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A Full Fiji-moon — for Real

'Bachelorette'-inspired honeymoons in the South Pacific



Nanise Bure Honey moon Suite at Namale Resort & Spa.



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Namale Resort & Spa

"We treat all honeymooners like rock stars," said Bill Keefe, resort general manager of the all-inclusive luxe Namale Resort (www.namalefiji.com), a dreamy paradise of avant-garde villas and bures (Fiji-style cottages) built atop boulders and seacliffs on Vanua Levu, Fiji's second largest island.

Hebert stayed in the Tatadra (Dream House) and rarely left. And why would she? Measuring 3,000 square feet, the Dream House is just that, with a sumptuous living/dining room overlooking the private infinity pool and ocean, plus a glass-walled master suite with a four-poster bed, raised Jacuzzi for two and a hanging-bed pavilion.

A cozier option might be the Nanise Bure — which you didn't see on TV. Named the "Ultimate

Remember those dreamy scenes on "The Bachelorette" when Ashley Hebert charmed her suitors by a moonlit South Pacific sea, dined them by candlelight in a virgin rainforest and welcomed a beau into her paradise boudoir?

Each scenario would make for a heavenly honeymoon — but is it reality? Can you re-create the same bliss depicted on the show during your own honeymoon? To find out, I followed in Hebert's Fiji footsteps.

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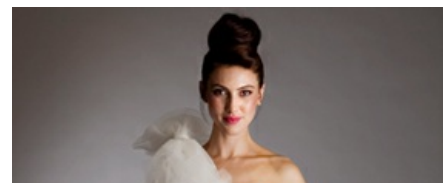
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Honeymoon Suite in Fiji” by Modern Bride magazine, it’s built on two volcanic pinnacles, with a bridge leading to the infinity-plunge pool and dining deck atop the second boulder.

Koro Sun Resort & Rainforest Spa

Nearby, the Koro Sun Resort & Rainforest Spa (www.korosunresort.com) — where the steamy dinner in the rainforest and Hebert’s overnight liaison with J.P. Rosenbaum took place — is a paradise for active honeymooners, according to Jack Young, resort CEO. It’s also where Rosenbaum and members of the film crew stayed.

“We can re-create everything we did for ‘The Bachelorette,’” said Young. Indeed they can.

I experienced a redo of Hebert and Rosenbaum’s rainforest dinner — complete with cushions, candles, finger lobster, calamari and New Zealand wines. After dinner, we continued even deeper into the forest to discover the Rainforest Spa — an Eden-like hideaway consisting of four open-air treatment huts built beside a small waterfall. Young recommended the Night Massage, during which you and your partner will be led to the spa by lantern-light, soothed by the sounds of the jungle.

The 3,500-square-foot Kavika Falls Villa — where Hebert and Rosenbaum spent their first night together — seems built for passion, with expansive ocean views from its hillside perch, two infinity pools connected by a waterfall and contemporary Fijian-styled living rooms, terraces and four bedrooms.

However, real honeymooners, like Kim Mele, who grew up in Eagle Rock, often prefer the semi-over-water Edgewater Villas, where Rosenbaum stayed. Witnessing the sun set into the ocean from the huge upstairs patio, cozying up in the second-story ocean-view bedroom, watching zebra fish swim below you through the glass floor and kayaking directly from the over-water deck are one-of-a-kind moments, she told me. Mele now lives in Seattle and was honeymooning with husband, Travis Foxx.

“We saw the Koro Sun Resort on ‘The Bachelorette’ and chose it for our honeymoon,” Mele continued. “It’s exactly how it appeared and exactly what we wanted.”

Vomo Island Resort

For beach bliss, Vomo Island Resort (www.vomofiji.com), the private island where Hebert presented the final rose to Rosenbaum, was even better than it looked on TV. Honeymooners often choose Vomo’s luxurious and cozy beachfront bures (with netting draped over the bed and Jacuzzis for two), rather than The Residence (the sumptuous four-bedroom villa complex with a private pool, outdoor showers and a butler, where Hebert’s family stayed and were interviewed on TV).

“We loved our beachfront bure because we could wake up and run straight into the ocean, which is only a few steps from the room,” said Meghan Finefrock of Malibu who, along with husband, Greg Finefrock, and 70 family members and friends, rented the entire island for their June 3, 2011, wedding. “Vomo is the ultimate spot to spend your honeymoon,” she said.

Additionally, the cuisine is so tasty that the newly married prince and princess of Monaco sailed in on their yacht for dinner two nights before I arrived, according to Wayne Milgate, the resort’s general manager.

Westin Denarau Island Resort & Spa

The Presidential Suite at the Westin Denarau Island Resort & Spa (www.westin.com/denarauresort), on Fiji’s main island of Viti Levu, is a sweet spot to share love. Rosenbaum and Hebert shared dessert in one of its two elegant bedrooms. Actor John Travolta enjoys its sweeping ocean and island views, authentic Fijian décor, spacious living/dining areas and luxurious bathrooms, according to Uraia Rasake, resort executive assistant manager.

But the real thrill is the Heavenly Spa by Westin retreat — arguably Fiji’s most sophisticated day spa. It’s secluded on acres of tropical greenery, with Fiji-style thatch-roofed bures opening onto lily ponds and gardens. The Vale Levu couples’ spa suite is a pampering paradise, with a private bath, lounge and outdoor shower.

If a smaller room is better, opt for an over-sized Ocean Studio at the neighboring Sheraton Fiji Resort (www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton). These contemporary-style corner rooms offer double ocean views — and you can still use the Westin’s spa.

Tourism Fiji (www.fijime.com) is offering “The Bachelorette”-inspired “Fiji Romance” packages, with round-trip air on Air Pacific and stays at a combination of these resorts. Packages must be booked by March 31, 2012.

—Barbara Beckley



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