

Sunset

February 2009 Issue

20 affordable romantic retreats

Create interest by changing things up. Here are our favorite places to start



Find the top wilderness experiences, beach strolls, romantic escapes, ski resorts, waterfalls, bike rides,

Volcano Rainforest Retreat, Volcano, HI: In the secluded Sanctuary, light candles, make the Tibetan chimes kiss, play a CD of sensuous Indian music, and whisper words from a bedside book of meditations on love. As you snuggle under the Balinese-print quilt, you'll feel a glow that comes only partly from the ornate cast-iron fireplace. **Make it beautiful:** Hide out in the open-air pavilion's Japanese soaking tub, just big enough for two, surrounded by glistening ferns and sweet flowering ginger. \$\$, including breakfast; two-night minimum; on the Big Island. – Bill Harby



Your guide to the West's most spectacular secret beaches. Just don't tell anyone you heard it here

Ka'awa Loa Plantation Bed & Breakfast, Captain Cook, HI (\$125)

On the Big Island, kiss beneath a rainfall showerhead in an outdoor lava-rock shower. Then sip homegrown

Kona java while gazing out at the waters of Kealahou Bay. **Make it interesting:** Try the authentic Hawaiian cedar steam room adjacent to the hot tub. \$\$, including breakfast; two-night minimum. – *Kathy Chin Leong*

Deetjen's Big Sur Inn, Big Sur, CA: Each of the very rustic cottages, which are grouped around a redwood-shaded ravine on a gorgeously untamed coastline, has a name — Grandpa's, Faraway — and each contains a journal in which visitors have bared their souls, sometimes happily, sometimes not. But when the rains lash the redwoods, there's no better place to snuggle and listen to the crackling of a fire in the woodstove. \$ with shared bath, \$\$ with private bath. – *Peter Fish*

The Orchid Inn, Santa Barbara: Orchid blossoms appear on your pillow each night, the beach is just a short walk away, and rooms have wood-burning fireplaces and private entries. **Make it beautiful:** Visit [Santa Barbara Orchid Estate nursery](#), 15 minutes away, featuring orchid species and hybrids from around the world. \$\$\$, including breakfast. – *Chrissy Yost*

Tu Tu'Tun Lodge, Gold Beach, OR: You'll want to say all those sweet nothings sotto voce so your voices don't compete with the soothing bubbling of the Rogue River just outside your room. **Make it beautiful:** Order a "romance basket" (\$125), with chilled Champagne and chocolate-dipped strawberries, to take to the soaking tub on your deck. \$\$, including breakfast. – *Susan G. Hauser*

Briar Patch Inn, near Sedona, AZ: The gurgle of the stream, occasional bleats from mascot sheep, and rustle of leaves as breezes waft down Oak Creek Canyon provide the background music to these stone-and-wood cabins. Doze together in the large hammocks dotting the garden, or share a bottle of wine on the banks of the creek. **Make it beautiful:** Between trees, catch glimpses of Oak Creek Canyon's other walls. \$\$\$, including breakfast; two-night minimum. – *Nora Burba Trulsson*

Hotel Cielo Rojo, San Francisco, Mexico: It's all about foreplay here. Before you even check in, pour yourselves a shot of tequila from the hospitality tray. Venture out to the tawny-walled courtyard, dip your toes in the plunge pool, and ponder what you'll order later at the hotel's teensy outdoor Bistro Organico, before you make your way to your sweetly simple room. **Make it beautiful:** Stroll a few blocks down the cobblestone streets, which are shaded by palm trees and papaya plants, to San Pancho's beach. There, the fiery red sunset might help you ignite a little fire of your own. \$ U.S., including breakfast. – *A.W.*

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