

BY DOUG WALLACE

CURAÇAO

Dutch-flavoured, CARIBBEAN COOL

THE CARIBBEAN is a place you always thought you knew – and then there’s Curaçao, a surprise taste of European-chic off the coast of Venezuela. With a multicultural heritage that includes Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese, the island oozes European charm, architecture and influence. This cosmopolitan perspective is then wrapped in an icing of warm island hospitality – all of which suits its many visitors from the Netherlands perfectly.

There are a number of nooks and crannies here to anchor your big day away. Rather than a few long stretches of beach, Curaçao has 35 small beaches, each with its own character. You just have to find the one that suits you best. With watersports for the adventurer, a celebrated culinary scene for the foodie, a café society for the night owl, and a treasured link to the past for the history buff, Curaçao truly has something for everyone. The fact that the island is outside the hurricane belt is another selling point, particularly when you have a wedding to plan.

Couples opting for opulence book in at Santa Barbara Beach & Golf Resort, with custom-designed packages for five guests or 500. You can choose from the white-sand beach, an oceanside pavilion, expansive terraces, even a helipad. The resort also serves up several pools, tennis courts, a full-service spa and



View of Punda in Willemstad, the Capital of Curaçao Below: Santa Barbara Beach & Golf Resort



one of the best golf courses in the Caribbean. Intimate ceremonies at Baoase Luxury Resort can be held in a stunning private villa or on tiny Bibi Island directly in front of the resort, which offers palm-tree perfection and a stellar sunset.

When you’re off the wedding clock, daytime can be spent weaving through the narrow laneways of the UNESCO-designated capital of Willemstad. Highlights here include Mikvé Israel-Emanuel Synagogue, the oldest in the Western Hemisphere, and Museum Kurá Hulanda, which holds the largest collection of African artifacts in the

Caribbean. The neighbourhood of Pietermaai is in the thick of things, home to Curaçao’s top restaurants and lounges, where visitors can indulge in romantic cliffside restaurants, chilled-out poolside patios and animated cocktail bars. The Euro-tinged island cuisine yields succulent snapper, the freshest tuna and exquisite ceviche via seemingly endless and inventive fusion.

Back to your checklist, the steps to tying the knot in Curaçao are not complicated. Once the paperwork is arranged with the registry office and your witnesses are lined up, all you have to do is show up and enjoy yourself.

DID YOU KNOW?

GETTING THERE:

Both Air Canada and WestJet fly non-stop from Toronto to Curaçao in about five hours. The best time to visit is May to November, during the off season – when all the Dutch tourists are enjoying their backyards.

PLACES TO HOST YOUR WEDDING:

(Images left to right)

➤ Under a pavilion at Santa Barbara Beach & Golf Resort (Santa Barbara). santabarbararesortcuracao.com

➤ On a private island at Baoase Luxury Resort (Steenrijk). baoase.com

➤ On the beach at Avila Beach Hotel (Nieuw Nederland). avilabeachhotel.com

Oasis Coral Estate Resort



Santa Barbara Beach & Golf Resort.



➤ On the pier at Oasis Coral Estate Resort (Sint Willibrordus). oaiscoralestate.com

➤ Poolside at LGBTQ-friendly Floris Suite Hotel & Spa (Piscadera). florissuitehotel.com

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