

This Caribbean island country would seem to be the perfect wedding spot for anti-Bridezillas. After all, Jamaicans practically invented the concept of laid-back. But even though its location, just 500 miles from Florida, puts paradise at your fingertips, getting hitched in the land of rum punch, reggae and Red Stripe does require some effort. Luckily, we've scouted out three great resorts that take full advantage of the island's beauty and vibe.

Hotel Riu Palace Tropical Bay

Couples looking for a big resort experience (sprawling grounds, tons of activities and lots of dining and night-life options) with an island feel can opt for the all-inclusive **Hotel Riu Palace Tropical Bay** in Negril. With 416 rooms, this enormous resort can accommodate a large wedding; at the same time, the property's low-rise Victorian-style buildings gives it a more intimate feel. With five on-site restaurants, four bars and a hip, straight-from-Ibiza nightclub called Pacha, you'll have a number of location choices for wedding

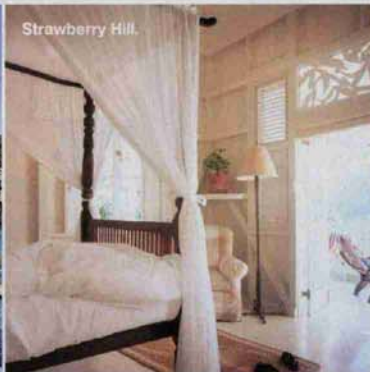
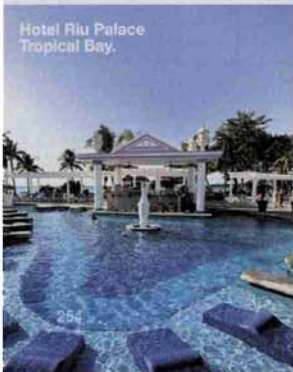
weekend events. On its 12 lush acres, ceremony sites also abound—popular spots include the gazebo and the beach. Guests traveling with kids can stay next door at the more family-friendly sister hotel, the ClubHotel Riu, with access to all resort amenities, as well as to the palm-fringed beach on the much-more-picturesque-than-it-sounds Bloody Bay (wedding packages start at \$295; riu.com).

Strawberry Hill

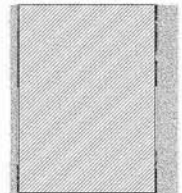
Set on 26 acres on a stand-alone peak in Jamaica's famed Blue Mountains (home of the coffee of the same name), **Strawberry Hill** appeals to couples looking for a tropical getaway feel—minus the sand in their shoes. What the former 18th-century coffee plantation lacks in seaside atmosphere, it more than makes up for in breathtaking 360-degree views, including the city of Kingston to the west and Bull Bay to the south. Ceremonies for up to 250 people can be held on the Mountain View lawn, amongst the fragrant juniper, cedar and mango trees. More intimate

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Jamaica

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gatherings may be hosted in pretty Jade Arbor or the yoga studio. Venue options for receptions include the lawn beneath the stars, on the terrace of the dining room or poolside with spectacular, long-distance views. The menu gets an island feel with local delicacies like jerk leg of lamb, jerk chicken, red snapper, fried *bammies* (flatbread) and a Jamaican rum wedding cake. Each of the 12 individual Georgian-style cottages was handcrafted by local artisans; romantic details abound, from deep-set bathtubs to the gossamer white fabric billowing around the canopied four-poster beds—and best of all, private porches cantilevered out from the side of the mountain (wedding meals start at \$85 per person; strawberryhillresort.com).

The Ritz-Carlton, Rose Hall

Travelers choose to stay at Ritz-Carlton properties time and time again because of the seamless service and elegance that make every guest feel like a VIP. This Montego Bay resort is no different: Once part of a historic sugar plantation, **The Ritz-Carlton Rose Hall**, with its 5,000 acres of meticulously landscaped grounds and 427 rooms, is the epitome of tropical opulence. Frette linens grace the beds, the white-sand beach is peaceful, and the resort's six restaurants are a food-

LEGALLY WEDDED

No worries when getting married in Jamaica. Most large all-inclusive resorts have a wedding coordinator to handle all your paperwork, and smaller hotels can put you in contact with one. Even if you take matters into your own hands, the task is relatively hassle-free. Upon arrival on the island, apply for a marriage license at the Ministry of Justice with the following notarized documents: proof of citizenship (certified copy of birth certificate with your father's name) and an original certificate of divorce or certified copy of death certificate (if applicable). All documents must be in English, or a certified translated copy. No blood tests are required. Marriage licenses cost about \$50, and there's a 24-hour waiting period. Note: Two witnesses must be present at the ceremony. —*Tracy Calvo Clarke*

ie's dream. Couples can say their "I do's" in the gazebo on the lush lawn, fronted by the Caribbean, beneath swaying palm trees on the east beach or at sunset on the greens of the golf course. Intimate nuptials can be held on the ocean-front terrace. Receptions here feature Jamaican ambience crossed with the special Ritz-Carlton touch—meaning the reception menu may include anything from salmon en crouete and Peking duck to conch fritters and Jamaican patties; for entertainment, you can go with a traditional jazz trio or throw an island jump-up with a steel band and limbo dancers (wedding packages start at \$99; ritzcarlton.com). ■