

FOR THE BRIDE

SPRING 2012

~ GET SWEPT AWAY ~

200+
NEW GOWNS
TO LOVE

THE LATEST
BIG DAY
TRENDS

CHIC & SEXY
HAIRSTYLES

~ FABULOUS HONEYMOONS ~

PUNTA CANA
THAILAND
COSTA RICA
ARGENTINA

DESTINATION WEDDINGS

CITY, COUNTRY & BEACH



Vatulele Resort

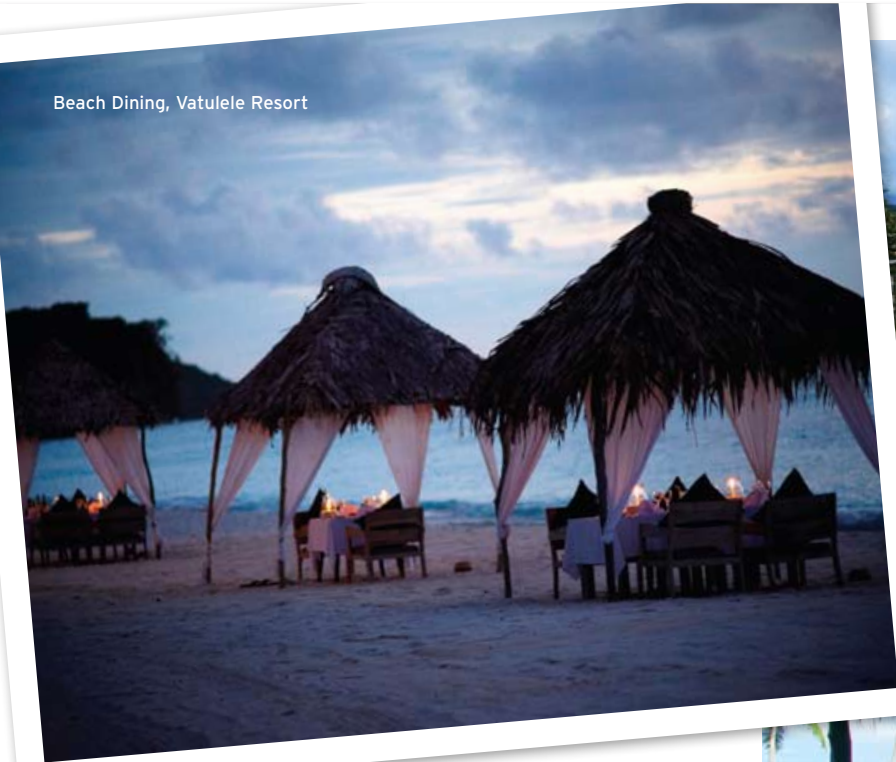
A SHORE THING

WHEN HOLLYWOOD CELEBS WANT TIME OUT OF THE SPOTLIGHT, THEY HEAD TO FIJI. BY JILL FERGUS

188

FORTHEBRIDEMAG.COM SPRING 2012

Beach Dining, Vatulele Resort



Wakaya Club & Spa



Laucala Island

They are a rare species: resorts so perfect, in settings so spectacular, that they stand out even in a part of the world that is itself a showstopper. Some of the plush honeymoon hideaways we spotlight here are found in secluded, palm-fringed beaches, on islands where green mountains rise dramatically from jewel-colored seas. These idyllic resorts have perfected their own brand of R&R: Havens you'll find to be Remote and Romantic! Come take our tour.

WAKAYA CLUB & SPA

This luxe private-island resort has attracted the likes of Celine Dion and her manager-husband, Rene Angelil as well as Bill and Melinda Gates. No doubt, these high-wattage couples traveled on their own private jets, but you, too, will arrive in style, flown in a small twin-engine plane from the international airport on the main island of Viti Levu. Once at the Wakaya Club (wakaya.com), you'll find the rooms are full of island tails, including bamboo four poster-beds, wooden floors made from native yuka trees and spacious, open-air lava-rock showers big enough for two. With only nine beachfront, thatch-roofed bures (Fijian bungalows), you'll get as much privacy as you want. The resort celebrates ancient Fijian customs, too. A traditional lali drum serves as the dinner "bell," and there's a weekly Fijian feast called a lovo, where mahimahi and root vegetables are wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in a hot-stone underground oven. Daytime activities include snorkeling the surrounding reef, golfing on the property's nine-hole course and hiking.

VATULELE ISLAND RESORT

Where do Hollywood A-listers in search of South Seas rapture go? Many can be found wiggling their toes in the sand at Vatulele Island Resort (vatulele.com). There are just 18 bures there, all outfitted with king-sized beds, rugs made of richly textured tapa cloth and spacious patios. This escapism has appealed to actor Tommy Lee Jones, tennis icon Patrick Rafter among others.

At Vatulele, guests ease into the resort's barefoot-chic style. Shed your strappy sandals and swim in underground caves, snorkel among the kaleidoscopically-colored fish and pad around your waterfront bure in nothing but a pedicure. Dine on Pacific Rim cuisine, such as grilled fish and chicken cooked in spinach-like fa fa leaves, at a communal lantern-lit table. Of course, if you want to be alone, a private table for two can be arranged just about anywhere on the island. Now that's getting away from it all.

LAUCALA ISLAND

Ready to vacation like Oprah? If the answer is "yes," then book a stay at Laucala Island resort (laucala.com), located about 45 minutes by plane from Fiji's Nadi International Airport. The 3,000-acre atoll was once a coconut plantation for nearly a century but has been transformed into a tropical garden with lush hillsides thick with herbs and vegetables, as well as fruit-bearing plants that supply the shot-glass portions of fresh juices that attendants serve to guests throughout the day. This Garden of Eden features thatch-roofed villas (each with its own swimming pool) set along the mountainous island's beaches and cliffs. Each residence is specially designed to combine nature and Fijian traditions with luxurious comfort. Villas range from Plantation, where guests enter through their own main gate to Overwater havens which feature floating daybeds and private marinas. To complete this romantic picture couples have a choice of five restaurants, all of which use produce grown on the island, plus a world-class spa, a man-made lagoon for swimming and an 18-hole golf course. Could this be heaven? ♦