

HOME PAGE	MY TIMES	TODAY'S PAPER	VIDEO	MOST POPULAR	TIMES TOPICS	My Account	Welcome, tonysilva0	Log Out	Help
-----------	----------	---------------	-------	--------------	--------------	------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------

WORLD	U.S.	N.Y. / REGION	BUSINESS	TECHNOLOGY	SCIENCE	HEALTH	SPORTS	OPINION	ARTS	STYLE	TRAVEL	JOBS	REAL ESTATE	AUTOS
POLITICS WASHINGTON EDUCATION														

The Grand Tour

The Frugal Traveler Does Europe on a Budget



Join the Adventure!

The New York Times
nytimes.com/frugaltraveler

California Braces for 'New Summer of Love'



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

Jan Felshin, left, and Edrie Ferdun, retired professors who live on Fire Island in New York, have been together 49 years. They plan a wedding in Los Angeles.

By [PATRICIA LEIGH BROWN](#)
Published: June 14, 2008

SAN FRANCISCO — The groom was shopping for the perfect diamond for his betrothed — the other groom. As Rey Almeida, a 47-year-old elementary school principal, perused the Equality Forever rings (a same-sex wedding special at 40 percent off if purchased from June 16 to June 26), he couldn't help reflecting on the symbolism.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



Jim Wilson/The New York Times
Cosette Trautman-Scheiber tidying a room in the Hope-Merrill House in Geyserville, Calif., which has elopement packages.

[Enlarge This Image](#)



Jim Wilson/The New York Times
James H. Bainton, left, Jeffrey Rueda, right, with the Rev. Blane Ellsworth during a recent wedding planning session.

\$479 bargain basement (boutonnieres, 15-minute wedding, 20 guests) to the “[Elizabeth Taylor](#)” at \$29,999 (poolside villas, wedding cake and reception, ice sculptures, flowers, sit-down dinner for 200 and three nights in the honeymoon suite). “We’re just blessed to help.” Ten couples from New York, Las Vegas and Phoenix have signed up for the options.

“We’ve been waiting for the right moment,” Mr. Almeida, 47, said of marrying his partner, Alan Pex, a 46-year-old accountant who was initially as standoffish as Mr. Big on “Sex in the City.” “Now there’s the possibility of a ring, a ring that says, I want to marry you and spend the rest of my life with you.”

[California](#) is gearing up for the “new summer of love,” as it is being dubbed here: the legalization of [same-sex marriage](#) beginning at 5:01 p.m. Monday.

Unlike in Massachusetts, California’s new law does not limit marriages to residents of the state, thus resurrecting old postcard images of California as the promised land. But instead of Edenic orange groves, the new arrivals will be greeted with organic framboise ganaches, Russian River honeymoon canoe trips and Gay Palm Springs hotel packages with rose petals, Champagne, two souvenir pillows embroidered with the couples’ first names and aromatherapy candles at room check-in.

Faced with a wilted economy, water shortages and sticker shock at the gasoline pump, many California businesses are welcoming “the dinks” (double income, no kids) with open arms. “It’s basically a godsend,” said Daniel Doiron, the general manager of the Ingleside Inn in Palm Springs, which is offering honeymoon specials from

E-MAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

SAVE

SHARE



[More Articles in US »](#)

Politics E-Mail



Keep up with the 2008 presidential election with the daily Politics e-mail newsletter. [See Sample](#)
tonysilva@mac.com [Sign Up](#)

[Change E-mail Address](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

MOST POPULAR

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED

1. [Your Money: A Primer for Young People Starting Their First Job](#)
2. [Lost in E-Mail, Tech Firms Face Self-Made Beast](#)
3. [When Mom and Dad Share It All](#)
4. [Bob Herbert: Letters From Vermont](#)
5. [Japan, Seeking Trim Waists, Measures Millions](#)
6. [New Take on a Prostate Drug, and a New Debate](#)
7. [Legal Drugs Kill Far More Than Illegal, Florida Says](#)
8. [Tapped Out](#)
9. [Tim Russert, 58, NBC's Face of Politics, Dies](#)
10. [Plan Would Lift Saudi Oil Output](#)

[Go to Complete List »](#)

nytimes.com/theater

Critics' picks for the Tony Awards

Also in Theater:

- [Making noise behind the scenes](#)
- [Imports, Off Broadway](#)
- [Complete coverage of the 2008 Tony Awards](#)

According to Community Marketing Inc., a gay and lesbian market research firm here, four of the top 10 gay travel destinations are in California, with gay men and lesbians spending \$64 billion a year on domestic leisure travel. The potential windfall of same-sex marriage was underscored this week in a study by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law, which estimated that over three years, same-sex nuptials would contribute \$684 million to the state's wedding industry and \$64 million to the state budget.

The study also predicted that half of California's 102,639 gay couples would marry over the next three years, as would 68,000 from out of state (including 12,000 from New York).

Among them are Jeffrey Dreibratt, 47, a Web designer, and Willie Walker, 44, a legal assistant, from Brooklyn, who fell in love in the Borough Hall subway station 15 years ago while standing in line to buy tokens. They plan to honeymoon at an inn in Sonoma County after marrying in San Francisco on Aug. 8.

"When I was younger, I didn't understand the point of getting married and replicating heterosexual life," said Mr. Dreibratt. "But over the years, my thinking has changed. The law in California and the implications for New York spoke to us and said, 'now is the time.'"

Many gay men and lesbians are taking a wait-and-see attitude, said the Rev. Blane Ellsworth, an independent nondenominational minister in Napa who also has a Web site, Enchanting Elopements, listing equality-sensitive businesses. There is still the memory of the euphoria, and letdown, in 2004, when nearly 4,000 same-sex couples stood in line to marry in San Francisco, only to have the marriages nullified by the state five months later.

Mr. Ellsworth said those he has dealt with "are pretty smart business people."

"They're saying if they're going to invest in a nice service and wedding, 'I'm going to wait until it's a sure thing,'" he said.

"We're hoping our rights don't get taken away again," said Megan Marteny, 23, who was sipping Champagne one recent night with her partner at a wedding expo held by the Golden Gate Business Association, a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender chamber of commerce.

In contrast to the experience in 2004, which had a spontaneous, storm-the-castle, free-tickets-to-the-Grateful-Dead quality, with hundreds of couples standing in line in the rain overnight, there is a palpable sense of impending permanence this time.

Ed Schultz, a social worker who became domestic partner to Steve Berlin last year, plans to go to City Hall on July 10. "Marriage has a certain dignity," Mr. Schultz said. "When I go to work and say, 'I'm domestically partnered,' that's something different than saying, 'I'm married.'"

Charlotte Fiorito, a wedding photographer who specializes in same-sex unions, says she did "the 2004 crush in our rain ponchos. Now, a lot of people are planning the kind of weddings they have been waiting their whole lives for."

Among them are James H. Bainton and Jeffrey Rueda, both 40 and doctors, who were about to send out letterpress invitations to their commitment ceremony at a Napa Valley vineyard when the [Supreme Court](#) ruled last month that gay men and lesbians had a constitutional right to marry. The invitation to their "commitment ceremony" was quickly changed to "wedding."

"We're still in the shaping mode," Mr. Bainton said of the nuptials, with 100 guests, to take place beside a pond in fields of sage and lavender at the height of August tomato season. "This increases the meaning of it. It feels like we're sitting here making history."

While not quite a gold rush, businesses like Enchanting Elopements and [myqueerwedding.com](#) are popping up.

And across the state, there is a sense of the birth of new rituals. Steve Pougnet, the openly gay mayor of Palm Springs, plans to hold a citywide "marriage festival" on June 21, having been deputized two weeks ago by the county clerk. He has two dozen weddings lined up and is planning his own in the fall. Jan Felshin, 76, and Edrie Ferdun, 71, retired professors who live on Fire Island in New York, have been together 49 years. At their wedding in Mandeville Canyon, in Los Angeles, they will be joined by four other lesbian couples.

Not surprising, along with new rituals have come new etiquette questions. Couples whose marriages were nullified in 2004, like Joyce Feltham and Dorian Leslie Duren of Palo Alto, are wondering how to handle their "encore" wedding, a new breed here as couples embark on their second or third public pledge to the same person. "How do we tell people who brought gifts the first time not to feel obligated to bring another one?" Ms. Duren asked.

Peggy Post, the etiquette expert and author, who is based in Vermont, said the legalization of same-sex weddings, if it held, was bound to bring about changes in the ritual, the same way, she said, that brides now walk down the aisle with stepfathers, not just their fathers, and that a white dress has come to signify "the color of joy," not just virginity.

So it will be too, when same-sex couples are pronounced "spouses for life."

Armistead Maupin, one of the city's most famous authors, became married in Vancouver, British

ADVERTISEMENTS

All the latest world sports, news and results - [iht.com/sports](#)



Watch A.O. Scott's video reviews of movies.

All the news that's fit to personalize.

Need to know more?

Get 50% off home delivery of The Times.



The New York Times

Where to stay in Buenos Aires?

"Renting an apartment is the most economical way to enjoy a stay."
— Robert Post

[Click to see what travelers like you recommend.](#)

NYTimes.com/Travel

Columbia, last year to his partner, Christopher Turner, and will probably marry him again in California, he said.

"Straight people have grown up thinking they're entitled to a fairy-tale wedding," Mr. Maupin said. "One of our great advantages as gay people is that we've been forced to forge relationships without that fantasy. In doing so, we've figured out what's at the core."

He continued, "Our relationships supported us during the AIDS epidemic. We know what it means to have another person stand by you."

[More Articles in US »](#)

[Free trial.](#) [Read the complete New York edition of The Times on computer, just as it appears in print.](#)

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

[Cheating in Marriage](#)

Find out why so many women today cheat on their husbands
[WomensInfidelity.com](#)

[Wine Country Wedding](#)

Have Your Dream Wedding at One of Oregon's Gorgeous Wineries
[explorer.oregonwine.org](#)

[Weddings Limerick](#)

Wedding Reception by the Shannon in Limerick City Center. Book Now!
[ClarionLimerick.com/Weddings](#)

Tips

To find reference information about the words used in this article, double-click on any word, phrase or name. A new window will open with a dictionary definition or encyclopedia entry.

Past Coverage

- "I Do?" Oh, No. Not Here You Don't. (June 13, 2008)
- WORLD BRIEFING | EUROPE; Norway: New Rights Granted to Gays (June 12, 2008)
- NATIONAL BRIEFING | EAST; New Hampshire: Civil Union for Bishop (June 10, 2008)
- WELL; Gay Unions Shed Light on Gender in Marriage (June 10, 2008)

Related Searches

- * [Homosexuality](#)
- * [Marriages](#)
- * [Weddings and Engagements](#)
- * [California](#)

- [+ Add Alert](#)
- [+ Add Alert](#)
- [+ Add Alert](#)
- [+ Add Alert](#)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



BOOKS »



Essay: James Agee Unfettered

MAGAZINE »



When Mom and Dad Share It All

OPINION »

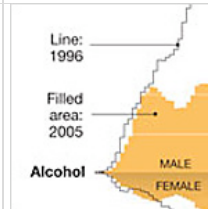
**Editorial:
Iowa's
Disasters,
From Floods to
Tornadoes**

IN THE REGION »



In Harmony With His Daughter

OPINION »



Charles Blow: Why Is Mom in Rehab?

BUSINESS »



In France, Plans to Make a Bit More of the Bubbly

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [N.Y. / Region](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Automobiles](#)
[Back to Top](#)

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)