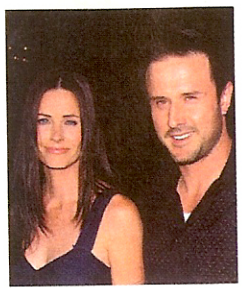
Courteney Cox and David Arquette

Cap Juluca, Anguilla

This luxe favorite is all about curves: It has the most perfect crescent of soft, white sand in the Caribbean, plus gleaming Moorish-style architecture that's as comfy as it is seductive. (Doubles from $780. 888/8-JULUCA; capjuluca.com)



THE 'MOON AND THE STARS

The inside scoop on where celebrity newlyweds find honeymoon nirvana

by Sona Charaipotra

JUST ONE WEEK AFTER HER WEDDING, *The King of Queens* star Leah Remini fell into a postnuptial funk. "We had been so caught up in the wedding plans that we actually never talked about the honeymoon," recalls Leah, who married actor Angelo Pagan in an elaborate wedding at the Four Seasons Resort Las Vegas in July 2004. "The wedding was a big party. And then it was just coming home to everyday life, and we were like, 'Oh my God, we never planned *anything*.' Angelo said, 'It doesn't matter to me—I'm still on cloud nine.' But every day that went by, I thought, This is ridiculous. We should be going somewhere to celebrate the fact that we just got married."

Two days later, they were happily ensconced at Las Ventanas al Paraiso, a white-sand hideaway in Los Cabos, Mexico. "I called my publicist and asked her what the great spots were," says Leah. "I told her, 'I swear to God I will fire you if this place isn't perfect.'"

It was, and then some. "The resort was beautiful, beyond beautiful. It was more than what I imagined," says Leah, who admits she was shocked by the five-star treatment she and Angelo received. "You put your sunglasses down for a minute outside by the pool, they'll spritz them to get all the gunk off of them. You go to move and it's, 'Can I help you, ma'am?' And they have little stools for your purse when you go to dinner. You try to put your purse on the floor and they come over with the little stool. I loved it!"

Privacy, please!

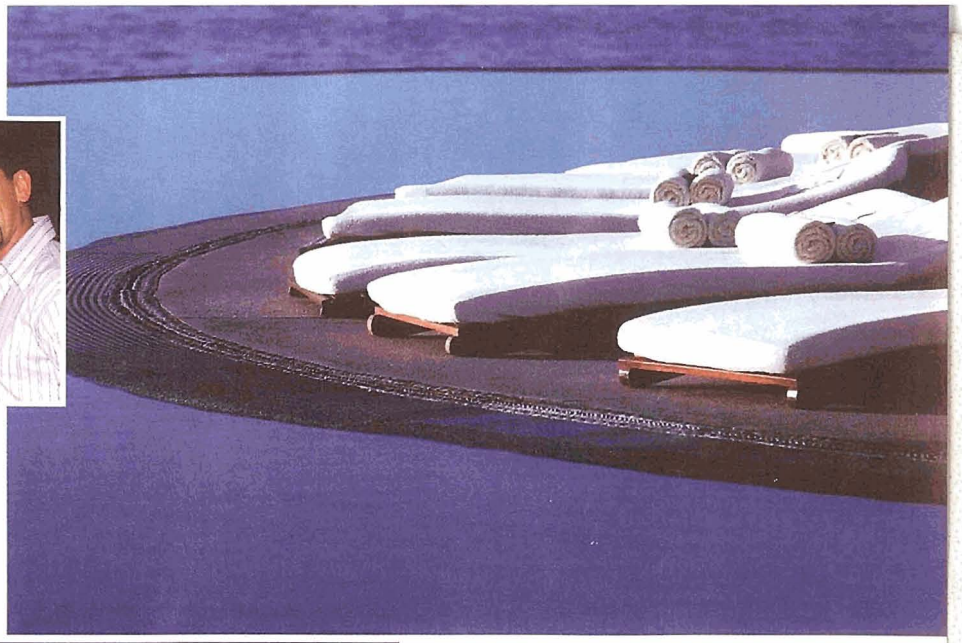
While lounging in the lap of luxury was a new experience for Leah and Angelo, to most celebrities it's old hat. Which means planning something as significant as a honeymoon requires pulling out *(continued on page 388)*

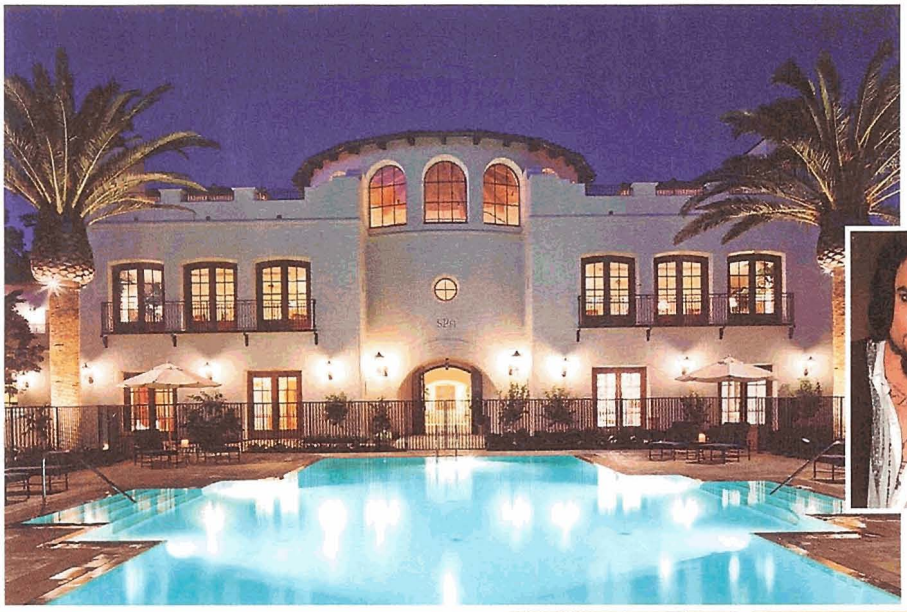
FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF CAP JULUCA; STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.

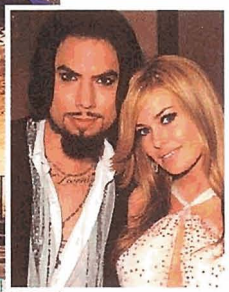
Leah Remini and Angelo Pagan

Las Ventanas al Paraiso, Los Cabos, Mexico

Your wish is their command at this sexy, star-filled hideaway overlooking the Sea of Cortez. Elegant extras include an incredible spa and a tequila/ceviche bar, plus lavish marble baths, adobe fireplaces and telescopes in every room. (Doubles from $600. 800/ROSEWOOD; lasventanas.com)







Carmen Electra and Dave Navarro

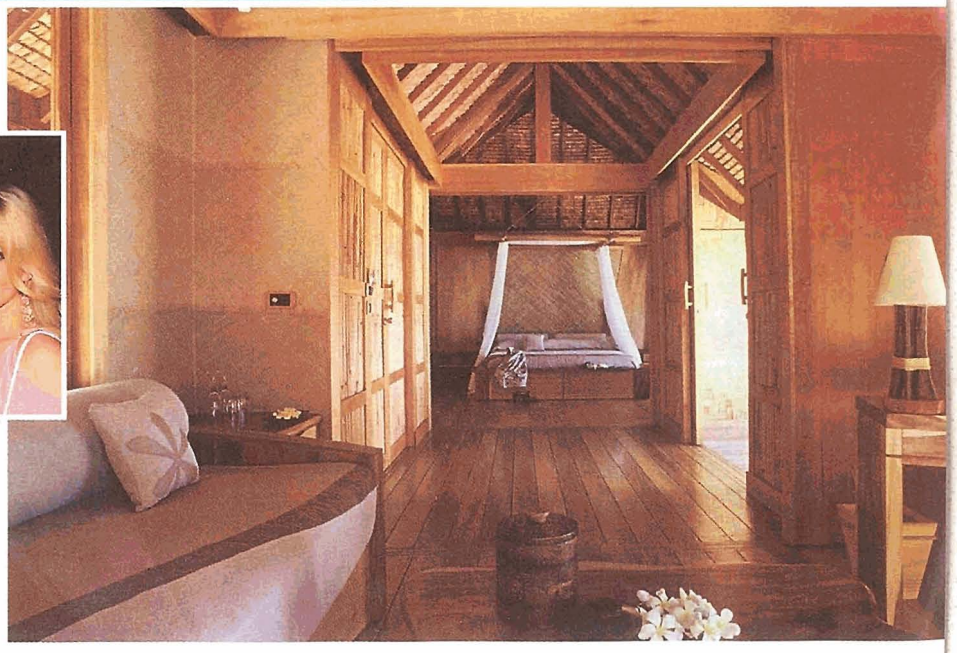
Bacara Resort & Spa, Santa Barbara, CA

Celeb sightings abound at this popular resort/spa with its white-washed Spanish buildings spilling down a hillside, spacious rooms and suites, and multilevel pool that's see-and-be-seen central. (Doubles from $450. 877/422-4245; bacararesort.com)

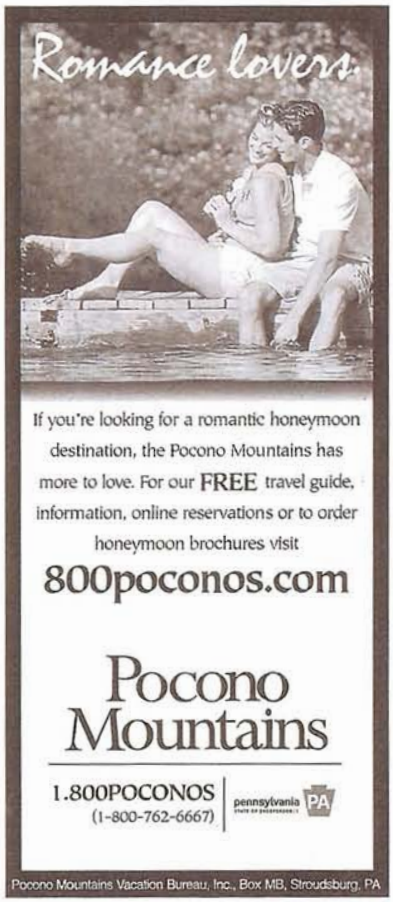
Shanna and Travis Barker

Le Taha'a Private Island & Spa, French Polynesia

Tahiti's only Relais & Chateaux property, this fabulous private island features some of the South Pacific's most luxurious accommodations, an underwater coral garden and gourmet French cuisine. (Doubles from $900. 800/65-PEARL; pearlresorts.com)



CELEBRITIES, FROM TOP: FERNANDO ALLENDE/CELEBRITY PHOTO; MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE; JOHN SCIULLI/WIREIMAGE. *RESORTS, FROM TOP:* JAD DAVENPORT; COURTESY OF BACARA RESORT; COURTESY OF PEARL RESORTS.



'Moon and Stars

(continued from page 362) all the stops to find a place where even the most tabloid-worthy A-listers can share romance privately. "They're normal people—who have really big expense accounts," says Beverly Hills–based travel-agent-to-the-stars Gary Mansour, who has worked with Angelina Jolie, Renée Zellweger and Tyra Banks, among others. "They're looking to get away to a place where nobody is going to bother them. They say, 'Don't send me someplace where I'm going to have paparazzi stalking me.' They want to feel safe. Some hotels have reputations for having consistent problems with paparazzi. So inside the small circle of celebrity, there's talk: 'Oh, you don't want to go there.'"

Keeping the increasingly aggressive tabloid industry at bay is indeed an issue for top resorts. Even at privacy-minded properties, persistent paparazzi have been known to outwit security and get their shots. And yet for all the talk about privacy, some celebs let down their guard once inside a resort's walls. "I recently saw a very well-known celebrity, who had a suite with its own pool where you can retreat and not be seen," says Marissa Woods, Las Ventanas' director of romance, who coordinates all engagements and weddings at the property. "But he was actually organizing games at the main pool. He was just there enjoying himself. A guest asked me, 'Is that who I think it is?' We never say yes or no."

Going on location

Los Cabos has turned into celebrity-honeymoon central over the past several years: Las Ventanas was also the honeymoon spot of Kate Beckinsale and her new husband, director Len Wiseman, in May 2004, while nearby Esperanza, another five-star retreat, hosted Gwyneth Paltrow and her husband, Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, in December 2003. Given the super-easy commute from southern California, resorts on Mexico's Pacific coast provide a key comfort zone to Hollywood stars, who live by the old adage that time is money. "Proximity is really, really important for celebrities," says Mansour. "To have a great place like Cabo close by is a dream." Leah Remini couldn't agree more. "I don't like to fly, and this flight wasn't even an hour and 45 minutes," she says. "Then we were picked up by the hotel, and 20 minutes later we were there."

California resort towns like Santa Barbara, which is a mere 90-minute drive from L.A., are popular as well. "We had 45 to 50 celebrities here one Valentine's weekend," says Brendan Finley, catering director at the Bacara Resort & Spa near Santa Barbara, where ultrabusy celebrities like *One Tree Hill* stars Chad Michael Murray and Sophia Bush, and MTV regular Carmen Electra and her rocker husband, Dave Navarro, have escaped for short-but-sweet honeymoons.

But nearby doesn't mean cheap. While celebrities have budgets, "theirs are just different from yours and mine," says Mansour. "They may have

a price in mind, and they'll say, 'Okay, this is what I'm thinking...' And yet by the time it's over, they've spent a quarter of a million dollars. And they're okay with that. It adds up really fast—it's 'I want a private jet at $175,000. I want a yacht.' Already the prices are insane. Then add $20,000 a night for a luxury suite." If that last number sounds inflated, think again. That's the high-season pricetag for The Villa, the top digs at Sandy Lane in Barbados, where golf great Tiger Woods wed model Elin Nordegren in October 2004. (Because such over-the-top pampering is probably not compatible with your budget, see "Same Place, More Affordable Price," page 399, for other resort options in the celebs' favored locales.)

Is the luxury worth the cost? The stars seem to think so, since the payoff is ultimate indulgence—whether that entails private pampering or having a favored pet tag along. "I made Dave do girly day-spa treatments," Carmen Electra has said of the couple's stay at Bacara, where guests can enjoy stone therapy, Reiki and deep-tissue massage for up to $7,500 per night in the Presidential Residence. (A more reasonable $450 per night will get you a perfectly lovely Spanish-style Garden Room.) Meanwhile, at the nearby San Ysidro Ranch, the $3,990-per-night Eucalyptus Villa played host to honeymooners Julia Roberts and Danny Moder (as well as their dog). The resort's two-story oceanfront Kennedy Cottage (named for JFK and Jackie, who spent part of their September 1953 honeymoon there), which runs $1,875 per night, was where Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck reportedly were to have spent their wedding night; instead, the Latin diva honeymooned there with singer Marc Anthony just five months later.

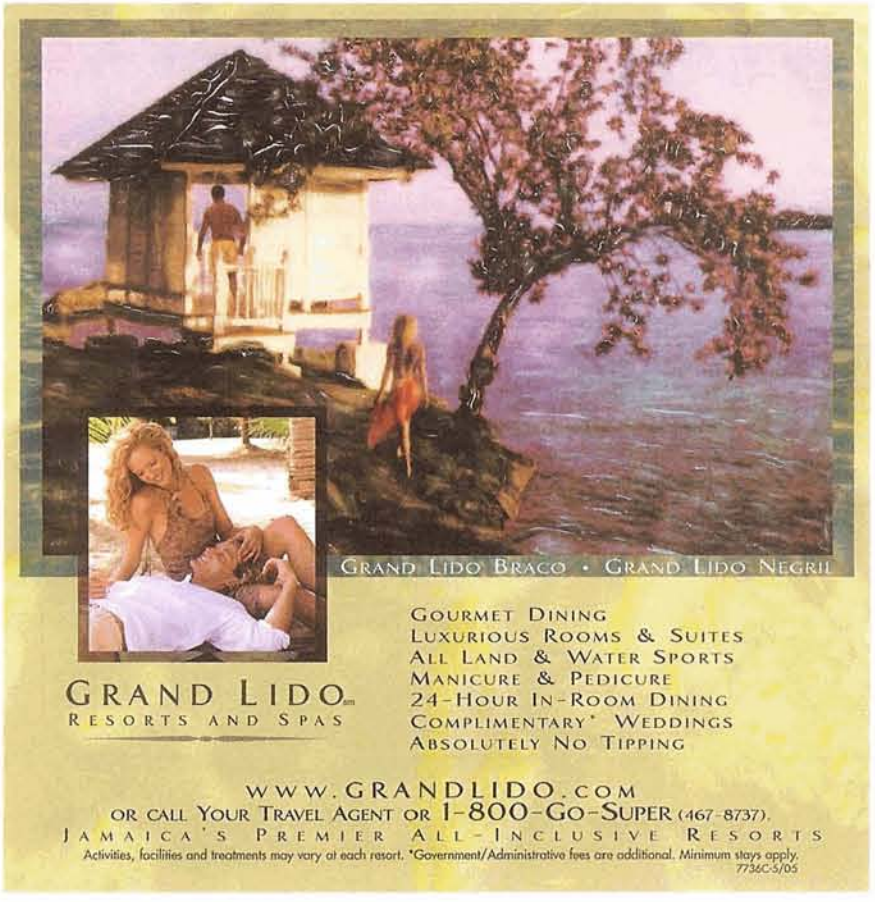
For harried East Coasters, nothing is simpler than a quick trip to the Caribbean. In late 1999, Jerry and Jessica Seinfeld flew just three hours from New York to honeymoon in an $1,800-per-night oceanfront villa on Parrot Cay, a 1,000-acre island in the Turks & Caicos with no shops, no nightlife—and no paparazzi. In late June, Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck—a.k.a Bennifer II—recited surprise I Do's at this secluded paradise. Non-newlyweds love this resort, too. Penelope Cruz and Matthew McConaughey stayed last year after wrapping filming on *Sahara*, and Bruce Willis, Keith Richards and Donna Karan all own homes there.

Other Caribbean beaches have beckoned celeb lovebirds, as well. Courteney Cox and David Arquette chose Anguilla's sexy Cap Juluca for their June 1999 honeymoon. And this past May, Renée Zellweger married country star Kenny Chesney in a private beach ceremony on St. John, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the singer owns a home. Their honeymoon was a short one; Chesney was back onstage for his aptly named "Somewhere in the Sun" tour just three days later.

Tried-and-true Hawaii, a five-and-a-half hour flight from L.A., also draws famous honeymooners: In 2003, TV star Matt LeBlanc married model Melissa McKnight in front of *Friends* like Jennifer Aniston and Matthew Perry on Kauai before staying on to honeymoon in a private villa. And after their September 2002 destination wedding in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, was almost blown away by a hurricane, Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze, Jr., found some honeymoon sunshine in Hawaii with a luxurious 11-day stay in a $900-per-night oceanfront suite at the posh Four Seasons Resort Wailea on Maui.

Virgin territory

Still, some celeb honeymooners crave something a bit more far-flung—and they get it. Newlyweds Tori Spelling and Charlie Shanian, who honeymooned at Villa d'Este on Lake Como, Italy, in July 2004, were dining on trout and free-range chicken at the La Locanda *(continued on page 399)*



'Moon and Stars

(continued from page 389) dell'Isola Comacina (a George Clooney favorite) when the *Beverly Hills 90210* alum was asked to participate in a traditional ceremony to ward off an ancient curse.

"She played the vestal virgin," the restaurant's owner said of the ritual, which required Tori to drink a brandy, sugar and coffee concoction during an informal pageant. Tori played along, giving her and Charlie a one-of-a-kind honeymoon memory.

Culture cravers really go the distance. Sir Paul McCartney, who proposed to model/activist Heather Mills in India, *(continued on page 400)*

SAME PLACE, MORE AFFORDABLE PRICE

If you dream of honeymooning in the places where the celebrities go, but there's no way your budget can handle the prices at their five-star retreats, check out these similarly chic but less costly options.

Los Cabos honeymoon spots

LAS VENTANAS AL PARAISO Kate Beckinsale and Len Wiseman, Leah Remini and Angelo Pagan

ESPERANZA Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin

Affordable alternative

PUEBLO BONITO PACIFICA This new resort mixes minimalist landscaping and zenlike architecture with serenely luxurious rooms, each with private balcony and feathertop bed. (Doubles from $300. 866/585-1752; pueblobonitopacifica.com)

Tahiti honeymoon spot

LE TAHA'A PRIVATE ISLAND AND SPA Shanna and Travis Barker, Alicia Silverstone and Christopher Jarecki

Affordable alternative

MOOREA PEARL RESORT AND SPA Located on Moorea and accessible by ferry, this sister property to Le Taha'a Private Island and Spa has a relaxed, intimate vibe with surprisingly well-appointed garden and overwater bungalows. (Garden bungalows from $340. 800/65-PEARL; pearlresorts.com)

Fiji honeymoon spot

TURTLE ISLAND Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, Britney Spears and Kevin Federline, Trista and Ryan Sutter

Affordable alternative

CASTAWAY ISLAND With 66 thatched-roof bungalows set on 174 tropical acres, this resort appeals to activity-oriented honeymooners as well as families (there is a kids' club) looking for an affordable private-island experience. (Doubles from $400. 800/733-2107; castawayfiji.com)

Santa Barbara honeymoon spots

BACARA RESORT AND SPA Carmen Electra and Dave Navarro, Sophia Bush and Chad Michael Murray

SAN YSIDRO RANCH Julia Roberts and Danny Moder

Affordable alternative

EL ENCANTO HOTEL & GARDEN VILLAS This historic getaway overlooking Santa Barbara features 77 bungalow-style rooms and suites decked out in California Craftsman and Spanish colonial style. (Doubles from $189. 800/393-5117; elencantohotel.com)

Turks & Caicos honeymoon spot

PARROT CAY Jerry and Jessica Seinfeld

Affordable alternative

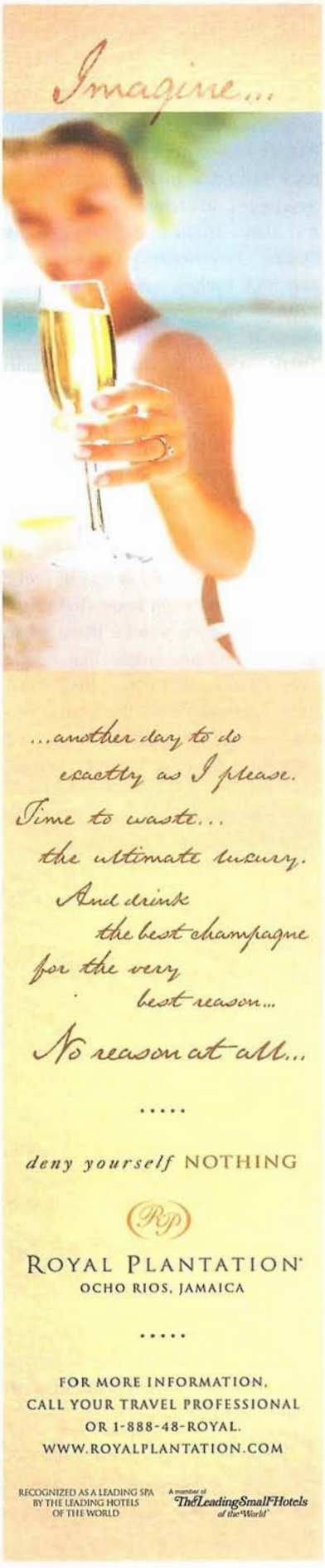
WINDMILLS PLANTATION This quirky, colorful eight-room hideaway on sleepy Salt Cay is set on 2.5 miles of deserted white-sand beach—the ultimate spot to perfect a honeymoon disappearing act. (Doubles from $375. 800/225-4255; windmillsplantation.com)

Italy honeymoon spot

VILLA D'ESTE Tori Spelling and Charlie Shanian

Affordable alternative

GRAND HOTEL MAJESTIC Set on equally gorgeous Lake Maggiore, not far from more famous Lake Como, this 90-room palazzo was built in 1870 and is a member of Small Luxury Hotels. (Doubles from $220. 800/525-4800; slh.com)



'Moon and Stars

(continued from page 399) took his new bride to exclusive Fregate Island (where fellow Beatle George Harrison once owned a private estate) in the Seychelles, an archipelago of 115 tropical islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean. *Newlyweds* Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, and *Chaotic* co-stars Britney Spears and Kevin Federline chose to honeymoon at ultraprivate Turtle Island in the South Pacific island nation of Fiji, a 10-plus hour flight from Los Angeles. Tattooed Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker and his wife, Shanna, whose October 2004 wedding was documented on the MTV reality series *Meet the Barkers*, went almost as far afield, opting for the Le Taha'a Private Island & Spa in French Polynesia, an eight-hour flight from L.A. "They grow vanilla there, so the whole island just smells like vanilla," says Shanna, a former Miss USA–turned-actress. "And the water is so see-through and perfect—you can walk for miles in it. It's so beautiful."

Le Taha'a, with its breathtaking views of the lagoon and of neighboring Bora Bora in the distance, was also the honeymoon choice of *Clueless* star Alicia Silverstone and her new husband, S.T.U.N. lead singer Christopher Jarecki, who jetted off to the posh private-island resort right after their June outdoor wedding in Lake Tahoe. Another ultraexclusive Tahitian hideaway, Bora Bora Nui Resort & Spa, was the romantic playground of *Married With Children*'s sassy blond daughter turned *Sweet Charity* songstress Christina Applegate and her husband, Johnathon Schaech, who enjoyed a better-late-than-never honeymoon at the resort in 2004—three years after their October 2001 wedding.

At their service

Whether they choose the Caribbean, Mexico, Fiji or Tahiti, what celeb can resist the playful tug of turquoise waters? Leah Remini, apparently. When her hubby, Angelo, heard about the kayaks and Jet Skis at Las Ventanas, "he wanted to go do all kinds of things. I was like, 'You picked the wrong woman! Get yourself a damn book, get some baby oil and chill out. Because this is me—bathing suit, room service, chilling. I'm not doing anything else,'" says Leah, laughing. "We got dressed up a few times and then we were like, 'Why are we doing this? What don't we have at home? Room service!' So that's what we decided to do. We'd have dinner outside on the beach by the fire pit, and it was gorgeous. And they'll make anything you want. Angelo wanted paella one night. They said, 'Sir, we don't have that, but we will have it for you tomorrow.' And they had it for him the next day."

Whether you're a celeb pulling in seven figures per film or an average couple looking to create romantic memories that will last a lifetime, figuring out what you want ahead of time prevents snags later. "We knew that we wanted a warm, tropical, sexy resort where we could be naked all day, and where you could still get really good french fries," says Shanna Barker. "To me, that was key. Sometimes you end up at one of those places where the kitchen closes at 8 p.m. and you're screwed. Or you go to these places teeming with families and kids, and you don't get catered to. Taha'a was perfect. Private and beautiful, but with great, really specific service."

So can a typical honeymooner really afford to indulge at one of these celebrity hotspots? Travel agent Gary Mansour says it can be done by those willing to trade up for the experience. "Your honeymoon is the one time you really want to give into pushing your budget to do it right," he says. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Recently engaged, New York City–based writer Sona Charaipotra, a frequent contributor to celeb mags such as People, Teen People *and* Inside TV, *is now coveting the ridiculously high-end honeymoons of the rich and famous.*