

# destination weddings & honeymoons

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FOR BRIDES AND GROOMS



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## THIRD ANNUAL WORLDWIDE GUIDE

# duck key, florida

Hope Hollkamp weds Jacob Theisen on March 21, 2009

Orlando-based couple Hope and Jacob were high school sweethearts. They remained friends through college and “let life bring us full circle,” says Hope, a financial analyst. Nine years later, Jacob didn’t disappoint when it came to popping the question: He had Hope call in sick to work before whisking her away on a private plane to Atlantis resort in the Bahamas for a sunset proposal.

The couple, avid beach lovers, picked Hawks Cay Resort because their 125 guests could easily bunk up in the two- and three-bedroom villas. “At first, the idea of a destination wedding threw my dad for a loop. But since he was the last guest to leave the dance floor, I’m guessing he ended up loving the idea,” laughs the bride. The warm welcome started with a sunset cruise; the next day was spent in Florida Keys fashion — swimming with dolphins, fishing and kayaking.

On the eve of the wedding, guests caravanned to Pierre’s Restaurant in Islamorada for a four-course rehearsal dinner including Florida must-haves: lobster, oysters Rockefeller and lump-crab napoleon. And while the Hawks Cay gazebo made a picture-perfect setting for the sunset nuptials the

next day, there was one small kink: the weather. “One direction had clear skies; the other looming black clouds,” recalls the bride. The couple exchanged vows just in the nick of time — as the wedding party made its exit, the rain fell.

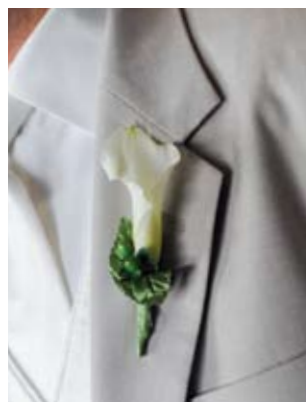
The resort’s team quickly switched to plan B: a cocktail hour of passed Coronitas (small bottles of Corona) and mini apps in the Osprey Room. The reception was moved to one of the ballrooms, decked out with a white dance floor, monogrammed ice luge and martini bar with Lady Gators (created with blue Curaçao to match the wedding colors). Before dancing, guests mingled among three scrumptious food stations — fresh seafood, chicken-and-chorizo paella, and Peruvian flatiron steaks. Another highlight: the dessert bar lined with shot glasses of Key-lime and chocolate cakes.

For the big finale, the couple planned a boat departure. “We jumped on, popped the champagne, waved goodbye ... and then the boat didn’t move,” recalls the bride. So plan B came into play again as the couple dashed on foot to the afterparty at the Osprey, where they were greeted with late-night cinnamon-sugar pretzels and a crowd donning neon sunglasses and glow-in-the-dark jewelry. — *TB*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAMON TUCCI



◆ **THESE MINI** white calla lily boutonnieres were created by Marathon Florist to match the bridesmaid bouquets. Jacob wore a tan suit with a cream vest, paisley tie and brown Lacoste flip-flops; groomsmen wore chocolate versions.



◆ **BAREFOOT SOPHISTICATION** was our theme. You can’t tell here, but the flower girls aren’t wearing shoes! We wanted the beauty of the ocean and palm trees to stand out, so we worked with an all-white palette of rose petals, flower balls and linens.



◆ **THIS SEASHELL** guest book was an idea we got from our minister. Our guests signed them as they entered the ceremony and placed them in the bowl. Later, during the sand ritual, Jacob and I poured the unity sand over them as we exchanged our vows.

◆ **THESE CIGARS** were custom-made by Fletcher Cigar Co. in Miami. Each had our names, wedding date and a “just married” getaway car on it. We also had matchstick books in a white- and blue-foiled font for our guests to take home.



◆ **THE BRIDESMAIDS’** dresses were knee-length and made of a cobalt-blue chiffon by Wtoo. I gave all of the girls chandelier earrings from White House Black Market to wear, and I couldn’t resist creating the halos for my flower girls.

◆ **THE FLORIDA KEYS** setting inspired our menu. This is our “seafood tower” action station that included jumbo shrimp, marinated mussels, crab legs and oysters on the half shell. A fun add-on: The oysters were shucked to order.



◆ **WE LOVE** champagne! A celebration is not complete without some bubbly, so we had trays of it served to our guests before the wedding. We wanted everyone to meet and greet so the ceremony would feel less formal and more casual.

◆ **WE KEPT OUR** grand boat exit a surprise. After the reception, our guests lined up with sparklers as we ran through waving goodbye. We were grinning from ear to ear — even though the boat broke down! It was one of the most memorable moments.

