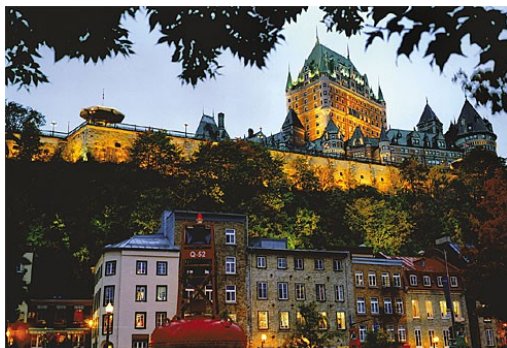


10 great places to be on Cloud 9 with your sweetheart

http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/10great/2008-02-07-10-great_N.htm



Soar to new heights with your love on Valentine's Day. **Carley Roney**, editor in chief of *TheNest.com*, a popular lifestyle website for couples, shares her list of favorite over-the-top destinations with **Kathy Baruffi** for USA TODAY.

Ladera Resort

St. Lucia

"Nothing, not even a wall, comes between you and the lush, bird's-eye views of the Pitons, the island's twin volcanic peaks, and the ocean," Roney says. Rooms in this boutique hotel, which is perched like a luxury treehouse on a forested ridge 1,100 feet above the Caribbean, have only three walls, bringing you exhilaratingly close to nature. Have a couples massage at the spa, and then feast at Dasheene, the hotel's restaurant with Caribbean accents. 866-290-0978; ladera.com

Top of the World Restaurant

Las Vegas

"You'll feel like you're walking on clouds together at this revolving restaurant on the 106th floor of the Stratosphere Casino & Hotel, more than 850 feet above the sparkling lights of the 'Wedding Capital of the World,'" Roney says. "Bonus activities: The world's highest thrill ride, Big Shot freefall ride (dresses not recommended), is located above the restaurant. Toast being a twosome with a 2-foot-tall Stratoblaster glass filled with Champagne at the expansive casino downstairs." 702-380-7711; topoftheworldlv.com

Napa Valley Aloft

Yountville, Calif.

"Napa Valley is ultra-romantic — especially when you fly high over the vineyards in a hot-air balloon ride," Roney says. "You and your date get picked up at your hotel at dawn for a drive to the launch site, V Marketplace at Vintage 1870 Wine Cellar. Upon your return from the dramatic sights above Napa and Sonoma, you'll be treated to a delicious breakfast and driven back to your inn in time to begin a day of traditional vineyard tours." Select the Adventures Aloft package. 800-944-4408; napavalleyaloft.com

Fairmont Le Château Frontenac

Quebec

"Request a room on the exclusive Fairmont Gold Floor and get the royal treatment at this grand hotel with castle-style architecture towering on a bluff above the St. Lawrence River in the heart of Old Quebec," Roney says. Dress up for dinner at Le Champlain, where hotel chef Jean Soulard's cuisine includes

selections from the surrounding agricultural region. Later, ride the funicular down to walk arm-in-arm on the cobblestone streets and explore this historic city. 418-692-3861; fairmont.com/frontenac

Goliath Hypercoaster

Six Flags Magic Mountain

Valencia, Calif. "Looking for a romantic rush? Strap into a wild ride at 85 mph on one of the tallest, fastest roller coasters in the world. The anticipation-building ascent will give you time to recount all the things you love about each other before you take the white-knuckled plunge together," Roney says. "It's a full-body rush and will get those endorphins going, which is an instant aphrodisiac." 661-255-4100; sixflags.com/magicmountain

Top of the Rock Observation Deck

New York

"Ride a glass-ceiling elevator up 67 stories to this historic perch atop one of Manhattan's most recognizable art-deco landmark skyscrapers: 30 Rockefeller Plaza. This romantic destination has 360-degree views of the city that never sleeps," Roney says. Snuggle together on either the 67th-, 69th- or 70th-floor observation decks and identify the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building, Central Park and Brooklyn Bridge, as well as views of the Hudson River and the East River. 212-698-2000; topoftherocknyc.com

The London Eye

London

"Also known as the Millennium Wheel, this landmark on the South Bank of the Thames takes you up 443 feet to catch dramatic views of Buckingham Palace, St. James's Palace, the Houses of Parliament, and views of London up to 25 miles in every direction," Roney says. "Splurge and upgrade to your own Cupid's Capsule, a romantic private capsule complete with a bottle of Laurent-Perrier Champagne and pink truffles served by your host." www.londoneye.com

Hotel Villa Caletas

Near Jaco Beach, Costa Rica

"Take in the lush tropics and eye-catching sunsets of Costa Rica's central Pacific coast from 1,150 feet above the ocean at the Hotel Villa Caletas," Roney says. "Enjoy cocktails and dinner set to music as you watch the sun dip into the horizon from the resort's cliff-side amphitheater. Then return to your French-Colonial suite (with its own infinity pool) for private time." hotelvillacaletas.com

Space Needle

Seattle

"Whisper sweet nothings while viewing snow-capped Mount Rainier, the Cascade Mountains and the majestic Olympics as well as the waters of Puget Sound, sparkling Lake Union and Elliott Bay," Roney says. "Share one of the Observation Deck's complimentary Swarovski telescopes that are so powerful, you could spot a friend in the stands at the baseball stadium a couple of miles away. Munch on a sumptuous meal at SkyCity, the needle's 360-degree-view restaurant." 206-905-2100; spaceneedle.com

Sears Tower Skydeck

Chicago

"If you're looking for a natural high together, head to Chicago and the Sears Tower Skydeck. On a clear day, the walk-around view (from the 103rd floor) includes Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin, as well as the city's remarkable architecture," Roney says. "The sights aren't just out the window. Interactive, museum-quality exhibits inside tell the stories of Chicago's past and present." Stay at the Sofitel Water Tower, where a romance concierge and special Valentine's Day chocolate martini will complement your day. 312-875-9696; the-skydeck.com