

Two If By Sea

Fantasy wedding sites sparkle along the coast of your imagination. FROM STAFF & WIRE REPORTS

When lovers hit the coast button they plan their weddings in Maine, and little wonder. Poised where the land meets the sea, our romantic coastal resorts offer the perfect psychic geography for newlyweds to launch their futures together.

SHORE OF A RELATIONSHIP

"My favorite wedding featured a tented event for 400—sit-down, with wine service," says **Nonantum Resort** sales director Tim Ames. It became a surf-and-turf affair when "the bride and groom arrived by sailboat. It was a Goose Rocks family—the bride wanted a wedding for 80, but her mother didn't want to leave anyone out!"

Of course, it helps when your venue has a marina.

"We can accommodate up to 200 guests indoors and 400 outdoors. Price itemization for on-site facility rental, including tent reception set-ups, starts at \$2,500." A great point of flexibility: "The best thing is that we don't require a single room to be rented to host a wedding here."

SWEPT AWAY

The **Inn by the Sea** in Cape Elizabeth, with its white-sand beach, nature walks, and romantic seaside charm, has a sweet rule to assure couples this really is their day:

"There's never more than one wedding here per day, and often only one per weekend," says sales director Tracy Albert.

Among the Inn's reception packages, the Sea Breeze includes a planning and tasting session beforehand, a cocktail hour, a formal plated dinner including drinks and wine, a champagne toast, and two nights' accommodation for the bride and groom for \$219 per person (innbythesea.com).



Then, famously, "You've got the beach for photos." Would Saturday be Saturday at Crescent Beach in the summertime without a barefoot, be-gowned bride and her bridesmaids skipping down the sea-grass path from the inn like goddesses trailed by groomsmen in Ray-Bans, to pose among the gulls and sunbathers?

IT'S VODKA COLLINS TIME

Dreaming of reciting your vows overlooking Frenchman Bay and then dashing to your reception in the stained-glass-windowed **Stone House** with 130 of your closest friends, or at the **Bar Harbor Club** with twice as many friends?

"We can accommodate anything from a few dozen guests to 300, even more under tents," says Deb Jordan, director of sales and catering for **Bar Harbor's Harborside** complex. "Guests stay at the Harborside or the **West Street Hotel**," and the receptions are held at the Stone House and Club. "Bar Harbor is a destination—ninety-nine percent of our weddings come in from places all over the country. We have two types of packages for each venue. A hundred guests on a Saturday at the Stone House is a minimum \$10,000, but smaller groups on other days can be less (theharborsidehotel.com).

"It depends on what they want. Figure a base of \$100 per person and more for add-ons. We had five big celebrations last year from Manhattan, and we flew a band up from New Orleans for another," but small and intimate is also possible.

BEAR HUG

Eliminating the stress of wedding planning frees you to enjoy 25 acres of hills, forest, and lakefront peace at the **Bear Mountain Inn** in Waterford. Knowing itemized charges ahead of time helps. The inn can accommodate small wedding ceremonies from a dozen to 64 people; the wedding packages are geared toward the bride and groom. Select your suite and the base package will include champagne and fresh flowers upon arrival, breakfasts, afternoon tea and treats, use of the hot tub, complimentary kayaks, canoes, and paddle boat on Bear Lake, hiking trails, and Adirondack chairs on the deck overlooking the lake. For a two-night stay in summer or fall, this ranges from \$700 for the

Bear Paw Suite and \$800 for the Great Grizzly (bearmtninn.com).

There are optional add-ons, some of which might not have occurred to you—how



about a sleigh ride for two (in winter) pulled by Belgian horses (\$100)? Or a justice of the peace, \$125; photography services, \$200; a bridal bouquet and boutonniere for the ceremony, \$115; 75-minute massage, \$115; chocolate-dipped strawberries at check-in, \$20; small wedding cake, \$50. Dreamy views are free.

LET'S JUST ELOPE!

Sebasco Harbor Resort has four different spaces on their premises where weddings and receptions may be held, including in the Pilot House restaurant or Clipper Barn, both accommodating up to 110; and the Cornelius Room for up to 220 guests. But there's also something called an "Intimate Escape" elopement package for \$550 (sebasco.com).

"It's a really nice add-on to a room for couples eloping or people renewing their vows," says Jane Gagne. "We can be flexible for a very small wedding group; we keep it really simple." Sebasco's 500 photogenic waterfront acres in Phippsburg are wedding-ready, with lawns, ledges, a gazebo, and an upscale barn.

ISLAND DREAM

"No cookie-cutter weddings on Cow," says program director Adam Shepherd of **Rippleffect**, a community-based youth development organization specializing in adventure and wilderness experiences. He's referring to Cow Island, an uninhabited little dot on Casco Bay, just off the northern tip of Great Diamond Island. Shepherd is also the wedding planner if you're lucky enough to schedule a summer wedding on Cow Island (rippleffect.net).

"We tailor it to whatever you want; the price will vary by what you'd like for the meal." His price for 50 to 120 guests ranges from \$11,000 to \$15,700, and it includes the tents, tables, chairs, and complete service. "It can be a lobster



bake if that's what they really want, but I tell them, you're all dressed up and it gets messy!" The price also includes transportation by boat, which may be the sight-seeing *Bay View Lady*, schooner *Wendameen*, or other craft, depending on party size. "Our 'season' for weddings is just July to September, and we do very few each summer. We have camping accommodations for up to 40 on the island if a group wants to spend the night, and we'll pick up [the jubilant 'survivors'] the next day. They're great events, and they help underwrite Rippleffect's outdoor programs." ■



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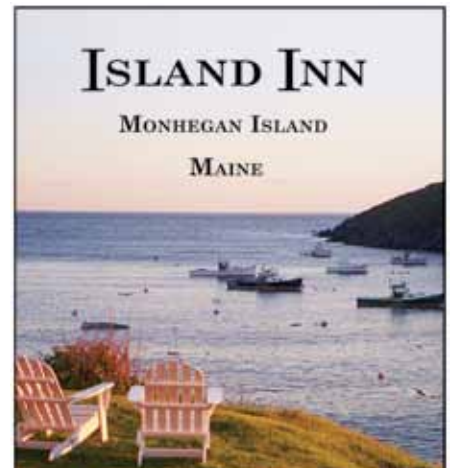

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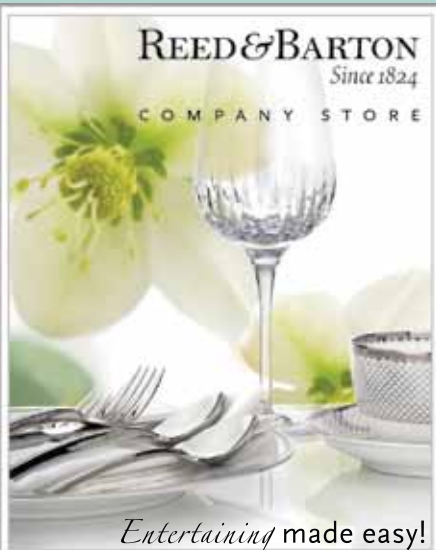
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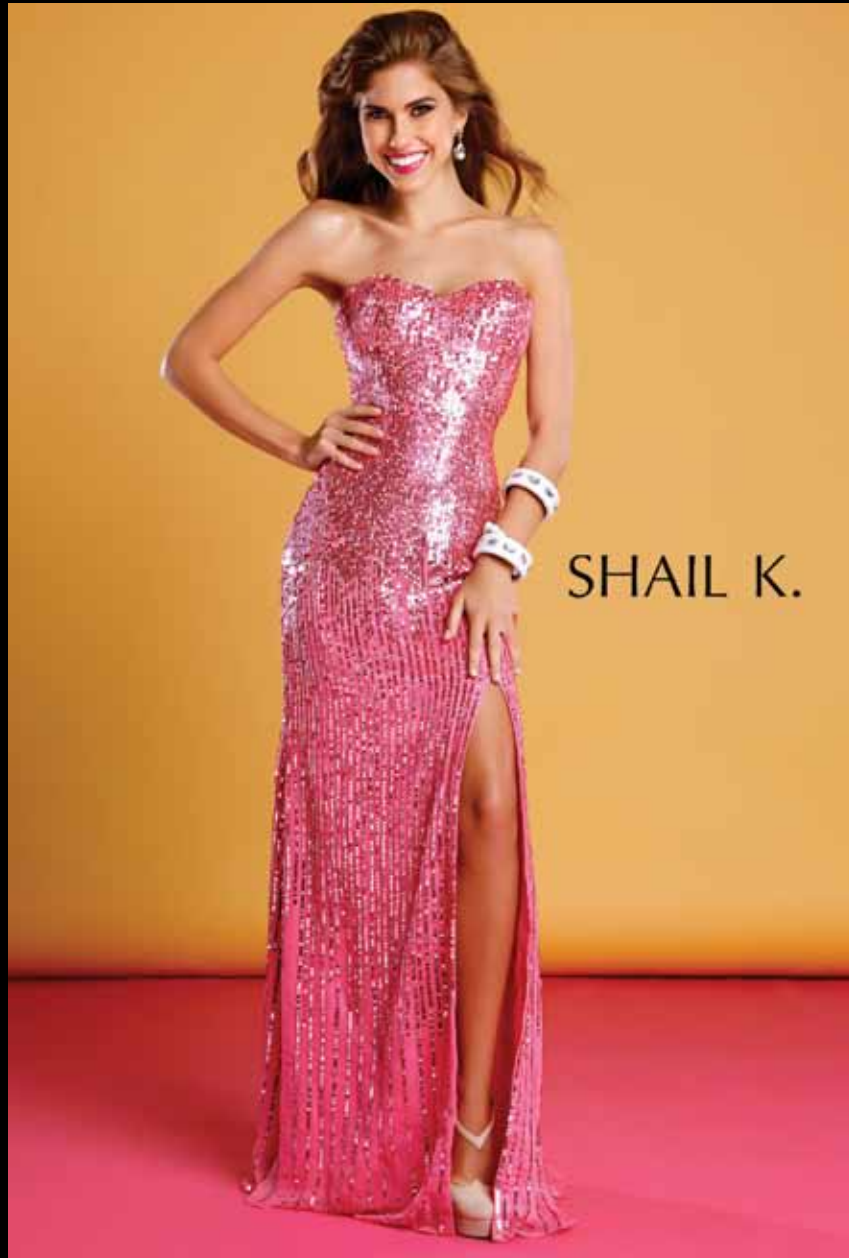
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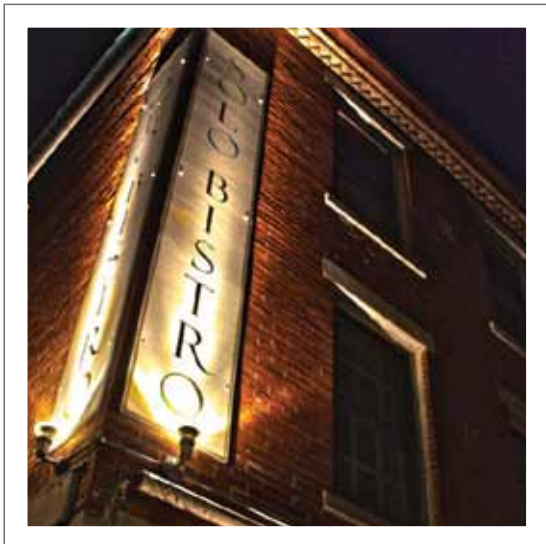
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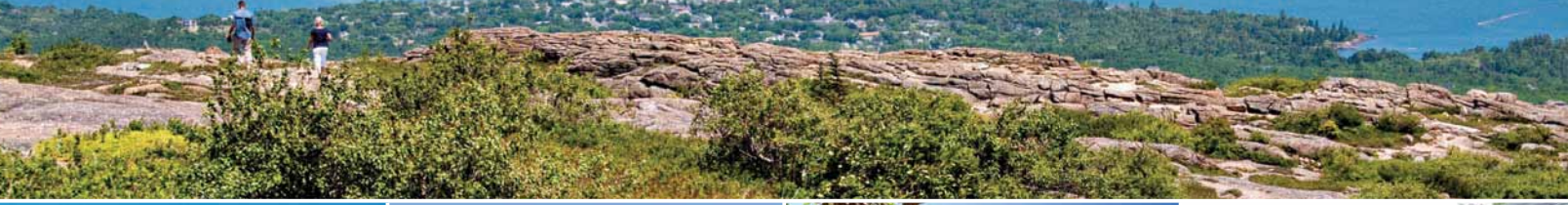
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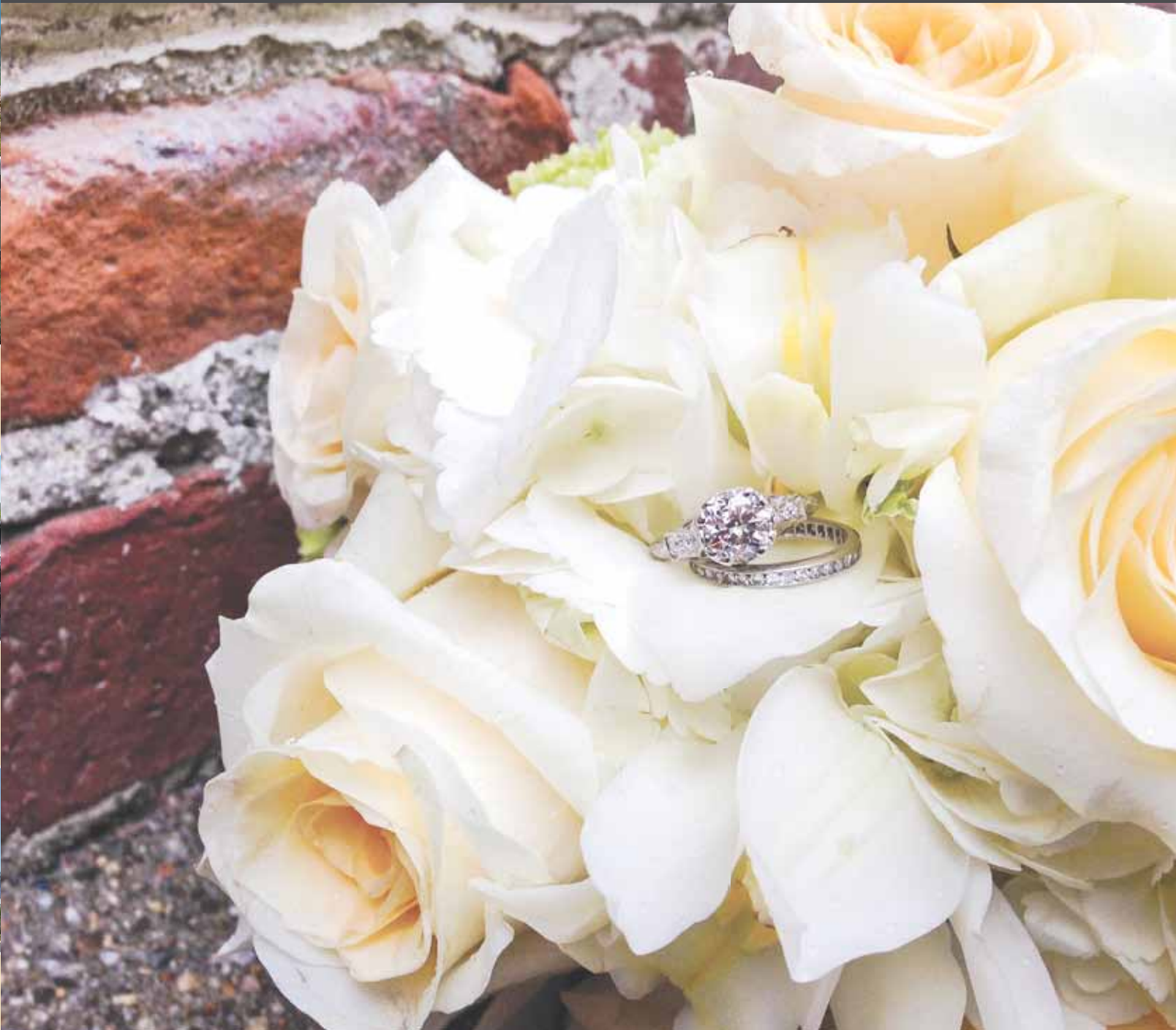
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