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TRAVEL beyond the beach

*Travel is
Back!*

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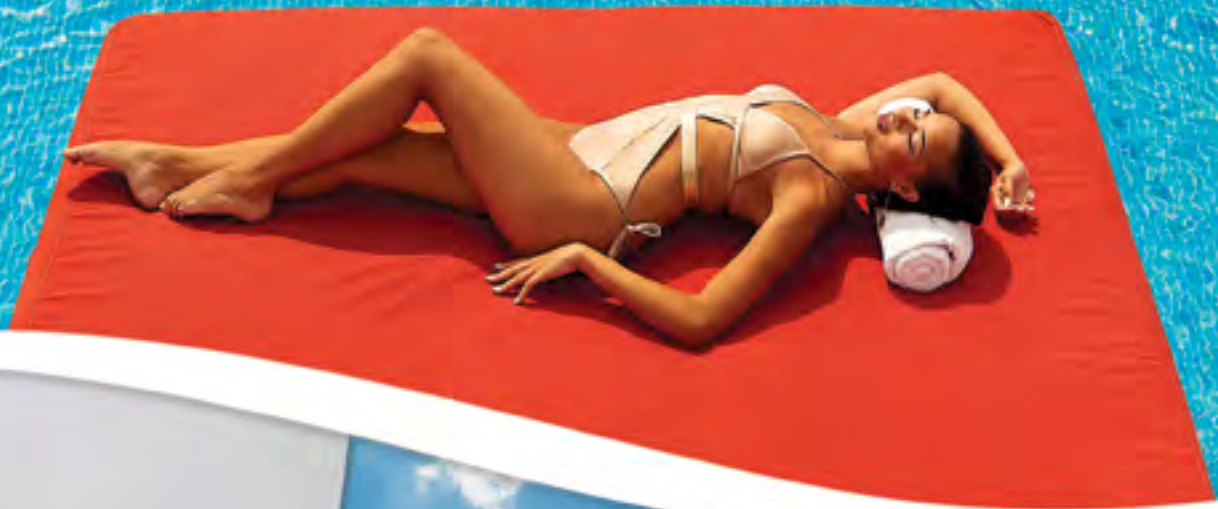


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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

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**Resorts World Bimini,
Bahamas**



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We are back, baby!

By we, I mean travel, which in turn means us, which means I am happy. The rush of excitement stepping on to a plane did not escape me. A seasoned traveler should be immune to the heady feelings of excitement about hopping on flights to explore beyond her shores. At least, that's what I thought before heading to Puerto Rico, and then over to Cayman to interview one of our own, Dylan Benoit. The excitement actually has not faded now that I am home, planning our next escapes to share with you this fall and winter.

I hope you're planning your next getaway. The past year and a half has given us all time to think, reflect, and readjust and now it is time to get back to what we love (safely). Various destinations and resorts are offering COVID testing on property, at airports, or at nearby locations. Some destinations are fully reopened and the United States is requiring negative test results to return. Whatever the scenario is, it is meant to keep us safe while allowing us to visit the people and places we love (and miss). I am all for it!

The way we travel now has us exploring at a different pace, with a different outlook. Personally, it feels more authentic. I hope you feel a shift on your next journey and, as always, feel free to share your experiences with us [@CLTravel](https://twitter.com/CLTravel).

Yours,

Peta

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CONTRIBUTORS



AMY SEDEÑO

Contributor

As a self-proclaimed @hotelista I do quite a bit of traveling, and from holding a tarantula in an ancient site in Guatemala to drinking high tea in Dubai, and petting grey whales in Baja, you bet I've got stories to tell.



ANDREW INNERARITY

Director of Photography

It's all about triggering emotion via imagery. When I convey the very essence of a situation with a single photograph, then I am complete, because the viewer understands more than the moment, they know the situation.



AVA ROSALES

Features Editor

I am the Caribbean.



DYLAN BENOIT

Contributor

I'm a chef with Champagne taste and a beer budget, but always seem to find myself surrounded by the most amazing people in the most amazing places. From eating termites in the Honduran jungle to learning how to make dim sum in Hong Kong, for me treasure is in the story.



JEFFREY SOBEL

Co-Editor-in-Chief

All I need is a book, a bourbon and a boat to a new destination - I'll be just fine.



SERGIO OLIVARES

Creative Direction

I'm my best on this island. My flight left last night, but I know I'm not going back home.



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NEW

Noteworthy



BAHAMAS

Resort World Bimini is reimagining itself with the addition of a swanky new beach club. The Bahamas is opening back up with new amenities, and this property just debuted a stunning private beach that rivals beach clubs found in places like Mykonos and Tulum. Think bohemian-chic decor, daybeds and hammocks, a DJ booth, expansive lagoon pools, and the Caribbean Sea just a few steps away. Fun fact: this is the closest private beach to the coastal United States.

www.rwbimini.com/bimini-beach



BAHAMAS

Nassau is back and it's downtown that is taking center stage. Jimmy Buffett knows his audience and what they want out of a vacation, latest personification of his ethos will have them put on their flip flops, (don't step on a pop top) cruise down the street after a few margaritas and head to the heart of a destination. This newest location, opens summer 2021, is ideal for those who love that laid back vacation with the action right on their doorstep. If you ever get enough of watchin' the sun bake all of those tourists covered with oil, just walk out of the front door and Nassau awaits. Bay street and all of the shopping and dining the island is known for is moments away. Here you will never feel as though you are wastin' away again in **Margaritaville** as the new rooftop is packed with the most fabulous things to do. The island's famed Graycliff cigar rollers will be on hand and an exclusive Remy Martin lounge where you can elevate your well-spent time sipping on Louis XIII. Looking forward to this highly anticipated resort opening.

www.margaritavilleresorts.com/margaritaville-beach-resort-nassau



MEXICO

Karisma Hotels & Resorts, the award-winning portfolio of luxury resort properties across Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe, and Margaritaville, the global lifestyle brand synonymous with fun and escapism, have announced plans to launch their newest boutique hotel collection: **St. Somewhere**. This latest addition marks the second elevated concept developed by Karisma Hotels & Resorts and Margaritaville, complementing the Margaritaville Island Reserve Resort brand, which debuted in Riviera Cancun in 2020.

The first St. Somewhere resort is slated to launch in fall 2021, with additional properties to be announced in other luxurious locations. Designed to appeal to both couples and families, St. Somewhere will encompass the laid-back, escapist lifestyle that Margaritaville is known for, with yacht-inspired architecture and its own boutique luxury twist. With the first resort set to launch in Isla Holbox, a small island north of the Yucatan Peninsula between the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, guests will be able to experience life by the sea in a tranquil, private club setting.

www.karismahotels.com/margaritaville-st-somewhere



ST. MAARTEN

St. Maarten's newest hotel, **The Morgan Resort & Spa**, brings an added touch of luxury and paradise to the Dutch-owned Caribbean island. Opened June 2021, the sleek boutique hotel is home to 124 guest rooms and suites and offers an intimate feels-like-home vibe paired with stunning architecture. In rooms, guests can expect tranquil and modern design with spa-like showers and gorgeous blue views. Overlooking the turquoise Caribbean sea, its patio features a spectacular and one-of-a-kind beach-style walk-in infinity pool. A rooftop observation deck allows for uninterrupted views of the jet landings at St. Maarten Princess Juliana Airport, or for a closer view, the famous Maho Beach is just a one minute walk away.

www.themorganresort.com

NOSTALGIC for Puerto Rico



It was one of the most exciting moments...

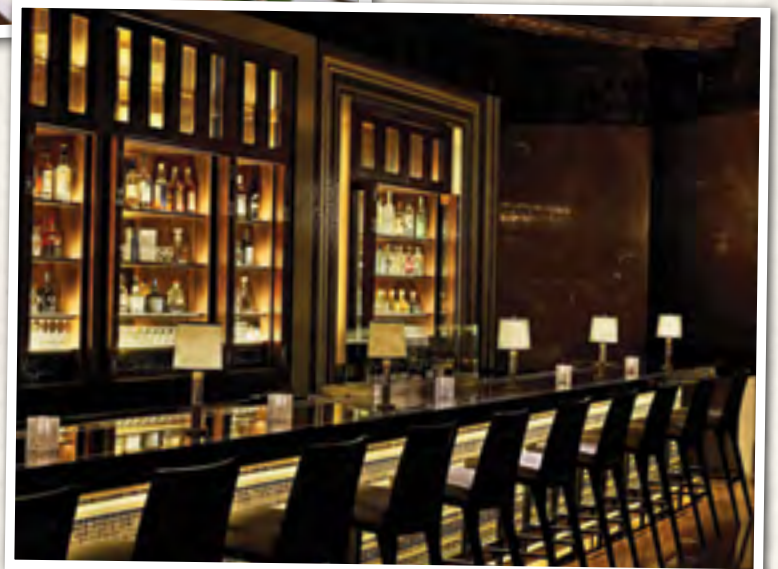
when we clicked on the button to purchase our tickets to Puerto Rico. It was as though a weight had been lifted and we were about to travel back to a time where vacation and relaxation were not just words but actionable, accessible, and within reach. That's one of the reasons we chose the Fairmont El San Juan. As you may have read in our Swellegant Stay over at Swanky Retreats. If you are reading this first then here is what we shared:



“Step back in time to a swanky era where cigar smoke permeated the air and live music filled your soul in San Juan. This resort embodies all the classic touches that evoke a sense of place from the moment you enter the lobby. Closer than the forts and cobblestone streets of Old San Juan, the Fairmont El San Juan immediately sets the stage for a Puerto Rican holiday. By day, the dark wood walls and ceiling soften the bright sunlight and invite the luxury traveler to sink into its rich leather furniture and enjoy the opulence of the lobby while being dazzled by the imposing 7,000 crystal chandelier. By night, this same lobby comes alive in a very sophisticated way. Sway your way through the entrance as the beat of live latin music pulls you deeper into the heart of the resort. This inescapable sense of place is woven into the fabric of your stay. The pools echo back to a time where sunbathing was glamorous and space was limitless. Float aimlessly, on your back, in the wellness pool, while gazing up at the magnificent 300 year old Banyan tree. History is not fabricated here, it is made here. This is a fabulous place to create vacation memories that will last a lifetime. Amenities include Well & Being Spa and Fitness Center, paddleboards, luxury cabanas, signature dining at Caña by Juliana Gonzalez, El San Juan Beach Club, Meat Market, Riva, and the Chandelier Bar. Indulge in modern tropical splendor with old-world elegance in any of its rooms, suites or villas. The beach is only steps away from its pools and cabanas. This island is a hotspot for those seeking relaxation, a touch of history, and a vibrant Caribbean getaway. Fairmont El San Juan is an excellent choice when you are looking for something swanky and elegant for your next Swellegant stay.”



The thing is that those details are the tip of the warmth and nostalgia that draw you in from the moment you arrive. We swam in the pools...both of them, until our cares were washed away. It is true about being in the wellness pool, that floating around in that one, looking up at the banyan tree, makes you realize that time passes, life goes on and that this resort is rooted in Puerto Rican history. As easily as a time traveler would slip from 2021 back to February 1st, 1958 when the hotel made its debut, we made our way up to our room and slid into outfits befitting this gorgeous stately property. Before dinner, we sauntered over to the chandelier bar for cocktails that embraced our feelings of nostalgia, a Martini and a White Russian. Drinks in hand, we made our way across the lobby to the billiard table where the subtly swagged curtains obscured the rest of the lobby and made us feel as though we were in that story. As the writer of that story, we controlled the scenes and each one was more romantic and alluring as the next. With travel starting to burgeon again, we were lucky to have the luxury of space in this normally bustling lobby.





As the sounds of the live band permeated the air, we swayed to the beat on our way to dinner where the fusion cuisine at Cana played beautifully into our next chapter where we were flown in from Spain to dine on the sandy shores of Puerto Rico, for just one romantic evening, then it was off to bed to actually dream. Our waking hours at El San Juan were so beautiful that diving into bed to see if we could carry the feeling into our dreams was a delicious thought. Alas, it was not meant to be. As we awoke in the morning, our reality surpassed anything that came to mind from our sleep. So, joyful for another day at this resort, we headed outside to take it all in, with a little day trip into Old San Juan to delve even more deeply into the history of the island. It all tied together perfectly. We will be back again soon as we long for the sweet nostalgic feel of this island and this resort.

www.fairmont.com/puerto-rico



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DYLAN BENOIT

🌿 Chef Profile 🌿



Have you ever loved a destination so much you considered staying permanently? We certainly have, and so had our very own editor Chef Dylan Benoit until one day, he just did it. We recently caught up with international chef Dylan Benoit to talk about his top food destinations, living life in the Cayman Islands and being the host of the hit television show *Fire Masters* on Food Network Canada and *Cooking Channel US*.

Caribbean Living: Thank you for sitting down with us, the last 18 months have been quite the rollercoaster, how have you been keeping yourself busy during a global standstill?



Dylan Benoit: It's always great to spend time with my favorite magazine, Caribbean Living! You know, it's been a trying time for so many (especially in the hospitality industry) and I am so grateful that I have been able to utilize the time I've had to perfect my craft, reflect on what is important and realize how much travelling and experiencing the world means to me. I can't wait to feel the rush of getting on a plane again and changing up my scenery.

CL: We miss that too! But we're getting closer to that day again soon we hope. Speaking of travel, what are your top food and travel destinations that you would love to return to?

DB: I love traveling around Asia! Particularly Hong Kong, Vietnam and Indonesia. The variety of dishes, cultures and geographies set the stage for life changing experiences daily. I've yet to make it to Japan and South Korea but they are top of the list for when travel becomes less restricted. I've also spent a lot of time in Mexico, Central and South America.

CL: Is there a place you loved to travel but you were disappointed in the food?

DB: The food in Central America is not disappointing, but it's all very similar. I found when traveling between Honduras, Guatemala, Belize and Nicaragua there were little to no variations in the ingredients and dishes. Not like the drastic changes you see when traveling between countries in Asia, Europe or even South America.





CL: You've travelled a lot, what made you decide to make Cayman your home?

DB: I fell in love with Cayman from the moment I landed. Not only due to the white sand beaches and postcard-worthy turquoise waters, but also the people and the community. The lifestyle here is drastically different to what I've known growing up in Canada or travelling the world; It's a Caribbean Island with a typical Caribbean vibe, but it's still very forward and developed so there are more comforts than in some other Caribbean regions. Plus, Cayman is known as the Culinary Capital of the Caribbean, so it was a perfect fit!

CL: So, you're not much of a snow and mountain kind of guy?

DB: There is a great lyric by Damien Rice that says "give me miles and miles of mountains and I'll ask for the sea". I love mountains, but I'm always drawn back to the ocean. I tolerate snow and the cold but only in very measured doses. I'm always down for a ski trip or an arctic adventure, however, if I'm in one place long enough where I need to shovel a driveway then I've overstayed my welcome.

CL: Makes perfect sense! So, you're well acclimated to island life by now, what is your favorite Caymanian dish or ingredient?

DB: My favorite dish, which has its roots in Jamaican cuisine, is oxtail - hands down. Cross-cut sections of beef tail slowly braised in a brown gravy until rich and sticky from all the natural gelatin and nearly falling off the bone. Served up with some rice and peas and a couple frosty beers, oxtail is real stick-to-your-ribs food and I love it. My favorite ingredient is definitely seasoning pepper. A member of the capsicum family that looks like a small spicy pepper and has zero heat but an unmistakable flavor and aroma that I've never experienced anywhere else.





CL: Tell us about Prime Consulting and Carnivore Premium Meats.

DB: I started Prime Consulting in 2018 as a food & beverage consulting company and since then we've grown to have a few other branches. Most notably is Prime Kitchen, our private chef and catering division, where we curate bespoke culinary experiences for our clients in Cayman and abroad. Whether it be a small group or a large party our team of chefs work alongside our clients to ensure the perfect menu and the best service is on hand for their events or dinner parties.

Then in February 2019 just a few weeks before the world shut down, we opened Carnivore Premium Meats, Cayman's only butcher shop providing premium quality meats, sausages, charcuterie, sandwiches and more. Fortunately, we were able to make quick adjustments that allowed us to continue servicing the people of Cayman with incredible products and now that we're back to a semblance of normalcy, business is ticking along nicely.

CL: What inspires you to keep doing new things like Carnivore?

DB: Travel has always been the single most important factor in my inspiration around cooking. Going to new places, meeting new people and learning about new dishes, ingredients and cooking techniques, then reflecting back on how I can incorporate the things I've learned into my menus and restaurants. Before opening Carnivore, I did a trip to Germany to explore their rich history of butchers and further my skills and comprehension in the craft of making fresh and dried sausages.

CL: Sounds incredible, I'm getting hungry just hearing about it! Let's talk about Fire Masters. What is it like to be the host of a Food Network television show?

DB: It's wild to be honest! To think of the success the show has had, and that it keeps getting more and more popular...I never intended to be on television, but when the opportunity presented itself and I was told about the concept I knew it was going to be a lot of fun and I wanted to be involved. We're now about to start filming the third season this month and I grow more enamored with the process every time. My first few days of production on Fire Masters were like my first shifts as a young cook all over again. I was thrown into a completely new environment where people were buzzing all around me doing things I've never seen with razor like speed and precision, working in unison like a Swiss watch. I had to (quickly) learn who each person was, what their jobs were and where their stations are. Then I needed to learn a whole new language of terms and slang that must be thoroughly understood and a schedule that must be rigorously adhered to. Meanwhile, the whole time if a single thing goes awry the things can untangle very quickly and the whole train risks derailment. In fact, it's just like working in a busy kitchen.

CL: Sounds like you have plenty of irons in the fire! What do you do in your spare time, if you have any?

DB: Spare time is a precious commodity for me these days, that's for sure! But when I get some I'm often hanging out with my girlfriend and my dogs, going to the beach, scuba diving or tinkering on an old car or motorcycle. Oh, and keeping an eye out for my next great meal.

Catch Dylan on Fire Masters every Thursday night this July and follow him on social media [@DylanMBenoit](#)

cl





SWANKY

R E T R E A T S

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE OBVIOUS

A person with long, dark, wet hair is sitting in the ocean, viewed from behind. Their arms are resting on the water's surface. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant rocky islands.

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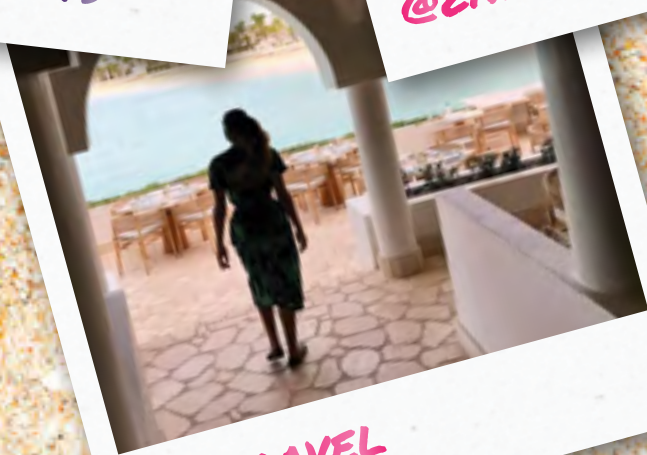
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