

marry me on a mountain

White goes with wedding the way husband goes with wife and when it comes to wedding locations you don't get whiter than a snow-capped peak, writes Rachael Oakes-Ash. Climb a mountain with your beloved and you'll be certain that you're on top of the world when you both say "I do!"



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Rick Kunelius marries a couple in the Rockies in Alberta, Canada. Picture perfect in the Rockies. Kunelius will arrange everything from helicopter to photographer.



Lake Louise & Banff, Canada

Lake Louise and its surrounding region, including Banff and Canmore, provide a host of truly stunning mountain range locations where you can exchange vows. Think majestic snow-capped Rocky Mountains melting into aquamarine lakes for the perfect photographic backdrop.

There's no waiting period for a marriage license in Alberta so you can get married on a whim or choose to plan well ahead. All you need are two witnesses, a celebrant (or a commissioner, in local parlance) and preferably a helicopter to take you to truly breathtaking peaks for your ceremony.

Rick Kunelius has married over a thousand couples, all of whom are drawn to the remote beauty of this region. Some choose to don kilts and tartan, others wear ski suits with wedding trim and still others wear traditional bridal dress.

Rick and his crew have an extensive network of local wedding services and they can arrange everything for you – helicopter flights, photographer, bubbly, flowers or

whatever you need. All you have to do is show up. Best of all, with only five people, your photographer and the chopper pilot in attendance, you're guaranteed a truly intimate ceremony.

SLEEP OVER At the Fairmont Lake Louise Chateau in a lakefront suite far from the crowds. + 1 403 522 3511

www.fairmonthotels.com

MARRIAGE MAN Rick Kunelius is an Alberta Marriage Commissioner. + 1 403 762 3852

www.kunelius.com

SNAP HAPPY Brenda Falvey is a wedding photographer. + 1 403 609 2413

www.falveyphotography.com

BRIDAL BEAUTY Treat yourself to the Willow Spa at Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel for pre-wedding couple treatments.

Tel + 1 403 762 2211

www.fairmonthotels.com

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

www.skibig3.com

PHOTOGRAPHY: RACHAEL OAKES-ASH



WEDDINGMOONS



Loveland, Colorado, USA

Every Valentines Day at the Loveland Ski Resort in Colorado, couples arrive from far and wide to declare their love for each other on top of the mountain. It's the annual "Marry me and ski for free" day. A mass wedding ceremony takes place at noon with a celebrant who marries around 60 couples and renews the vows of others wanting to recommit.

Brides are creative in their attire, from full wedding frocks on skis to veils glued to snowboarding helmets, roses twisted around ski poles, top hats and tails, even faux leopard skin. If you like your wedding filled with laughter, then this is for you.

After the ceremony the newlyweds ski down to the valley floor for a group reception with family and friends. It's quirky, it's different and it's for the truly dedicated snow sports enthusiast. It's cheap too: registration costs \$10 and the same amount for each guest. Marry on the day and your ski pass is free.

SLEEP OVER Denver is less than an hour's drive from the Loveland ski field. Bed down

in Hotel Teatro and know that Gwyneth and Chris have cosied up between the Frette linen sheets here too. Favoured by celebrities for its service with a capital S, you can soak in your personal aromatherapy tub, pre-wedding. Romance packages start from US\$199 per night. + 1 303 228 1100

www.hoteleatro.com

BRIDAL BEAUTY: The Spa at the Brown Palace in downtown Denver is truly lush-a-licious. Cocooned in a basement with complimentary spa dining menu, massage, facial, manicures, hair salon and eucalyptus steam rooms you won't want to leave.

+ 1 303 297 3111

www.brownpalace.com

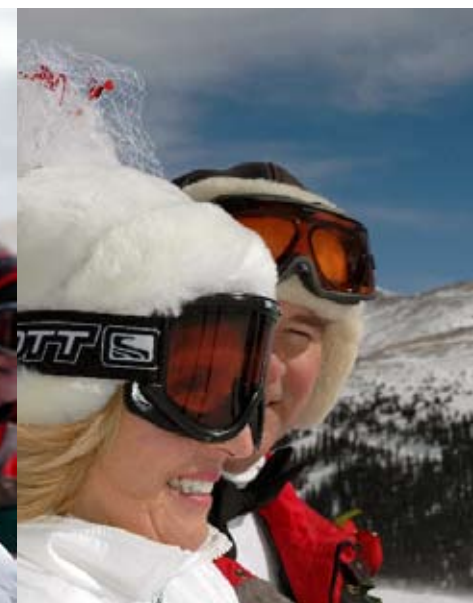
HAPPY SNAPS 2 Sisters Wedding Photographers have been voted Denver's best. What you save on the wedding ceremony and reception you can spend on the photos.

+ 1 303 948 5363

www.2sistersphoto.com

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

www.skiloveland.com



Scenes from the "Marry me and ski for free" day at Loveland Ski Resort in Colorado. Brides are creative in their attire from full wedding frocks on skis to veils glued to snowboarding helmets, roses twisted around ski poles, top hats and tails, even faux leopard skin.