

AMOROUS ADVENTURES

Romantic surprises await you and your love in Bora Bora, Morocco, and the Himalayas

By Bekah Wright



blissful Bora Bora

At Tahiti's St. Regis Resort, you and your sweetheart can swim in an overwater pool (top), indulge in an outdoor steam, whirlpool, or bath in a pure marble tub (middle), and linger in a Villa bedroom overlooking the sea (bottom).

Some people equate romance with champagne and roses. Others think of it as raw, fiercely passionate, soul-defining love. Whatever your definition, consider one of these luxurious locales, sparked with adventure and surprises at every turn, for your dream honeymoon: a private *motu* in Bora Bora, a Moroccan resort at the gateway to the Sahara, or a palace in the Himalayas.

BASK ON THE BEACH IN BORA BORA

Impossibly turquoise ocean waters, sand beaches like powdered sugar, and trade winds scented by tiare flowers and wood fires are the signature features of the South Pacific paradise known as Tahiti. In eight short hours aboard an Air Tahiti Nui flight, Angelenos will find themselves in Papeete, Tahiti, the capital of the French Polynesian islands. After an overnight stay at the Sheraton Hotel Tahiti, a blink-of-an-eye flight takes travelers to Motu Mute, the islet where Bora Bora's airport is located. Then a boat transports guests past the many *motus*, or islets, that skirt the main island of Bora Bora. On the shore of one *motu*, a sign proclaims: "St. Regis Resort, Bora Bora." A butler greets visitors on the dock.

Soon after the June 2006 opening of the St. Regis Resort, Bora Bora, the 44-acre property garnered media attention with the arrival of honeymooners Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, followed by Eva Longoria and Tony Parker on a romantic getaway. The resort's Royal Estate is a perfect haven for couples seeking seclusion. A koi pond in the courtyard welcomes visitors. From there, marble floors offer a cool contrast to the sun's warmth and pave the way to the gourmet kitchen, dining room, study, and spa area. The nucleus of the compound is a swimming pool fed by water flowing from three wall sconces. Lagoon waters

HONEYMOON TRAVEL

lapping at the private beach just beyond the living room are also alluring.

For those who can't get enough of the crystal-clear sea, an overwater villa with its own swimming pool or whirlpool is ideal. Natural elements such as yellow willow floors and a thatched roof combine with colorful textiles to create romantic warmth. Couples will forgo watching the two flat-screen televisions for lazing on the muslin-canopied bed, positioned just right for views that extend beyond the sea to the cloud-shrouded Mount Otemanu. And should temperatures rise, it's easy enough to dive off the villa deck into the lagoon.

Visitors may be tempted to stay in their lush accommodations, but other sites at the resort wait to be relished. The Oasis pool offers hot tub nooks beneath trellised cabanas. The resort's main pool is ideal for staying cool with a cocktail. For those who prefer being sun-kissed, the main beach is steps away. For a sanctuary set apart from the rest of the resort, plan an escape to Spa Miri Miri. Walk down the breezeway to a couples' suite for massages followed by a whirlpool soak or a Hammam steam in a private courtyard. Even more romantic: Share a soak outdoors in a pure marble bathtub.

Bora Bora is not only about relaxing. Activities abound, including parasailing, offshore fishing, kayaking, and scuba and snuba diving. Get a feel for the main island with a Vavau 4x4 tour that circles the 20-mile island with stops for breathtaking views, visits to abandoned World War II bunkers and armaments, and ancient *marae*, or archeological sites. Take a helicopter tour to see out-of-the-way locales, such as an inaccessible cave on the side of Mount Otemanu. For another way to experience the surrounds, take a six-hour private *motu* picnic. Two guides whisk guests away on a boat, making stops for shark feeding and snorkeling with stingrays and tropical fish. Next up, anchor at a private *motu* to refuel with a barbecue feast set at a table in the waters of the Pacific.

Although eating in the ocean is a hard act to follow, there are many fine dining options to experience, both at the resort and in Bora Bora. In Vaitape, enjoy breakfast or lunch at L'Appetisserie. Don't miss the chocolate croissants and coconut jam. Stop at Bloody Mary's for a cocktail before lingering over a romantic dinner at the intimate Villa Mahana. The St. Regis offers two dining venues, and a sushi restaurant will be opening soon. For breakfast, lunch, and dinner, guests can enjoy Mediterranean cuisine at the



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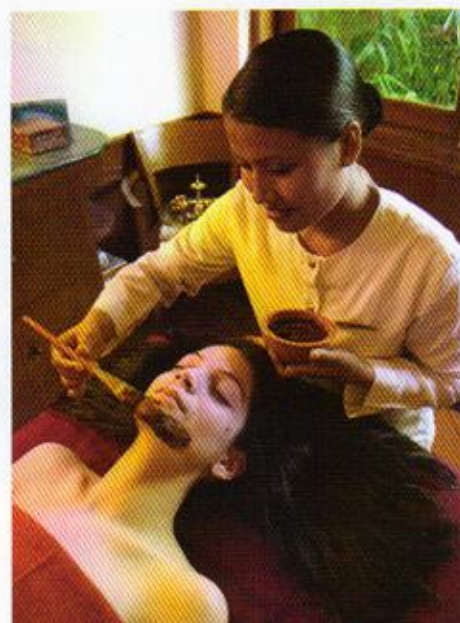
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about face Stroll through palace gardens and a forest for a facial at the renowned Ananda Spa.

sunken bathtub in a marble bathroom, and a patio balcony with views of the Himalayas, Rishikesh, and the palace.

More opulent is the 3,000-square-foot Viceregal Suite. A private elevator affords extra privacy. Framed antique Jamawar fabric, gold-painted wooden artifacts, and pillars with paintings by Rajasthani master craftsmen create a sense of romance. One dining room is inside the suite, another is on the rooftop.

Beyond the living room, the bedroom surrounds a four-poster bed and leads to an adjoining dressing area and a separate shower and steam room. Cuddle by one of three fireplaces, heat things up in the Jacuzzi, or enjoy views of the Himalayas and the Ganges River through the telescope on the 2,000-square-foot terrace.

During their stay, guests can meet with a consultant to develop a customized wellness program emphasizing nutrition, health, fitness, and spirituality. Meditation and Hatha, Kriya, and Raja yoga are key to the program. Stroll through the palace gardens and a forest to reach the renowned Ananda Spa. The Kama Suite with a private Jacuzzi and sauna is ideal for couples. Try Chakradhara, a treatment in which herbal oils target the chakras during a marma point massage. A milk bath with fresh flowers makes a great follow-up.

Connected to the spa is an extensive fitness



Himalayan hospitality

A four-poster bed is one of many luxurious appointments in the bedroom of Ananda's 3,000-square-foot Viceregal suite.

open-air, beachside Te-Pahu. The resort's signature restaurant is the Lagoon, helmed by chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. Visitors who are not guests at the resort arrive by boat to enjoy the French- and Asian-influenced fare.

As stars fill the sky, walk hand in hand back to the villas, where a path of orchids and hibiscus lead to a petal-strewn bath for two.

For more information, call 689-60-78-88 or 877-787-

3447, or visit www.stregis.com/borabora. Rates range from \$950 to \$15,000 per night.

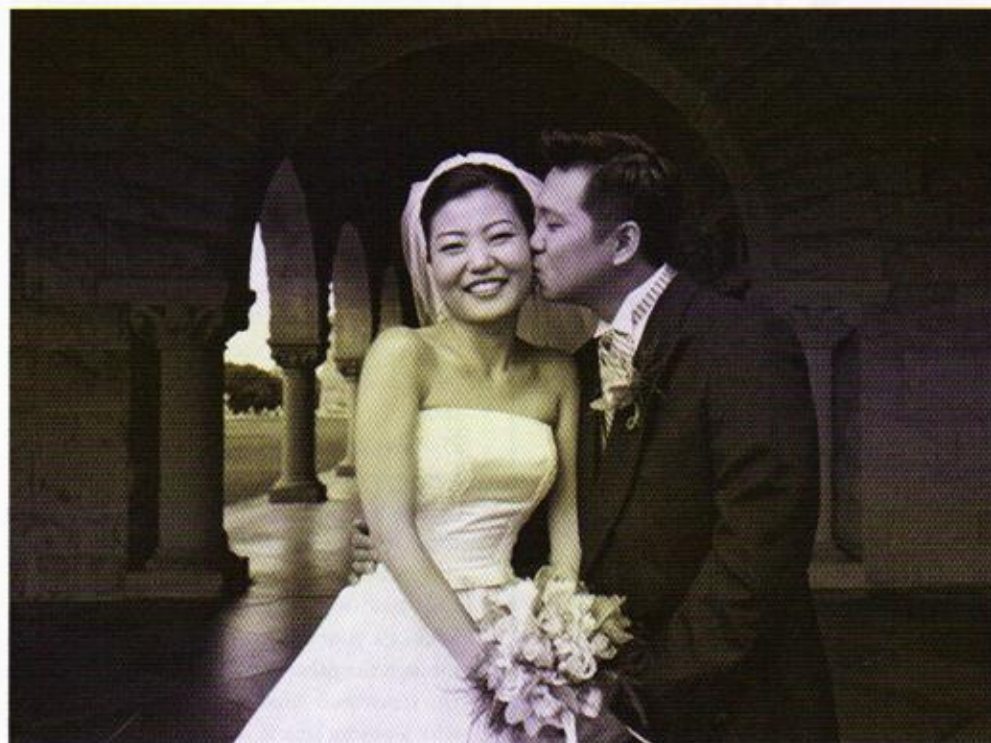
HIDE OUT IN THE HIMALAYAS

Peace and quiet—the perfect post-wedding prescription. Ananda In The Himalayas delivers both with awe-inspiring landscape, a wellness program, and spa treatments that soothe body and soul. The resort is located five and a half

hours from the Indian capital of New Delhi and just outside Rishikesh, a holy town said to be the birthplace of yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda. Resting on a mountain ridge perched above the Rishikesh Valley, Ananda is set on the 100-acre palace estate of the Maharaja of Tehri-Garhwal.

The facility's emphasis on yoga is reflected in a number of structures on the grounds, including the Ma Anandamayi Abode, which overlooks the Ganges Valley; the ornate, open-air Yoga Pavilion surrounded by a water pool; Viceregal Hall, situated above Sal Tree Valley; and the Winter Garden, which borders a grove of sal trees.

As if not to distract from the surroundings, guest rooms are simplistic with wood floors, a



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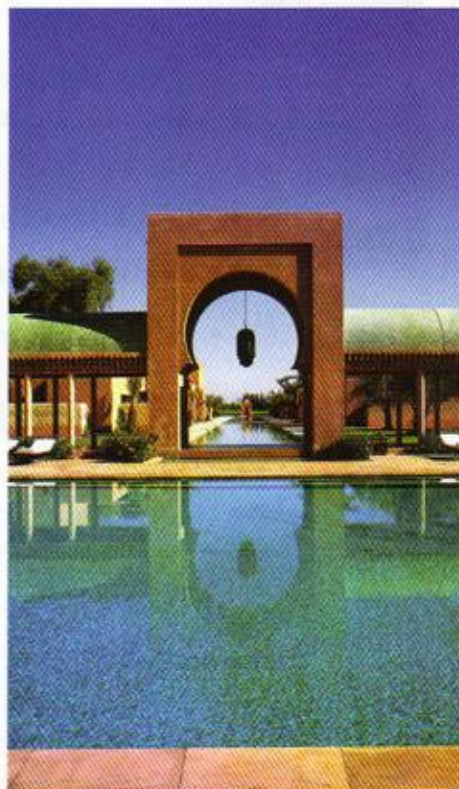
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center that offers swimming, squash, golf, and more. The resort also arranges for offsite activities like trekking, whitewater rafting, kayaking, and fishing for mahseer on the Ganges. Adventure-seekers may enjoy a trek to Gangotri to see the Ganges and the Valley of Flowers, or a safari into Rajaji National Park, Corbett National Park, or Chilla Sanctuary to view wildlife such as tigers, panthers, and elephants. Catch a sunrise or sunset on a trek to Kunjapuri Temple, which was built to honor goddess Shakti and Lord Shiva.

For a snack or a drink, head over to the art deco-style Pavilion. Enjoy tea in the Palace Tea Lounge in Viceregal Palace, which is located in a hillside garden just outside the Sal Tree Valley. At dinner, guests congregate on the deck of the restaurant by a 100-year-old sal tree. Ayurvedic, Asian, and Western cuisine can be enjoyed at a welcoming island fireplace in the center of this venue. Adding fun to the mix is a show kitchen where the chef performs cooking demonstrations



romantic reflection The advent of 11th-century irrigation brought Marrakech into being, so water plays a large role at Amanjena. The resort's buildings extend from a huge crystal-blue reflecting pool that represents traditional holding pools in which water was collected for irrigation—as well as fodder for amorous musings.

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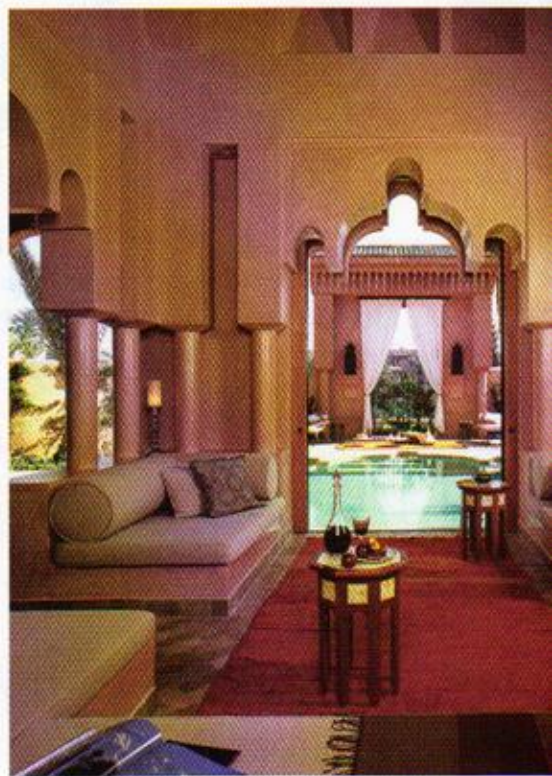
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and classes for guests. Other dining options include Tree Tops, an outer-deck area of the restaurant. The Hill Theatre combines dinner with dance and musical performances, part of Ananda's Indian art and culture program that promotes local artists and craftsmen.

For more information, call 91-1378-227500 or 866-401-7974, or visit www.anandaspa.com. Rates range from \$475 to \$1,600 per night.

MAKE SOME MAGIC IN MOROCCO

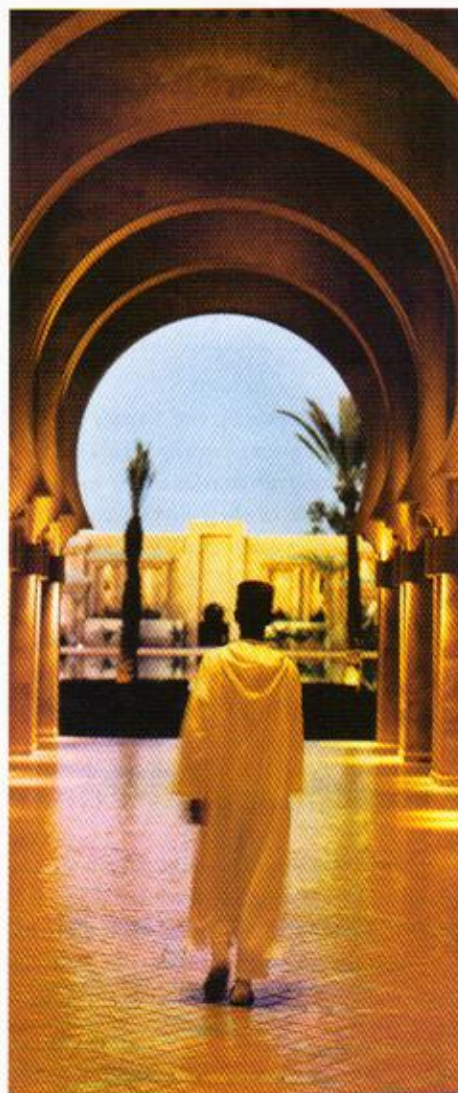
If Hollywood has taught us one thing about Morocco, it's that a kiss *isn't* just a kiss. As for sighs, you'll emit plenty while visiting this exotic North African country. Morocco is the land of kasbahs, camels, snake charmers, and the Sahara Desert. Marrakech, known as "the Red City," is a prime destination. To the southeast are the striking Atlas Mountains. To the west, desert expands to the Atlantic Ocean. At its heart, it's a city of palaces, gardens, and street markets waiting to be discovered.

On the edge of town in an oasis of palm and olive trees is the Amanjena Resort. Desert pink walls and colonnaded walkways create a sense of sanctuary. Central to the complex is a *bassin*, or reflecting pool. Rambling throughout are gardens of peach hibiscus, orange bougainvillea, and pomegranate. Idyllic accommodations come by way of domed pavilions with platform beds,

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After a traditional hammam, or steam, at the resort's Health and Beauty Centre, spend time reclining by the pool. Guests looking to rev things up can play golf and tennis or go mountain biking, exploring the grounds. There is much to see and do in Marrakech. Start with a morning walk along the ramparts. Then check out many of the city sites via horse-drawn carriage. Among them: the exterior of Koutoubia Mosque with its grand

minaret, the 16th-century Saadian Tombs, and opulent palaces such as the Dar el Badi, El Bahia Palace (which was used in the filming of *Lawrence of Arabia*), and Dar Si Said, now a museum of Moroccan art. Visit the Ben Youssef Merdersa and Musee de Marrakech before lingering over the wares of the souks, or street markets, selling everything from textiles and leatherwork to slippers and jewelry. Stay late, when the Djema el

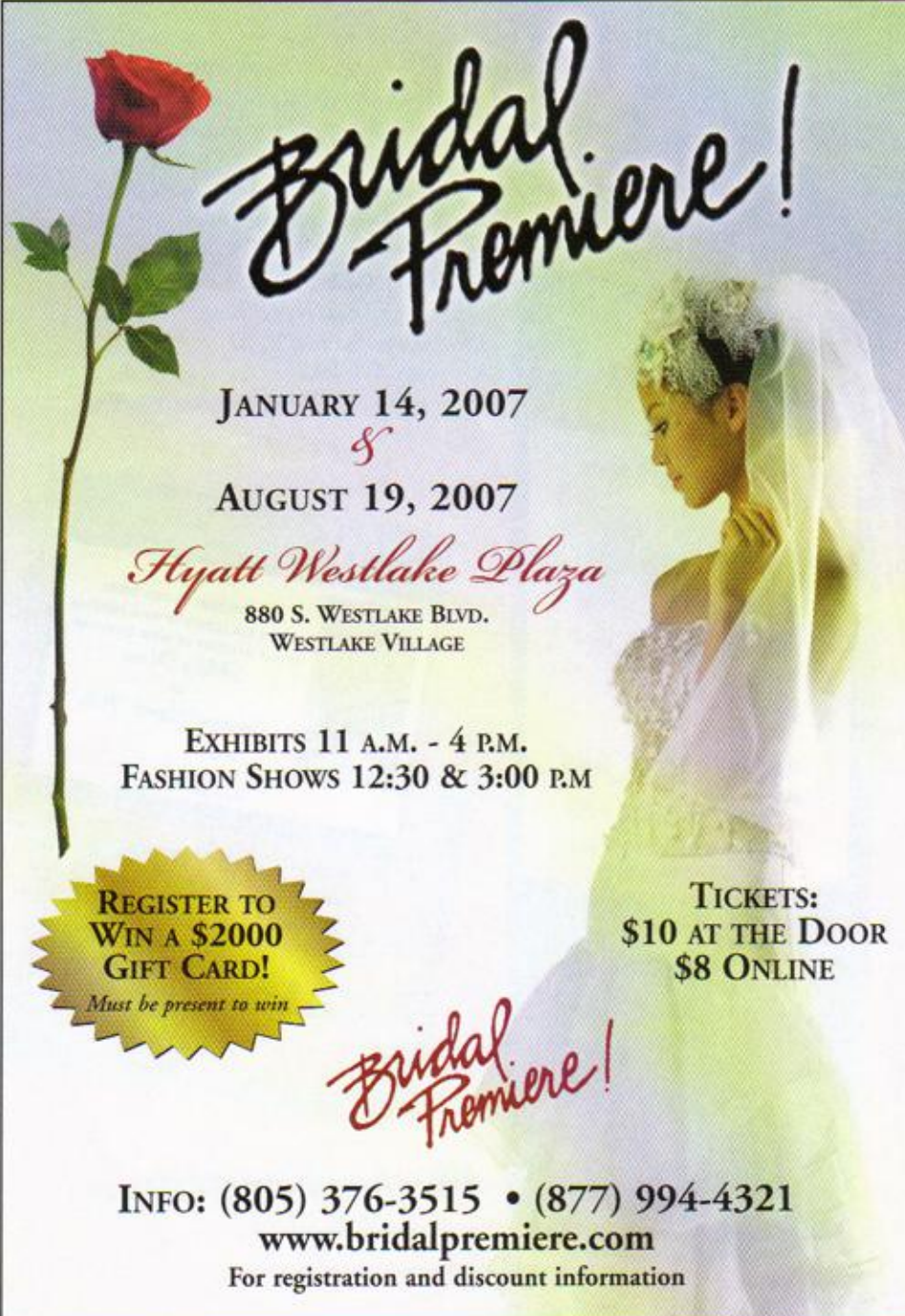


Moroccan majesty *Amanjuna* means "peaceful paradise." Designed to suit its name, the resort, which opened in 2000, was patterned after old Moorish buildings, replete with charming exotic details, like colonnaded walkways, marble fountains, and hand-cut glazed tiles.

Fna Square comes alive with storytellers, magicians, snake charmers, and dancers.

Venture out on daytrips to locales such as the seaside village of Essaouira for windsurfing and picnicking by the Atlantic. Take on the High Atlas Mountains; climb Jbel Toubkal, North Africa's highest mountain. Visit a Berber farm or Bedouin camp. Better yet, take a cue from the Moroccans, who call their country "Maghrib," or sunset: Grab a camel and ride off into one of your own.

For more information, call 212-24-403-353 or 800-477-9180, or visit www.amanresorts.com. Rates range from \$850 to \$3,000 per night.



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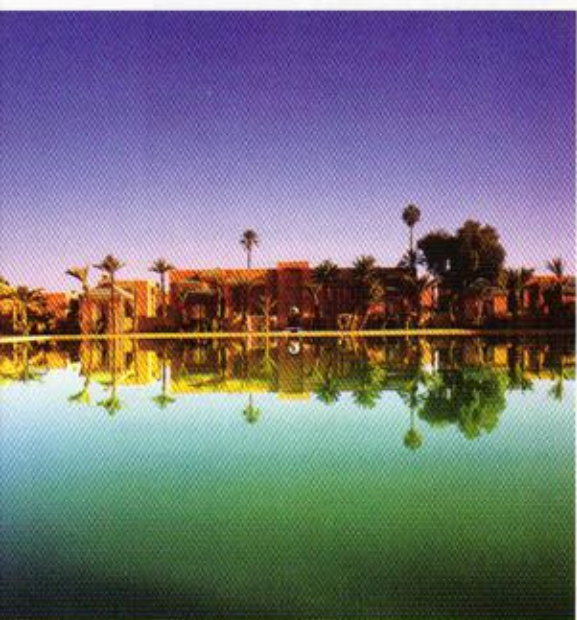


shades of love

True to the style of Marrakech (aka "the Red City")—and traditional shades of passion—the walls at Amanjena Resort (left) are rose-colored. A cluster of pink structures and green palm and olive trees, the expansive sanctuary (below) shimmers like a beacon to newlyweds.

brass lanterns, and Berber carpets. Here, guests can slip into a stepped soaking tub or relax in the *minzah*, or gazebo, of their private courtyard. Among other available chambers is the Al-Hamra Maison, with living and dining areas and an open fireplace. The suite's personal butler is at the ready to bring cool drinks out to the private heated pool and to tend to every request.

Several on-site dining facilities tempt guests' palates. Thai Restaurant and the Pool Terrace serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Moroccan cuisine can be found at The Restaurant, with its retractable pyramid skylight and onyx fountain. Off-site, fine Moroccan dining can be enjoyed in former palaces at acclaimed restaurants Dar Marjana, Palais Gharnatta, and Dar El-Yacout. Feast into the night while musicians and dancers provide entertainment.



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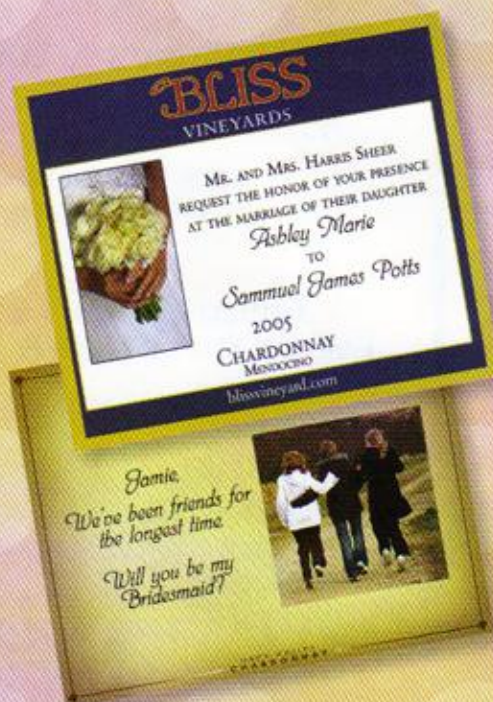
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