

WORDS BY HARMONY WALTON

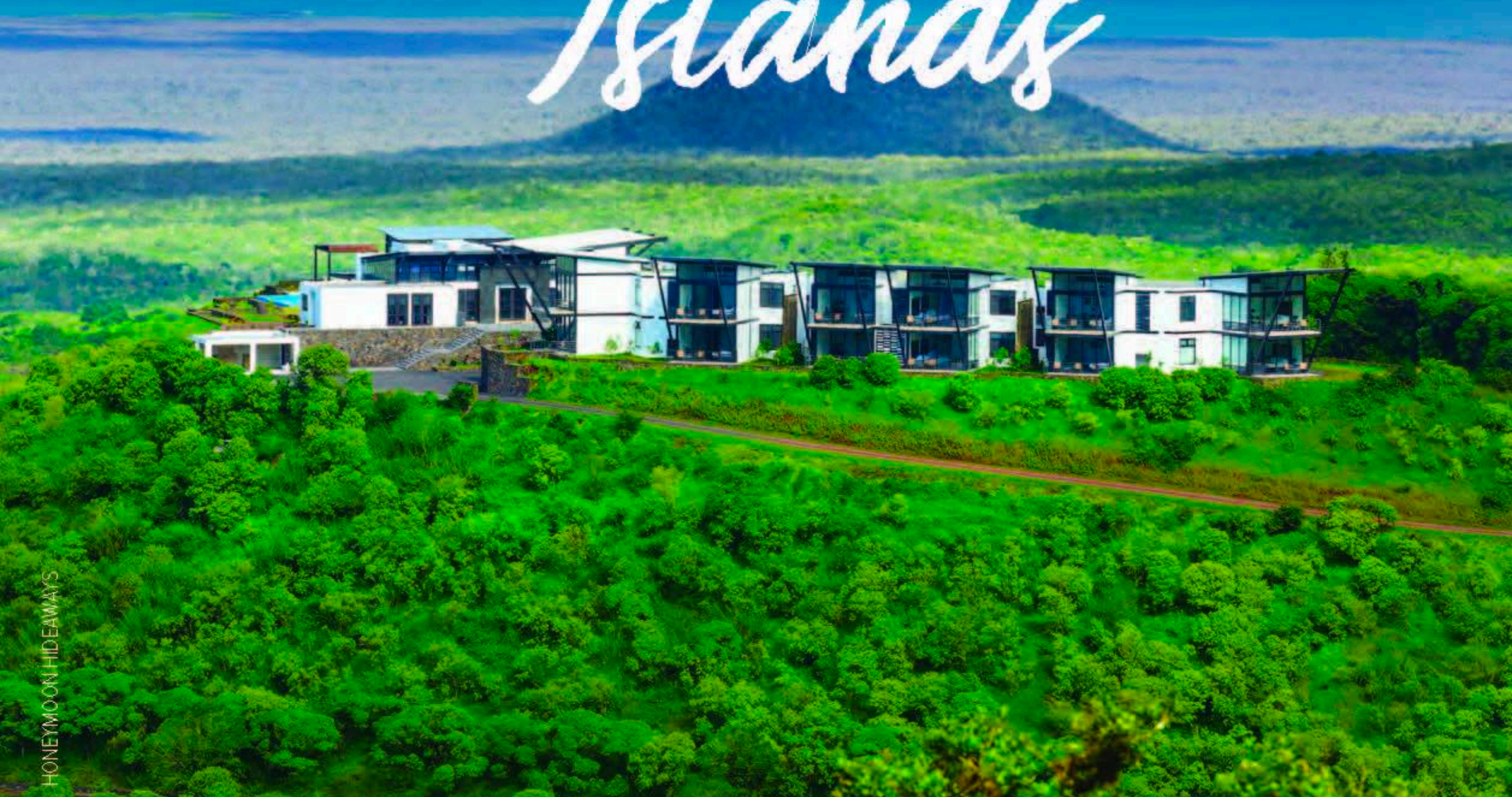
If your curiosity of life and love of exploration means you're the type of couple who doesn't sit still on a beach, then honeymooning in the Galápagos Islands is the perfect place to begin your newlywed adventures. Located an hour-and-a-half off the coast of mainland Ecuador (six hours fly time from New York), the destination is remote by design, so every element of its beauty is preserved for your wonderment. Once you land in this one-of-a-kind oasis, a short ferry ride takes you to the island of Santa Cruz, where a luxury, eco-conscious boutique hotel has been constructed.

Pikaia Lodge is a land and sea experience that marries the best of both worlds in the islands. With just 14 rooms (the pool suite is perfect for honeymooners), you'll disconnect from daily life, city living and crowds, luxuriating

Photos courtesy of: Pikaia Lodge

**A GRAND
ADVENTURE
IN THE**

Galápagos Islands



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in the highland clouds. The property is an architectural marvel that feels more like a villa you can call home; complete with a movie lounge, bar and island education in the evenings. The restaurant, EVOLUTION, is a mix of inventive Peruvian, Ecuadorian and American favorites on a rotating menu to ensure variety. The pool deck is the ideal place to watch the fog roll in at night and enjoy the hot Ecuadorian sun by day. But, you won't find much downtime here. Pikaia Lodge plans itineraries for every kind of adventurer. This unique, all-inclusive traveling experience pairs delicious fare and fun cocktails with daily land and sea excursions, all of which you won't want to miss. "While doing the booking, our reservation agents organize the guests' itineraries in order to maximize their exposure to other islands and [provide] adequate down time at the lodge," Andrew Balfour, General Manager of Pikaia Lodge explained. "The end result is a

balanced program with activities, resting time and plenty of nature exposure."

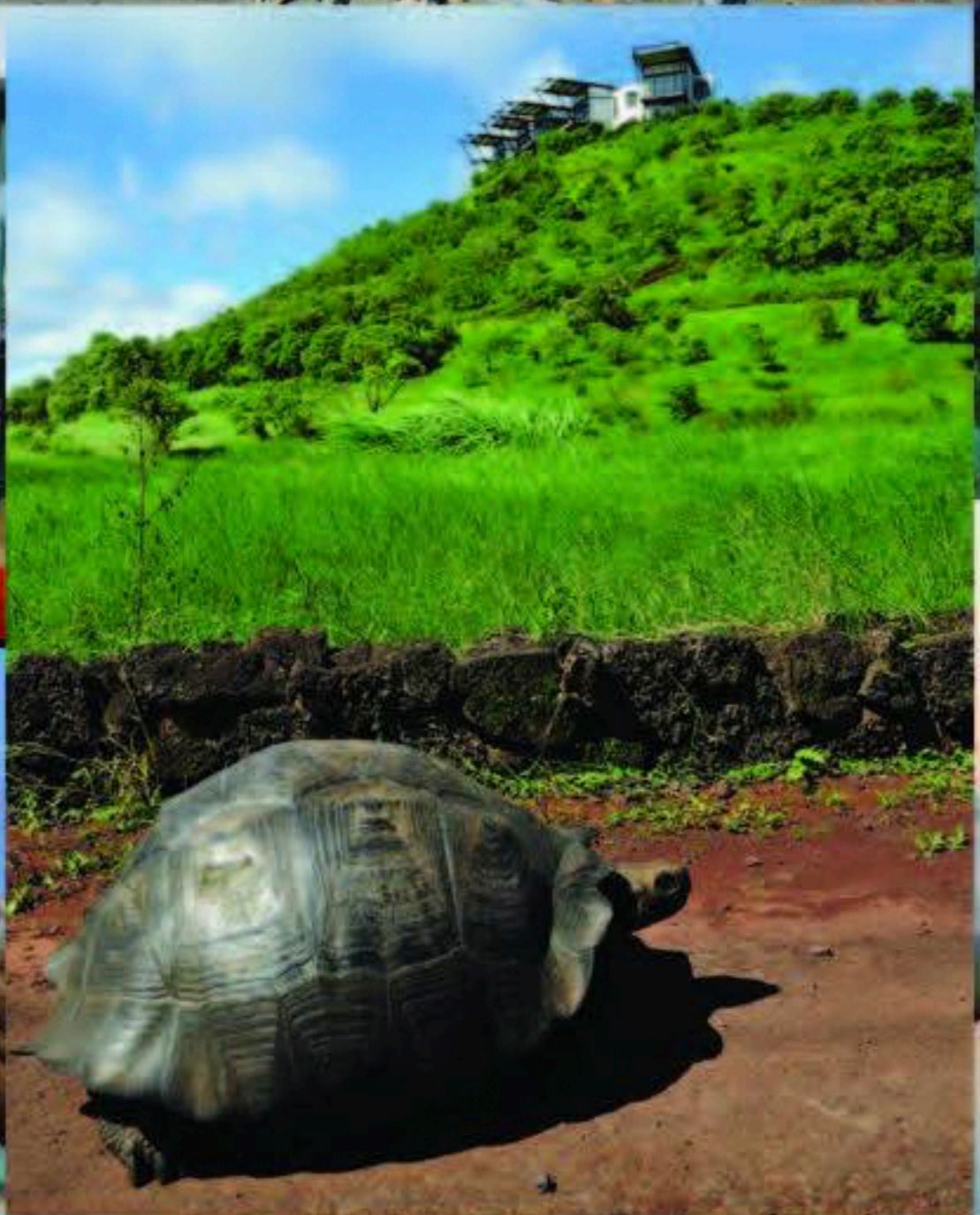
The most popular four-night exploration package includes naturalist-guided land visits to giant volcanic sinkholes and a trip to see 500-pound land tortoises in the wild. Herein lies the real beauty, because everything in the Galápagos is in the wild, untouched by humans, protected by the government and friendly as can be, so you can get up close and personal with it all. A highlight of the daily tours is a visit to Santa Fé Bay where sea lions give birth to their young, swim with snorkelers and sunbathe side-by-side on the sand. Bird-watching along the shoreline of Bartolomé to spot rare tropical penguins also tops the hits list. And for those sea excursions, Pikaia Lodge owns its own yacht, the MAY Pikaia I, which is the only yacht in Galápagos with guest cabins permitted for day tours, so afternoons out on the water are hardly roughing

it. No matter what your pleasure, a unique honeymoon experience can be created accordingly. "Guests can plan for surf lessons, diving day trips, cycling programs, catch and release fishing, a day of hiking or simply take it easy and enjoy our spa and pool area," Balfour suggests.

If you want to experience the best that Mother Nature has given us, but from the comfort of an impeccably-designed hotel and matching yacht, then seeing the Galápagos Islands by land and sea with Pikaia Lodge is perfect for your post-wedding trip-of-a-lifetime. It's also ideal for intimate destination wedding buyouts!

INSIDER TIP

Plan a stopover en route in Guayaquil for a night or two. Break up your travel at the charming Hotel del Parque and enjoy the wildlife sanctuary alongside the property before you depart for the islands.



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