

caribbean

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TRAVEL beyond the beach



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...It's Time
to Come Back!



Palette™

The Original High Fiver

We almost used a beautiful picture of a woman lying on a kayak on a sun-soaked beach holding a High Fiver. You know, a chic colorful ad with a catchy slogan about being well, “better.”

What makes the High Fiver worth talking about — what makes it so remarkable, what makes it “original” — is its patented design. Its medical grade press-up wells so you can get every last drop. Its leak resistant system. This innovative, refillable, washable and reusable smart beauty tool completely transforms how you pack your beauty. All while keeping those minis and tiny travel bottles out of the landfill.

That’s not just better. That’s a revolution.

revolutionary
A ~~better~~ way to pack
your beauty is here.



palettebypak.com



LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SALES DIRECTOR:
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www.CaribbeanLivingMagazine.com

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Dear friends,

It's been quite a year, so far. I miss you and I hope you, your families, and your friends are all doing well. Thank you for your patience with travel this year. Thank you for still wanting to get out there and live!

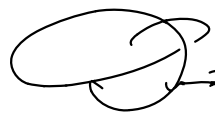
We have put together some inviting pieces for when you are ready to travel again. There's an inspiring piece on tribe travel. Maybe that's something to think about... getting your tribe together and planning your next escape. Having been inside and in the same surroundings for far longer than normal, I am doing this as soon as I finish writing you this letter. We have retooled some of our recent favorite stories as well as rediscovered some great beach/pool reads. We have all had some time to catch up on a lot of reading, but there is nothing like toes-in-the-sand reading. We hope you get back out there sooner rather than later.

The other aspect of this is some people may not want to travel at the moment, so we have created a virtual travel box to quench your wanderlust. Each box gives you a taste of the Caribbean and a travel offer for when you are ready to get up and go again.

Here we are and I hope you enjoy this issue. If anyone has found love during COVID, there's a special piece on elopement, if you choose to go that route. It's been a heck of a year, so I say, "Why knot!"

Have a great read and see you in the Caribbean soon. Please wear your (Caribbean Living) mask.

Big hugs,



Masks:

<https://py.pl/rgOmm>

Virtual travel boxes:

[caribbeanlivingmagazine.com/invitationonly](https://www.caribbeanlivingmagazine.com/invitationonly)

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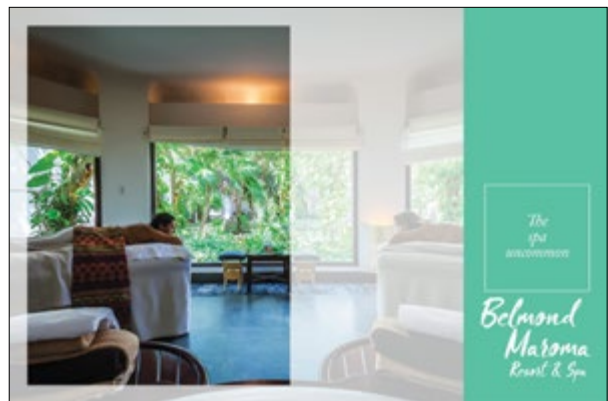
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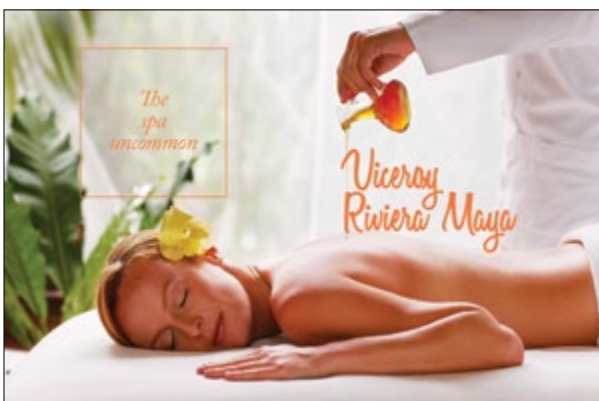
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AMY SEDEÑO

Contributor

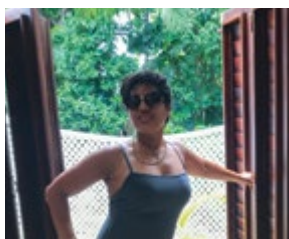
As a self-proclaimed @hotelista I do quite a bit of traveling, and from holding a tarantula in an ancient site in Guatemala to drinking high tea in Dubai, and petting grey whales in Baja, you bet I've got stories to tell.



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.



BRIANA LOZANO

Contributor

My favorite place to travel to is one I have never been to before! New cities, new sights, new food, new music, new people, new memories, new ways of life. The only way to truly know, is to see it for yourself. I am forever wanderlust.
Thank you, Briana



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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Clothing

Accessories

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Like a great getaway...

*Literature
worth
revisiting.*

"Clever, cruel, hilarious,
heartbreaking, and at
times simply ingenious."
—THE LOS ANGELES
REVIEW OF BOOKS



HEADS
OF THE
COLORED
PEOPLE

STORIES

NAFISSA

THOMPSON-SPIRES

From a reality tv show that follows a family who only eats fruit, to debating one's suicide on the basis of how it will be received on Facebook, this collection of short stories touches on every modern issue and does so in a wildly entertaining manner.

While each tale is vastly different from the next, they all share common threads that perhaps are best detailed in the very first story bearing the same title. The opening story is intriguing on its own without the shock at the end, but that's the point. It would be interesting enough to follow these unique characters pursuing their passions, but ultimately they can't. The journey ends before we even get to know them because that's just how life is for many in America. The story doesn't want to be about violence, but it's forced to be.

Every story draws a new sketch, yet many overlap - not only in theme, but also with some characters cleverly taking over where others left off. Thompson-Spires spins this structure in such a spiraling fashion that she catches all of us in this web of comedy and tragedy.

It is difficult to pick favorites, but one that stood out for me consisted of letters exchanged between two parents passively aggressively fighting with one another over their respective daughters. Setting aside the hilarity and the fact that it's best read while bingeing popcorn, beneath the wit lies the dark truth that there is so much loneliness and mental illness in plain sight these days that no one truly sees it. What is really driving two mothers to battle one another, or two professors to fight over an office? What's behind one woman fetishizing men with disabilities to the point of a restraining order or causing another to erupt at minor inconveniences?

Most of the characters throughout this collection seem to want to convey their unique situations without having to trace issues back to race, but it's impossible not to. Everyone is fighting an internal battle of who they are and who they're 'supposed' to be, that these fights can't help but spill outward. Each 'head' has a history, and even the most reprehensible character deserves our empathy.

Thompson-Spires not only creates such a wide variety of people but manages to seamlessly drop them into scenes ranging from the mundane to the catastrophic, all with poignant and compelling results.

"Wonderful . . . Skillfully weaves fact and fiction, building to a gut-wrenching climax." —NEWSWEEK



JULIA ALVAREZ

author of HOW THE GARCÍA GIRLS LOST THEIR ACCENTS

In the Time of the Butterflies

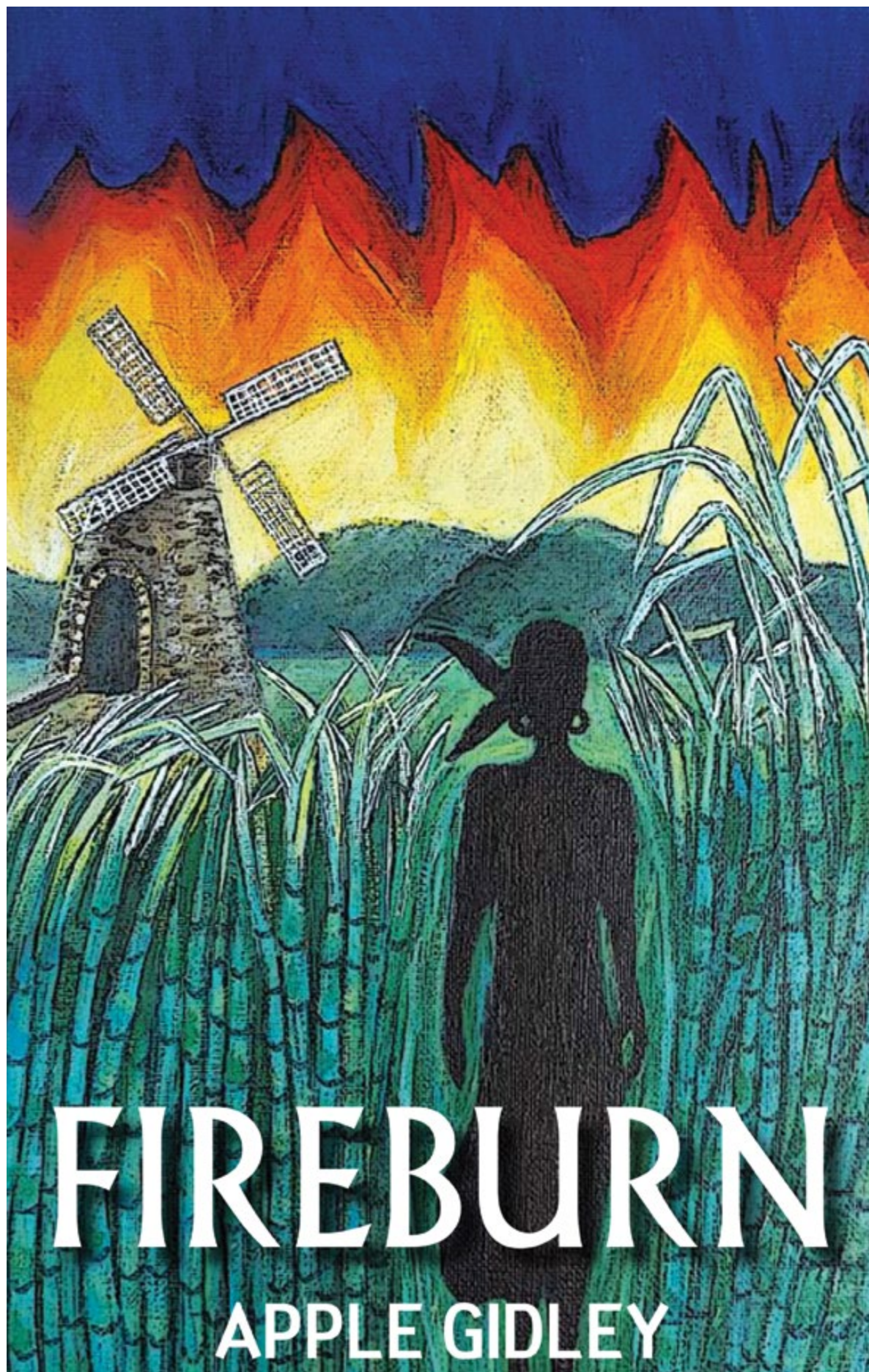
A NOVEL



In the Time of the Butterflies follows four young women as we observe how they deal with the everyday difficulties of growing up set against the backdrop of the Trujillo dictatorship in 1940s Dominican Republic. Shifting the perspective between the four Mirabal sisters, Alvarez etches deeper insight into each of these very different girls from one chapter to the next. While Patria, Dede, Minerva and Maria Theresa all provide unique voices that range from the timid to the revolutionary bold, they all share the same strength that binds them as they march through their own personal difficulties and joint struggles, as a whole.

The stories of each girl intertwines with one another, while also jumping ahead to the 1990s where Dede acts as the family historian, sitting down with an interviewer to explain what exactly happened to her family all those years ago. Overall, this is a heartbreaking tale where we see not only the loss of innocence, that all adolescents go through as they become adults, but at the same time we witness their loss of innocence in terms of their views of the country, and more specifically its leader. While the Mirabal girls in this historical fiction suffer the ultimate price, it could be said that through each of the sisters' points of view we're given an archetypical portrait of many women going through the same adversities, not just in the first half of the 20th century Caribbean, but even around the world today.

 **JEFF SOBEL**



FIREBURN

APPLE GIDLEY

"Informed by impeccable research and infused with a deep curiosity and love for the beauty and complexity of the West Indies, Fireburn is at times shocking, at times deeply moving and always engaging. Historical fiction of the highest class.

Gidley is a skilfull and assured story-teller, unafraid to take on complexities of race, class, and gender, while at the same time creating unforgettable characters and a story that kept me reading deep into the night.

Like the very best historical fiction, Fireburn brings the past to life in glorious technicolour."

An engaging history:

The Danish-owned island of 1870s Saint Croix vibrates with passion and tension as Anna Clausen, a young Anglo-Danish woman, returns to her childhood home after her mother's death. Her heart sinks at what she finds on arrival. Her father is ailing and desolate and her beloved plantation, Anna's Fancy, that has been in the Clausen family for three generations, is in shambles.

The unwelcome lust of one man and forbidden love for another makes Anna's return to Saint Croix even more turbulent. Despite the decline in the sugar industry, she is determined to retain Anna's Fancy but must first win the trust of her field workers, of Sampson, the foreman and the grudging respect of Emiline, the cook, and local weed woman.

Fireburn tells the horrors of a little-known, bloody period of Caribbean history. Weathering personal heartache Anna survives the worker rebellion of 1878, 30 years after Emancipation, as she challenges the conventions of the day and faces hostility from the predominantly male landowners.

 **JEFF SOBEL**

(TO) (GET) (HER)



ELOPE

Couples who book the Elopement Package are invited to share a virtual wedding ceremony live streamed from the property with friends and family at home, and to announce the date of their larger celebration at the resort in 2021.





The Elopement Package at The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort offers couples the opportunity to celebrate their wedding now, while still planning for the future with the added bonus of savings on their 2021 celebration date. Available now through 2021, the elopement package includes a special rate for accommodations at The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort, steaming services to allow for virtual attendees at the ceremony, a save the date for 2021, a complimentary champagne toast and private champagne sabering experience, a minimal location fee for 2021, and a custom designed bridal bouquet that speaks to the destination and draws from the property's own nursery. Additionally, the custom designed bridal bouquet will be used to inspire the floral design at their larger ceremony in 2021.

The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort is located on 438 acres and nestled between the El Yunque rainforest and the tranquil waters of the Espiritu Santo River. The resort boasts 139 guest rooms, all with private terraces and spectacular ocean or garden views. Whether couples are planning an intimate celebration or a full-buyout for their wedding in 2021, The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort can accommodate weddings of any size. From lush tropical gardens and beaches to elegant ballrooms, the St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort offers the optimal setting for any wedding. The resort also has four distinct dining venues, perfect for an intimate dinner or extravagant morning-after brunch. Couples can also work with the resort's event and food and beverage staff to customize every detail of their wedding to create a truly unforgettable experience.

www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sjuxr-the-st-regis-bahia-beach-resort-puerto-rico





Is Tribe Travel

Ready to Bounce Back?

STORY BY Gini Trask

“But there is something about
being able to hug one another, hit the dancefloor
together, and actually reach across the dinner table
and touch someone;
that simply cannot be substituted.”

We all know that 2020 has been a doozie. I don't know that I've ever seen the word “unprecedented” and “uncertain” used as much as they have been these last few months. As a nearly 20 year veteran of the travel industry, not a day goes by that I don't get the question, “Is travel just completely dead?” And it's an interesting question, because, for some companies, it certainly looks like death, but transformation and death often look a lot alike. Our industry is undergoing an intense metamorphosis, and, while it seemed touch and go for a while, these last few months have taught me one thing is for certain. We will eventually emerge from the cocoon of Corona and the travel industry is going to see a surge. In fact, some sectors are already traveling or preparing to travel and “Tribe Travel” certainly seems to be the tip of the spear, so to speak. As a company that deals solely in group travel we have are among the rare few in our industry who have seen resounding loyalty and the desire to press forward among our group leaders. As a reader, at this point, you are probably astounded, and wondering why this phenomena is occurring.

As humans, we are pack animals. We crave connection and nothing in history has disrupted our ability to connect more than the Corona Pandemic. Of course, we are doing the best we can virtually. I'm sure every reader out there has had or attended at least three zoom birthday parties, heck, here at Top Tier Travel, we even created a virtual cocktail hour company – Quarantine Cocktail Hour- to help people put on virtual connections with “live” music and a bartender. But there is something about being able to hug one another, hit the dancefloor together, and actually reach across the dinner table and touch someone; that simply cannot be substituted. This need goes so deep that even with COVID cases on the rise, we have begun to see people venturing out in ways that still feel safe expanding their “quarantine pods” to include a few others, or, in the case of several of our clients, continuing to travel with their “Tribe” in a modified manner. For example, we just had a leadership conference with 180 people travel to Puerto Vallarta. That probably sounds crazy to some, but there are many reasons we are still seeing some of the “Tribes” we service traveling.



Tribe Travel is all about traveling with a group of people who are closely bonded together such as, family groups, mastermind/personal development/retreat groups, network marketing groups and travel clubs. Most of these groups have been having quarterly or annual get-togethers for years. The groups are tight knit and may only add a few new members each year. For these tribes, getting together has become tradition and an integral part of their mental and emotional wellbeing. Because these groups have such a steeped history together, there is a trust factor allowing members of the group to feel that they can openly discuss measures to keep everyone safe. Members of the group will follow and respect

those measures based on the deep foundation of respect and love they have for one another. We have found that the majority of these groups are actively planning their next get-together. Some are traveling now, while others have come to a consensus and will travel in 2021. The interesting fact is that, 100% of our Tribe Travel groups are planning something, even if it is in the future.





Of course, we wouldn't call these "unprecedented" times if the travel of these groups didn't look a little different than before. We are finding that it is crucial to communicate with group leaders and destinations regarding the flexibility of cancellation terms daily. We, and most providers, have implemented cancellation policies that allow cancellation within seven (or fewer days in some destinations) of travel and our staff travels to most destinations ahead of the group to provide an in-depth report on current sanitation conditions at the hotel. There are many modifications to group gatherings such as buffets have been all but outlawed throughout the US, Mexico and the Caribbean, and have been replaced with socially distanced banquet seating and plated dinners (at no extra cost in most destinations), and many hotels have implemented contactless check-in or limited contact check-in. Groups arrive to find hotel lobbies plastered with hand sanitizer stations and plexi glass partitions between themselves and staff. Some of the most sanitary hotels and pro-active destinations we have found might surprise you- The Astor Crowne Plaza in New Orleans and Hard Rock Vallarta are among two of the best locations both from a sanitization and COVID protocol perspective that we have worked with in the last few months.

If the "Time of Corona" has taught us nothing else, it has shown us the resiliency of the human spirit and our desire to be together in what ever ways we can manage. We know it will be a slow re-emergence and we encourage you to hold into your dreams of traveling and being with your tribe again and when you feel comfortable, the world will still be out there waiting for you to explore.

www.toptiertravel.com

*Oh, the places
we'll go*



the places we've been...



QUIE



RICO

PUERTO RICO



IN SAN JUAN, PR,

Executive Chef Juan Jose Cuevas Soto of Condado Vanderbilt's signature restaurant 1919, takes great pride in his work with local farmers and purveyors. Chef truly changed the landscape of the agricultural scene in San Juan and its surrounding areas through his outreach with small, family-owned farms over the last several years. He personally spent time with local farmers and purveyors to educate them on opportunities to partner with the resort and community at-large, as many were involved in the industry due to family ties rather than a true passion for agriculture. Juan Jose was on a mission to change that. Chef taught them how to maximize their soil's composition and grow the best crops, even showing them some crops they thought were weeds were actually culinary treasures. He continues to be an instrumental part of the agricultural rebuilding of the island this past year following Hurricane Maria. Upon request, guests have the opportunity to take a daytime excursion to Puerto Rico's bountiful farms with Chef Juan Jose and harvest ingredients for their very own tasting menu at 1919 restaurant that same night. What a great way to get up-close with the people of the island and your meal.







EXECUTIVE CHEF CUEVAS,

who was the executive chef of Blue Hill in New York when it was awarded a Michelin star, believes in pairing social consciousness with exquisite taste. He places the highest value on hand-selecting products that are local, artisanal and homemade in order to craft food that is flavor-forward. Always fresh and with a contemporary flair, the cuisine at 1919 Restaurant is served with meticulous care and pride. At 1919, guests experience a blend of experiences. Chef pairs world-class dining with the flavor of locally-sourced ingredients. Guests will savor artisanal delicacies harvested and served, fresh-- and with a contemporary flair.

Aside from the above, Condado Vanderbilt is celebrating its 100th Anniversary this year (1919 is a nod to the year the property was opened when Frederick William Vanderbilt built it as a haven for celebrities, socialites, etc.). In honor of the Centennial, the property has an array of programming running throughout the year including special collaboration dinners with pairings, as well as, a Miura & Clos Pissarra dinner with Master Sommelier Emmanuel Kemiji, the debut of a history book celebrating the property's illustrious past. We like this restaurant because inside and out, it's like tasting history with a fresh new twist.

www.condadovanderbilt.com/condado-1919-restaurant





A glass of rosé wine with a strawberry garnish on a wooden table with appetizers. The background shows a blurred view of the ocean and a chair.

ROSÉ

ALL THE WAY



The rosé wine and blush champagne-themed Pink Bar sits directly on the sand at Wymara Resort & Villas Turks + Caicos. Open daily, it serves a seasonal menu that includes a curated selection of rosé wines and blush champagnes, along with a cocktail menu that provides a fun “pink” twist on the classics such as a Rosé Spritz, Tropical Margarita, Rosé Gin & Tonic and more. A selection of bites, including Sweet and Spicy Crusted Yellowfin Tuna, Organic Popcorn with truffle oil and sea salt and Spiced Deep Fried Calamari with sweet chili crisp, is offered in the evenings to complement the Pink Bar experience. And on Sundays, a live DJ from 3-6:30 pm helps you toast the sunset and ease in to the evening ahead.

Once you settle in to a seat at the bar or one of the nearby loungers, you’ll never want to leave this vibrant bar, if not for the cocktails then for its location. Located at the Caribbean hideaway of Wymara Resort and Villas Turks + Caicos, you’ll find Pink Bar at the sleek boutique hotel’s entrance to the pristine Grace Bay Beach. Situated along this 13 mile stretch of sand, it’s arguably the best beachfront real estate on the island; possibly in the Caribbean.







PINK MOSCOW MULE

COMBINE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 1/2 OZ TITO'S VODKA
- 1/2 OZ X-RATED BLOOD ORANGE
- 1/2 OZ PASSIONFRUIT LIQUEUR
- 1 OZ FRESH LIME JUICE

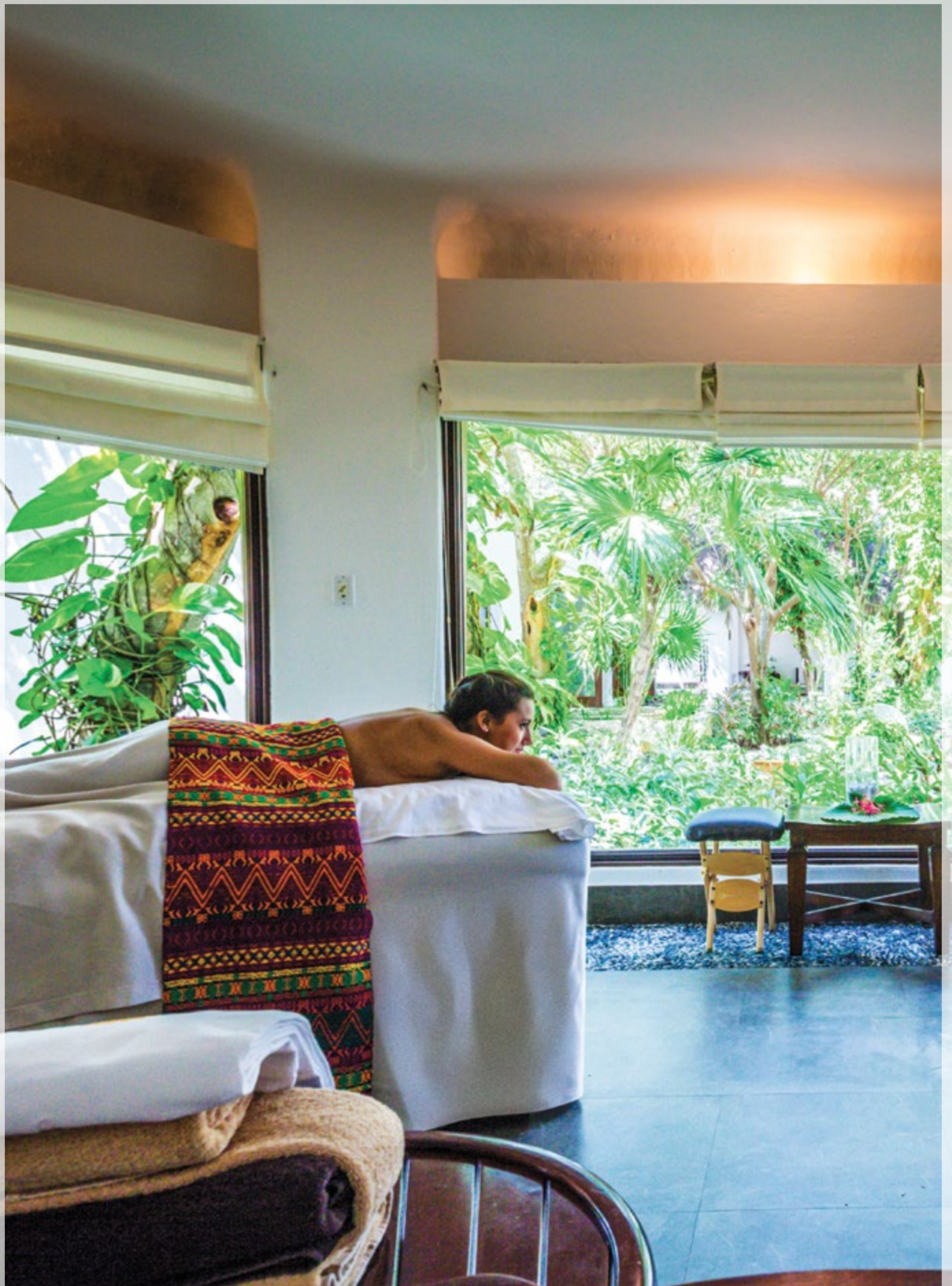
SHAKE WITH ICE. TOP OFF WITH GINGER ALE.

With a dramatic open-air lobby leading directly out to a 7,000 square-foot infinity-edge pool, the hotels' guest rooms, suites and penthouses are the perfect oasis for island visitors. To step it up a notch, explore the option of the new oceanfront four and five-bedroom private villas now available at Wymara with indoor and outdoor living areas, ocean view infinity pool and courtyard pool with waterfall, outdoor fire pit lounge, panoramic views of the tranquil bay, fully equipped modern kitchen and floor to ceiling windows for the ultimate in luxury. Once settled in, guests can enjoy the sophisticated cuisine at the award-winning Asian fusion restaurant, Stelle, or enjoy the resort's additional option for beachfront dining at Zest, for thoughtfully crafted local specialties while dining al fresco. And if laying in perfect peace on the powder white sand isn't enough for you, complimentary water activities, private boat charters, rejuvenation at The Spa, and more are at your fingertips.

www.wymararesortandvillas.com



*The
spa
uncommon*





*The
spa
uncommon*

*Belmond
Maroma
Resort & Spa*



Carved out of a stately coconut grove and enclosed by a 200-acre jungle, Belmont Maroma Resort & Spa is a seaside hideaway along the Riviera Maya offering simple indulgence and a wondrous pristine beach. Immediately upon arrival, Belmont Maroma reveals a sense of reverence for the serene and welcomes you with genuine Mexican hospitality. The property is intrinsically connected to its rich history which shines through all aspects of the hotel from its design and ethos to its cuisine and spa.

Once guests have checked into Belmont Maroma, they are led (with their welcome drink in hand – a margarita infused with licorice and honey-flavored liqueur) through a labyrinth of winding paths in the resort's lush jungle to their rooms. Accommodations feature hand-carved furniture, vibrant woven fabrics and captivating indigenous artwork. Beyond breezy terraces, the crash of waves provides a soothing soundtrack to mornings lazing in a hammock or evenings toasting the sunset with a cocktail.





The most popular rooms are the oceanfront one-bedroom suites. The suite boasts a covered patio with plunge pool, a private air-conditioned fitness center, a palapa for private spa treatments, and a spacious bathroom with double sinks and two showers (one indoor and one outdoor). This suite is a favorite because of its private access to the beach and the unobstructed views of the ocean. Thoughtful in-room amenities include cotton kaftans, nightly turndown with aromatherapy, organic soaps and shampoos handcrafted with locally grown herbs. And for the beach – a beach bag, sarong, and hat.

The culinary offerings at Belmond Maroma incorporate seasonal local produce to reflect the best of the region's cuisine. At El Sol Tapa & Restaurant, anticipate beautiful salads, exceptional cuts of freshly grilled meat and seafood straight from the ocean. Freddy's Tequila and Ceviche bar, a beach-side lounge serving vibrant fresh-fish ceviche, sushi and sashimi, has the largest collection of tequila and mezcal in the region. The beachfront El Restaurante is the more informal option for dining offering eclectic regional specialties. Fresh corn tortillas and quesadillas are prepared daily by Tia Dalia, who has worked at the resort for 19 years.

There is plenty to do on and off property. At the hotel, guests can participate in daily complimentary yoga, birdwatching, play tennis, lounge by one the three pools, or relax on the beach with access to kayaking, snorkeling, and Hobie Cats to sail on. Guests can also snorkel and scuba dive at the world's second-largest barrier reef that is 10 minutes from the property. Further afield, you can embark on day trips to explore the ancient architectural sites, including Cobá and Chichén Itzá, and visit the rainforest to see the mysterious cenotes – freshwater sinkholes carved by underground rivers that are unique to the Yucatan peninsula and believed to be a 'gateway to the underworld' by the Mayans.







With all that the region has to offer, one of the most fascinating legacies of the ancient Mayans is their emphasis on wellness and spiritual healing. Their shamans were spiritual leaders that performed rituals to cleanse the body and spirit, and many of the region's natural elements were believed to hold special healing powers. Today, Belmond Maroma has modernized some of the rituals practiced by the Mayans while honoring their techniques and ingredients.

The Kinan Spa, named for the Mayan word meaning 'healing energy of the sun' celebrates the traditions

of Mayan culture with ancient rituals, rare indigenous botanicals and a holistic approach to healing. Nestled within flower-filled gardens, the spa was built with the spiritual guidance of a family of Mayan masons. The nine treatment rooms were designed based on sacred geometry and astrologically aligned with the stars and positioned in harmony with nature.

Many of the treatments use rich local ingredients, such as chocolate, honey and powerful herbs. Of particular note are the treatments with Melipona bee honey which is known for its strong anti-microbial and healing properties. Melipona bees are a symbol of nature and wisdom and are



extremely sacred in the Mayan culture, with *Ai Muzen Caab* known as the Mayan god of life and bees. Belmond Maroma celebrates *Melipona* bees and their positive impact on the environment as an essential part of the ecosystem and food supply. In an effort to help raise awareness of the growing threat of bee extinction, the resort continues its dedication towards caring for two natural hives of stingless *Melipona* bees. The spa director, Cinthya Alva Flores, leads educational workshops twice a week in which she shares the history of this tiny species and natural remedies using honey to benefit the skin, hair and overall wellness. “It is an honor for us to bring the *Melipona* bees to Kinan Spa and share with our guests the importance of

preserving this magical and local bee,” says Flores. At the spa boutique, guests can also find three different types of Mayan honey and bee pollen, which helps *Mayahuum*, the local Mayan community located in Cobá that donated the hives to the spa.



The Kinan Ritual is one of the many treatments on the spa menu that benefit from the Melipona bee's creations. The treatment uses local herbs that are infused into warm sheets that are wrapped around your body wraps to draw toxins to the surface. The freshly produced honey is mixed with a salt scrub, from the Yucatan town of Celestún, to exfoliate and cleanse before completing the treatment with a four-hand massage. Another is the Honey & Glow facial that helps rejuvenate and firm skin while working to eliminate fine lines and wrinkles. It begins with an exfoliation treatment to remove dry skin before applying a layer of nourishing Plant Stem Cell Booster Serum. Then soothes on a mask prepared with honey to repair and revive skin.

Belmond Maroma also offers a dedicated kid spa menu, which includes the 'Bee Pampered' children's treatment that consists of a honey facial and a foot massage tailored to tiny feet. As a memento, tots take home Meli, a Melipona bee stuffed animal.

Travelers cannot visit the Riviera Maya without experiencing the traditional Mayan cleansing ritual known as Temezcal. Performed at dusk on the beach, the purification ceremony connects to the energy of the universe, the phases of the moon and the elements of life — air, fire, earth and water. Guided by a Mayan shaman, the ritual begins with a healing herb infusion being poured over heated volcanic stones to create an aromatic steam. The vapor, together with the sound of ancestral drums and chants, helps you connect with your inner self, producing a sensation of total cleanliness, tranquility and peace. Aloe vera is then applied to the skin, before you take a refreshing plunge into the Caribbean sea – a perfect end to a rejuvenating and enriching visit to Belmond Maroma.

www.belmond.com



SWANKY

R E T R E A T S

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE OBVIOUS

A person with long, dark, wet hair is floating in the ocean, seen from behind. Their arms are outstretched, and their head is tilted back. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some clouds. The person's hair is the central focus, creating a vertical line that contrasts with the horizontal lines of the water and sky.

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or subscribe today!

www.SwankyRetreats.com

*The
spa
uncommon*



A close-up photograph of a person in a white shirt pouring a golden-yellow oil from a glass pitcher onto a person lying on a massage table. The person being massaged is lying on their side, and their skin is a warm, tanned color. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white, suggesting a clean, bright spa environment. The text "Viceroy Riviera Maya" is overlaid in a cursive font in the center of the image.

Viceroy
Riviera Maya

T

The daunting task of finding some of the Caribbean's most unique spas falls on our shoulders. Thankfully, they are kneaded and well-oiled for the task at hand.

This season, one of our favorites is the Wayak Spa. This beauty is in the Viceroy Riviera Maya, so you know it's going to be fabulous!

Our decision-making process in selecting just the right Spa Uncommon for our readers includes a lengthy list of criteria. Most commonly for our uncommon features, we look for the spa's setting. We look for unique treatments that incorporate local/native ingredients, and several other factors. The feeling of tranquility that washes over us upon entering the very best of these spa experiences are what motivate us to share them with you.

Wayak Spa at Viceroy Riviera Maya immerses guests in authentic, indigenous rituals and experiences of rejuvenation and well-being. Here's one that caught our attention because, who doesn't want to know they're on the right path to love?







The Xaman-Ek (Love Ritual) is an 80 Minute experience that you will definitely fall in love with. The Mayans believed that the southern star guided the footsteps of those on to the path to love, understanding, harmony and abundance. In this treatment, you'll want to allow yourself to be pampered side by side with someone you care about. It begins with a foot ritual, followed by a relaxing massage with unique essences of love to balance the chakras. Immerse yourself in their healing herbal bath, a tub made from a black Zapote tree. With all of this stimulation, you can let the therapists create the magic, as they leave you meditating the Mayan words that will be written in your hearts forever. This couple's experience is sure to enrich the love between the two of you. On your second visit to

the spa, you guys can try the 90 minute couples treatment and go for the Mayan ceremony.

Spas aren't always a joint affair and sometimes we just want to stretch and work out all the kinks. For this, we like the Akbal (Invigorating Massage).

Focus on yourself for 80 Minutes!

For this ancestral Mayan technique, a rebozo is used, in a movement denominated "Manteada" or blanket stretching as the traditional Mayan women did to adjust the posture and elongate muscles. It's an invigorating and therapeutic experience that improves flexibility. Ancestrally, this



treatment reconnected Mayan women with those who had gone before them and you might find the realignment to something from your past.

Regardless of treatment, you can't really go wrong here. The spa bases its treatments off of Mayan traditional practices, using this ancient culture to reconnect guests to their inner being and well-being. The healing powers of the jungle come full-circle at Wayak Spa. Inspired by the lush greenery and bright white sands that create their shoreline, the Mayan-inspired treatment rooms overlook waterfalls and provide the natural healing sound of water. You will want to share time with your loved one in their exclusive Spa Suite, if you indulge in one of the mentioned

unique couple's treatment. You can take our advice or get creative and design your spa experience to suit you while discovering the mysticism of the Mayan culture.

This is truly a spa uncommon. Come experience their rituals and treatments and leave revived, relaxed and refreshed.

www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/riviera-maya/wellness/spa#treatments





The spa takes guests even deeper into the mystical healing world of the ancient Maya with the addition of a K'óben (Mayan herb kitchen), where the resort's resident shaman creates the ultimate personalized treatments, and a new menu of restorative Mayan experiences brought directly to guests in the privacy of their villa. At the new K'óben, the shaman dries and prepares the wide array of herbs from his garden. He then creates a completely personalized healing experience for the guest.

Viceroy Riviera Maya's shaman is the only full-time shaman on staff at a resort in Mexico and he is from a long family line of Mayan shamans from the Yucatan village of X-pichil. In keeping with the Mayan tradition, he received the shaman's "gift" through inheritance, passed on to him from his father. He is also a master of the use of plants of the region and tends to the stingless meliponas bees from a local Mayan village.

The signature treatment, Hunan-Kab, incorporates honey harvested on-property. The Melipona Bee Honey (Bee Cheii) is thought by the Mayans to be medicinal. The honey is applied using herb compresses soaked in a special tea before guests enjoy a massage in nature next to a waterfall.

Every Monday, guests can participate in a complimentary Mayan walk that starts with guided meditation and a blessing by the Shaman in the garden before walking through the pool and to the beach.

Full list of spa treatments:

www.viceroyhotelsandresorts.com/riviera-maya/wellness/spa#treatments



*The
spa
uncommon*

**GOLDENEYE
HOTEL**

GOLDENEYE HOTEL:

LAID-BACK LUXURY AND LEGENDARY GLAMOUR ON JAMAICA'S NORTH COAST

has been the lowkey hub of cool since James Bond author Ian Fleming first built the lush estate in the town of Oracabessa on Jamaica's North coast in the 1950s. For decades, this hideaway played host to the glitterati and literati – writers, musicians and heads of state. Now owned by Jamaica-raised Chris Blackwell, the visionary entrepreneur and founder of Island Records, GoldenEye opened to guests in November 2010. Through careful preservation and a discerning approach to completing the retreat, Blackwell has ensured that the relaxed allure of Ian Fleming's GoldenEye endures. Set along the pristine coast, among lush tropical gardens and around the calm waters of the property's lagoon and secluded beaches, the 52-acre estate now encompasses 45 units – 9 Beach Villas, two Lagoon Villas, six Lagoon Cottages, 26 Beach Huts, one Ocean Front Villa and The Fleming Villa. Guests can book Fleming's own private two-bedroom villa -- with three guest villas - where his writing desk still stands just as he left it.







CARIBBEAN-COOL ACCOMMODATIONS

On arrival at GoldenEye, guests are driven along a winding gravel driveway, planted on either side with groves of indigenous trees donated by past guests like Kate Moss, Naomi Campbell, Jude Law, Willie Nelson and Martha Stewart. Those staying at the Fleming Villa will continue along the driveway to the right, past the decades-old stand of intertwined fig trees to where the iconic home sits at the cliff's edge. The Fleming Villa accommodates groups of up to 10 guests, with the original three-bedroom home, which features an open-plan living and dining area, plus two new poolside cottages. Fleming's private swimming pool, media room and bar, and sunken garden round out GoldenEye's top villa, along with direct access to the private Fleming Beach below.

Guests staying in a Lagoon Cottage or one of the Lagoon or Beach Villas make a left on arrival and pass through the open-air Fleming Room – a library and games lounge – before crossing the bridge over the hotel's private lagoon to the beach and lagoon villas and cottages. Ann Hodges, Jamaica's leading architect, and renowned interior designer Barbara Hulanicki were called upon to design and decorate the new accommodations to perfectly blend with the property's existing footprint. The Lagoon Cottages appear to float on the lagoon and offer lagoon access from private docks while Lagoon Villas feature outdoor patios that lead to the lagoon's edge. The barefoot-chic Beach Villas are situated on Low Cay Beach and open directly onto the white sand. All villas feature a living room and fully-



equipped kitchen with Italian upmarket Smeg appliances. Both villas and cottages have entirely private gardens with outdoor showers.

The Beach Huts, which opened in 2016, are freestanding one- and two-bedroom octagonal structures built in varying heights. Some Beach Huts are snuggled against Snorkeler's Cove. Others are positioned for best views of the Caribbean Sea, Oracabessa Bay and Button Beach. Each is designed with a private veranda, oversized louvered windows and high ceiling. The layout for the huts was conceived to blend the indoors and out; the sexy sounds of the tropics with the feel of a hut on the beach.

Custom-designed Jamaican furniture, crisp white linens and African fabrics are featured in each of the rooms. The villas are outfitted with bath and beauty products made using local botanicals, and Royal Hut's fine handmade linens. With a nod to Blackwell's illustrious history in the music industry, all accommodations feature a Logitech Squeezebox sound system that is equipped to channel any radio station or genre of music from around the world. Complimentary Wi-Fi is also available throughout the property.

THE FIELDSPA AT GOLDENEYE

is our ocular focus: built into the natural jungle-like landscape on the edge of the crystal clear blue lagoon allowing guests to walk, swim, or kayak to their spa appointment. Have you ever floated up to your spa treatment? We love the uncommon factor that this brings to the (massage) table. After toweling off, if you decided to swim up, you become immersed in what is known as **FIELD WORK**

“The Intention is to integrate each guest into a comprehensive program rich with intuition, fun, and activity – yet fully connected to GoldenEye, the Jamaican home of Ian Fleming, author of James Bond, and the place Fleming called: ‘The Healthiest Life I could Live.’ ”

Activities such as Lagoon Laps immerse you into the mindset the spa is designed to induce. Have you ever been involved in a spa activity like this? We don’t think so. A gentle self-guided open water swim in the protected lagoon continues that tradition. Swim begins at Wata Sports Bridge and is marked by buoys ending at the Royal Palm Deck past the FieldSpa. This is not your typical hydrotherapy.

In fact, the word spa comes from “Salus Per Aqua” which means “health through water.”

Keeping you active, Par-Course, the outdoor tropical arena is the perfect place to get in tune with nature while tuning up the body with an adult playground. We love this freeform, free-flowing approach to wellness at this spa.

Ingredients from the hotel’s local farm, Pantrepant, such as ginger, pumpkin, and yam are incorporated into therapies. FieldSpa also serves as the home-base for the fitness-focused experiences including stand-up paddle boarding, sunset yoga classes and daily group runs around the local area.

From body scrubs to bush baths, we feel grounded at this spa. It’s a slice of Jamaica in all its rich, natural, authenticity and charm. Speaking only about the spa is not what makes it so uncommon. The entire GoldenEye experience is nourishing to the soul.





JAMAICAN DINING ON THE PROPERTY:

Perched on the western arm of Low Cay Beach is GoldenEye's beach casual restaurant, Bizot Bar, which is named for Jean-Francois Bizot (1944-2007) – the journalist, musical taste-maker, founder of Paris-based world music radio station Radio Nova, and great friend of Chris Blackwell – who often visited GoldenEye. Located steps from the beach and the fresh and sea-water swimming pools, guests can partake of light bites, exotic cocktails and international wines all served to the cool sounds of Radio Nova, which is live-streamed at Bizot Bar.

The Gazebo features an all-day outdoor lounge and an evening-only restaurant, serving up local fare with an international twist. Located high on the eastern bank of the lagoon entrance, overlooking the calm lagoon waters and Low Cay beach beyond, The Gazebo's west-facing view is the ideal setting to take in the fiery Caribbean sunsets. GoldenEye is also home to Sha'been, a seafront bar with rooftop lounge and games room.









BEACHES & LAGOON

LOW CAY BEACH: Shaped like a French croissant, Low Cay is the hotel's main beach with 500 feet of smooth sand for sunning, relaxing and swimming. Located right off shore is a small island with palm trees and lounge chairs for guest enjoyment.

THE LAGOON: The protected lagoon is one of GoldenEye's utterly unique features. The lagoon's warm waters are a combination of seawater and underground spring water, making it a favorite hangout for a wide variety of little fish and guests alike. Always peaceful and placid, it is ideal for swimming laps even if you aren't partaking in FieldSpa, snorkeling, stand-up paddle boarding or floating around with a Red Stripe.

Wata Sports: Home to GoldenEye's watersports, trained lifeguards will arrange for everything from beach towels and snorkeling equipment to kayaks, paddle boards, and glass bottom boat rides.

Snorkeler's Cove: The spot where guests swim out to sea to explore GoldenEye's coral reef and the Oracabessa Fish Sanctuary.

ORACABESSA FOUNDATION

Established in 1995 by Chris Blackwell, the foundation serves to educate the local community and encourage sustainable development. Guests can follow in the footsteps of Michael Caine, Kate Moss, Quincy Jones, Johnny Depp, and Bill & Hillary Clinton and plant a tree on the property with a \$1,000 donation to the foundation. The tree planting tradition was started by Anthony Eden, England's Prime Minister in the 50s. The Oracabessa Foundation is dedicated to serving the community and provides leadership, organization, funds and volunteers for local projects such as the Oracabessa Fish Sanctuary, education and entrepreneurship programs for adults, and leadership and sporting programming for children.

A stay here makes us feel good all over.

www.GoldenEye.com



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