



Terrace pool at P&O Cruises;
Below: A couple on the
Royal Caribbean Cruise liner.

HONEYMOONING AT SEA

SOMEONE WHO SAYS THAT SIX DEGREES OF FREEDOM OVER A WATERY EXPANSE CAN LEAD TO THE MOST EXHILARATING, MEMORABLE, AND ROMANTIC TIME SPENT WITH YOUR BELOVED, IS PROBABLY RIGHT. WE BRING TO YOU CRUISE LINERS, YACHTS, AND PRIVATE CHARTERS THAT OFFER EPIC TRAVEL EXPERIENCES, FRILLS, AND FRINGE BENEFITS TO HONEYMOONERS. WELCOME ABOARD! **BY P S BHAVANA**

COURTESY OF P&O CRUISES. OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL



GO MAINSTREAM CRUISING—A CARNIVAL WITH MEGA SPACES, GLOSSY AMENITIES, AND WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF CO-PASSENGERS.

ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL

A chilled bottle of champagne, red roses, vanilla cup cakes, canapés, mignardises or petit four, breakfast in bed, terry robes, spa appointments, and a silver-framed portrait as a souvenir are enough to set anyone's oxytocin level into a tizzy. And when these are a part of the Classic or Ultimate packages (for honeymooners) by Royal Caribbean International, their luxe value peaks. Their Eastern & Western Caribbean voyages, with various ports of call—Fort Lauderdale, Labadee, Falmouth, Cozumel, Nassau, Charlotte Amalie, and Philipsburg—are plush and worth a try. Travel on an Oasis class ship, Allure of the Seas, through seven neighbourhoods. The ship boasts on-board features like Broadway musical (Chicago), coffee shop at sea (Starbucks), cartoon experience (Dreamworks), surf simulators (FlowRider), ariel acrobats (Aqua Theatre) and lots more.

COST: Romance Packages from US\$80 to US\$780 and Caribbean Vacations from US\$649; 91-11/4906-1000; cruise@tirun.com; royalcaribbean.com

P&O CRUISES

If your dream is to enjoy a ubiquitous honeymoon on board a cruise liner, P&O Cruises might be one of your best bets. Besides planned and mobile weddings—via one of their 12-night, Wedding Cruise Packages, valid for 16 guests or more—it has honeymoon plans in the offing. You can travel through exotic, far-flung or magnificent locales like the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Canary Islands, the Middle East, the Baltic and Norwegian Fjords, America, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, or the Far East with romantic, historic, and adventurous touches. Their cruises' USP is that the fare includes all flights and transfers; free pressing service and launderettes with ironing facilities; relaxed restrictions on luggage as many cruises sail directly from Southampton (Hampshire, England), and lots more.

COST: World Cruise from US\$1,933, Euro/Med/Fjords from US\$2,400, Caribbean from US\$2,820, Indian Ocean cruises from US\$3,030; 0-843/373-0353; pocruses.com

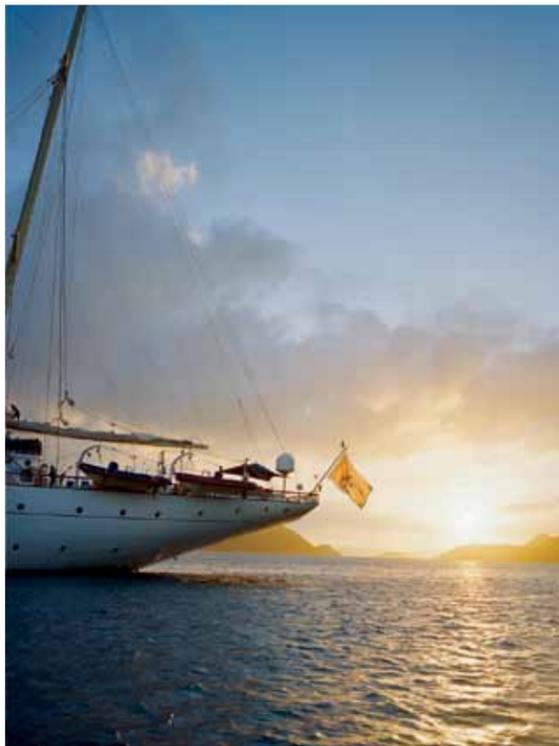
NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

Plan a Hawaii cruise aboard the 15-deck Pride of America. She sails (round trip) from Honolulu all year-round. Celebrate your honeymoon journeying from one exotic island to the next. Enjoy 18 restaurants, nine bars and lounges, spacious suites, balconies, stage shows, dance clubs, piano bars, pools and Jacuzzi tubs, and live music as you island-hop Hawaii in style. The seven-day, inter-island cruise offers nearly 100 hours of port time. It also includes overnight stays at Kahului (Maui) and Nāwiliwili (Kauai), and stopovers at Hawaiian Hilo and Kona Islands. Don't miss an afternoon cruise by the spectacular Nāpali Coast and views of the Kilauea Volcano.

COST: Hawaii from US\$1,099; ncl.com

CRYSTAL CRUISES

Their list of cruises is exhaustive! Couples looking to satiate their dreamy desires and fuel an adventurous streak, hand-in-hand, should choose from one of the theme-oriented cruises. For instance, **Ballroom @Sea** (Trans-Atlantic cruise) is a lavish, Las Vegas-style dance party with Harry James Orchestra, dance lessons, celebrity instructors, and more. In contrast, the Crystal Wine & Food Festival (South-East Asia cruise) is a fête of culinary arts where mixologists, chefs, brew masters, and wine experts hobnob with guests before presenting fancy, delicious



fares. Other chic cruises include Film & Theatre (Panama Canal & Caribbean cruise, and Trans-Atlantic cruise), Emerging Artists (Mediterranean cruise and North Cape cruise), and the Extreme Thrill Seekers (World Cruise Segment cruise).
COST: US\$2,800 onwards. internationalsales@crystalcruises.com; crystalcruises.com

PRINCESS CRUISES

They offer loveable cruises for honeymooners, besides the usual island hotspots and voyages. In Japan enjoy spectacular views of the Honshu island, its world-famous cities of Kyoto and Tokyo, the Hokkaido Island, and Mount Fuji. Witness ice blocks calving at the Glacier Bay National Park and brown bears at Misty Fjords in Alaska. Feel the Aloha Spirit present in the breathtakingly beautiful primitive Petroglyphs, French Polynesian atolls, pristine beaches, and marine life in Tahiti and the South Pacific. The Honeymoon Celebration and Deluxe Honeymoon packages are studded with extras—a personalised invitation from the Captain to visit the bridge while in port, heart-shaped Godiva chocolates, chocolate-dipped strawberries, Nicolas Feuillate Champagne in engraved glasses, and a 25-minute spa session.
COST: US\$444 onwards; 91-120/454-3838; helpdesk@cruiiprofessionals.in; princess.com

HOLLAND AMERICA LINE

If getting a complimentary honeymooners' party at sea and a certificate for completing your honeymoon is music to your ears, welcome aboard Holland America's Celebration Packages (common for weddings, anniversaries, and vow-renewals) that include honeymooning. Their Eurodam- and Vista-class megaships

flaunt a touch of old-world elegance, showcase Holland's love affair with flowers and its relation with Indonesia, and display seafaring memorabilia. For a romantic experience sail to the Caribbean, Panama Canal, Alaska, Mexico, Hawaii, Canada, New England, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, South America, and Africa.
COST: US\$795 onwards; 800/541-1576; For more, browse hollandamerica.com

BOOK A YACHT—A LUXE ADVENTURE, OPEN-SEA/ COASTAL EXPERIENCE, WITH MINIMAL GLITZ, AND LIMITED CO-PASSENGERS.

CELEBRITY CRUISES

A Greek shipping family (Chandris) lineage; megaships like Solstice, Equinox and Eclipse that offer yacht-like feel and showcase decade-old art collections—this cruise liner is rather dreamy. It offers voyages around Alaska, the Caribbean, The Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada/New England, the Pacific Northwest, the Panama Canal, Europe, South America, the Galapagos, and across the Atlantic Ocean. Beyond the visual aesthetics, these cruises offer lovely add-ons like classic entrées, Canyon Ranch Spa Club, and Celebrity Cruises Cellarmaster Selection for proprietary wines. Scribbled on the back on their menus is a breakdown of the calories, fat, and sodium present in the meals on offer! The Deluxe Romance Package starts with a mimosa breakfast in bed, evening turndown with rose petals, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and a bottle of Perrier Jouet champagne.
COST: US\$125 to US\$225 and onwards; celebrityspecialservices@celebrity.com; celebritycruises.com

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES

Unlike its sister brands Celebrity and Royal Caribbean, Azamara does not put forward the usual megaship stories. Instead it narrates country-club-esque tales as part of Destination Immersion (overnights and stays at ports) and AzAmazing Evenings via mid-sized ships like Journey and Quest (each with 686-guest capacity) that sail to Europe, West Indies, the Mediterranean, Asia, the Caribbean, the Panama Canal, Baja or the Sea of Cortez, and across the Atlantic Ocean. It's the perfect match for those who crave intimacy, long itineraries, and off-the-beaten-track ports. On-board entertainment includes a relaxing local bar set-up with a jazz band, pianist, vocalist or a harpist; poetry reading or writing gatherings; spa therapies; boutique; theatrical performances; late-night movies; magical acts; and comedy shows—all uber-composite and friendly. Feel free to choose the ones that nurture your honeymooning spirit and customise others. They have 11 striking European voyages to the Spanish and French Riviéras, and the Greek Isles. Enjoy onboard spending credit (applied to couple's spa treatment or Land Discovery shore excursion) per stateroom, complimentary chocolate covered strawberries, and dinner for two at either of their two specialty restaurants—Prime C or Aqualina.
COST: US\$2,800 onwards; 877/999-9773; azamaracruises.com

3. WINDSTAR CRUISES

Their flagship sailing yachts boast of computer-controlled staysails, open deck spaces, casual on-board vibes, and delightful nautical detailing. Each accommodates 148 to 310 guests on cruises to 50 nations. Although most cabins are sans balconies, the suites have good views. While they may not have planned cruises for honeymooners, their breezy water sports—snorkeling, windsailing, paddle-boating, water-skiing, and scuba diving—are perfect for adventure-loving couples. Enjoy extraordinary experiences, cozy comforts and an unregimented stay, plus the usual offerings of wines, chocolates, fruits, food, and spa. Try their voyages to the Greek Isles, Italy, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Caribbean islands.
COST: US\$2,500 onwards; 866/613-5476; info@windstarcruises.com; windstarcruises.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF PRIDE OF AMERICA; COURTESY OF P&O CRUISES; COURTESY OF ALEXA; ANDREW ROWAT
 FROM TOP: COURTESY OF CRYSTAL CRUISES; COURTESY OF PRIDE OF AMERICA; CELEBRITY CRUISES



Royal Caribbean International Mariner Solarium. Below Clockwise from left: Alexa sailing the sea; Celebrity Century; Royal Caribbean International's Mariner Centrum.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL; COURTESY OF CELEBRITY CRUISES; COURTESY OF ROYAL CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL; COURTESY OF ALEXA

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF CELEBRITY CRUISES; COURTESY OF P&O CRUISES; KATIE DUNN

STAR CLIPPERS

Cruise on board modern versions of 19th-century clipper ships, which offer a balanced mix of adventure, comfort, and familiarity. Couples can climb masts, raise sails, check the bow netting, and chat freely with the Captain on matters related to navigation or ports of call. 'Casual' is the buzzword all around, although some semi-formal-to-formal air remains. Other than visits to remote ports, dynamic water sports, crew-planned talent show, dancing, and wining and dining, entertainment options are minimal. Therefore, interaction with fellow passengers (not more than 230) and crew is the key. Feel free to revel in merriment and get pampered at the same time. Need privacy? Ask for it and your wish will be respected. Choose between three beauties—the 70-passenger **Star Clipper** and **Star Flyer** with four masts each, or the 227-passenger **Royal Clipper** with five masts and 42 sails. On offer are visits to the Western Mediterranean, the Greek Isles, Thailand, French Polynesia and the Society Islands in the South Pacific, and Windward Islands or Grenadines in the Caribbean.

COST: USE1,645 Thailand cruise, US\$1,745 Caribbean islands; 377/9797-8400; info.monaco@starclippers.com; starclippers.com

PETER DEILMANN

If you're looking for an intimate cruise, with oodles of extra indulgence—night entertainment, lavish meals, high-end art collection, galas, and classical concerts—try one of Peter Deilmann's floating hotels. The MV Mozart accommodates 98- to 200-passengers; it offers an indoor pool and solarium or sunroom. The MV Deutschland has a capacity of 513-passengers, while the three-masted, barquentine sailing yacht Lili Marleen is alluring. Enticing travel options include a round-trip from Passau (Germany-Austria border) with port calls in Vienna and Budapest; distant and non-commercial destinations in Europe; and little ports on the Danube. Among passengers, the Germans may dominate the scene a tad more than usual. But would you really care, when you and your partner are spoilt for choice?

COST: US\$1,600 onwards; 800/348-8287; deilmann-cruises.com; deilmann-cruises.com

SAIL A CHARTER: AN ULTRA-SOPHISTICATED JOURNEY, WITH HIGH-BROW PERIPHERALS, OFF-BEAT PORT VISITS, AND A HANDFUL OF CO-PASSENGERS.

FRENCH COUNTRY WATERWAYS

Take a luxury barge cruise along the French countryside on board *Adrienne*, *Horizon II*, *Nenuphar*, *Princess*, *Espirit*, and *Liberte* to make your honeymoon unforgettable. Meander through exquisite locales like Burgundy, Upper Loire Valley, Champagne, and Alsace-Lorraine while enjoying delectable wines and cheeses from French provinces. Keeping you company will be scenic châteaux, medieval castles, forts, homes and rolling pastures. Guests receive special attention as the carriers follow an 18-passenger limit. The wow factor is further enhanced thanks to Michelin Star, on-port dine-out options, and charismatic, wood-paneled interiors. Turn up the romance with fresh flowers, extra pillows, duo-cycles, or pair umbrellas (all available on request) to make your beloved feel special. Also, try their along-the-river cycling options.

COST: US\$5,485 onwards; 1-800/222-1236; admin@fcwl.com; fcwl.com

ALEXA PRIVATE CRUISES

Explore the Indonesian Archipelago aboard a traditional sailing vessel built just for two. **Phinisi** (pi-ni-si), the 31-metre boat design-inspired ship is decorated with wide-plank teak and Indonesian interiors. Even better, get sailing routes tailored to surprise your beloved with a variety of activities—go surfing in Sumbawa; docking at the tribal land of Sulawesi; trekking and diving in Komodo National Park; swimming with dolphins in the Flores Sea; walking hand-in-hand on a deserted beach; swimming, snorkelling, or scuba diving with Manta Rays; BBQ-ing lobsters on a far-flung exotic island; and skinny-dipping (yes!) under the stars. Enjoy deep-tissue massages and yoga sessions, or simply laze around and do nothing at all. Fly from Bali Denpasar (DPS) airport to the smaller airfields nearby. From there sail towards the bewitching islands.

COST: US\$21,000 onwards; info@alexaprivatecruises.com; reservations@alexaprivatecruises.com; alexaprivatecruises.com

SEABOURN

Spirit and **Legend** are majestic mega-yachts with lovely on-deck areas, Scandinavian décor, and a homely feel. They sail to locations where big cruises cannot reach, such as Le Lavandou on the French Riviera, the Corinth Canal in Greece, and other parts of the Caribbean, Central America, New England/Canada, the Panama Canal, Africa, Asia, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. You can relax while enjoying a host of activities like book readings, cocktail gatherings, mini massages, alfresco dining (check Sky Bar), and cabaret and dance sessions, among others; or head to the retractable water sports marina for swimming, sailing, windsurfing, and waterskiing. Seabourn takes pride in fulfilling the particular needs of guests, like procuring a brand of product or arranging for a personal shopper to save time when at a port. For your private romantic moments they'll send on order Champagne or drinks directly to your mini-bar and even draw an oil bath in your suite.

COST: US\$4,275 onwards; 1-206/626-9179; 1-866/827-5257; seabourn.com+



A woman on the deck of Seabourn. From top: A couple enjoying a moment on the private balcony at Celebrity Cruises; The Oasis Spa pool at P&O Cruises.

