

When romance on the piste leads to true love, and your passion for wintersports is matched only by your passion for one another, then the next stage in the relationship could be to propose on a chairlift and tie the knot at the top of a snow-capped mountain.

However, planning to get hitched on a mountain takes some organising, particularly as the possibilities in Europe are limited. In France, you need proof of residency and local witnesses, which only makes sense if you intend spending a couple of months living in a ski resort beforehand. This also allows plenty of time to practise saying your vows in French and to understand what they mean. Austria and Slovenia both offer weddings to overseas travellers, although services must take place in a traditional register office, not at the top of a mountain.

Not surprisingly, therefore, most people who want to say their vows on a secluded peak go to North America. It is simpler than in Europe and in most resorts you can do it anywhere. Snowy white weddings are big business, and promotional brochures are packed with hyperbole promising the most wonderful day of your life.

The British winter sports favourite of Banff, in Canada, is also a favourite with those wanting to get married. Besides offering the most incredible scenery in the West, Banff is proud of its user-friendly wedding legislation – or, as local wedding commissioner Rick Kunelius says, “No blood tests, no waiting period, no registered locations.”

As a former National Parks warden, Kunelius knows every inch of the terrain and offers weddings on a mountain top, a glacier, a lake or even while heliskiing. He promises that the ceremony will always be dignified and solemn, but he’s happy to include a bit of frivolity as well. “I am willing to go almost anywhere to perform a marriage ceremony, just as long as there’s room for two witnesses and myself,” he says. For more information on Banff weddings, visit www.kunelius.com or www.carmichaelphoto.com.

South of the border in California’s aptly-named

Heavenly Valley, you can ski or snowboard to your choice of secluded spot overlooking the majestic, cobalt-blue waters of Lake Tahoe and then take your vows. After the short ceremony, you are invited to make your first tracks as husband and wife, preferably holding hands (failure to turn at the same time may lead to the first marital disagreement). The package costs from about £500, or £560 on Saturdays, and includes the licence (no blood test), notary fee, a wedding certificate, 30 ceremony photos and four lift passes – one each for the wedding couple, minister, and photographer. An extra £100 or so buys you a professional video. In case of bad weather, a further £60 will secure you a chapel backdrop. Oh, and you’ll also need to stump up another £60 for the confetti clean-up. Contact the Lake Tahoe Wedding and Honey-moon Association (www.tahoeguide.com) or try www.skiheavenly.com.

The views will take your breath away even if your loved one doesn't

If your dream is to say “I do” among snowflakes and pines, wearing skis or snowshoes, look no further than the romantic Teton Mountains in Wyoming. Winter Adventure Weddings in Jackson Hole will arrange the whole event from accommodation to flowers, and provide a dog sled or horse-drawn sleigh for those couples who aren’t so keen on wearing skis with a bridal gown and morning suit. More details of an “intimate wedding in your own winter wonderland” are available on www.swopephoto.com, or, for a specific location, look at the facilities offered by the Wildflower Inn at Jackson Hole (www.jacksonhole.net.com).

The Colorado resorts of Vail, Aspen, Beaver Creek and Arrowhead Mountain all promote a variety of restaurants and venues that can be used for wedding ceremonies, including special decks on each mountain with

spectacular views of the ranges. Worth looking at is www.powderhorn.com, which promises to “make your day as unique and special as the one you love”.

In the A-list resort of Telluride, one of the most fashionable places to be seen getting hitched is Allred Lodge, which claims to offer a truly Cloud Nine experience. Perched at 10,535 feet at the top of the gondola, this exclusive timber and stone restaurant affords stunning views of soaring peaks and the twinkling lights of the historic town below. Check out www.visittelluride.com and start saving.

And finally, the ultimate winter wonderland wedding ceremony comes courtesy of PureWest Adventures. This one will keep you the centre of attention at urban dinner parties for the rest of your married life. Adventurous couples board a Cessna 185 ski-plane and fly over the Continental Divide to one of the vast icefields that serves as the backdrop to the ceremony. Vows are declared at around 9,000 feet, surrounded by 11,000ft mountain peaks (which should make you breathless, even if your loved one doesn’t).

After the ceremony, you re-board the ski-plane and continue the scenic air tour through the Rockies. The trip lasts two hours and costs about £125 per person, with a maximum of four passengers, including bride, groom and a Justice of the Peace. Go to www.purewest.com/adventures to find out more.

The excitement and romance of a mountain wedding may well seem more alluring than popping down to the local register office followed by a family knees-up at the rugby club. However, saying your vows at altitude is not necessarily the passport to many years of wedded bliss, as model Christie Brinkley found out. She married Richard Taubman in 1994 at the top of 12,000ft Telluride Mountain. Their spectacular exit from the ceremony on skis was surpassed only by their spectacular divorce eight months later.

● Thomson Ski (0870 606 1470; www.thomson-ski.co.uk) and First Choice (0870 754 3477; www.fc.ski.com) both feature wedding packages in North America and Austria.