

THE FASHIONABLE LIFE ■ TRAVEL

Close Encounters

THE DESTINATION WEDDING JUST MOVED A LOT CLOSER TO HOME - AND WITH THE RIGHT DESTINATION, GOT A LOT MORE PERSONAL.

The words "destination" and "wedding" may very well bring to mind Mexican beaches or lavender fields in the south of France — exotic locales where the romance of a landscape adds inspiration to the vows and toasts. But with so much glorious variety in New England, there's little need to cross an ocean to find a backdrop fit for a fairytale. With our own beaches, mountains, and white-steepled villages, we've got a bevy of settings to invite the scenery into the ceremony. — MICHAEL BLANDING

MOUNT SNOW, VERMONT

No matter how much you love your family and friends, everyone needs their privacy sometimes, which is why the layout of the Inn at Sawmill Farm is perfect for a small destination wedding. The sprawling Vermont country farmhouse oozes country charm, while several cottages sprinkled among the grounds allow the bride and her clan to prepare for the "I dos" in peace. The landscape is pure New England, with the forested slopes of the Green Mountains lordling over the surroundings like benevolent uncles. Meanwhile, the inn's proprietors are old hands at arranging weddings for up to 65 guests staying on the property, drawing not only upon local florists and photographers, but also upon the four-star continental cuisine of chef/innkeeper Brill Williams. As a bonus for any future father-in-law looking to splurge, the inn also has one of the best wine cellars in the country — with grand cru Bordeaux going back to 1955 that just cry out for toast.

■ INN AT SAWMILL FARM, WEST DOVER, VT, 800-493-1133, THEINNSAWMILLFARM.COM.

NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

Nantucket may be only a short flight or ferry trip from Boston, but its windswept beaches tossed upon the Atlantic are worlds apart from civilization. A Nantucket beach wedding is a dream for many a bride until she looks up the price; a more reasonable — and at the same time, far more intimate — alternative is to rent a private home on the island and cater a backyard ceremony. The clapboard cottage at 82 Orange St., for example, hides an ultra-sophisticated, magazine spread-ready interior with chef's kitchen, king bed master suite, and four other bedrooms for close family. It's just one of several island homes gut-renovated by Mark Goldweitz. (Spillover guests, meanwhile, can stay around the corner at the comfy-chic Union Street Inn.) As the warm fog rolls in over the whale-ship romance of Nantucket Town, guests can say they've been to a destination wedding as exotic as one anywhere in the world.

■ 82 ORANGE ST., NANTUCKET, 617-590-5605, NANTUCKETVACATIONHOUSES.COM

■ UNION STREET INN, 7 UNION ST., NANTUCKET, 888-517-0707, UNIONINN.COM.



PROUTS NECK, MAINE

Artist Winslow Homer's rough-and-rocky seascapes are some of the most evocative — and romantic — images of the New England coast, so lifelike you can practically feel the spray from the waves. Well, you can do just that on this surf-splashed headland south of Portland, where Homer had his studio for many years and where the Gilded Age glory of the Black Point Inn still gazes majestically over the shoreline. The inn has remained authentic to its 130-year history, all dark-wood paneling and grand dining room overlooking the ocean. Several years ago, however, a group of nearby residents purchased and punched it up to the modern era, decreasing the number of rooms from 84 to 25, adding plush new linens and décor, and opening a new bar onto an outdoor patio readymade for cocktails at sunset. The result is a perfect balance to please both Great Aunt Ethel and the party-girl maid of honor.

■ BLACK POINT INN, SCARBOROUGH, ME, 207-883-2500, BLACKPOINTINN.COM.