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Luxurious Ceiba del Mar Offers a Uniquely Mexican Experience

Ceiba del Mar Beach and Spa Resort on the Riviera Maya offers everything your resort-bound client desires while capturing a "real Mexico" experience.

CONNIE SKOOG

Numerous resorts along the Mexican Riviera Maya claim to offer "something for everyone." This assertion often relies on a facility the size of a small town. Ceiba del Mar Beach and Spa Resort, an exquisite 88-suite 5-star property provides guests with the best of the Riviera Maya without requiring that they join a multitude.

Ceiba del Mar is located just 20 minutes south of the Cancun airport in Puerto Morelos. Owner Luis Segura, a well-known Mexican architect, has created a luxurious property that reflects genuine Mexican culture and design. From their first glimpse of the lobby until they relax on their balcony or patio overlooking the sea, guests know they are in Mexico at this property.



Some of Ceiba's suites include a private mini-pool on the terrace.

Accommodations with a View

All rooms, suites and penthouses have a view of the ocean. As a travel professional, you know that a beach resort vacation requires seeing and hearing the sea for most clients; that requirement is a sure thing at Ceiba del Mar.

Deluxe rooms offer king or double queen beds, balcony or terrace and a separate tub and shower. Suites add a living room, while Master Suites, more than 750 square feet in area, offer an extra balcony, a 42" plasma TV, plus an extra bathroom and bar. Some of them include a mini-pool on the terrace. Free wireless access is available in-room in all units.

The seven Penthouse Suites, each with a huge rooftop terrace with a whirlpool, are 900-square-foot one-bedroom apartments. All rooms meet the most discriminating guest's expectations, with a "pillow menu," European-style linens and state-of-the-art baths.

If ordered, a complimentary Continental breakfast for two is delivered to each room via a convenient alcove at the door, so guests are not disturbed when it arrives.

The décor of all rooms consists of purely Mexican materials and products. For instance, all of the bath products are hand made by a native tribe from pure natural ingredients.

Prices at Ceiba del Mar vary widely, depending on the season and choice of accommodation. Rack rates range from \$410 (deluxe room) to \$1050 (penthouse) during high season; many specials are offered throughout the year. Both European and American plans are available. An example of the 2008 autumn special (available until December 22): is \$299 ppdo including accommodation, all a la carte meals, snacks and drinks.

Sand and Water

The Riviera Maya may boast of as many "sugar-white" beaches as any place on earth, but the second largest coral reef (the largest is in Australia) along the coast puts this destination well above most tropical getaways for those interesting in life below the surface.

Ceiba del Mar's accredited dive facility offers everything from certification classes to snorkel trips. In keeping with Ceiba's policy, they insist on keeping their excursions small.

Probably Ceiba del Mar's most compelling attraction (for me or anyone who would rather explore a coral reef than just about any other activity) is its world-class-snorkeling just off its beach. The coral is so close to the surface, it's sometimes

necessary to hold your tummy so you don't touch it! The sea along this coast is part of a National Marine Park; no motorized boats are allowed in the area except the local fishing boats that leave early every morning and return to the village each night and the snorkel and dive boats. The best snorkeling is either a fairly long swim or a very short boat ride from the shore. It is one of the best snorkeling areas I have ever encountered anywhere.

Landlubbers will find shaded lounges on the beach and lining both pools. Waiters carry food and drink to any of these lazy spots. The largest pool includes the ubiquitous swim-up bar as well as a warm spa pool.

The Spa

Ceiba del Mar advertises spa treatments that go beyond the usual massage and wrap treatments. According to the spa manager, they assess stress and other health threats with a Meridian Stress Assessment machine that profile a client's condition. Treatments to balance the body and the mind are prescribed from these results.

Treatments include aromatherapy, unique Mayan treatments and ionithermie (created in France for correcting cellulite), as well as the usual scrubs, massage, wraps and facials. The whirlpool, Swiss shower and sauna are available to all guests free of charge. A complete gymnasium is also open to all guests.

Temazcal Ceremony

One of the most unusual treatments offered by Ceiba del Mar is the Temazcal Ceremony, an ancient ritual conducted in a typical Mayan clay hut. Our group of about a dozen people participated in the Temazcal Ceremony on a beautiful afternoon at the resort. A leader painted us with herbs and calmed us with an explanation of the ritual before each of us filed into the hut and sat down on large palm leaves. She sang and chanted as glowing volcanic stones were brought into the hut. Herb water was sprinkled on the stones and we soon found ourselves in an aromatic steam bath.

We shared visions and stories as the heat intensified. By the end of the ceremony, only three of us remained in the hut. The leader insisted that she wanted no one to "suffer," so she encouraged anyone who was too hot to exit the hut. Everyone agreed that they were glad they had participated in the ceremony; a few people felt that it was the highlight of their trip and expressed feeling a deep relaxation and revelation.

Dining Options

Arrecifes, the seaside restaurant at Ceiba del Mar, serves both Mexican and American dishes, with an emphasis on fresh seafood, grilled and wood-fired oven entries. Your clients will not be disappointed by the culinary expertise exhibited at the Arrecifes; we never had a bad or even mediocre



The largest pool wraps around a swim-up bar as well as a warm spa.

meal there.

The small fishing village of Puerto Morelos, a short stroll down the beach from Ceiba boasts a remarkable number of good restaurants. Puerto Morelos is the oldest town on the Riviera Maya (stretching now from north of Cancun to below Tulum and growing). Unlike Cancun (a city that tourism built) or Playa del Carmen (a village that completely disappeared when tourism took over), Puerto Morelos remains an authentic fishing village: no Senor Frog, no streets lined with t-shirt shops.

Your clients can choose from several seafood places, one German and four "international" restaurants, as well as an assortment of Mexican eateries. One place that shouldn't be missed is John Gray's Kitchen. John Gray moved to Mexico as chef for the Ritz-Carlton and now provides world-class food in Puerto Morelos.

Special Groups at Ceiba del Mar

As "destination weddings" become more and more popular, the lure of celebrating other momentous occasions with group travel has also caught on. Families celebrating someone's 40th, 50th or 60th, an anniversary or reunion, are likely to use you, their travel professional, to find the best property and to help pull their plans together.

Your best source for making these kind of celebrations memorable at the Ceiba del Mar is Denise Courtney (groups1@ceibadelmar.com). Ceiba del Mar offers private gardens on the beach with covered patios and bar, a dock that can be lined with lights, and many other facilities that come alive with Denise's imagination and panache.

"We are small enough to be able to provide just about anything that a family or wedding party could think of," said Denise. "We've catered parties on a roof overlooking the sea, in one of the penthouses, on the beach, just about anywhere." We suspect no client could think of anything that Denise and her crew have not already done with aplomb. She can email photos of many past celebrations.

Ceiba del Mar, 877-545-6221, www.ceibadelmar.com

All Ashore! Mexico's Costa Maya Port & Surrounding Region Shine as a Top Ten

An interview with director of marketing & sales director Cesar Lizarraga about the destination's development and tourism growth.

MARY ELLEN SCHULTZ

Mexico's Caribbean coast on the Yucatan peninsula has enjoyed steady growth over the past thirty years. First, there was glittering Cancun. Then came Riviera Maya of the megaresorts and jungle-nestling boutique hotels. Over the past six years, though, another jewel in the country's getaway crown has begun shining further south: Costa Maya.



CESAR LIZARRAGA

Stretching 80 miles along the coast between Felipe Carillo Puerto (approximately 180mi south of Cancun, 60mi. north of Chetumal and 2mi from the resort town of Mahahual), the gateway to this sun-soaked, culture-rich and adventure-filled region is Puerto Costa Maya,

the western Caribbean's first port designed exclusively for the cruise industry.

Resembling an ancient Mayan City, the port can accommodate three ships at once and introduces visitors to a destination showcasing the Mexican Caribbean's ancient and colonial heritage.

Accolades abound. It was named 2007 Port of the Year by Sea Trade magazine, one of the 10 Top Caribbean Ports by the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association and one of the hottest emerging dive destinations by industry publications.

After receiving an impressive 2 million passengers within 5 years of its 2001 launch, the port suffered major damage and closed in the wake of 2007's Hurricane Dean. This past October 31st, the port reopened with the arrival of Holland America Cruises' Westerdam and high season is in full swing.

Travel World News met recently with Cesar Lizarraga, Costa Maya's marketing & sales director, for an update on the region's recovery.

Travel World News: What was Costa Maya's total investment plan?

Cesar Lizarraga: Taking a page from Cozumel's success, we began six years ago with a 25-year development plan to convert the region into the premier cruise destination along our Caribbean coast. Costa Maya was built with an original

investment of \$25mn, following responsible development guidelines to guarantee the preservation of landscape and Mayan culture.... the plan called for governmental collaboration with and integration of local communities. Following Hurricane Dean, the local and federal government provided an additional \$20mn for reconstruction.

TWN: Describe the port, please.

CL: We've got three berths — we're one of only four ports worldwide able to accommodate the F3 and Genesis-class type vessel...and one of only six [ports] in the Caribbean receiving over 1mn passengers a year! Ashore, we've got three grand pavilions, our own private beach club, saltwater pools, restaurants/bars, plus a 70,000-sq. ft artisan and luxury shopping center and bazaar and land and sea excursions galore.

TWN: Which cruise lines dock at the port?

CL: Currently, Carnival Cruise Lines, Celebrity Cruises, Cunard, Disney Cruise Line, Holland America, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, P&O Cruises, Regent Seven Seas and Windstar.

TWN: Some stats, please — when is high season, how many ships dock a day and how many passengers?

CL: High season is October–April, usually three arrivals with approximately 9,000 total passengers disembarking daily.

TWN: Beyond the port, what makes Costa Maya so special?

CL: It's a beach destination combined the region's largest concentration of archaeological sites (e.g. Calacmul, Becan, Xpuhil and Chicanna) and existing Mayan population in Mexico, nature reserves....plus, we're a divers' paradise — 26 nautical miles offshore, Chinchorro is part of the world's 2nd most important coral reef in the world...till now, was so remote, known only by well-heeled diving cognoscenti...now, we've got the infrastructure in place to take more divers there. Think about it – 100ft visibility!

TWN: What makes Costa Maya interesting for a travel agent to recommend to clients?

CL: Travel agents are inclined to recommend cruises based on the variety/quality of shore excursions offered...vacationers select cruises for the same reasons...we offer over 25 diverse excursions — the perfect mix of beach and introduction to the beauty and rich history of our culture and myriad adventure options.

TWN: Please describe some of these excursions.

CL: Hmm...Biomaya Bacalar ziplining; Costa Maya Snuba



Holland America Cruises crew arriving at Puerto Costa Maya's state-of-the-art port facility.

adventure (snorkeling/scuba combo); Dolphin Dream interaction and the Mayan Culture experience with local communities...or think trekking through subtropical rainforest and discovering prehistoric waterways...or Laguna Bacalar (a rainbow-lake with 7 shades of blue)...and of course, shopping till you drop for local crafts!

TWN: What particularly do you want agents to know?

CL: Cruise-concentrating agents need to learn about Costa Maya...our hope is to help them promote it. We were first known as a port of call, but please realize that beyond being a spectacular port facility, we've got with high-density attractions beyond typical daylong shore excursions. We're becoming known as a true destination, comprising 20 communities in the heart of the Mayan world. Encourage your clients to use their brief shore visit as a "taste" of our rich Mayan culture and beauty— and then come back and spend some time to really explore all we've got to offer! [Note: FIT/Land-based clients can fly into Cancun or Chetumal airports.]

TWN: Do you see interest in the region growing?

CL: Definitely. The cruise is the hook to encourage repeat visits to the region.... this part of Mexico show strong promise for tourism development...we've got the figures to back it up...Costa Maya grew 15% between 2006 and 2007, and we're projecting a 212% area population increase following our reopening.

TWN: Will regional development focus primarily around Mahahual?

CL: Actually, all along the coast, between Felipe Carillo Puerto and Chetumal/Xcalak. Beyond port facility expansion, new infrastructure is being added, including new roads,

an airstrip and varied real estate offerings. Some small, privately owned hotels are operating now; future plans are for a maximum of 10,000 rooms to be built—eco-friendly structures— primarily smaller, boutique properties.

TWN: With the northern Yucatan coast already so heavily promoted, what do you see as the challenges to building excitement about Costa Maya?

CL: The main challenge is educating agents as to what exactly IS Costa Maya. Yes, it's our state-of-the-art port facility, but it's so much more...as mentioned above, sugar-sand beaches, the diving, the attraction-rich region.

TWN: How are you marketing Costa Maya in the U.S.?

CL: We're now marketing Costa Maya as a regional destination, in addition to a port-of-call— that opens a whole new world of possibilities. Our new branding campaign will feature a new logo and image, along with a redesigned website. We've begun developing coop-marketing plans with the Mexico Tourist Board...e.g., tradeshow and print media. We've got budget constraints — particularly now with current economic situation — but do hope to be able to increase visibility, mainly via tradeshow, e.g. cruise-specific ones like Sea Trade, CLIA and Cruise 360, plus the traditional industry shows. We're also seeking regional investors to create pooled marketing efforts.

TWN: Closing words for our readers?

CL: Once you arrive at the pier, is when your conversation with the destination begins...tell your clients to come and talk with us, soon!

Costa Maya, www.puertocostamaya.com, www.visitmexico.com

SANDOS INCORPORATES NATURAL SETTINGS, TREATMENTS INTO TWO NEW FACILITIES

Designed to promote serenity and relaxation, a new Spa Sandos facility at the all-inclusive Sandos Playacar Beach Resort & Spa offers Thalassotherapy treatments using the only Nausicca equipment found on the Riviera Maya, Mexico.

Treatments combine marine water in its various forms (steam, micro drops, and liquid) with aromatherapy and colored lights (chromotherapy) to detoxify, purify and tone the skin to create a sense of well-being.

The facility includes hydrotherapy baths, open-area hydro massage swimming pool, steam baths, sauna; gymnasium with rooms for spinning, Pilates, yoga; beauty salon for manicure and pedicure rituals, nails, hair styling and color, and make-up. All those who stay within the Playacar complex, consisting of Sandos Playacar Beach Resort & Spa and Sandos Playacar Riviera Hotel, have access to the facility, with first-floor services, including the fitness center, hydro massage pool and saunas, free of charge.

Emerging on the scene with an environmental focus, Sandos Hotels & Resorts will convert Sandos Caracol Beach Resort & Spa and Sandos Select Club Beach Resort & Spa in the Riviera Maya into an unprecedented Eco-Resort and Eco-Versity in which guests will engage in ecological practices. Renovations are underway for



Sandos Caracol Eco-Resort & Spa to debut this year.

"In order to move towards a sustainable future, we decided to transform our Caracol complex into an Eco-Resort by implementing a variety of 'green' practices that are taken to the next level," said Jacques De Paep, director of sales and marketing, Sandos Hotels & Resorts.

CEIBA DEL MAR

Beach & Spa Resort

Golf & Spa Winter Special

plus 4th Night Free!

Price per Special for two starts at:
US\$ 1,707.00 plus taxes & service charge (17%),
 based on double occupancy. Additional Nights are available.

Special Includes:

- + 4 Nights in selected luxury ocean view accommodations, with the 4th night complimentary
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- + One romantic Dinner for 2 with one chilled bottle of wine on the beach
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- + Two 60-Minute Massage per stay to choose from our Spa menu
- + 20% Discount in Spa Treatments
- + Access to our Spa facilities the entire stay
- + Private Airport-Hotel round transportation
- + Free wireless internet in room
- + In-Suite Organic Bath Amenities.

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For reservations: 1-877-545-6221
www.ceibadelmar.com

CEIBA DEL MAR
BEACH & SPA RESORT
PUERTO MORELOS, RIVIERA MAYA

*Golf & Spa 4th Night Free Special is valid for Stays until December 22, 2009. *Average Daily Rate displayed already reflects the 4th Nite Free discount. Not combinable with any other promotions. Current published prices valid only for New Reservations.

Plans include a 75-percent reduction in carbon footprint by 2012 by using alternative energy technologies to create a hospitality-world first: "zero emissions" buildings. The resort will also implement breeding programs to re-establish endangered populations.

With an Eco-Zoo in place, guests can learn about the wildlife and also interact and feed certain animals. They'll be able to participate in activities like beach clean-ups, saving tortoises in Akumal, Mexico, and setting exotic bird species "free" into the wild to earn points that can be redeemed for free nights at the property.

The Caracol complex was originally built to respect surrounding ecosystems. It's the only property on the Riviera Maya with 16 cenotes, underwater caves that were used by the ancient Mayans as a place to communicate and contact their gods. Directly off its beach is the world's second largest living coral reef, the Meso-American Barrier Reef, an underwater environment ideal for snorkeling and scuba diving.

Sandos all-inclusive rates range from \$67 to \$132 pppo in a standard room, based on availability, for travel now through April 18, 2009.

Sandos Hotels & Resorts, 866-887-5601, www.sandoshotels.com

GRACE GRILLO APPOINTED SANDOS SENIOR SALES MANAGER



GRACE GRILLO

In an effort to further develop its sales network within North America, Sandos Hotels & Resorts has recently appointed Grace Grillo as Senior Sales Manager for Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada.

Grillo and her team, based in New York, will be responsible for regional brand representation; strategic pitching to travel agencies, tour operators, incentive companies, national tourist

boards and key industry organizations; and various promotional programs for clients via travel agents, wholesalers, tour operators.

"With over 15 years in the travel industry, Mrs. Grillo will be an asset to our Sandos Hotels & Resorts team," said Jacques De Paep, director of Sales and Marketing, Sandos Hotels & Resorts. "Grillo's extensive travel industry experience and intimate knowledge of both Canada and U.S. operations will aid our efforts to enhance services and support for our clientele," he added.

Sandos Hotels & Resorts has four products on the Riviera Maya, Mexico: Sandos Caracol Eco-Resort & Spa, Select Club Beach Resort & Spa, Sandos Playacar Beach Resort & Spa and the Playacar Riviera hotel section; and one in the Canary Islands, Sandos Papagayo Arena Beach Resort & Spa. Future openings are planned in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.



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JAMAICAN TOURISM MINISTER ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF JOHN LYNCH AS DIRECTOR OF TOURISM



JOHN LYNCH

Jamaica's Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett has announced the appointment of John Lynch as Director of Tourism at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), following Basil Smith's decision to not renew his contract that expired in October. "Lynch's knowledge, experience and strength in sales make him an ideal candidate to fill the available post," noted Bartlett.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Lynch worked for 16 years as executive vice president of Unique Vacations, with overall responsibility for public relations, sales promotions, and group sales and is credited with being a major force in the development of all Sandals Resorts brands worldwide.

Mr. Lynch has also had experience in the public sector by serving the Jamaica Tourist Board in a variety of capacities in the past: senior manager of trade services, regional director based in Chicago, and deputy director of tourism, responsible for sales, marketing and conventions and overseas offices. He was a driving force behind the award-winning Come Back to Jamaica

campaign that significantly increased visitor arrivals during his tenure.

Mr. Lynch also serves as third vice president of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), chairing its marketing committee, and sits on the board of directors for the Caribbean Tourism Development Corporation (CTDC), a merger of the Caribbean Hotel Association and the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Minister Bartlett said he is looking forward to working with the new Director of Tourism as part of a renewed thrust to drive Jamaica's tourism industry to new heights. "Mr. Lynch is one of the finest marketers in the tourism business today to be found anywhere in the world. He possesses the expertise and tireless energy that we need to meet the fierce challenges facing Jamaica in the global tourism marketplace today," Bartlett noted.

Mr. Lynch welcomes his appointment as Tourism Director: "I am eager to give back to Jamaica's tourism industry and I look forward to working with the new Board as we protect and grow our market share in this challenging period," said Lynch. He will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the JTB and the country's global tourism marketing.

Jamaica Tourist Board, www.visitjamaica.com

HALF MOON NAMED GOLF RESORT OF THE YEAR

Over 300 golf tour operators from 45 countries cast their votes for the annual International Association of Golf Tour Operators that saw Jamaica's luxury resort Half Moon declared Golf Resort of the Year in the Rest of World category.

Half Moon's General Manager Aram Zerunian was on hand to collect the award at the IAGTO Awards gala dinner held in Marbella, Spain, in November.

Over 2,000 golf resorts from around the world were considered for this award category and were judged based on customer satisfaction, quality of golf course and accommodation, value for money, accessibility to tee times as well as speed of communication and quality of service of the golf resort sales and marketing team.

In accepting the award Aram Zerunian said, "We are honored to receive this recognition and to be named among such legendary golf resorts in the world. This award affirms the work we have invested to continuously improve our product and the quality service offered by the over 800 men and women who work at Half Moon."

Half Moon joins a roster of acclaimed international golf resorts that have received the prestigious award in previous years. Past winners in the category included: Druids Glen Golf Resort in Ireland, Turnberry in Scotland, Mission Hills in China, Sandy Lane in Barbados and Arabella Western Cape in South Africa among others.

The IAGTO Awards were established in 2000 to reward to recognize those exceptional resorts in the world of golf travel.

Half Moon, 800-626-0952, www.halfmoon.com

Point Village Resort
The village within the village on the sands of Negril

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Website: pointvillage.com
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Discover Jamaica



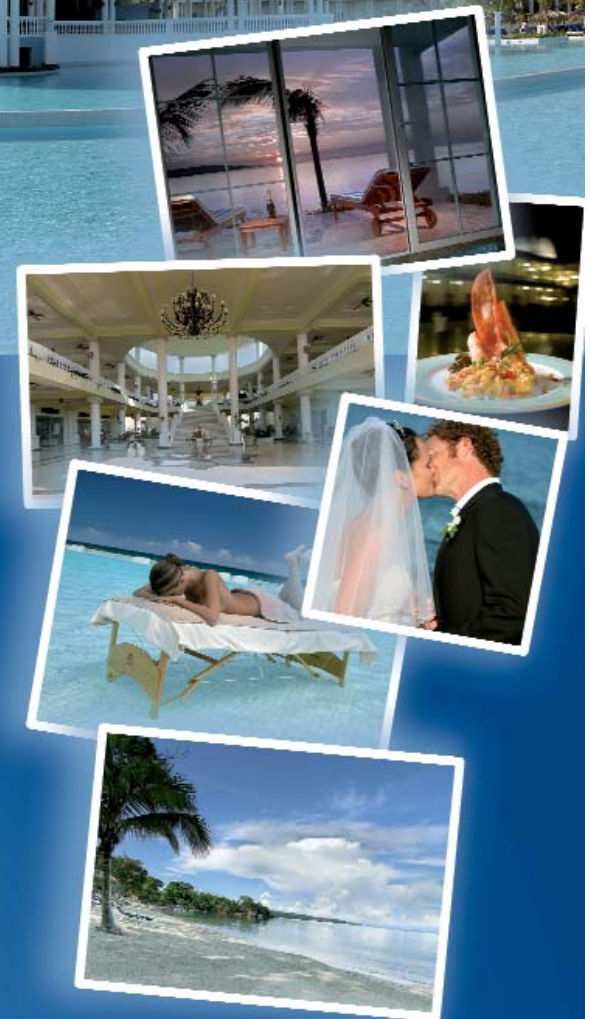

GRAND PALLADIUM
JAMAICA RESORT & SPA


GRAND PALLADIUM
LADY HAMILTON RESORT & SPA

Two Brand New Palladium Resorts in Jamaica ...

Located in Lucea, the north coast of Jamaica, only 25 minutes from Montego Bay, the Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa and the Grand Palladium Jamaica Resort & Spa offer a unique Caribbean setting for an unforgettable vacation or the celebration of any special occasion. Personalized services, exclusive suites, 7 thematic "a la carte" restaurants, 3 buffets, 13 bars, 5 large swimming pools and the biggest spa and fitness center in Jamaica measuring 3000 square meters.

Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa *****
Grand Palladium Jamaica Resort & Spa *****



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ROSALIE BAY RESORT APPOINTS CELIA ROBERTS AS GENERAL MANAGER



CELIA ROBERTS

Celia A. Roberts has been appointed to the post of General Manager of Rosalie Bay—A Nature Resort, Dominica's new four-star resort opening early this year. A 20-year veteran of the hospitality industry, Roberts has experience in hotel management, human resources, tourism and business development, and marketing.

"Our mission at Rosalie Bay Resort is to define luxury in Dominica and provide guests with personal service at the highest

of standards," says Roberts.

Embracing a holistic approach to tourism, she is excited to have an opportunity to play a part in the development of Dominica, as a flourishing travel destination in her position at Rosalie Bay. Roberts began her career in at the Royal Antigua Resort, going on to become the general manager of the Marina Bay Beach Resort and to work in management in Antigua at Club Antigua and Sandals Antigua Resort & Spa. In 2001 she launched Roberts & Associates, a consulting firm specializing in business operations.

Consultancies included developing training programs, marketing plans and tourism projects for clients including Jolly Beach Resort & Spa in Antigua, Coral Reef Resort in Barbados, and the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. Roberts has also taught business and marketing and industry-specific courses at various institutions including the Antigua & Barbuda Hospitality Training Institute and the Antigua and Barbuda International Institute of Technology.

Roberts holds the designations Certified Caribbean Hospitality Trainer and Hospitality Advisor through the CTO/CRSHTD Hospitality Assured program, earned a Bachelor of Science in Hotel & Resort Management, and received her MBA in Total Quality Management from the University of Hampshire.

Rosalie Bay Resort, info@rosaliebay.com

MONICA NEUMANN TO OVERSEE ALL OPERATIONS OF THE REGENT PALMS TURKS AND CAICOS AS GENERAL MANAGER



MONICA NEUMANN

A veteran of the luxury hospitality industry, Monica Neumann, has been appointed the new General Manager of the award-winning Regent Palms Turks and Caicos, one of only five Caribbean hotels to earn a spot on Robb Report's 100 Best Places to Stay 2008, and the resort's Regent Spa was on Condé Nast Traveler's coveted "Hot List" for 2008.

With extensive luxury hospitality experience, including Director of Operations and Director of Quality Integration and Training for Regent

Hotels, Neumann oversees all operations for the award-winning resort, which overlooks renowned Grace Bay Beach on the island of Providenciales.

Neumann has been a leader within Regent managed hotels and brings much global experience to The Regent Palms Turks and Caicos. She has held several senior management positions with Hyatt Hotels Corporation, and was the company's first female to open a Hyatt operationally (Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Washington DC) as well as the first female General Manager to open a Hyatt hotel (Hyatt Regency Coral Gables, Fla.).

She also served as General Manager at the Hyatt Newporter Hotel in Newport Beach, and at the Radisson Plaza Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia. Her luxury expertise also includes leadership positions in client services for the upscale retailer Nordstrom.

"Monica is a sparkling hospitality talent with a keen eye for quality and an impressive background in luxury. Combining Monica's impressive talent with our award-winning Caribbean resort is a recipe for success," said Bjorn Gullaksen of Regent Hotels & Resorts.

The Regent Palms Turks and Caicos,
www.TheRegentExperience.com

MONTSERRAT ANNOUNCES THE RETURN OF DAILY FERRY SERVICE TO ISLAND

The island of Montserrat recently reestablished ferry service between Antigua and Montserrat, after a three-year hiatus. With the help of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, travelers will once again have the opportunity to enjoy views of the scenic coastline and lush tropical landscape while enroute to the island.

In December, the 107-seat Diamond I began offering passengers daily roundtrip service Monday through Saturday, with the commuter boat departing Montserrat at 7:30 a.m. and arriving Antigua at 8:50, and on the return, departing Antigua at 5:30 p.m. to arrive in Montserrat at 6:50.

At the start of January 2009, a schedule and equipment change takes effect. For January 1–April 24, 2009, the ferry service will make two return trips, four days a week.

The ferry used January 1 onward is the Provincetown III, launched in 2004 with a seating capacity of 149 passengers. It takes approximately one hour to complete the Montserrat/Antigua journey, with its cruising speed of 28 knots.

Two daily roundtrips are offered four days a week. Roundtrip fares are approximately \$135. Details are available on MONAIR's website or from Carib World Travel.

Montserrat, a lush green and mountainous island of approximately 39 square miles, lies in the Eastern Caribbean chain of islands.

MONAIR, www.monair@candw.ms; Carib World Travel, info@carib-world.com; www.visitmontserrat.com

TUSCANY ON GRACE BAY OFFERS STUNNING VIEWS OF CARIBBEAN SUNSETS

Conveniently located on the world-famous 12-mile Grace Bay Beach in Providenciales, Turks & Caicos, guests at The Tuscany on Grace Bay can enjoy the island's spectacular sunsets and sunrises in any one of the hotel's lavish beachfront suites.

Visitors can witness magnificent views from their private enclosed patio or simply step out from the comfort of their first-floor suite and "catch some rays" beachside. And for intimate moments, a personal chef is available for couples who wish to 'dine under the stars.' The three-bedroom suites are stylishly appointed, with an expansive master bedroom and lavish ensuite bathroom, a contemporary gourmet kitchen and sprawling living and dining areas.

As a seaside property, The Tuscany's location allows guests to walk a few steps to a variety of off-site activities that range from deep-sea fishing, snorkeling, boating and wind surfing to horseback riding, golfing, and exploring the island's caves. In addition, the hotel's knowledgeable staff can also arrange excursions to see and experience the island's offerings.

The Tuscany is located on Grace Bay Beach in Turks and Caicos, just 15 minutes from Providenciales International Airport. The resort offers thirty 2,000-square-foot, well-appointed three-bedroom/three bathroom suites providing guests with comfort and luxury, each having a distinctly different ambiance and décor.

All units are beachfront and include extended screened patios with first-floor villas offering immediate beach access. Home to the pristine 12-mile Grace Bay beach, Turks and Caicos is surrounded by coral reef and tropical, turquoise waters.

Tuscany on Grace Bay, 866-359-6464,
www.thetuscanyresort.com

NEW SEVEN STARS RESORT SETS ELITE WEDDING PACKAGES FOR GRACE BAY

The new, luxurious Seven Stars Resort on Providenciales' Grace Bay Beach in the Turks and Caicos Islands offers two wedding packages for couples wishing to tie the knot in a fairy-tale setting.

Elite Wedding Package I includes four nights' accommodation in either a one-bedroom Gardenview Studio or one-bedroom Oceanview Studio, a Wedding Officiate and post-wedding documentation, decoration and set-up, a romantic dinner for two served beachside or at an alternative location, Continental breakfast daily, one-hour couples massage, bottle of champagne and fruit plate on arrival, bottle of wine, transfers to and from airport and 10-percent hotel tax and 10-percent service charge.

From January 3–April 4, 2009 per-couple rates are \$3,720 for the Gardenview Studio and \$4,985 for the Oceanview Studio. From April 5–October 31, 2009 rates are \$3,140 and \$4,100, respectively.

Elite Wedding Package II includes four nights in either a one-bedroom Beachfront Studio or a one-bedroom Beachfront Suite

with Grand Salon and all inclusions of the Elite Wedding Package I. Plus, music during the ceremony, two keepsake champagne toasting flutes, one sea salt skin buff (or similar treatment) each for the bride and her mother or a member of the wedding party and chocolate-dipped strawberries delivered the wedding night. Rates for Elite Wedding Package II from January 3–April 4 are \$6,165 for the Studio and \$9,235 for the Suite and Grand Salon. From April 5–October 31, rates are \$5,155 and \$7,315.

Included in Seven Stars daily rate is golf course shuttle, tennis, use of the fitness center and Wi-Fi availability in the pool area. Accommodations feature a broad terrace or private balcony, marble floors, cable TV and a CD/DVD player with iPod connectivity, full or galley kitchens with granite countertops, GE Monogram appliances and an espresso machine with complimentary coffee set-up.

Seven Stars' courtyards, fountains and lush tropical gardens give way to magnificent ocean views. The hotel's name comes from the seven stars of the Pleiades, the storied constellation seen so clearly from the Turks and Caicos Islands. In Greek mythology the stars represent the seven daughters of the god Atlas and goddess Pleione. **Seven Stars Resort, 866-570-7777, reservations@sevenstarsresort.com, www.sevenstarsresort.com**



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AGUA'S SPECIAL PROMOTION INCLUDES IMPRESSIVE ARRIVAL BY HELICOPTER



Agua Resort & Spa in Punta Cana is offering special packages that will pamper couples seeking to get away to the seclusion and serenity of the golden beaches of the Dominican Republic. Agua is a full resort with spa, gourmet dining and an array of activities. Finely-appointed suites and villas each feature views of the lush gardens, pools and azure ocean water. High-season rates, January 6 through April 30—five nights, range from \$3,150 to \$8,505 ppdo, and for the low season, May 1–December 17, \$2,205 to \$5,481 ppdo.

Agua's special package includes accommodation in a Junior Suite (753 square feet of space with French doors leading to a private tropical terrace), a welcome drink upon arrival, daily Continental breakfast, romantic moonlight three-course dinner on the beach (night of choice), a couple massage, turn-down with amenities from executive chef, helicopter arrival from Punta Cana Airport, private, and ground airport transfer to Punta Cana Airport. MAP (breakfast and dinner) supplement available for extra charge. Taxes and service are included; extra nights available. Rack rates.

Guest suite amenities include Frette linens, Korres (Greece) bath products, pillow menu, attractive bathrooms with separate showers, vanity areas, walk-in closets, mini-bars and Wi-Fi service. Room service and twice-daily maid service are also included. Agua Resort & Spa, 866-757-agua (-2482), res@aguaresort.com, www.aguaresort.com

WESTIN ROCO KI BEACH & GOLF RESORT NAMES ALICIA VILLEGAS CORRALES DIRECTOR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES



ALICIA VILLEGAS CORRALES

Ha, the resort's general manager.

Alicia Villegas Corrales has been named Director of Residential Services for The Westin Roco Ki Beach & Golf Resort in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Her responsibilities include overseeing the day-to-day operation of 32 Jungle Luxe Bungalows, 20 spectacular Cliffside villas and 56 luxury two- and three-bedroom resort condos managed by The Westin Roco Ki. Having joined the management team in early December, she reports to Randall

Villegas joins Roco Ki from the Westin Los Cabos Ocean Villas and the Grand Regina, the luxury fractional ownership condominiums of the Westin Resort & Spa Los Cabos, where she's served as the property's Operations Manager. She also had responsibility for residential services under Starwood Vacation Ownership Latin America. She began her career with Starwood as part of the pre-opening team of the Westin Resort & Spa Los Cabos in November 1999, holding various positions in the finance department. She is a Certified Public Accountant in Mexico and holds a Hotel Business Administration Diploma from ITESM in Mexico as well as a certified Green Belt and a Westin Brand Trainer.

The Westin Roco Ki is the first luxury hotel at Roco Ki. Situated on 2,500 acres, Roco Ki offers natural beach environments with dramatic cliffs, mangroves and 3.5 miles of secluded and undeveloped Roco Ki Beach. An adjacent lagoon inhabited by vibrant ocean life is nearby. Roco Ki is home to the Faldo Legacy Course, an 18-hole, par-72 Nick Faldo-designed championship golf course offering a variety of challenges and dramatic settings combining beach, lakes, mangrove forests and cliffside views. For Faldo the six-time major tournament winner and three-time winner of the Masters, the course marks a personal landmark as it is his first course design project in the Caribbean.

The Westin Roco Ki Beach & Golf Resort, www.westin.com/rocoki

LEADING HOTELS ANNUAL CONVENTION CONVENES IN BOSTON



The Leading Hotels of the World recently held its 2008 Annual Convention in Boston, Massachusetts. Taking place at the Taj Boston, The Langham, Boston, and the Liberty Hotel this past November, the conference attracted a record number of proprietors and general managers from member hotels across the globe. The Annual Commitment to Quality Awards were awarded to properties that achieved the highest scores during their most recent Leading Hotels' anonymous inspections. Pictured on left is Welf Ebeling with Haydee Rainieri proprietor of Tortuga Bay in the Dominican Republic. Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd., 800-223-6800, www.lhw.com

BUCUTI BEACH INFUSES OUTDOOR SPACES WITH LOUNGE-LIKE AMBIENCE

Bucuti Beach Resort, an Aruba boutique resort for couples, has completed a transformation of its outdoor areas. Comfortable modern furnishings, bar and restaurant enhancements and an expanded deck are highlights of the new elements incorporated into Bucuti's award-winning design scheme conceptualized by Nhora Quintero of NCQ Design in Orlando.

Bucuti's updated areas include an opulent infinity pool and expanded lounge deck adjacent to the oceanfront Pirates' Nest Restaurant where guests may enjoy drinks against the backdrop of tranquil ocean sounds. Designer lounge-like beds, sectionals and seats big enough for two by Kettal and Dedon are comfortable spots to listen to the music of Bucuti's steel pan player. The new sunken bar has spacious seating in a setting still intimate. Palm trees are illuminated in translucent planters around the deck for a nighttime glow.

Bucuti owner and CEO Ewald Biemans has a strong commitment to aesthetic enhancements as well as a constant awareness of hospitality industry trends outside of the Caribbean region. The most recent renovation project included the installation of Sun Square awning sails above the deck of the outdoor restaurant. "I discovered the Sun Square system while traveling in Austria, and I knew they would make a great addition to Bucuti and our unique ambience," said Biemans. These innovative electronic awnings, which were recently featured in Architectural Digest, protect restaurant guests from sun and rain and add a stylish element to the outdoor décor.

"The overall feel of Caribbean resorts has matured over the years, and our guests are seeking a more sophisticated experience than ever before," said Biemans. "The combination of our impeccable facilities, the warm hospitality of our staff and our unbeatable location on the pristine sands of Eagle Beach allow us to offer an unmatched romantic experience for couples."





Bucuti Beach Resort, www.bucuti.com



Blue Haven

— H O T E L —

Hollywood legends made Blue Haven Hotel a favorite hideaway since the 1950's.

'As lovingly restored as a vintage film, historic Blue Haven is again making a big splash with beau monde. Elegant rooms overlooking the sea are so awash in sunlight that they positively glow. The view is pure Technicolor.'

— Conde Nash Traveller

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World Travel Awards

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Where H^eaven Begins

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www.sunsethouse.com

Stylish up-do-date touches have been incorporated into the new Normandie in the French West Indies, the lovely hotel that's a two-minute walk from beautiful Lorient beach at St. Barths. Centrally located to dining, distinctive island shopping and water sports, the Normandie offers conviviality and relaxation in a charming surround.

The Hotel's bedrooms and bar/salon area have been totally renovated. The guest rooms are in two buildings, which are connected by a new deck of exotic Brazilian wood surrounding the Hotel pool, set in a tropical garden environment. Amenities at the Normandie, which offers a glimpse of life aboard France's great luxury ocean liner, the SS Normandie, include WiFi, flat screen plasma TVs (with French and US channels), telephones, air conditioning, refrigerators and elegantly-styled ensuite bathrooms.

For high season, January 5 through April 14, 2009, room rates are approximately \$227 ppdo and approximately \$200 single. From April 15 to December 14, prices are approximately \$167 ppdo and approximately \$147 single. A Continental breakfast and complimentary wine in the afternoon is included. Five-percent tourism tax is additional.

Normandie Hotel, contact@normandiehotelestbarts.com,
www.normandiehotelestbarts.com

**RENTING A LUXURY VILLA AT
AQUAMARE EQUATES TO EXCEPTIONAL
PER-PERSON VALUE**

In the current economic environment, the perfect beach vacation is a happy marriage between an outstanding property and a fair price. Aquamare, Virgin Gorda's villa enclave, manages to offer this by delivering the exclusivity of a villa rental with five-star amenities at noteworthy value. For multi-generational gatherings and holidays with friends, each of the three 8,000-square-foot villas, comfortably sleeping up to 12 guests, are priced at a low season rate of \$13,750 per week. That price comes out to just \$1,964 per day for up to 12, less than \$165 per person per day, normally a fraction of what a bona fide five-star luxury hotel charges for a similar experience.

Built for guests who would be sociable and want plenty of room to relax, each of the villas feature three master suites, a double suite and a junior suite.

There are spacious common areas, fully equipped gourmet kitchens and waterfront infinity pools with unobstructed views of the Sir Francis Drake Channel.

Guests at Aquamare are pampered by an on-site concierge, a private chef and beach attendants. They have access to a pair of private yachts. Daily housekeeping, laundry service and nightly turn-down service are provided, featuring Frette linens and Bulgari bath amenities.

Aquamare is set on the Western coast of Virgin Gorda at Mahoe Bay along half a mile of pristine beach frontage. Villa rates for 2009 range from \$13,750 to \$25,000.

Aquamare, www.villaaquamare.com

ST. LUCIA'S LADERA NAMES KEVIN SINNETT GENERAL MANAGER



KEVIN SINNETT

Kevin Sinnett has been named the General Manager of Ladera, St. Lucia's open-air resort, famously located on a ridge at the edge of the rainforest overlooking the volcanic Pitons and Caribbean Sea.

Mr. Sinnett spent nearly a quarter of a century serving as a pilot in the U.S. Navy.

He commanded a 350-person naval squadron and a fleet of eight Navy aircraft. For Kevin, adjusting to a new life at

1,100 feet above the sea will be business as usual.

He began his professional career in 1979 after graduating from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. While at the Naval Academy, he was a record-scoring basketball star and was drafted by the Boston Celtics, though opted to fulfill his chosen career path in the military. Each year, the Academy awards a distinguished athlete the Kevin Sinnett Academic Achievement Award. Throughout his Navy tenure, Mr. Sinnett and his family were stationed at over a dozen military bases, instilling a remarkable ability to adapt and integrate into a wide range of cultures and lifestyles.

"I look forward to applying all of my life experience to this exciting new challenge," says Kevin Sinnett. "Doreen and I feel privileged to have the opportunity to apply all of our world experience to this exciting new phase in our life, and in such a stunning paradise as St. Lucia. We look forward to being part of its continued, extraordinary success."

Ladera, www.ladera.com

FREE RUM CAKE AND FREE EVENTS FOR HOTEL CARAVELLE AND ST. CROIX

Hotel Caravelle on the tropical island of St. Croix is inviting travelers to "Have Your Cake and Eat It Too." Guests who stay at the hotel and support any of the local events listed enjoy a complimentary Tortuga rum cake when they book a three-night stay. Rates at Hotel Caravelle start at \$150 through April 14, 2009, and from April 15 to December 14, \$138.

"St. Croix is home to so many talented people who express themselves through music, dance, painting, glass," stated Sid Kalmans, owner of Hotel Caravelle. "The creativity is truly inspiring and with so many wonderful events coming up, it is a great time to discover the beauty of St. Croix—from the beaches and hills to the people and arts."

Hotel Caravelle is situated on the water in historic Christiansted, within walking distance to galleries, historic buildings, Fort Christiansvearn, restaurants and boutique shops.

On the first Thursday each month, art galleries open their doors in the evening for music, fun and creative outpouring. Locals, artists and visitors stroll the streets to discover new creations and meet and make friends. On the third Friday

of January, February, March and April, Caravelle can arrange transportation to Frederiksted for their Sunset Jazz performances. Another fun event is Jump Up, a street party that occurs in November, February, April and July. Stores stay open late with sales, and food vendors and artisans are about, with steel pan bands and other live music on every corner. Mocko Jumbies dance the streets beginning at seven. The event is a production of the Christiansted Restaurant & Retail Association.

A special Jump Up on May 1 celebrates the triathlon. On May 3, triathletes descend on St. Croix to compete in the St. Croix Half Ironman, a qualifier for the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii. The race starts at 6:30 a.m. when athletes plunge into the ocean for the swim around Christiansted Harbor.

Now through May, there's a Ruins Ramble organized by the Education Outreach Program of the St. Croix Landmarks Society, featuring interpretation of historic ruins with monthly walks that take place on a Sunday. Hotel Caravelle can arrange transportation to and from the meeting spot.

St. Croix Food and Wine Experience, April 15–19, includes gourmet dinners, wine seminars, wine auctions, and the annual culinary competition, A Taste of St. Croix—all benefitting the St. Croix Foundation, a non-profit community foundation.

Hotel Caravelle, 800-524-0410, www.hotelcaravelle.com;

GoToStCroix.com, stcroixfoodandwine.com,

www.stcroixlandmarks.com, www.stxrenaissance.com

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Several months and \$6 million later, there's a gracious new open-air lobby, elegantly redesigned suites with luxurious bathrooms, alluring new lighting and stunning new landscaping. The low-key pleasures of The Sands have become a bit more refined, but the breathtaking views of Grace Bay Beach, the considerate service and sense of peace, privacy and tranquility remain unchanged. Some things should never be tampered with.

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ANGUILLA TOURIST BOARD LAUNCHES CHARMING ESCAPES COLLECTION WEBSITE



The Anguilla Tourist Board has announced the launch of its website www.charmingescapescollection.com, devoted exclusively to the island's Charming Escapes Collection (CEC), a group of 14 select hotels, villas and inns that offer a unique and affordable way to experience what has become one of the Caribbean's most exclusive island getaways.

The new site provides travelers and members of the travel industry with information on each of the member properties as well as the diverse activities, culinary and cultural offerings of the island. The 14 properties, each unique in its own way, are supported by interior and exterior images, and distinctive visuals that showcase Anguilla's natural beauty. Site screens include Things To Do, Restaurants, Weddings/Honeymoons, Things To Know and a Calendar of Events, with links to the Anguilla Tourist Board's main site. Visitors are treated to the music of island icon, Bankie Banx, throughout their website journey.

The CEC site incorporates a booking mechanism utilizing Island Resort Tours that offers consumers a quick and user-friendly online booking system and a search for the best pricing. For the trade, an exclusive Travel Agent log-in provides easy access for client bookings commissionable at 11 percent.

The Collection portfolio includes Allamanda Beach Club, Ambia Bed and Breakfast, Anguilla Great House Resort, Arawak Beach Inn, Caribella Villas, Carimar Beach Club, Ferry Boat Inn, Sirena Resort and Villa, Lloyd's Bed and Breakfast, Paradise Cove Hotel, Patsy's Seaside Villas, Royal Palms, Serenity Cottage and Shoal Bay Villas. The Anguilla Tourist Board plans to implement special online promotions and value-added packages supporting the CEC properties and the launch of the new website.

Anguilla Tourist Board, 877-4ANGUILLA (-426-4845),
www.charmingescapescollection.com,
www.anguilla-vacation.com

ANGUILLA ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE AIR SERVICE TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 14

Anguilla's Ministry of Tourism has announced the launch of a new executive air service which will operate between San Juan, Puerto Rico and Anguilla. The service, scheduled to start on February 14, 2009, will be provided on the Anguilla Air Express, and operated by Rainbow International Airlines Inc, one of the premier charter

companies in the region, and currently operates executive charter service out of major hubs in the Caribbean including San Juan, St. Maarten, Antigua, Barbados and St. Kitts. Guests seeking the comfort, luxury and convenience a private jet service provides will enjoy traveling on the Anguilla Air Express.

The Anguilla Air Express will operate a Beechcraft 1900D Turbo Prop Airplane with seating capacity for 19 in leather reclining cabin chairs on this route.

Departures from San Juan are at 1:30 and 5:30 p.m. and departures from Anguilla are at 9 am and 3 pm. Bookings will be made direct using an 800 number or online, and negotiations are currently underway for guests to be able to book flights through their hotel.

Ticket prices start at \$399 per person, including taxes. Emphasis will be on first-class, personalized service, with an agent meeting all passengers at the gate and escorting them through security and to the departure gate in San Juan, and through Immigration and Customs on arrival in Anguilla. The same level of service will apply on the return journey, with all passengers greeted at the aircraft by an agent, then escorted through Immigration and Customs in San Juan.

Anguilla Tourist Board, 877-4ANGUILLA (-426-4845),
www.anguilla-vacation.com; Rainbow Airlines Inc.,
www.rainbowinternationalairlines.com/index.html

KAMIQUE PROVIDES RELIEF PACKAGE AND 25% BOOKING COMMISSION TO AGENTS

Kamique Anguilla BWI is offering 25%-35% off the standard rates of their four- and six-bedroom luxury villas for bookings made before January 31 for travel anytime through April 15, 2009. As a further incentive for luxury travelers to escape the stresses of the economic downturn without straining one's own finances they offer the following package on a complimentary basis for any weekly bookings: free private charter boat transfer from St. Martin, complimentary in-room massage and spa treatments for up to four guests, and complimentary private chef-fed dinner for up to six.

Under the current promotion, rates for Kamique's four-bedroom (up to 10 guests) villas start at \$15,750 per week and rates for their six-bedroom (up to 14 guests) villa start at \$22,750 per week. Rates are exclusive of 10% occupancy tax and 10% service charge.

Kamique features pampered Caribbean luxury rental villa vacations with villas and estates designed to provide escapes without sacrificing the service and care a luxury traveler may expect. Kamique's villas were recently featured, along with the Amanara in Turks and Caicos and Carlisle Bay in Antigua, as one of "Seven with Style" Caribbean luxury accommodations. Kamique is located on the center of Anguilla's south coast.

A 25% booking commission is offered to agents.
Kamique Anguilla BWI, www.kamique.com

ST. KITTS BREAKS GROUND ON NEW TOM FAZIO GOLF COURSE



A groundbreaking ceremony for the 18-hole Tom Fazio-designed championship golf course on St. Kitts' picturesque Southeast Peninsula demonstrated continued progress in the development of the island's tourism product.

The ceremonial "first dig" was made by St. Kitts & Nevis Prime Minister the Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas; Chairman and CEO of Christophe Harbour's developer, Kiawah Development Partners, Mr. Charles P. "Buddy" Darby; and acclaimed golf course architect Mr. Tom Fazio during a groundbreaking event held last November. Tom Fazio is regarded as one of the world's preeminent golf architects and creator of more than 200 top-ranking golf courses. The course is set 500 feet above sea level on the green hills overlooking the water and will also feature an elegant golf club.

St. Kitts, 800-582-6208; info@stkittstourism.kn,
WWW.STKITTS TOURISM.KN

YOUNG GUESTS LEARN TO CHOOSE AND PREPARE HEALTHY FOODS AT CLUB MED

In an effort to promote a healthier lifestyle and encourage nutritious eating behaviors at an early age, Club Med Ixtapa Pacific recently launched a new Petit Chef program that offers daily cooking lessons for kids ages four to 10 during snack time in the Mini Club Med kitchen.

"Research shows that children involved in the kitchen are excited to eat the foods they've made and willing to experiment with new foods—even vegetables," comments Club Med corporate chef Erik Peters. The Petit Chef program teaches them how to prepare a different recipe daily, including nori rolls, guacamole, fresh salsa, handmade pasta, pizza from scratch, salads and light carrot cake. Each recipe gives children a new opportunity to learn basic cooking techniques, kitchen safety and practice following food-preparation directions. These skills provide the perfect foundation for youngsters to help their parents in the kitchen.

Club Med rolled out the Petit Chef program at the newly-renovated Punta Cana last month and plans to initiate it at the

Sandpiper in December 2009. The resort company is designing a similar program for teens, also to launch in 2009.

Petit Chef daily cooking lessons are part of Club Med's all-inclusive package. Pricing for Club Med Punta Cana starts at \$1,190 and Club Med Ixtapa starts at \$1,260 per person for a seven-night all-inclusive vacation. Children's rates for ages two to three are 30 percent of the original rate and 50 percent for ages four–15.

Club Med, www.clubmed.com

STAY THREE AND GET ONE FREE AT BERMUDA'S SOLE ADULTS-ONLY RESORT

Now through March 31, guests booking three nights at Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa get a complimentary fourth night plus free room upgrade and free dinner nightly at the resort's Tamarisk Room, one of Bermuda's top-rated restaurants. In the winter, nightly rates at this AAA Four-Diamond resort start at \$295 for a garden-view room, \$555 for an oceanfront suite, and \$1,160 for a luxury suite with private infinity plunge pool and panoramic views of the Atlantic. To book Cambridge Beaches' Winter Romance Package, a Monday or Tuesday night stay is required, and reservations must be made by March 27. The package applies to new bookings only.

Cambridge Beaches, set on a private peninsula at Bermuda's western end, has 94 spacious Bermuda-style cottages. With water on three sides, the resort has four private beaches. Features are an award-winning spa, three restaurants, bar, nature preserve, marina, boutique shop, bath butler, and beachfront infinity pool with secluded tiered decks.

Each cottage room and suite has a different décor—traditional to contemporary—to accommodate all tastes. All have a sitting area or living room as well as private terrace or patio providing garden or Atlantic Ocean views. Marble bathrooms house oversized showers and deep soaking tubs. Rooms have high-speed Internet access and Gilchrist & Soames bath amenities. Situated on a bluff there are three new luxury pool suites with plush furnishings, spa bath with whirlpool tub, Bose iPod-docking stereo and private terrace with infinity plunge pool offering ocean views.

The Ocean Spa at Cambridge Beaches is recognized as the Caribbean's and Bermuda's "Most Excellent Spa" by Conde Nast Johansen Worldwide Luxury Travel Guide. The 10,000 square-foot spa has a fitness center, indoor pool with sunroof, aroma steam room, herbal sauna and innovative Crystal Mist Room for therapeutic cooling.

Complimentary afternoon tea is provided daily in the historic Main House and breakfasts and fine dining in the Tamarisk Room, rated by Food & Wine as one of Bermuda's best places to dine. The Chef's Table features a five-course meal prepared by Cambridge's five-star chef. For more casual fare, Shutters serves up lunch and dinner poolside with views of Mangrove Bay.

Cambridge Beaches Resort & Spa, 800-468-7300,
www.cambridgebeaches.com

CURTAIN BLUFF COMPLETES RENOVATIONS AND FREEZES RATES FOR 2009



Curtain Bluff in Antigua has just completed renovations that will now enhance the property for the winter season. In addition, management at the resort has announced they're placing a freeze on rates in 2009.

"We have made strides to maintain our classic look at Curtain Bluff while making improvements to offer the best possible experience and overall service," said Rob Sherman, Managing Director of the resort. "We also know that it has been a tough year economically and we want to thank our valued guests by continuing to grow and improve our resort experience without creating additional expenses."

The renovations were designed to give an overall fresh new look to Curtain Bluff's main public areas and individual guest rooms. Many areas of the resort have been upgraded with the new changes.

New spa-like bathrooms were installed in all 18 deluxe rooms and 12 bluff suites to enhance the relaxed sense of luxury for guests at the resort. New bathroom features include spacious walk-in showers, rain can showerheads and granite countertops with vessel sinks. The main bar was completely redone to extend to the outside patio. A second bar area with chairs on the outside of the original Sugar Mill Bar was opened to accommodate the increased amount of guests the resort can host since the property has grown from its inception in the 1960s. The bar at the beach restaurant was also enhanced with new refrigeration for wine and cold drinks, new blenders, dishwashers and an improved flow to facilitate better service for the guests. And the fitness center was outfitted with all new Cybex equipment.

Last year, the resort opened the Spa at Curtain Bluff, a facility overlooking the ocean with five treatment rooms. This addition has been a hit among Curtain Bluff's repeat visitors (who make up 70 percent of the guests) and new travelers alike. Curtain Bluff was recognized last year as one of the Top 10 classic Caribbean resorts in the September issue of Caribbean Travel & Life, and rated the #2 resort in the Caribbean by readers of Condé Nast Traveler in the November 2008 issue.

Curtain Bluff, 888-289-9898, www.curtainbluff.com

SANDALS NAMED 'CARIBBEAN'S LEADING HOTEL BRAND' AT WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS

For the 15th year in a row, Sandals Resorts has been named the Caribbean's Leading Hotel Brand during the 15th Annual World Travel Awards held in December at Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort Villages & Spa in Providenciales, Turks & Caicos. Sandals Resorts was also named the World's Leading All-Inclusive Company for the 13th year in a row. Sister-brands Beaches Resorts and The Royal Plantation Collection, which form part of the Sandals Resorts portfolio, also enjoyed top nods during the event.

"Throughout our 27 years of operation, our number-one priority has always been—and will continue to be—offering travelers a top luxury product and an unforgettable experience," Gordon 'Butch' Stewart, chairman and founder of Sandals Resorts said. "We are humbled and flattered that our ongoing efforts to modernize and improve our resorts have been recognized today. As we have evolved over the last two decades, it is still our continued goal to challenge industry standards in order to provide our guests with the best vacation available."

For a total of 15 trophies, Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts and The Royal Plantation Collection rose above other highly acclaimed hotel brands, including four wins within the highly sought after 'World's Best' categories. The Caribbean resort company's top honors included: World's Leading All-Inclusive Company—Sandals Resorts International (13th year), World's Most Romantic Resort—Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa (12th year), World's Leading Family All-Inclusive—Beaches Resorts (11th year), World's Leading Family Resort—Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort Villages & Spa (second year), Caribbean's Leading Family All-Inclusive—Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort Villages & Spa (third year), Caribbean's Leading Resort—Royal Plantation Ocho Rios, Jamaica (third year), Antigua & Barbuda's Leading Resort—Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa (second year), Antigua & Barbuda's Leading Spa Resort—Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa, Bahamas' Leading Resort—Sandals Royal Bahamian Spa Resort & Offshore Island (fourth year), Bahamas' Leading Spa Resort—Sandals Royal Bahamian Spa Resort & Offshore Island (second year), Jamaica's Leading Resort—Royal Plantation Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Jamaica's Leading Spa Resort—Royal Plantation Ocho Rios, Jamaica (second year), St. Lucia's Leading Resort—Sandals Grande St. Lucian Spa & Beach Resort (fourth year), St. Lucia's Leading Spa Resort—Sandals Regency La Toc Golf Resort & Spa in St. Lucia (second year), and Turks & Caicos' Leading Resort—Beaches Turks & Caicos Resort Villages & Spa (third year).

The World Travel Awards were established in 1993 for the express purpose of acknowledging and celebrating achievements in all areas of the world's travel and tourism industry. This year's voting campaign reached a total of 167,000 travel professionals worldwide in more than 164 countries

Sandals Resorts, 800-SANDALS (726-3257), www.sandals.com;

Beaches Resorts, 800-BEACHES (232-2437), www.beaches.com