

RIVERIA MAYA: *The New Sandos Caracol Is Better and Much Bigger*



CARIBBEAN

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Riviera Maya: The New Sandos Caracol Is Better And Much Bigger

With close to a thousand rooms, six pools and restaurants, a spa and loads of activities, the Sandos Caracol looks to a bright future on the Riviera Maya.

CONNIE SKOOG

Sandos Hotels and Resorts, a Spanish company, is confident about the bright future of the Riviera Maya in Mexico. They confirmed this optimism with a complete rebuild of their all-inclusive Sandos Caracol Resort, enlarging it nearly five-fold to 966 rooms. Their investment in this destination continues with a renovation of Sandos Playacar Resort now in progress at Playa del Carmen.

Although a few resorts between Cancun and Playa del Carmen have more than a thousand rooms, this resort is among the larger properties at this destination.

The size of the new Caracol allows it to offer an appealing variety of services to clients looking for an affordable all-inclusive holiday that includes white sand, warm water, a sunny climate and lots of things to do.

Caracol is laid out like a Mexican beach town; at its center is a plaza with a bar and burger place. A disco, several restaurants and open-air lounges circle the plaza. Radiating from this plaza, paths lead to other eateries, a luxurious spa, the resort lobby building, a theater, children's club and, of course, the beach.

The resort's six pools, six restaurants, nine bars, world-famous spa, disco, clubs for babies, kids and teens, tennis courts, water sports center, theater present guests with copious choices for their time. A long list of excursions and activities such as golf or scuba are available for an extra fee.

Standard rooms at the newly renovated Sandos Caracol provide every amenity plus mini-bars that are regularly stocked. The Deluxe rooms add a whirlpool tub in the bathroom and a living area with a pull-out couch. The Junior Suites have a larger living area inside, plus a large terrace with an additional outdoor whirlpool tub.

In addition to helping clients choose the accommodation that will best suit their needs, you can help them by working with the resort sales staff to locate clients where they will be happiest. If they chose the Sandos Select Club, they will be located close to the Club's private pool, which is at the oppo-



Beachside pool, one of the Sandos Resort's six.

site end of the resort from the Club's beach club house.

Be sure you help clients guarantee the location of their room. One of the pools is adults only; that might be where your clients will want to locate.

Of course, beach and pool views are always desirable, but some of the buildings provide lovely jungle views with more privacy. Walking from one end of the resort does not take more than ten or fifteen minutes, but being convenient to their favorite activities will ensure an enjoyable vacation for your clients.

If the couple or family you are sending to the Riviera Maya have conflicting ideas of how to spend their vacation, the Caracol may be able to satisfy them all. On the beach, guests can check out snorkeling gear, boogie boards and other beach toys at a large sports center. They can also try a variety of non-motorized flotation, such as catamaran sailboats, wind surfers and kayaks.

Motorized toys can be rented. The beach is large, but the ocean swimming is limited. Rocks and sea grass in the water make it a beach best enjoyed at the edge. We did find a couple of entries into the water and some interesting snorkeling once you get past the rocks and grass. In addition to scuba classes and trips, the resort arranges snorkeling excursions and fishing trips for additional fees. On-site tour operators arrange tours of nearby Mayan ruins, water parks, and wild

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life preserves.

The resort's daily activities program reminds you of a cruise ship: dancing lessons, archery, pool games, water aerobics and so on.

This is followed each night with cabaret shows and theme nights. The resort also furnishes a complimentary bus that transports guest to and from Playa del Carmen every two hours.

La Laguna, the primary buffet restaurant open from 7:00 AM until 10:00 PM, offers a wide variety of food plus energetic service from a staff who fills coffee cups and keeps tables clean and guests happy.

Two smaller buffet restaurants, La Toscana and Las M'scaras serve Italian and Mexican cuisine respectively. Both the Riviera and El Gaucho steak house enjoy a beach-side location.

The Riviera serves a continental mixture of Mediterranean and seafood. The El Templo combines several Asian cuisines in it's a la carte restaurant. Advise your clients to make reservations at their choices from the three a la carte restaurants as soon as they arrive.

The number of reservations allowed is determined by the number of days they are staying at the resort (example, a five-day stay warrants three reservations). The lines for reservations can get long and the time periods less than desirable, so tell them to make plans early.

A lovely building at the center of the resort houses all things



The outdoor whirlpool tub on a Junior Suite terrace.

healthy and rejuvenating. A well-equipped gym overlooks a watery retreat with jetted spas, jetted "chairs," saunas and pools. All of this is available to all guests for no fee.

The actual spa is operated by Renova, a Spanish company that provides spa services to resorts and hotels in Europe and throughout the Caribbean. Their list of services is impressive, their rates are reasonable (i.e.: 50 minute massages range from \$60 to \$110, depending on style) and their personnel are well-trained. The spa facilities contribute to a first-rate experience.

For an extra fee per person, guest can enjoy the Sandos Select Club. (This fee changes with the season, group rate and so on.) The advantages of this club begin at check-in when a special concierge checks club members in at her desk. The beach club, with free Internet access, a pool table, and tables of snacks from morning till night, is located at the best end of the beach, available only to club members.

In another area of the resort a private pool and poolside buffet are also for club members only. A children's pool and playground makes this an especially great place for families. The outdoor kitchen and bar near this pool offer grilled hamburgers, chips and guacamole and a huge informal menu that gives guests the option of a perfect pool-side dinner when they want to stay in their bathing suits until sundown.

Club membership offers added amenities in member rooms, as well as a host of other advantages. This membership would be well worth considering for clients who want a more intimate feeling than can be experienced in a resort with nearly a thousand rooms.

Sandos offers a special travel professional section in their website where you can register and contact their sales staff at www.sandosresorts.com.

Sandos Caracol, www.sandosresorts.com

NO MORE TREASURE HUNTING . . . YOU'VE JUST DISCOVERED THE BOUNTY!

Whether you're looking to snorkel in the warm blue waters or just relax sipping a tropical drink at one of the many bars, there is something for everyone.

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IGTM Celebrates Its First Decade By Returning To The Americas

With the golf travel sector thriving, International Golf Travel Market continues to grow, with this year's event to be held December 3-6, 2007 in Cancun, Mexico.

JENNIFER M. LANE

IGTM (International Golf Travel Market), celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year, is the premiere golf event, bringing together specialist golf tour operators, incentive travel agents, and meetings and conference organizers with leading hotels, resorts, golf courses, airlines and other suppliers of golf related products. This year's event will be held December 3-6, 2007 in Cancun, Mexico.

It presents a fantastic opportunity to become familiar with the golf

tourism product in Cancun and to sign up for any of the 20 or more fam trips that will take place in 2008.

IGTM Comes to Cancun

IGTM is marking the decade by returning to the Americas. 2007's IGTM is set to be the most successful, and will draw over 400 exhibitors from over 35 countries.

"The first IGTM took place in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and hosted 131 exhibitors from 16 countries," says Catherine Vaughan, Overseas Marketing Manager, Reed Travel Exhibition. "After a decade, the show continues to grow from strength to strength - testament to the enduring passion of golf enthusiasts from across the world.

Last year's event in Andalucía saw a 36 percent increase in buyers visiting from over 39 countries with a record 378 exhibitors from 47 destinations exhibiting. The pace is clearly set for our milestone anniversary and the best ever IGTM in Cancun this December."

The success of the show is representative of the fact that golfing holidays now represent one of the most profitable sectors of the travel industry.

The International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) estimates that golf, as the primary purpose of travel, accounts for up to \$12bn in the U.S., \$4bn in Europe and \$600m in the historic home of golf, the UK. Some 12 percent of American adults play golf and it accounts for a disproportionately large 27 percent of America's total travel expendi-



IGTM 2006 Discussion Forum panel.

ture. Hence, the multiplier effect of the golf market is enormous to the tourism sector. The number of players taking golf holidays reached record levels in 2005-06 and is set to continue rising over the coming years.

Breaking away from the normal trade exhibition format, IGTM will feature pre-scheduled appointments where buyers will be able to select up to 29 appointments with their chosen exhibitors. In addition there will also be over three hours of dedicated free networking opportunities on the show floor each day.

Mark Walsh, Group Exhibition Director, said: "IGTM has been an important event for the industry as well as a venue for launching new destinations and products. This year's show carries a special meaning: it will celebrate a decade of success and we will look at what the future holds for the golf travel business. We also need to identify how we can grow the game of golf and the overall stature of our international industry."

Mexico won the Latin American & Caribbean Golf Destination of the Year Award 2007, voted for by IAGTO's 300 golf tour operator members. As would be expected in such a large country with such a varied topography, from desert to rainforest, Mexico offers at least 13 different individual golf destinations. Best known is probably Los Cabos, home to some of the most spectacular golf courses in the world. Puerto Vallarta itself has a wide range of courses, from resort courses

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to the wonderful rolling fairways in the hills of Vista Vallarta.

Cancun itself, while being the most popular holiday destination in Mexico for visitors from three continents, is relatively new to golf.

The quality of the eight courses currently open is of the highest caliber. Jack Nicklaus, Greg Norman and Robert van Hagge have carved marvelous courses out of the dense vegetation and secondary rainforest that covers the state of Quintana Roo.

With more courses on the way, Cancun and the Riviera Maya are set to become one of the world's most popular golf destinations.

Manuel Diaz Cebrian, Director of the Mexican Tourism Board in the UK, Ireland and Scandinavia, said: "It is an honor and pleasure to host the 10th anniversary of IGTM in Mexico. Golf has started to take off in our country and IGTM is the perfect global business backdrop for profiling the potential and the strengths of Mexican golf courses to the industry worldwide."

Scotland on Course for Cancun

Scotland, the home of golf, is heading to Mexico for IGTM. As golfers seek new and exciting destinations and courses, Scottish representatives will be reinforcing Scotland's iconic heritage and product offering as the home of golf.

With its roots dating back to 1457, golf has become a major tourism sector across the globe. The U.S. market alone accounts for over £50m (approximately \$100m) to the Scottish economy with an average spend of approximately \$3,200 per trip. Golfers spend twice that of other visitors to Scotland and for every \$2 spent on a green fee, a further \$10 is spent elsewhere in the Scottish economy.

With over 550 golf courses in Scotland and five of the eight Open Championship courses, including the Old Course, Turnberry, and Muirfield, Scotland has one of the world's best golfing reputations – reflected in Scotland being selected to host the Ryder Cup in 2014 at the world renowned Gleneagles Hotel.

Already lined up for IGTM are Carnoustie Golf Links, Loch Lomond and, the St Andrews Golf Development Group comprising the Old Course Hotel, St Andrews Links Trust, Kingsbarns Golf Links and the Fairmont St Andrews Resort. Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club, Murrayshall House Hotel, and The Carrick will also be taking part in the four-day event.

Says Catherine Vaughan: "The level and number of Scottish exhibitors clearly highlights Scotland's commitment to the golf tourism sector.

IGTM has always been a valuable sales and marketing exercise. 2007's show will see an increase in USA buyers, all of whom have already registered an interest in meeting the Scottish contingency. Scotland should inevitably see an increase in demand for golf-related tourism over the coming years."

IGTM, www.igtm.co.uk

VALENTIN IMPERIAL MAYA RESORT IS RIVIERA MAYA AT ITS MOST MAGNIFICENT



Nestled on Playa del Secreto in the Riviera Maya, Valentin Imperial Maya Resort offers a dream escape to Mexico.

The newly constructed Valentin Imperial Maya Resort's suites are bright and spacious, and feature comfortably elegant designs, oversized whirlpool bath, and balconies with spectacular views. There are 396 junior suites and 12 one-bedroom suites.

Guests have a choice of nine full service restaurants and eight light fare spots. No reservations are required for any of the dining options. The nine full service restaurants include a main buffet-style restaurant that features International cuisine, and seven theme restaurants including Italian, French, Japanese, and Mexican restaurants. In addition, The Beach restaurant, Steak House, Lobster House and Seafood restaurants are all located on the beach and offer the finest and freshest cuisine available.

Guests interested in lighter fare can visit any of the two snack bars at the swim-up pool, the two snack bars at the main pool, or the two snack bars at the beach or the Sports bar. In-suite dining is available daily.

Valentin Imperial Maya Resort also boasts a full service spa offering numerous exotic, custom-designed spa experiences. The spa provides a waterfront haven in the heart of this resort's social scene, where guests can experience the perfect balance of relaxation and play. Along with the expert knowledge of the spa's professional staff of therapists, the healing properties of flowers and spices are used to enhance each experience.

Guests will also enjoy complimentary use of all non-motorized water sports including windsurfers, snorkel and fins, and kayaks, as well as fishing rods and reels. Arrangements can be made for SCUBA, snorkeling, backcountry and deep sea fishing, and sunset sailing cruises, as well as guided nature tours. Trips to historic ruins can be arranged, as well as day trips to Cancun and Playa del Carmen. Guests can also try the tennis and paddle courts or the soccer field. Valentin Imperial Maya Resort's concierge is available to help plan outings to remember.

Valentin Imperial Maya Resort & Spa,
reservations@valentinhotels.com, www.valentinhotels.com

RING IN THE NEW YEAR AT EL DORADO ROYALE



El Dorado Royale, A Spa Resort by Karisma in Punta Brava, Riviera Maya, Mexico is offering a chance to ring in 2008 with a special New Year's Eve package.

The New Year's Eve Package includes accommodations for two in a suite featuring a four-poster, king-size canopy bed, terrace overlooking the Caribbean Sea or gardens, private bath and shower and in-suite Jacuzzi for two; all meals and premium beverages at seven restaurants including Fuentes, El Dorado Royale's culinary theater (gourmet-inclusive); in-suite chocolate fondue and bottle of Moët Chandon champagne; hair and makeup application on December 31 at El Dorado Royale's Spa (based on availability – reserve early); New Year's Eve Dinner and Party which includes a four-course dinner, live DJ and dancing, a midnight champagne toast, and a firework display on the beach (weather permitting); New Year's Day Mimosa Brunch at any of El Dorado Royale's seven restaurants; couples' horseback-riding tour through the Mayan jungle and cenote caves; and a rejuvenating Couples' Mud Massage.

A four-night minimum stay is required and rates start at \$2,468 per couple in a Junior Jacuzzi Suite. Travel must be completed by January 4, 2008 for these rates.

Karisma, 866-KARISMA (527-4762), www.KarismaHotels.com

IBEROSTAR GRAND HOTEL PARAISO OFFERS AUTUMN ESCAPE

The Riviera Maya's newest star, the all-suites, adults-only Iberostar Grand Hotel Paraiso is the perfect escape for couples and groups any time of the year, but especially when the temperatures start to dip.

Guests at the Grand Hotel Paraiso receive personal butler service, with pillow menu and in-room mini-bar and liquor preferences, full dining exchange privileges at over 19 restaurants and 19 bars located at other Iberostar resorts in the Riviera Maya, and personalized concierge services, which includes assistance with booking spa and golf times.

Those staying four nights or less receive a complimentary round of golf per guest on the resort's P.B. Dye designed 18-hole course (recently named one of the top 15 courses in Mexico). Guests who book a stay of five nights or more receive two rounds per person.

Guests who book an oceanfront suite receive "Grand Star" butler service, which includes in-room check-in, luggage packing and unpacking, nightly pressing service and internal resort transporta-

tion. Those looking for ultimate seclusion can experience a romantic, private retreat in one of the Grand's Secluded Villa Suites which includes the "Grand Star" service, along with added amenities such as breakfast-in-bed upon request. Guests can play, dine and experience the Grand Hotel Paraiso and all of the other Iberostar properties along the Riviera Maya during a romantic escape or a fun group getaway.

Guests of all Iberostar Hotels & Resorts enjoy first class accommodations, meals and snacks available 24-hours, beautiful surroundings, five-star service, breathtaking beaches and more. For dining options, guests can choose from lavish buffets and specialty fine-dining restaurants or from casual poolside snack bars. Guests also enjoy unlimited access to a variety of land and non-motorized water sports, including windsurfing, kayaking, catamaran sailing, tennis, and water polo.

Iberostar Hotels & Resorts, 888-923-2722, www.iberostar.com

PALACE RESORTS ANNOUNCES THE GRAND OPENING OF ISLA MUJERES PALACE

Palace Resorts has introduced Isla Mujeres Palace, the latest addition to the Palace Resorts' line of all-inclusive luxury resorts. This property, which opened October 1, rests on the island of Isla Mujeres, which is located eight miles across the Bahia de Mujeres from Cancun.

"We are delighted to offer guests the new Isla Mujeres Palace," said Roberto Chapur, President of Palace Resorts. "This boutique resort offers guests a luxurious yet affordable, all-inclusive alternative that is complemented by the unique relaxed setting that can only be found on this beautiful island."

The 62 superior deluxe-room resort combines high-end design, luxury and serenity with intimate facilities that embrace the concept of personalized service. Guests are provided with fine cuisine, 24-hour room service, top shelf drinks, entertainment, wireless Internet access, taxes and gratuities, as well as their choice of two excursions that offer guests an in-depth guided tour of the island or the opportunity to go snorkeling.

For those seeking a day filled with high activity, the resort offers an outdoor free-style pool, a state-of-the-art fitness center, beach and pool volleyball courts, sea kayaks, ping-pong, table games, daily activities, theme parties and shows.

For a more relaxed experience, guests may take in a massage in one of four specially designed spa treatment rooms, enjoy drinks at the lobby bar, or unwind over a meal at Azul Restaurant. After dinner, visitors can relax in their own private double Jacuzzis on the balcony, or stroll on the beach.

An Isla Mujeres Palace vacation package is priced and ranges from \$346 - \$522 per room, per night, based on double occupancy, depending on time of year. Additionally, for guests that book and stay seven-nights or longer before December 23, 2008 can take advantage of the "Swim with the Dolphins" for free promotion as part of the resorts all-inclusive program. The promotion provides transportation to the marina for two guests, per room, per stay and is non-transferable.

Palace Resorts, www.palaceresorts.com

Turks & Caicos: The Regent Palms Resort; Giving More Than You Expect In A Luxury Resort

Success in the luxury business is in the details.

D. O. CHRISTIAN RIEGER IV

The Regent Palms is a 72-unit resort at the center of Grace Bay Beach on the island of Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos. The property was officially opened under the Regent name on March 1. Diderik Van Regemorter, the general manager, says, "The Palms markets to, and is most favored by, adult couples. However, we get a fair number of children, especially during the holidays. And we have a kids program that caters to them for half day, full day, and night time activities. Most all of our guests are North Americans, which represent about 90% of the occupancy."

"It is our goal," he says, "to continuously exceed guest expectations and provide them with personalized and innovative hospitality through delivery of The Regent Experience. This is highly personalized and is devoted to creating luxury for all the seasons. It is authentic and natural. The Regent Experience is intentionally crafted and it is memorable."

"At The Regent Palms," he continues, "anticipation is the key to our success." The staff motto could very well be, he

says, "To hear without being told, to see without being shown, to know without being asked. For example, if a staff member sees a guest laying by the pool under the intense warm rays of the sun, as he/she feels the effects of the heat . . . they may twitch or wipe their brow or start turning on their sun bed . . . then is the time to go and offer a cool, scented towel, a refreshing mist of cool scented water, or a complimentary, cold bottle of water.

"Or . . . see a guest lighting up a cigarette, be immediately there to place an ashtray on the table.

"To be there before the guests think we are needed, that is the secret to our success."

The Suites

The Palms has one, two and three bedroom suites that include six penthouse suites. The units are exceptionally large,



Dining at sunset on the Penthouse terrace.

no less than 1,500 square feet, and many of the appointments are custom made. Most suites have ocean views over Grace Bay Beach. (The sand of which is not merely sugar white, it is literally powder-sugar soft. Without exaggeration, it is the eider down of sands.)

The suites have sectionally-carpeted, marble floors. All units have a travertine terrace of at least 225 square feet. The large terraces mean your clients can actually sit down on them and eat meals. All the terraces have daybeds, for that lazy, afternoon nap with the breezes sweeping in from the beach.

Your customers can request a private chef, costs extra, or cook the meals themselves in the full-feature kitchens with classic cabinetry, a full-sized, glass-topped range, and an over-sized refrigerator/freezer.

The bedrooms have carved, four-poster, custom made beds with hand-tufted mattresses and custom-made, 300 count,

Egyptian cotton sheets. Of course, at night there is a turn down service that includes bottled water and a piece of chocolate.

In the bedrooms and the living rooms are sliding glass picture windows. What this comes down to is part of your wall is missing when you open these so those Caribbean night breezes can sweep through the bedroom and out the windows on the opposite side. Air conditioning or Caribbean sea breezes, you chose.

As It Should Be

The resort is clean everywhere, no floor stains anywhere, and not the slightest trace of mildew in the rooms. That would be quite the trick for some hotels in the Caribbean. This is the important thing: you clients get what they pay for. Which is as it should be.

The units are in five, five story, coral stone buildings clustered around a \$1.8 million, 150 foot long, abstract shaped, infinity pool of a grand scale with ins and outs. It has sun pods for sybaritic sunning, wooden decks for people watching and in water tables at the Plunge restaurant and bar. This has Caribbean inspired dishes and American favorites including jerk chicken, chilled soups, organic salads and pizzas. The pool and beach staff offers guests complimentary fruits, sherbet and bottled water all day long. Nice touch for that pampered feeling.

Speed in a Leisurely World

Another smart thing they do is have six people behind the in pool bar. At most resorts there are maybe two. At the Regent Palms there is no waiting and waiting for service while you wave your hand in the air trying to get a bartender's attention. It seems there is always someone looking your way.

When you want a drink from these people you get it now. Which is only right, because that is what you can do for yourself at home. And on vacation, you should at minimum get what you get at home.

This no waiting policy extends to the bar of Parallel 23, their gourmet dining room, where three bartenders serve guests from behind its 20 foot length. No waiting for that first evening drink after a hot day in the sun. Overall, I was amazed at how fast the drinks were put before me. Dinners feature international cuisine with Caribbean flavors and textures, cooked the way you would cook if you knew how to cook so well. The food was always good, the staff throughout not just friendly, but really so.

The restaurant features indoor and terrace dining, as well as dining under a roofed over porch. Parallel 23 is also where the included, full American breakfast buffet is. It abounds in fresh and fruits, yogurts, really tasty, fresh pastries, breads, real English Muffins, eggs, bacon, sausage and so forth . . . and a first class Swiss muslix.

They also serve an a la carte breakfast. Overhead is the resort's 2,000 square foot ballroom, surrounded by balconies



Regent Palms well-appointed living space.

The Regent Spa

Angel Stewart of Las Ventanas al Paraiso and Golden Door Fame designed the Regent Palms' spa and put it on one acre of land. Many of the massages are on unique Mediterranean Float Beds, similar to a water bed, but less washy. Products used are from the Sonya Dakar, Somme Institute and Temple Spa (UK) product lines. The Regent Palms is the recipient of the 2006 World Travel Award for "Turks & Caicos Leading Spa Resort."

Van Regemorter believes what makes the Palms Spa outstanding are "the skills and expertise of the staff and the authenticity and variety of the treatments given. Our staff comes from the Far East, Europe and the Caribbean. The pampered approach and total dedication to personal well-being, the attention to every detail from the soft linens, to the perfect music for each moment, the mellowing ever-present scent of aroma therapy throughout."

The core selection of the spa is from Mediterranean traditions, yet there is a wide choice from cultures from around the world. One of them is West Indian, as it should be in the Islands. This is the unique "Zareeba" therapy created by a Caribbean herbalist.

Zareeba means "protected enclosure" and is an indigenous island herbal steam cleansing and detoxification ritual. The treatment is excellent for jet lag, sinus problems and many other ailments.

Therapists never leave guests alone during treatment, instead they offer "value added" services, continually working on guests. For example, once a face mask is applied, the therapist will then move onto the guest's feet, scalp or shoulders for an unexpected treatment.

Regent Hotels and Resorts has been in the leisure hospitality business since 1970 with properties worldwide in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. It has been providing discerning travelers with among the highest standards of luxury hospitality. Regent is wholly owned by the Carlson family of lodgings, which includes the Radisson Hotels and Resorts, the Park Plaza Hotels and Resorts, Park Inn hotels,

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and Country Inns and Suites.

The Regent Palms has been running consistently in the 90th percentile in overall customer satisfaction and intent to return survey ratings. "Most recently," states Van Regemorter, "we reached 9.3 out of a possible 10, the highest rating of all the hotels in the Carlson group."

The rating is the result of a detailed electronic survey sent to each guest's e-mail address immediately after check-out. It is conducted by an independent company that compiles the results for each of the 955 hotels within the Carlson family.



Regent Palms pool at night.

Seeing the Sights

Off property, there is plenty to do on both land and sea. The concierge will make all arrangements, and the chef at The Regent Palms will prepare gourmet picnic lunches to accompany outings.

By sea, there are voyages on an historic schooner, a semi submersible reef

explorer and glass bottom boats. Guests can go on whale watching voyages, sunset cruises and a once-a-month night trip to view ocean glow worms.

By land, there are eco-tours to see rare Rock Iguanas on Little Water Cay, cave

safaris to Middle Caicos to see massive formations and Stone Age petroglyphs, and hiking and bird watching tours. Visitors can island hop by air to Grand Turk or Salt Cay. Golfers can challenge the par 72 championship course at nearby Provo Golf & Country Club, a 6,705 yard, desert style course where pink flamingoes are regular spectators.

The rack rates (which include airport transfers) for the Christmas season range from \$950 for one to two people in a single room, to \$6,500 for a penthouse, ocean front unit accommodating up to six people. From January 3 to April 14 the rates range from \$595 to \$4,300. Summer rates drop to an astoundingly low \$325 to \$2,600, a very reasonably-priced, high end, honeymoon opportunity.

As regards to more in the Caribbean, agreements have been signed for a new property in Costa Rica and Regent is seriously looking at Puerto Rico as well as several other destinations.

Van Regemorte says, "We are currently offering a 40% discount from minimum rack rates to qualified travel agents, subject to room availability, through December 30th." The travel agent sales commission is 10%

**The Regent Palms,
866 877 PALM (7256,
www.regenthotels.com/thepalms**

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RITZ CARLTON AND CAP CANA JOIN FORCES TO DEVELOP RESORT AND RESIDENCE IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Luxury resort community Cap Cana, S.A. has announced a two-fold partnership with The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C., to develop a world class luxury resort, The Ritz-Carlton, Cap Cana, and a residential venture known as the Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Cap Cana. The 220-room resort will compliment Cap Cana's existing developments and will feature a range of luxury amenities including a spa. The Ritz-Carlton, Cap Cana and the 194-privately owned beachfront and golf Residences at The Ritz-Carlton, Cap Cana are scheduled to open in 2010 and are part of a two-phase \$1 billion endeavor (real estate sales and construction).

Spanning 30,000 acres of Caribbean waterfront, Cap Cana is situated on over three miles of beaches, the Ritz-Carlton mixed-use property taking center stage on a two-mile stretch of Juanillo beach.

"We are proud to welcome Ritz-Carlton, the most recognized luxury brand in the world, to the Cap Cana's family, as both brands share the same impeccable service philosophy and core family values," said Dr. Ricardo Hazoury, President of Cap Cana's Board of Directors.

J. W. Marriott Jr., Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Marriott International, expressed: "We are excited that our Ritz-Carlton brand will be represented at Cap Cana and are hopeful that one or more of our other hotel brands will also fit in with Cap Cana's plans for this world class destination."

Similarly, Simon F. Cooper, President and Chief Operating Officer of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, states that "We are extremely pleased to partner with ownership, Cap Cana, S.A., to develop a lifestyle resort and residential community in this unique tourism and real-estate project located on the most eastern part of the Dominican Republic. With some of the finest beaches in the Caribbean, an abundance of golf courses and other recreational facilities, this project will also offer our guests and owners a collection of designer shops, gourmet restaurants, and a significant area devoted to ecological preservation. It should attract affluent and sophisticated travelers from around the world, looking for leisure or group travel destinations that are truly exceptional."

Cap Cana, www.capcana.com;

Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company L.L.C., www.ritzcarlton.com

LUIGI DI CIACCIO APPOINTED GENERAL MANAGER OF CASA COLONIAL BEACH & SPA



LUIGI DI CIACCIO

Luigi Di Ciaccio has been appointed General Manager of the 50-room luxury Casa Colonial Beach & Spa in Puerto Plata, as announced by Executive Vice President of VH Hotels & Resorts, Roberto Casoni. "Luigi's experience in destination properties and proven track record brings tremendous value and strength to Casa Colonial," noted Casoni. We are pleased to have him as part of the Casa Colonial team."

For the past eight years, Di Ciaccio has held general manager positions at two noted Italian resort properties, Hotel Serapo and La Reserve Hotel and Destination Spa. His successes include implementation of new procedures to improve hotel operations at Hotel Serapo in Gaeta, located on the Mediterranean coast between Rome and Naples. As General Manager, Di Ciaccio is charged with overseeing all hotel operations that includes food & beverage outlets fine dining Lucia, casual Veranda and lobby lounge and bar, fitness center and the noted Bagua Spa. In this role, Di Ciaccio will work with hotel executives to optimize operations to provide the ultimate guest experience.

Casa Colonial Beach and Spa, 800-847-0291,

www.casacolonialhotel.com

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DOMINICA APPOINTS STEVE BORNN TO LEAD NEWLY FORMED TOURISM AUTHORITY



STEVE BORNN

The Discover Dominica Authority has announced that Mr. Steve Bornn has been selected by its Board of Directors to serve as the organization's first Chief Executive Officer and Director of Tourism, effective immediately. In this new position, Mr. Bornn will be chiefly responsible for the formulation and implementation of the tourism strategy and marketing plan as well as the stewardship of the Dominica destination brand.

In addition, he will be charged with monitoring and evaluating organizational performance; staff development; maintaining productive relationships with key stakeholders in Dominica and internationally; and ensuring the sound management of the new entity.

"We're fortunate to have an executive with such a diverse background lead our team," said Yvor Nassief, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Private Sector Relations for Dominica.

"We are confident that Mr. Bornn will be instrumental in strengthening Dominica's reputation as a world leader in responsible tourism." "I am honored to have been chosen to serve as CEO and Director of Tourism for the Discover Dominica Authority," said Mr. Bornn. "And I am grateful to the warm welcome I have received to this stunning country.

"My previous experience with other Caribbean destinations has prepared me well for the position. It will be my ultimate goal to establish the Discover Dominica Authority as one of the premier tourism boards in the region."

Mr. Bornn is a 28-year veteran of the tourism industry with extensive executive and Caribbean leadership experience.

Bornn previously served as Director of Marketing for the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism where he implemented the "No Passport Required" campaign and provided leadership in establishing St. Croix as a stand alone destination with a distinct brand and advertising program in the U.S. territory's successfully robust post 9/11 recovery.

Discover Dominica Authority, 866-522-4057,
www.discoverdominica.com

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO CELEBRATES 170 YEARS OF CARNIVAL

Over the past two centuries, Trinidad's Carnival has developed into one of the most colorful and culturally diverse pre-Lenten celebrations in the world. In 2008, the annual Carnival season starts right after Christmas, and culminates on Monday, February 4 and Tuesday, February 5. There are numerous countries that host their own Carnival celebration each year, but Trinidad & Tobago's festival has unique components, such as Panorama, Kings and Queens Costume Competition, J'Ouvert and Masquerade Band of the Year, that make it stand out from the rest.

Created in 1963, Panorama is the annual competition for steel

pan. Winners are awarded in the categories of small, medium and large band.

At the Kings and Queens Costume Competition, the costumes, weighing between 50 – 200 lbs, usually depict colorful dragons, butterflies, or insects. Costumes can reach up to 30 feet high and are usually attached to wheels to make mobility easier. Upon presenting their works of art to judges on Sunday, February 3, designers enhance their stage show presence and their chance of winning, with special effects such as lasers, fog, light shows, fireworks and musical sound effects.

Carnival Tuesday begins at 8 a.m. and masqueraders are in full costume ready to dance wildly in front of the judges. Bands are judged in three categories. The Grand Champion Band is crowned Masquerade Band of the Year.

Trinidad & Tobago, 800-816-7541, www.visitTNT.com

LASOURCE SPA RESORT CELEBRATES RE-OPENING WITH SPECIAL OFFER

Travelers looking for a Caribbean getaway can take advantage of special rates being offered at LaSource. The intimate spa resort is re-opening its doors this winter after three years of renovating, revitalizing and renewing.

Couples who book a seven-night or longer stay will receive a \$300 discount. This offer must be booked by February 29, 2008 and travel must be completed between February 1, 2008 and December 18, 2008.

Located along Pink Gin Beach and surrounded by 40 acres of tropical garden on the Spice Island of Grenada, LaSource offers a first-class, all-inclusive holiday experience that combines the best of an active beach vacation with a relaxed spa retreat. Its unique all-inclusive program allows guests over the age of 16 to receive a spa treatment each day and to be as active or laid-back as they choose in their free time.

Active travelers can choose from water sports such as snorkeling, waterskiing, Sunfish sailing, windsurfing, aqua aerobics, Hobie Cat sailing, ocean kayaking, hydro-boarding and scuba diving. Land activities include tennis, archery, fencing, aerobics and stretch classes, bicycle tours and a golf course.

At the Oasis Spa, guests can indulge in their complimentary spa services. Treatments include Swedish massage, as well as back and full-body massages, Seaweed Wrap, Salt and Oil Loofah Body Buff, Chandra Massage, a special foot massage, facials and a couples' massage for honeymooners.

Cuisine LaSource is globally influenced and designed to complement the holistic nature of the resort, emphasizing healthy eating without sacrificing flavor. Guests can choose from a variety of dining options at the Garden Restaurant, the Great House Restaurant or Oscar's Beach Restaurant. Guests can visit one of LaSource's three bars for a pre-dinner cocktail or evening nightcap.

With 100 guest rooms, LaSource is designed to provide complete body and mind rejuvenation. Note that the minimum age for guests at LaSource is 16 years, except from June 20 to September 8, 2008 when the minimum age is 10 years.

LaSource, 888-527-0044, www.theamazingholiday.com

BUCUTI BEACH RESORT AWARDED FOR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE



This year Bucuti Beach Resort has received awards from Expedia.com, Apple Vacations, and TripAdvisor for its continuous exceptional standards of quality and service.

Joining the company of a select few, Bucuti Beach Resort was the recipient of Expedia's prestigious Insider's Select Award 2007, rated No. 1 resort in Aruba and No. 15 overall out of 1,000 resorts throughout the Caribbean. At the recent Apple Vacations awards show held in Chicago, Bucuti Beach Resort was honored with the distinguished Golden Apple Award for the sixth consecutive year. The exalted rating recognizes exceptional standards of quality, service and value, determined by responses from questionnaires completed by more than 300,000 Apple Vacations guests who evaluate hundreds of hotels. In addition to these honors, Bucuti also received this year's coveted Traveler's Choice Award from TripAdvisor, the result of exceptional reviews by past guests.

Bucuti Beach Resort featuring Tara Beach Suites & Spa is Aruba's premier, intimate, upscale boutique resort. Located on Eagle Beach, Bucuti offers 104 guest rooms, innovative technology including advance check-in, high-speed Wi-Fi and loaner laptops, and a commitment to sustainable tourism. Bucuti Beach Resort is Green Globe 21 and ISO 14001 certified and has been recognized by notable organizations such as the Caribbean Hotel Association, American Express and the International Hotel and Restaurant Association for its environmentally responsible hotel operations.

Bucuti Beach Resort, www.bucuti.com

RECORD NUMBER OF BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULED FOR CANCUN TRAVEL MART

The President of the Cancun Hotel Association, Jesus Almaguer, has announced that 2,255 business appointments have been pre-scheduled for the almost 600 Tour Operators, Meeting Planners, Mexico Suppliers, and government officials that are attending the 20th Annual Cancun Travel Mart October 10-12, 2007, at the Cancun Convention Center. Cancun Travel Mart organizers say that even more business appointments are arranged during the event.

The Cancun Travel Mart, sponsored each year by the Cancun Hotel Association, brings Tour Operator Buyers to Cancun from almost 20 countries for two days of pre-scheduled business sessions,

destination update reports, and hotel site inspections. The Event format was expanded in 2005 to feature two full days of business meetings, and to invite tourism destinations from all of Mexico. In addition to Tour Operators, carefully qualified Meeting Planners also now attend Cancun Travel Mart as VIP Guests.

Official Sponsors and Host Hotels for this year's event include The Cancun Hotel Association; AMAV – The Mexico Travel Agent Association; C.A.N.I.R.A.C. – The National Chamber of the Restaurant Industry; Real Resorts; Grupo ECE – Hard Rock Cafe, The Mera Corporation - Pat O'Brien's, and American Express. American Airlines is the Cancun Travel Mart, Mexico Summit Official Host Airline.

Irma Coleman, President & CEO of William H. Coleman, Inc., the Cancun Travel Mart Event Management Firm stated: "We are delighted to be a part of this 20th Cancun Travel Mart, and that the total attendance and number of pre-scheduled appointments continue to increase. The number of pre-scheduled appointments, all of them "Perfect Match" and "Buyer Requests," indicates that the business sessions continue to be the most important and productive part of this very successful event."

Cancun Travel Mart '08 will be held October 15- 17, 2008 at the Cancun Convention Center.

Cancun Travel Mart, sales@whcoleman.com,
www.cancuntravelmart.com

UPDATES AND INDULGENCES AT ROYAL PLANTATION OCHO RIOS

Royal Plantation Ocho Rios, Jamaica, the luxurious, British colonial-inspired resort located on two private beaches has revealed its latest changes and indulgences. Along with an extensive refurbishment of the open-air lobby, lobby bar and terrace, La Terraza joins the lineup of diverse dining on-site, serving a la carte Italian specialties on the terrace overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Luncheon at La Terraza brings guests unique and exotic Jamaican fare.

As part of the ongoing effort to offer guests a taste of Jamaican character at every turn, the elegant champagne welcome upon arrival at Royal Plantation is now accompanied by a deliciously refreshing sugar cane treat, fresh from the local crop.

For veterans of the ultimate in beach relaxation, butlers have been enlisted to place cold cucumber slices over the sunbather's eyes to soothe and protect. Additionally, Royal Plantation now serves ice-cold jackfruit every day at noon. The Jamaican delicacy is rich in vitamin B, with anti-aging and aphrodisiac qualities.

The Royal Plantation boasts 74 ocean-view suites with a three-bedroom private villa. The historically-rich, oceanfront property was recently restored and evokes its roots with a premier level of time-honored, genuine Jamaican service. A member of The Leading Small Hotels of The World and a Virtuoso Luxury Property, Royal Plantation was recently named the 'Caribbean's Leading Resort' at the 2006 World Travel Awards and was chosen by Conde Nast Traveler's Reader's Choice Awards as a 'Top Caribbean Resort' for 2006.

Royal Plantation, 888-48-ROYAL (487-6925),
www.royalplantation.com

DUNCAN MACARTHUR AND JEFFREY BOLAND TO HEAD UP MANAGEMENT TEAM AT NEW SEVEN STARS RESORT



DUNCAN MACARTHUR

The New Stars Resort on Providenciales in the Turks & Caicos Islands, BWI, has named Duncan MacArthur and Jeffrey Boland Managing Director and Director of Operations, respectively. The property will open July 2008 on Grace Bay Beach. MacArthur's appointment was made by Jak Civre, President of the Sodalco Development Co., Ltd. and Boland was named by MacArthur, who also appointed Grace's Distinctive Properties Ltd. as travel trade sales and marketing representatives for the U.S. and Canada.



JEFFREY BOLAND

MacArthur brings over 30 years' hospitality industry skills to his position. He began his Caribbean experience in 1995 as General Manager at Halcyon Cove, Antigua.

As Director of Operations at Seven Stars, Boland is responsible for the resort and property management. He has over

15 years of hospitality industry experience, most recently, since 2003, as Assoc. VP for Colliers International Hotels and Advisory Group in Toronto.

Grace's Distinctive Properties, led by Grace Grillo who has 18 years' travel industry experience, has been named liaison for sales and marketing with the travel trade community. Founded in 2003, the firm specializes in luxury hotels and resorts and serves as a direct link for communication and coordination between Seven Stars and travel agents and tour operators.

Grace's Distinctive Properties, 866-655-8800, gdistinctiveld@aol.com

TOM ANDERSON JOINS SUPERCLUBS AS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT; OTHER KEY POSITIONS FILLED



TOM ANDERSON

International Lifestyles, Inc. (ILI), the U.S. representative of SuperClubs Resorts, has announced two important new hires, promotions and shifts in upper staff levels.

Effective September 28, Tom Anderson will join as Executive Vice President, Sales and Marketing. Tom was most recently Executive Vice President with The Continental Group, a Florida-based hospitality and property management firm.

His airline experience includes five years as Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer with Spirit Airlines (2001-2005) and 10 years with Continental Airlines. Prior to that, he spent seven years in the hotel industry in sales management positions with Four Seasons, Renaissance and Marriott. Anderson replaces Tom Trotta, who will transition from ILI to Priceline.com in mid-October.

"On behalf of the SuperClubs family, I am very pleased to welcome Tom Anderson to International Lifestyles," said John Issa, Executive Chairman of SuperClubs Resorts. "We are at a critical juncture of expansion, and Tom's skilled proficiency in a competitive marketplace and thorough understanding of the industry is ideally suited to lead SuperClubs in its next growth phase." Issa added, "We wish Tom Trotta our very best in his new position."

SuperClubs, 800-GO-SUPER (800-467-8737),

www.superclubs.com

SEASIDE SAVINGS PACKAGE AT EAST WINDS INN IN ST. LUCIA

This fall, East Winds Inn in St. Lucia is introducing a new "Seaside Savings Package" from October 1 to November 30, 2007. The special rate offers 20 percent savings relative to the standard rack rates for the same period. Guests who book five consecutive nights will receive the fifth night free. The value is even greater when factoring in the full meal plan and resort activities that are included in the rate. Fall season rates range from \$265 per person per night for a Superior Garden Cottage to \$300 per person per night for a Deluxe Garden Cottage or Ocean View Room.

East Winds serves West Indian cooking, as well as sophisticated international cuisine, with a full breakfast and lunch. Dinner becomes a more formal affair with a four-course menu taken in the open-air Flamboyant Room. The resort keeps an impressive 9,000 bottle wine cellar, where the Executive Chef Didier Lagauzere pairs the perfect wine with guests' meal, or complements the cuisine with a cocktail mixed with premium top-shelf brands - all included with the room rate.

East Winds opened in December 1993. Its long established tradition of quiet romance, island charm and surrounding natural beauty makes it the perfect autumn escape.

East Winds Inn, info@eastwinds.com, www.eastwinds.com

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE

50 Washington Street • South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710
Voice: 203-853-4955 • Fax: 203-866-1153

www.travelworldnews.com

Charles Gatt, Jr., Publisher
charlie@travelworldnews.com

Jennifer M. Lane, Editor
editor@travelworldnews.com

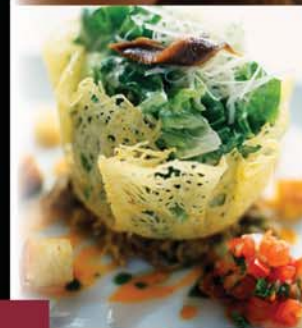
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