

# destination weddings

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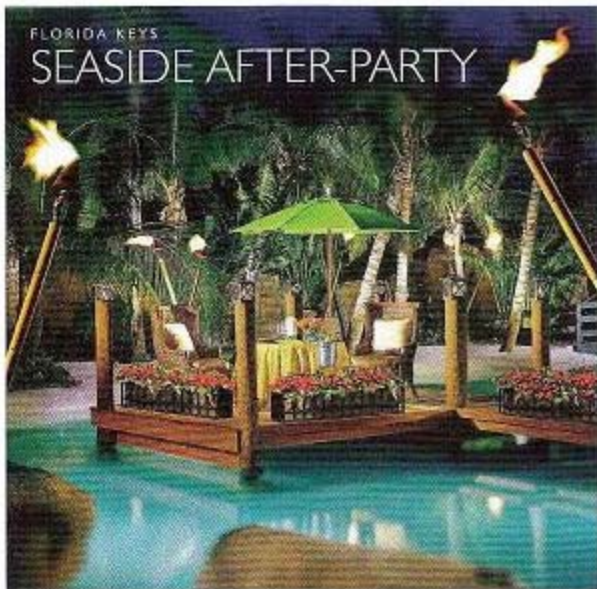
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When cooler weather hits, tropical destinations a little closer to home become some of the most attractive honeymoon destinations. **CHEECA LODGE & SPA**, in Islamorada, is a popular wedding spot thanks to its convenient location and ability to accommodate large groups. But I think it's even better once the big day has gone, especially if you check into one of the exclusive, adults-only beachfront bungalows. I had an oversized marble bathroom (great for sharing), a balcony with a spiral staircase that led to the patio and private access to my own secluded strip of beach for swimming and sunbathing. Spend your days snorkeling the only living reef in the continental United States, enjoying an oceanside massage or chilling out in one of the spa's poolside cabanas (attentive butlers will do everything but swim laps for you). Come evenings, take a sunset sail, enjoy private poolside dining (pictured) or just snuggle up on your pillow-top king bed draped in gossamer netting. *From \$399. —Jackie D'Antonio*

BARBADOS

## A WATERY HAVEN

**THE CRANE RESORT** is reportedly the oldest continuously operated hotel in the Caribbean (it was established in 1887). But it's also undergoing a major transformation that makes it feel decidedly new. The most recent wing (with 174 rooms in three four-story buildings) surrounds a five-tiered pool area with different features on each level, including infinity edges, a waterfall and a poolside restaurant whose building once served as the hotel stables. I

could've spent weeks there, soaking in the hot tub on top of the hill, doing strokes in the next pool down and lunching beside another (more seared tuna, please!). In fact, if you start this relaxing marathon with The Crane's turquoise curve of sea and end with a plunge in your suite's private pool (pictured), you'll have a soothing day without dipping into the same waters twice.



The Crane is continuing its expansion with the Crane Village complex (complete with new shops, eateries and a fitness center) that's set to open in December 2008. But it still maintains its classic feel, especially in the coral-stone walls and antique-style four-poster beds of the original historic wing. Think of it as a warm fusion of past and present, with plenty of places to cool off. *From \$210. —Liz Langley*

JAMAICA

## REGGAE ROYALTY



With a guest book that reads like an issue of *Blender*, **GEEJAM HOTEL**, a luxe resort founded by music veterans Jon Baker and Steve Beaver, is stirring things up in sleepy Port Antonio. With just seven secluded cottages and a notable recording studio (Gwen Stefani and Grace Jones have cut albums here), this macro-resort is like a W Hotel planted on a lush hillside overlooking the Caribbean. Guests can mix easily with the creative international clientele, as well as the movers and shakers of Kingston's vital music scene. The open-air Bush Bar provides a relaxing focal point for live bands, outdoor billiards and Japanese cuisine with a Jamaican edge. If the surrounding Blue Mountains aren't enough, three drivers (including one aptly named Bentley) are ready to whisk couples off for bamboo rafting, treks to jungle waterfalls or visits to unspoiled Frenchman's Cove, just minutes away. *From \$425, including breakfast. —PZ*