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## Jill Hamilton & Spence Buss

St. Philip, Barbados / September 2, 2005

**W**hen friends set up Jill Hamilton and Spence Buss on a blind date they had no idea how successful it would be. "He was so cute I almost passed out," says Jill. Five years later, the Winter Park, Florida, couple headed to Barbados to tie the knot, an obvious site given their mutual love of the ocean. The sunset ceremony took place at The Crane resort, under a flower-covered arch on a cliff overlooking the ocean, with only the minister, the groom's parents and two of the bride's closest friends in attendance. The mood was beach casual: Jill wore a simple white gown with spaghetti straps and a lightly beaded bodice while Spence wore white linen pants with a white guayabera. Afterward, the small group enjoyed seaside hors d'oeuvres, dinner and a champagne toast to blind dates.

### Jill's Tips

**"Tide" it right.** Every bride researches average temperatures, but if you plan to marry on a beach, also check tides and sunset times. I got the exact lighting I wanted for the ceremony and photos.

**Photos aren't just for florists.** I wanted a specific shot of Spence holding me on the beach — I'd seen a similar one in a magazine. I brought the image along so I could show the photographer exactly what I was looking for, and we nailed the photo!



## Heather Patterson & Matthew Moore

Sayulita, Mexico / May 14, 2005

**T**his Studio City, California, couple sees the Hollywood lights on a regular basis (Matthew is a film producer and Heather is a photo editor). For their big day they both wanted to escape the glitzy life and head back to the sleepy Mexican fishing village where they got engaged. Heather's father presided over a simple 5:30 p.m. ceremony in the cliffside garden of Villa Amor, Heather clad in a lace-accented silk gown by Norma LeNain at Celeste Bridal and Matthew in a matching Hugo Boss suit. Then the 40 guests ascended to the brick patio of the Gran Villa for the reception, which was enhanced by a local mariachi band and 180-degree views of the sea. It was exactly the escape this busy couple had hoped for.

### Heather's Tips

**Think small but smart.** The more remote the place, the less info will be available online. Avoid problems by sending out your save-the-dates early. A pre-wedding visit is essential with a remote spot, since you won't be able to see photos of everything online.

**Use a local planner.** This is especially vital in a small town. Keep documentation of what you and your vendors agree upon. If something goes awry, you'll have a go-to person nearby to fix it.

