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FIELD NOTES

Marry Me at 8 on the 8th, O.K.?

By [JENNIFER 8. LEE](#)

AFTER becoming engaged last year in Paris, Grace Fung and Victor Chiu returned to New York to discover that event spaces for their wedding on the second Friday of August were already booked. The logjam was unusual for a Friday, but the date in question is this Friday — 08/08/08.

“As a homonym, the number 8 sounds like ‘good fortune’ in Mandarin and Cantonese,” said Ms. Fung, who, like her fiancé, is of Chinese descent.

So, this fortuitous Friday is not only the chosen date of the opening ceremony for the Beijing Olympics; it has also been circled in red by many couples. (Ms. Fung and Mr. Chiu finally secured a booking for their lucky day at the [New York Botanical Garden](#).)

Chinese people find the 8’s highly desirable for cellphone numbers, license plates, prices (and this reporter’s byline).

In Beijing, officials expect more weddings than usual on Aug. 8, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. The Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau has provided an online booking service since June 20 for couples wanting to marry on Friday, giving them until Tuesday to sign up.

But this bump extends beyond China. The Knot, a wedding media and service company, says the number of weddings registered on its Web sites ([theknot.com](#) and [weddingchannel.com](#)) for 08/08/08 are four times that of other Fridays in August — 22,000 vs. 5,000.

Rob Johnsen and Polly Cohen have planned a Chinese-theme wedding in the Seattle area.

“We’re both really superstitious, and I’m a big gambler and 8 has always been my lucky number since I was born,” said Mr. Johnsen, a founder of [MyWedding.com](#). “We’re both 37 years old, and we figure that this point in our life we need all the luck we can get.”

But so far the 8’s are far behind the lucky 7’s. On July 7, 2007, a Saturday, the Knot counted 70,000 online-registered weddings.

Businesses saw opportunity in the numbers. Joseph Kohn, a photographer in San Francisco, said he is juggling five bookings that day. And when Elite Island Resorts, an umbrella group of Caribbean properties, observed many customer inquiries about that date, it designed an 08/08/08 wedding deal.

Steven Heydt, the president of Elite, said the eighth would be graced by 12 weddings at six of its resorts, an

unusual proliferation.

Las Vegas hotels are advertising \$888 and \$1,888 wedding packages, or deals for the first 88 couples. “Obviously numbers are very important to Las Vegas,” said Lisa Roughley, a spokeswoman for the J W Marriott Las Vegas Resort and Spa, which is offering a free spa deal for bridal parties with the big 8 date.

Mr. Johnsen said, luck aside, 8 appeals for another aesthetic and symbolic reason.

“Our logo on invitations is 8 turned sideways — infinity,” Mr. Johnsen said.

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