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#17 Finish Your
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#29 Plan
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#37 Wrestle a
Tiger Shark*

* Not Recommended

**STEVE
NASH**

How to Bring
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MARCH 2009



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Big Sur beats couples counseling

Love Is a Long, Long Road

> No adventure is more fraught with peril than a romantic getaway. Here's how to get there, and back, alive.

Best For CANOODLING

When I told people we were going to Tofino, on Vancouver Island, for our honeymoon, I got the feeling they thought we should have picked someplace warmer, more exotic, or both. We didn't care. Tofino came recommended from trusted sources. Besides, during my research I became obsessed with finding one of the Japanese glass fishing floats that occasionally wash up on the coast. For the first few nights, my wife, Nicole, and I booked one of Frank Island's two cabins (doubles, US\$120; frankisland.com). It was a solar-powered tree house with plenty of privacy—the only way to access the “island” is via a ten-minute walk across a sandspit. We didn't want to leave, despite knowing that our next digs, at the Wickaninnish Inn (doubles, US\$230; wickinn.com), a seaside resort farther up the coast, would be downright luxurious. Which they were. Mostly we wandered the beaches below the Wick, although one morning we did rent sea kayaks and explore Clayoquot Sound (guiding from US\$50; tofino-kayaking.com). We never found any floats. But that's OK. We've got plans to go back for our anniversary. —SAM MOULTON

Best For APOLOGIES

I'd committed some grave error, like begging out of one of her friend's birthday dinners,

and it was time to make amends. So we headed for the Catskills. There are flashier destinations within a few hours of New York City, but we were too broke for the Berkshires and too impatient to watch shining Volvos do slow battle on the L.I.E. That's the thing about these odd little mountains: They're a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Midtown, but they feel like central Vermont. The nights sound like vacuum chambers. Pull off the interstate on Route 28 and drift. When the weather's clear, head to the Devil's Tombstone campground, on Route 214 outside of Hunter, for a six-mile out-and-back ridgeline hike to 3,845-foot Plateau Mountain. When it rains, walk 15 minutes off Route 23A to 230-foot Kaaterskill

THE LINE— Destination Bachelor Parties

Because on that special night, every guy must be willing to say, “That I will not do.”



GET LOST: WITH HER

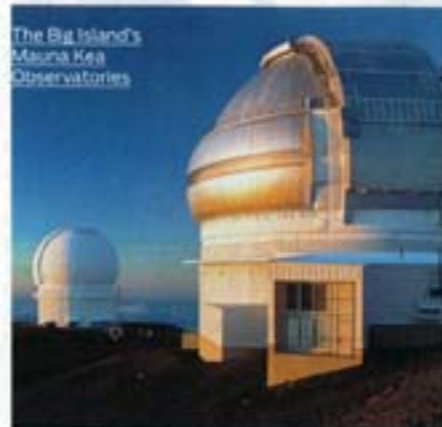
Falls. And when it's dark out, head 20 minutes north, to the town of Purling, where the Tumblin' Falls House bed-and-breakfast comes complete with a hot tub and, out back, a waterfall-fed swimming hole that will make her forget your lapses in judgment (doubles, \$100; tumblinfalls.com). —ABE STREEP

Best For SNOW ANGELS

Bloody Marys at noon; black-diamond bravado; snot rockets in lift lines—ski trips are not usually romantic. But this doesn't have to be the rule. Just insert cross-country before ski and head to Devil's Thumb Ranch, in Tabernash, Colorado, and you'll see (cabins, \$315; devilsthumbranch.com). Surrounded by 12,000-foot peaks, the timber-and-stone ranch is ground zero for the state's best nordic skiing—some 60 miles of groomed trails delve into forests and wind past your cabin. (Rent one instead of the rooms in the lodge. I was impressed.) Dinner? It's organic, locally sourced, and served in a lodge with 40-foot ceilings. While the barbecue may not look as date-friendly as the maple-cured salmon, it's better; go for the rack of ribs and wipe your face before hopping in a copper soaking tub. Then ski back to your cabin, which does not come equipped with television—a good thing. —ALICIA CARR

Best For SEX ON THE BEACH

Date someone long enough and you'll end up in Hawaii. Maui is great for slow hikes, and Oahu is fine if you're toting a tribe of kids, but, at 4,028 square miles, the Big Island offers what none of the others can: variety. Stay at one of Kona Village Resort's Polynesian-style bungalows (from \$610; konavillage.com), where the resort's 82 oceanfront acres have everything you need. Rent a car anyway: The island is home to one of the planet's best drive-up stargazing spots, 13,796-foot Mauna Kea (ifa.hawaii.edu/mko). If it's



The Big Island's Mauna Kea Observatories

a beach day, head to the eastern shore and hike down the access road into the Waipio Valley, where one mile of black sand awaits. And on the last night, grab a six-pack, drive down the dirt path past the Upolu airport to the low volcanic cliffs on the north shore and watch breaching humpbacks ply the channel as the sun sets. And rises. —RYAN KROGH

Best For CARNIVORES

Even if it was a hazy memory, I had driven through Big Sur before. So when we found time for a two-night trip last June, I decided to book a night at the Glen Oaks Big Sur motor lodge (doubles, \$175; glenoaksbigsur.com) and wing the rest. The best thing about Glen Oaks is that it's across the street from the upscale but unpretentious Big Sur Roadhouse (bigsurroadhouse.com), where they serve seared sea bass. And half-pound burgers. The other best thing about Glen Oaks is that it's just north of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park (parks.ca.gov), putting you in a prime position for wandering beneath redwoods and along the foggy, rugged coast, which extends for 90-some miles. And if you're a Route 1 rookie, don't muck it up. Pack a picnic basket and bring good music, or at least rent a convertible. Our goal on day two was Treebones Resort, a cluster of semi-rustic yurts near the south end of Big Sur (yurts from \$155; treebonesresort.com). With an impressive wine selection, a cozy restaurant and lodge, and a heated pool and hot tub overlooking the ocean, there was no reason to go anywhere else. —S.M.

Best For HAVING IT BOTH WAYS

The winning formula for a romantic getaway does not involve little black velvet boxes or little blue pills. It is only this: Let her make the decisions. Just rig things so you're honestly smiling at her choices. Start with “How about



Summer love: Punta Mita, Mexico



Sandy Neck Beach, Cape Cod

Cape Cod?” Here's what to expect from there: “A long beach walk? Sure, we'll cruise six-mile Sandy Neck Beach, north of Barnstable. We can smuggle in the dunes and, uh, I'll bring my surfing rod, just in case. A road ride? Yeah, the 30-mile out-and-back from Wellfleet to Provincetown looks fun [get maps and advice from the Bike Zone, in Hyannis; 508-775-3299]. Surfing? Really?



Kayak surfing, Tofino, Vancouver Island

Kinda cold... Oh, you brought your five-millimeter suit. OK, you can rent a longboard in Wellfleet [\$20; sickdaysurfshop.com] and we'll go to White Crest Beach. I'll watch. And honey, the hotel is up to you, but I thought you might like Chatham Bars Inn [chatham-bars-inn.com]. They have these roomy cottages [\$330 per night]. I love you, too, babe.” —MICHAEL ROBERTS

Best For HIGH ROLLERS

Up for a splurge? This long weekend is worth it—trust me. Friday, fly to Puerto Vallarta, drive 45 minutes north to the swanky resort area of Punta Mita, and check in to your luxe seaside digs (options include Hacienda de Mita villas and the new St. Regis; from \$555; puntamita.com.mx). For dinner, stroll into El Anclote village for a toes-in-the-sand meal at Blue Water Grill (there's no phone; ask around) or try the fancier Café des Artistes del Mar (hoteldesartistesdelmar.com). The next morning, head to El Anclote's Accion Tropical surf shop (acciontropical.com.mx) and ask for local instructor Fox or Eduardo. They'll grab boards and whisk you and your better half, via small boat, to a gorgeous cove with breaks for both of your levels. Post-surfing, hightail it to the Punta Mita Residents' Beach Club, claim two chaises on the stunning beach, order shrimp tacos, and book side-by-side, open-air massages. Stick around for sunset. Sunday: Repeat. —MARY TURNER