A Slice of Paradise in Seoul's New Centerpiece

The Park Hyatt Seoul with Dom Pérignon, by Benjamin Freeland

Planning a wedding is a thorny business at the best of times, and in the case of international couples, no issue is thornier than the question of where the wedding is to take place. In such cases, the most attractive and clear-cut solution is invariably a neutral third country, beckoning with the promise of romance, adventure and escape from the machinations of extended families and the cultural baggage they bring with them. For international couples seeking to elope in a third country, the range of possibilities is enormous.

Paris, of course, has long reigned supreme for eloping couples thanks to its irresistible mélange of romance, sophistication, fine dining and old world charm, followed closely by Hawaii's enticing mix of sea, sand, sun and slow living, with Mexico's Mayan Riviera, Australia's Gold Coast and the Scottish Highlands rounding out the top tier. However, a whole swathe of options exists for couples looking for something off the beaten track.

Indulge at the Park Hyatt Seoul.

Seoul, for example, while invariably not a place that most people associate with romantic getaways, nonetheless represents a beguiling Asian megacity bursting with energy, boasting some of the region's finest lodgings, dining, shopping, and cultural happenings. This coupled with its close proximity to Japan and easy air access from Tokyo make the place an attractive escape from the Japanese capital. And with the city's new flagship luxury hotel, the Park Hyatt Seoul, currently offering an enticing new limited-time-only accommodation package entitled The Park with Dom Pérignon, the time has never been better to book that luxurious getaway in South Korea's frenetic capital.

The growth of South Korea's tourist sector in recent years has resulted in a luxury hotel boom in the country's capital, and of the numerous recent additions to the city's cast of luxurious lodgings, none have been grander than the Park Hyatt Seoul. Situated in the city's central business district of Gangnam, directly opposite the COEX (Conference & Exhibition) Center, the 24-storey Park Hyatt Seoul was designed by the esteemed Japanese design firm Super Potato (a firm whose design portfolio includes the Sony Building in Tokyo and Kobe's Mosaic Harbor Land complex), opening its doors to the public in April 2005.

With a view to setting a new standard of luxury and grand hospitality in this high-powered metropolis, the Park Hyatt features 185 guestrooms, including one Presidential Suite, two Diplomatic Suites and 35 Park Suites, and boasts the largest guestrooms in the city, at 52 square meters each. Every guestroom comes with a custom-designed feather bed, a 32-inch flat screen television set, a DVD and CD player, multi-line telephones and high-speed internet access. In addition to this, the hotel also features a 570-square-meter Park Club spa and fitness center, which includes a Techno Gym that sits atop the building, offering one of the most spectacular views of the city available anywhere, as well as an indoor heated pool, a sauna, a steam room, Jacuzzi and plunge pools.

The Park Hyatt's culinary and refreshment options run the gamut, ranging from its signature restaurant The Cornerstone, featuring a selection of over 3,000 French and Italian wines and captained by master Torino chef Stefano Di Salvo, to The Timber House, which fuses traditional Korean design with live jazz and a mix of Japanese and Korean tipples. The hotel also houses six conference and boardrooms, all equipped with the most up-to-date media technology, and is encompassed in its entirety by a wireless LAN network.

With a view to drawing the romantic getaway-honeymoon crowd, the Park Hyatt Seoul is currently offering a special package deal entitled The Park with Dom Pérignon, offered for a limited time only, until the end of March of this year. This package deal includes one night's accommodation in one of the hotel's luxurious Park Rooms, breakfast buffet or weekend brunch at The Cornerstone, a cocktail class at The Timber House (Friday–Saturday, 6pm–7pm), free access to the fitness center, swimming pool and sauna, and, of course, a bottle of Dom Pérignon Vintage 1999 for good measure. Price for this package starts at 380,000 Korean won per night (per room) plus 10 percent tax, and it is recommended that reservations be booked at least a week ahead of time.

The Gangnam area which encompasses the Park Hyatt Seoul features the Apgujeong Shopping Center, which offers some of Seoul's finest shopping, as well as the stunning new COEX Center, roughly the Korean capital's equivalent to the Tokyo International Forum in Yurakucho, in both form and function. The area is accessible from Samsung Station on Line #2 of the Seoul Subway, and from Gimpo Airport (Seoul's domestic airport, which is now also conveniently connected to Tokyo-Haneda) the hotel is accessible either by limousine bus (40,000 won one-way) or by taxi (between 60,000 and 80,000 won).

In addition to the Dom Pérignon Package, the Park Hyatt Seoul also offers its regular Romance Package and Wedding Package, as does the rest of the global Park Hyatt network. It is well worth noting that the Park Hyatt provides an extra incentive for couples to tie the knot under one of their roofs, be that in Seoul or anywhere else with a Park Hyatt—couples who celebrate their wedding at the Park Hyatt are entitled to two complimentary nights' accommodation at any Park Hyatt or Hyatt Resort, be that in Paris, Kauai or Dubai. In other words, as the hotel's promotional literature puts it, "Celebrate your wedding with us and your first anniversary is on us." And given the ever widening reach of the Hyatt network, which has expanded in recent years to Saigon, Buenos Aires, Kyiv and Tianjin, the possibilities for a second honeymoon are nearly endless.

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