

### Mark & Linda Ryan

**Honeymooned with friends at Burning Man Festival, Nevada, before renewing vows in Vegas**

"We had a three-part honeymoon, and from the outset it was unconventional in that we brought our buddies with us! The first leg brought us to Nevada's Black Rock Desert for the annual Burning Man Festival and a week of outdoor partying. For the second leg, still with buddies in tow, we ditched the camper van in Reno and flew to Las Vegas to renew our wedding vows trailer-trash-style at a tacky little wedding chapel officiated by Elvis himself. At this stage it was time to dump our pals and unwind on a ten-day cruise around the Caribbean. There were a few good reasons for choosing such an unconventional honeymoon: We'd been to Burning Man Festival before and loved it, so felt it was a good opportunity to go again. Vegas came about because we thought it would be good craic to re-enact our wedding Vegas-style. And we added the cruise to make sure we had some real chill out honeymoon time."



YOUR HONEYMOON IS GOING TO BE YOUR HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME. TWO WEEKS ON A SUNNY BEACH MIGHTN'T CUT IT FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVER, SO WHY NOT TAKE INSPIRATION FROM THESE ADVENTUROUS HONEYMOONERS? FROM ROUND-THE-WORLD TRIPS TO A WILD DESERT FESTIVAL AND WORKING WITH AFRICAN WILDLIFE, ALISON BOURKE TALKS TO SIX COUPLES THAT DARED TO BE DIFFERENT.

# REAL LIFE Honeymoon Adventures

### Alan & Aoife Ryan

**Currently honeymooning on a Round the World trip**

"Our honeymoon was the perfect opportunity to do the big jaunt we'd always dreamed of. And the wedding, with our closest friends and family, was the perfect send off on our adventure. We travelled overland on the Trans-Mongolian Railway, across Russia to Beijing and then by ferry from Shanghai to Japan. For the next few months we travelled around China, Tibet, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand before heading to Australia and New Zealand. At the moment we're in South America. We had to take a lot of time off work, but the first step out the door was the hardest and it's been all we imagined and more. The people we've met - from Mongolian horsemen to Tibetan monks - to places we've seen - from watching the new year's sun rise over the Angkor temples in Cambodia to horse-riding in the hills of Chile - are priceless and will remain amongst our fondest memories. Our honeymoon has also been an opportunity to spend loads of time together. For any couple trying to decide where to go, make sure you get to do things that both you enjoy: whether that's lying on the beach in Koh Tao, gliding in a gondola in Venice or hiking up to Everest Base Camp in Tibet, it's up to you!"



### Jenny & Mark Samuels

**Honeymooned on a game ranger guide course in Africa**

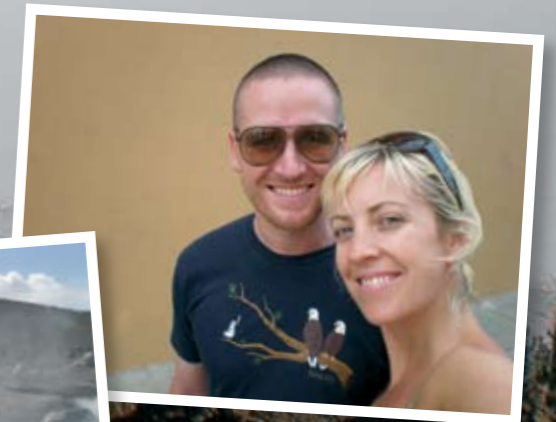
"We chose a game rangers course (with [www.conservationafrica.net](http://www.conservationafrica.net)) because we wanted a honeymoon that would be an experience of a lifetime. We're both active people who enjoy holidays that allow you to participate and grow as a person, so the opportunity to spend two weeks in the South African bush was one we couldn't pass up. The accommodation was situated in a spot remote from other tourists. Elephants would pass within meters of us and we would sleep listening to lions roaring! The bush was surprisingly romantic and we had many very special moments. It certainly was the perfect start to our marriage."



### Aidan Durkin & Lia Bresnihan

**Set off on honeymoon with a one-way ticket to South America**

"We never wanted to get married and simply settle down, so as soon as we got engaged we started planning a long honeymoon. We bought a one-way ticket to Buenos Aires and had no real plan. In Argentina we went whale watching in Puerto Madryn, white water rafting in Salta and cycling and trekking in Bariloche. We met people who'd passed through Colombia and, after hearing their stories, we decided to go there. We got to the beautiful city of Cartagena and decided to settle there for a while. So, we rented an apartment within the old city walls, met lots of Colombians and got into the Caribbean way of life. Another highlight was a six-day trek through the jungle to The Lost City. We slept on hammocks, cooked over log fires, met indigenous Indian tribes and trekked deep into the hot jungle. In Chile the highlight was a trek through Torres Del Paine national park in Patagonia. We camped along the way and passed through some of the most beautiful scenery ranging from glacier to beach, forest to deep rivers. In Bolivia we ran into the President, Evo Morales, in Villazon and Benicio Del Toro in La Paz. And we had ten days in Venezuela, spending several on the Caribbean archipelago islands of Los Roques. Over the six and a half months we spent time in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela, all before arriving in Sydney."



## Simon & Helen Pickup

**Combined ski-ing in Switzerland with studying lions in Kenya**

"Two weeks in a beach hut in the Maldives was never going to be right for us. We'd both travelled to various places around the world and like adventure – our last holiday had been trekking up Mount Kinabalu in Borneo! Our honeymoon started in Wengen, Switzerland with five days skiing. Then we travelled to Kenya where we joined an Earthwatch trip studying the maneless lions of Tsavo with a view to mitigating human/lion conflict. We stayed in tents in separate camp beds – so although it was a wonderful experience to watch lions in the wild, it wasn't exactly romantic! Then from Tsavo we travelled to the Kenyan coast and the resort of Malindi. Here we enjoyed an indulgent few days on the beach. Most people thought we were a little crazy to spend our honeymoon on conservation work, and wondered what we would pack to go on safari and skiing! But for us it was a perfect way to start married life." ■

## Sam & Beth Hardwick

**Backpacked around the world for five months**

"Sam and I spent the two years before our wedding driving long distances to see each other. We had never had much of a stretch of time alone or without agenda or time restraints. So, when we got married we decided to rectify that, backpacking for five months in the USA, Cook Islands, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong. When we told people our plans, most were really supportive. We had a lot of people saying they wished they had done something similar or telling us that their honeymoon had been boring! Then there was the handful that said we couldn't afford it. But a tight budget and living in 12-bedded dorms was half the challenge. The best thing about our trip was being together for such a long time. It gave us so much time to learn about each other and to grow as a couple. Trip highlights were USA for Sam and New Zealand for me. Experiencing such a mix of cultures, scenery and people was fantastic. The harder aspects were wanting the odd night of pure self-indulgent luxury and romance but not being able to afford it... and the flight home! All in all though, it was the best thing we could have ever done and we'd both do it over again if we could."

