

'Divorce Hotel' Promises a Quick Split For One Flat Fee

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Two days of mediation, then a visit to the spa

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Gideon Putnam Resort & Spa

Divorce is one of life's greatest (and most expensive) stressors. But does it have to be?

Divorce Hotel, which promises a painless two-day divorce mediation weekend, is bringing its program from the Netherlands to the United States. It's teamed with the swanky [Gideon Putnam Resort](#) in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., to offer a unique [package](#) consisting of two separate rooms and two days with a mediator to finalize the terms of a divorce agreement -- all for a flat fee of \$5,000.

This isn't a divorce for just anyone. As with all divorce mediation, which is considerably more affordable than the dueling variety involving attorneys, it works best when the parties are amicable and speaking freely with each other.

The resort is already well-known as a wedding destination. And now it is serving as a soothing environment for what can be one of life's most stressful events, regardless of how well the couple gets along.

"Saratoga Springs is famous for the healing powers of our mineral baths," said Rob Scarlotta, director of sales and marketing at the Gideon Putnam. "Divorce may be an end, but it's also a beginning."

The Divorce Hotel organization approached the Gideon Putnam, he told AOL Jobs, because they saw in the hotel a destination that would allow the participants to renew themselves physically, mentally and spiritually.

"We're just the place where it happens," he said. "'Divorce Hotel' is a process, not a place."

At the end of the weekend, couples will still technically be "married," but will walk away with the documentation to seal their divorce agreement, ready for submission to a court.

Netherlands-based Jim Halfens, CEO of Divorce Hotel, told AOL Jobs he launched the business three years ago because he was frustrated by the needless expense involved with the adversarial legal system. He witnessed this from inside as the commercial director of a law office.

All mediators will be specially trained in Divorce Hotel methods. Because the most difficult part of a divorce is reaching an agreement, the "pressure cooker" atmosphere to get it done in two days can help accelerate the process and keep costs down, Halfens said. Interested mediators can apply to join the program at DivorceHotel.com

"We wanted to be 100 percent sure our concept worked," before introducing it to the U.S. market, Halfens added. In the Netherlands, six participating hotels have been the venue to hundreds of mediated sessions.

"There are ethics issues," because of the lack of separate attorneys to provide legal review, cautioned Anju Jessani, an accredited professional mediator, and founder of New Jersey-based [Divorce with Dignity Mediation Services](#).

"What if they need the help of a third-party expert such as a business appraiser, pension appraiser or special-needs child specialist? What if they forget or don't bring key documents such as their retirement savings statement?"

"Marry in haste, repent at leisure," she quips. "Same applies to divorce!"