



# Orchestrating Bliss

Successfully planning a wedding in paradise means a commitment to saying “I do.”

BY JANEEN JOHNSON

Courtesy of Balaclava Great Houses and Gardens

# Breathtaking landscapes,

pristine white-sand beaches and romantic sunsets, Jamaica provides the perfect canvas to paint your personal version of happily ever after. Whether you're planning an intimate beachside ceremony or a grand affair for 200 of your closest friends, Jamaica is the perfect destination for a dream wedding. The island boasts an exquisite collection of luxury villas, resorts and first-class venues, all with thoughtful services and lovely views.

All-inclusive resorts offer attractive packages that cover everything from the officiant and photography to décor and catering. Properties like The Tryall Club and Round Hill in Hanover can even provide a bespoke experience.

"I don't believe in the word 'no,'" says Racquel Bernard, the Catering & Sales Manager at Round Hill Villa Resorts. She recalls the challenges of sourcing a grand piano for a client's wedding. "No one would rent us their piano, but I could not disappoint my client," she says. It took six months of research and rejections before she was able to secure the instrument. The next challenge was to transport it to the resort—and then return it, unscathed. A task she is happy to report was successfully accomplished. It's this level of determination and dedication to excellence that leads Round Hill to remain such a sought-after destination for nuptials. Round Hill prides itself on exclusivity, employing a strict one wedding per weekend policy. What they offer is a team that's invested in your complete satisfaction.

For Bernard, planning the "perfect day" often begins at least a year in advance. From the initial consultation

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she's able to match couples with suitable vendors. Arrangements are made for the bride and groom to make an onsite visit at least six months prior to the wedding day. At this point, the couple gets to meet with all the vendors participating in the event. "Everyone has to be on the same page," says Bernard. This ensures the team understands the vision and what is expected of them. She also organises the fun part of the research, like cake and menu tastings. Her pride and passion for her work is infectious. She praises the small but dedicated staff at Round Hill that always rises to the challenge to create perfection. "We're a family here. For us it is a love," she says. "We create a home away from home and that's what sets us apart."

There are many unique alternatives to a resort wedding. Hermosa Cove in Ocho Rios specialises in elegant affairs for groups anywhere from six to 50. The rooftop terrace and authentic Jamaican fare is certain to impress your guests.

Rose Hall Developments operates some of the most prestigious venues in Montego Bay, including the Cinnamon Hill Golf Course and the famous Rose Hall Great House. Destination Relationship Manager, Michelle Parkes oversees the wedding and events planning there. She works closely with caterers, musicians, photographers and other vendors to ensure a couple's vision becomes reality. On the wedding day, she checks in with the team to ensure everything is on time and goes according to plan. Her favourite part of planning a





wedding is seeing a bride fully satisfied that her day has been executed flawlessly.

The abundance of creative and highly skilled professionals in Jamaica makes the island the ultimate wedding destination. People of various faiths can easily find event planners with experience in everything from catering to multi-cultural celebrations. Rabbis, Hindu priests and other licensed officiants can perform faith-based ceremonies, as well as non-denominational services. From ethnic cuisine to culturally appropriate décor, it can all be arranged.

Events management companies, like Kingston-based New Levels Décor, are perfect for the modern bride. Choosing an event-planning service gives you access to venues across the island that you'd probably never discover on your own. "Most of our business is destination weddings," says Syreeta Hammond, operations manager of New Levels Décor. Hammond and her sister Selena started out in event décor and later expanded to include rentals and event planning. Selena handles the décor aspect of the business.

"Our attention to detail sets us apart," Hammond says. "My sister wants your wedding to succeed more than you want it for yourself." It's that attention to



## TAKE BOTH

*The beauty of a destination wedding is getting to have your proverbial cake and eating it too. You get to plan for your big day and enjoy the days after. Your honeymoon begins as soon as you hit the dance floor. And if you have family and friends in tow, you can turn your getaway into both an unforgettable family vacation and a romantic escape.*

detail that has led the duo to become a preferred vendor at the elite Tryall Club.

Their team takes personalised service to a whole new level. On the day of a wedding they assign two coordinators, one for the bride and another to handle vendors. From organising shuttles to making vendor payments, they cover all the bases. When describing what they do, Hammond says, "Seeing the venue and everything come together, it just feels like magic!"

Getting married is an exciting milestone for a couple. Jamaica's expert wedding professionals go beyond the call of duty to ensure your special day is a unique and memorable experience. If you can dream it, then it can be done.