

LOS ANGELES WEDDINGS



A WANDERLUST TO WED

If an out-of-town event appeals to you, check out these distinctive places to say "I do"

By Bekah Wright

NAPA, CALIFORNIA

Leaving San Francisco behind, Highway 12/121 leads to the wine country of Napa and Sonoma valleys. Stop at the right juncture, however, and you'll be in the Carneros wine region. Heralded by cherry laurel trees is a lavender-lined drive that leads to The Carneros Inn, an escape discovered by famous guests like Lance Armstrong and Sheryl Crow.

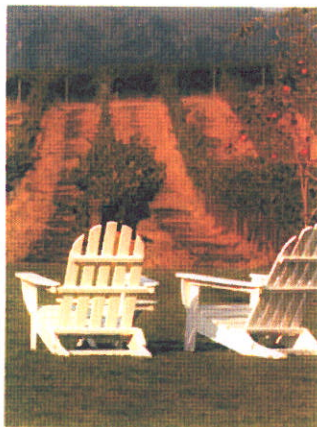
Rugged wooden buildings and spectacular views beckon from the 27-acre property. A rocking chair adorns the porch of every guest cottage. All the fresh air may entice you to run through the rolling pastures, smelling the aroma of fruit trees in bloom. Better yet, make your march to the altar down a tree-lined grove and exchange vows with a view of the Mayacama Mountain Range in the distance.

Accommodations The Carneros Inn's 86 charming green cottages with tin roofs and galvanized stovepipes don't prepare guests for all the delights they'll find inside. The wood-burning fireplaces, vaulted ceilings, and welcoming windows seem suited to the cozy surroundings, but the Corbusier and Eames furniture proclaim there's more here than meets the eye.

All the comforts of home and more await: flat-screen televisions and Internet connections as well as Italian linens and a soaking tub. The Brazilian cherrywood floors are beautiful, and the bathroom's heated slate floors are delightfully decadent.

Outside, there's a front porch with a vine-

Los Angeles has a bounty of magnificent wedding locales, but you may have visited other places that hold special meaning for the two of you—or that just plain make your heart sing. Hosting nuptials out of town turns your big day into a several-day event, giving your wedding party more time to celebrate together with group sightseeing, a friendly golf game, or a dinner featuring regional cuisine. And if you have an ultra-romantic out-of-town locale in mind, you may find one closer to home than you think.



Napa nuptials Enjoy a vineyard view and the fermented fruit of its harvest at The Carneros Inn.

yard view and a back patio garden with gas heaters and an alfresco shower large enough for two.

On-site activities Lounge at the infinity pool or partake in winemaker-hosted tastings. Try regionally inspired spa treatments done in six indoor/outdoor rooms at the spa, and a Huichica Creek Bath in the outdoor whirlpool tub that's lined with stones and built for two. Grab a picnic lunch from the property's Boon Fly Cafe and head out for tastings at local wineries. Two nearby: Artesa Vineyards & Winery and Domaine Carneros.

Off-site activities Get a tour of the area on the historic Napa Valley Wine Train. Take in the art and landscape of di Rosa Preserve. Please your palate at COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food & The Arts. Canoe or kayak down the Napa River. Visit Calistoga's Old Faithful Geyser and Petrified Forest. Go hot-air ballooning over the wine country. Take in a performance at the Napa Valley Opera House.

Rehearsal dinner Build the excitement for your big day with a dinner on the sophisticated Hilltop Dining Room Deck, overlooking acres of vineyard. Give your guests a taste of local vintages coupled with chef Kimball Jones' exquisite four-course tasting menu with selections such as Painted Hills Strip Loin with Potato Rosti, Sautéed Baby Spinach, and Cabernet Sauvignon Sauce paired with Groth 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville.

Ceremony and reception The world will be at your feet with an outdoor wedding on the lawn of The Carneros Inn's Apple Orchard, home to three varieties of apple trees with scents sweetened by the Napa sun. Cool breezes add crispness to the air. After exchanging vows, move the party to long, family-style tables for wine and a three-course dinner in the glow of Chinese lanterns and the moon rising over the Mayacama Mountain Range.

Off-site ceremony and reception alternatives include Beaulieu Gardens, COPIA, Christian Brothers Winery, Cornerstone Gardens, and di Rosa Preserve.

For more information Call 707-299-4900 or visit www.thecarnerosinn.com.

Marriage requirements See requirements for Santa Ynez Valley. For information specific to Napa, visit www.co.napa.ca.us. ❑