage and a quiet corner of the lagoon are just two of the options.

In the central lobby building is the bar and restaurant Thu Quan, which features Asian-style decor and a verandah. It's the perfect place to sip champagne before the grand evening reception.

Unwinding before and after the big day is also essential to a fabulous wedding. The Banyan Tree Lang Co's exceptional spa has individual treatment rooms dotted around the lagoon. For those who prefer something a little more adrenalin-filled, there's a speedboat to whisk you off to a neighbouring fishing village and mountain bikes on hand to help you explore the local terrain.

For the wedding night, the recently opened hillside villas are etched into the mountainside above the resort, offering serene views and an infinity pool teetering over the South China Sea—not a bad way to begin married life. banyantree.com

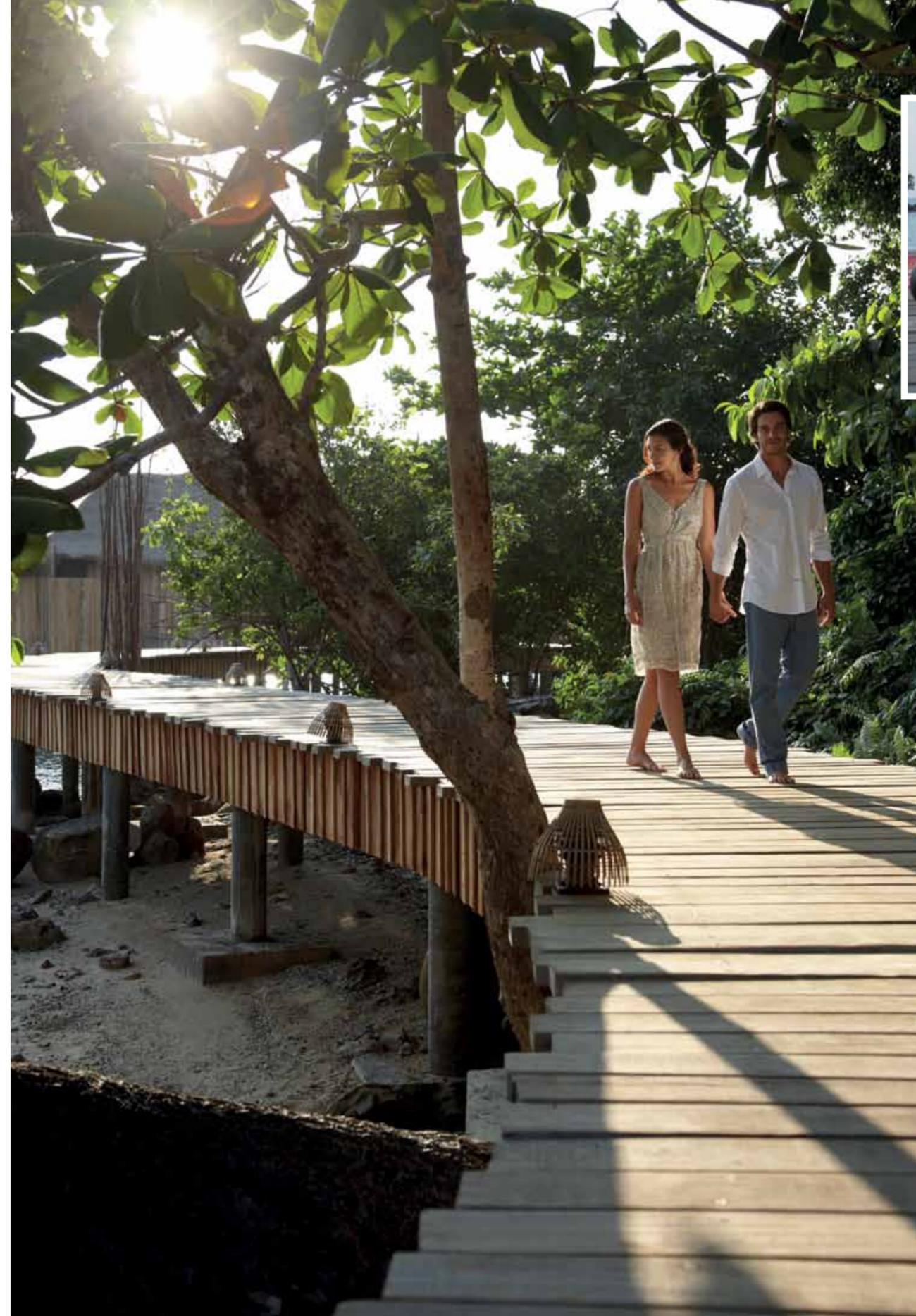
NATURAL BEAUTY

Clockwise from right: The beachfront villas all have their own private swimming pool; the Asian decor extends to the bedrooms; a wedding set-up at the chapel; larger groups can opt for a set-up on the beach; the warm, welcoming reception area



ISLAND RETREAT

Clockwise from top: One of the amazing over-water suites at Song Saa; a pictureque walkway in the complex; a traditional monk's blessing is part of the festivities; the Driftwood Bar is one of the areas at the resort that can be used for a wedding



Song Saa Private Island

The only danger of getting married in Song Saa is that you might find yourself getting weak at the knees for these two tiny islands off the coast of Cambodia, rather than your future spouse. You'll certainly be in love with your over-water suite, with all its effortlessly cool decor, soaring ceilings and private plunge pools. You'll definitely go moon-eyed for the warm water and spectacular views across the Gulf of Thailand. You'll wax lyrical about the delicious food in the open-air restaurant, and try to capture the beauty of pink and red tropical sunsets on your camera. You'll probably even develop a crush on Rory and Melita Hunter, the tanned, intrepid Australian couple who discovered the deserted islands a decade ago and created this stunning eco-lodge.

But if you and your fiancé can survive this assault on the senses, you will have discovered one of the most beautiful wedding venues in Asia. At Song Saa, you can tailor your wedding to your needs and your relationship—couples can choose from a number of magnificent locations to exchange vows, from the beach or the pool to the Koh Rong walkway or the Driftwood Bar.

The resort provides a wedding package that includes a traditional monk's blessing, a flower bouquet for the bride, flowers in the villa, a wedding cake, a make-up artist and a candlelit dinner on the beach. To ensure the party really gets started, DJs, photographers and even fireworks can be arranged. The resort can accommodate up to 50 guests.

Song Saa (which is Khmer for "the sweethearts") is about as romantic as it gets. The only problem is going to be finding a honeymoon destination as glorious as the wedding venue. songsaa.com