

10 crazy-different wedding venues

If you're not getting married in a house of worship, your venue options are almost endless. Here are a few of our favorite offbeat ideas.

BY AMY LEVIN-EPSTEIN

1 The George Peabody Library ◀ Baltimore, Maryland



Soaring 61-foot ceilings, impressive marble floors and historical manuscripts from the John Hopkins University collection—that guests can peruse over cocktails—are all part of this luxurious library's appeal. Fun fact: Rumor has it that the Beast's library in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* was modeled after this one. Saturday night rentals start at \$6,000, with the average wedding (with 170 guests) costing about \$50,000, which includes a library manager, staff worker and security guard. Party animals take note: No amplified music is allowed in the Exhibit Gallery and all parties must shut down by midnight (PeabodyEvents.Library.JHU.edu).

3 Please Touch Museum Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ▶

By day, this museum's interactive exhibits play host to curious children. After hours, rousing receptions are held in Hamilton Hall, a beaux arts building with a dramatic domed ceiling. The museum's 1908 Dentzel Carousel has whimsy galore, with 1,296 twinkling lights and 52 hand-carved animals (that your guests can not only touch but also ride). The elegant 9,000-square-foot glass-enclosed Carousel House, which surrounds the ride, is an über-chic setting for your ceremony and cocktail hour. Facility rental starts at \$5,000, with catering packages from \$155 per person (PleaseTouchMuseum.org). >>



2 Big Daddy's Antiques Los Angeles and San Francisco, California

If you want unbelievably eclectic vintage décor without to buy or rent it all, book Big Daddy's Los Angeles warehouse (an old sound stage) or their San Francisco rustic barn-style space. Want that kitschy cement lion sculpture to greet guests? You got it. Love the vintage leather couch? Make it part of your custom lounge area. For catering, choose from recommended pros or go casual and quirky with local food trucks. The Los Angeles space holds 250 for a sit-down dinner, while the San Francisco one maxes out at 39 (rentals from \$6,000, BDAntiques.com).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LIZ AND RYAN PHOTOGRAPHY; KATE HARRISON PHOTOGRAPHY; SUSAN STRIPLING PHOTOGRAPHY

4 Grand Canyon Helicopter Package

Las Vegas, Nevada ▶

Okay, picture this: You and your wedding guests (you can bring two—the officiant and photographer are provided for you) fly over the Hoover Dam and land on the rim of the canyon for a simple, but super-stunning, sunset ceremony. After you wed, take an aerial tour of the lights on the Strip as newlyweds. You'll leave with 24 photos, a framed marriage certificate and bragging rights to one of the most creative and scenic (not "Vegas-y") Las Vegas weddings of all time. Packages start at \$3,595, including the necessary park permits (VegasWeddings.com).



5 Chicago's First Lady

Chicago, Illinois

Taking a cruise for a wedding is a photographer's dream—every backdrop will be a unique look for your album. For instance, you can drop anchor and marry on the top deck in front of the city's iconic Centennial Fountain. Want fireworks? During the summer, stop in a prime spot for the city's weekly Saturday night ones—for free. Five of the six vessels hold 100-plus guests, while their vintage cruiser, Lady Grebe, is an elegant choice for two to six people. Wary about your wedding being a "booze cruise" (think: watered-down drinks and bare bones décor—yuck!)? Rest assured that these boats are in shipshape, with rich burgundy tones, Mahogany wood panels, upholstered chairs and marble bathrooms. Weddings are held from April to November, with costs from \$950 per hour with a three-hour minimum (CruiseChicago.com).



6 TreeHouse Point

Fall City, Washington ▶

If you've always wanted an enchanted forest wedding, this venue can make it happen. Although it's just a half hour outside of Seattle, you'll feel completely isolated (in the best possible way) on this four-acre property. Do your first look on the wooden walkways that are suspended in the air, connecting the tree houses, for a truly magical moment (and photos). You can marry in a tree house or under their 800-square-foot wood-floored tent. The venue can accommodate 80 guests, and 16 can snag converted tree house lodging. Packages start at \$1,400, which includes a coordinator, an officiant and some extras to keep your guests comfy, like standing heat lamps and firewood for campfires (TreeHousePoint.com). >>



FROM TOP: GIDEONPHOTO.COM; ANGELA RENEE; SHUTTERSTOCK

AMANDA LLOYD WEDDINGS

7 Mt. Hood Organic Farms Mt. Hood, Oregon

Dreaming of a rustic-yet-elegant wedding but aren't quite sure how to plan one? This venue makes it easy. Already in place: 300 acres of orchards and gardens for guests to explore and views of Mt. Hood and Mt. Rainier that will have them thinking "best wedding ever" before you even say "I do." An on-site coordinator can provide day-of or full-service planning help, including decorating (great if you love the DIY look but don't have the time or patience to actually DIY). And its exclusive caterer specializes in farm-to-table Pacific Northwest cuisine (think: tomato and zucchini gratin for a midsummer soiree). Saturday night festivities for 100 guests (the space fits 200) costs about \$16,500 (excluding beverages, flowers and décor); the fee for the venue alone is \$6,950 (MtHoodOrganicFarms.com). >>





8 Iolani Palace ← Honolulu, Hawaii

This is the only official royal palace in America. Period. But the list goes on. First, there's the gold-trimmed Throne Room and manicured lawns that would give Buckingham Palace a run for its money. Then there's the Barracks, the expansive former residence of the royal guards, that's available for seated dinners for up to 100 people (150 for cocktails). Wannabe Cinderellas should be aware that amplified music must stop by 10 p.m. sharp—in fact, your entire party has to turn into a pumpkin at that time (IolaniPalace.org).

9 Buskirk-Chumley Theater

▼ Bloomington, Indiana

Your wedding is kind of your own Oscar moment, so a theater and marquee make sense. We love this vintage one because you have access to the mezzanine, lobby, stage and dressing rooms for your day, and the theater provides local brews from the Upland Brewing Company and wine from the nearby Oliver Winery, as well as concession snacks (for a more formal fete, they allow outside vendors). Rates start at \$1,000 for the venue, which comes with a technical staff and house manager who can help you screen a slideshow or even a film of your own love story (BuskirkChumley.org).



*dance the night away
on the Queen Mary*

10 Queen Mary and Queen Mary 2 Long Beach, California

There's nothing quite as synonymous with the word "posh" as the Queen Mary, the 1930s fighting ship turned luxury liner turned museum, now permanently docked in Southern California and available for weddings. Packages for the Queen Mary start at \$59 per person (QueenMary.com). Or, if you want to take your destination wedding fantasies to the next level, host yours en route to fabulous locales like the Mediterranean or the Panama Canal on the still-sailing Queen Mary 2. Gather your wedding party for a prewedding spa day at the Canyon Ranch Spa Club. Bonus: Nobody will need any directions—they're already there! Packages for the Queen Mary 2 start at \$3,900, which includes ceremony flowers, wedding invitations, music and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot champagne, but not the cost of your sailing (Cunard.com).

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