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ISLAND TIME

Looking for a natural way to get your vitamin D fix? Here, a few sunny side up ideas – from beachy destinations to a royal cocktail – to beat the winter blahs

dream of putting a Sandals property on the island came true. It was then his company purchased a resort that had closed its doors and began a massive renovation and expansion project. The result is a seaside sanctuary with 225 rooms (or “keys,” as Stewart calls them) spread across three villages – Pink Gin, Italian and South Seas. Water flows everywhere. While some suites offer direct beach access, others feature a private infinity pool, whirlpool, plunge pool, soak tub or a combination. Three public swimming pools grace the lushly landscaped property, one with a fireplace and cosy seating area in the middle. Other highlights include a spa, an open-air bar and dance floor that serves as the main communal social space, and Butch’s Chophouse, the brand’s first-ever steakhouse.

Astonishingly, the makeover took only 11 months to execute. “This is Grenada,” Stewart explained. “A no-crime country of 100,000 people who want to see things work.”

The “high-end” segment of the industry goes back to the 1950s when there was no mass-market tourism, but boutique hotels serving the rich and famous were cropping up in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Jamaica. The “all-inclusive” concept emerged in the late 1970s with John Issa and Couples Resorts followed by Stewart and Sandals. Was this Stewart’s favourite property? “LaSource is definitely the Sandals of the future. It raises the bar. People want value for their money and no matter where you go, you won’t get any better than this,” he says.

Although I couldn’t resist hanging out into the night and listening to music beneath the stars, secretly, I wanted to get back to my decadent room and revel in my decadent day. But that’s the thing about the Caribbean. Just when you think it doesn’t get any better, it does. Kind of reminds me of how I like to think of my own life. —*Rebecca Field Jager*



CHEF SPECIAL While Air Canada is now featuring Vancouver-based chef David Hawksworth’s cuisine in its international business class cabins, all Sunwing passengers can enjoy chef Lynn Crawford’s fare. “I really want to showcase fresh, local, high-

quality ingredients served in the very best five-star experience,” says the much-loved Food Network Canada celebrity chef and the co-owner of Toronto dining spot Ruby WatchCo. Sunwing flies to more than 50 sunny destinations and, with tastebuds being 30 per cent less effective at 30,000 feet (according to studies), good food in the air has to start prior to take off. Want to try what Crawford describes as “chef-inspired comfort food that you want to enjoy” at home? We’ve got you a few of the recipes. We’re particularly taken with the peameal bacon sandwich, a true north classic, and that on board, it still starts with that Sunwing “Champagne Service.” www.sunwing.ca

For Crawford’s recipes for Sunwing, go to www.everythingzoomer.com/recipes-chef-lynn-crawford-for-sunwing.

IF YOU GO 888-726-3257; www.sandals.com/main/grenada/ls-home

■ Air Canada Vacations offers year-round flights from Toronto. Caribbean Airlines offers weekly service from Toronto. 866-529-2079; vacations.aircanada.com

Island Getaway #2 ART ED IN BERMUDA

Bermuda, to me, is pink – pink sand, pink shorts, pink houses. And yes, pink is a colour of happiness, of lightheartedness. It beckons us. In Hamilton, Bermuda’s largest city, I was charmed by a place that the locals affectionately call the Pink Palace. It’s the Hamilton Princess and Beach Club, a Fairmont-managed property and, this past summer, it entered its second act. After two years and about US\$100 million later, the more than 100-year-old hotel is ready for its close-up.

The dress code is relaxed, but the attitude has a regal air. Public spaces are a tribute to modern art and, in fact, an opportunity for art snobs and mod-art newbies alike to learn a thing or two. Here I was, not at the MoMA in New York nor the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain. I was at a hotel – in Bermuda, taking in the 60-plus-piece collection, with tours run every Saturday at 10 a.m.

I’ve always been an art lover but, as an art history student way back when, I had leaned toward Impressionism. Modern art was somewhat of a mystery. I knew I liked it but my experience recently, having the time to “live” with it for four days, was revelatory. I was inspired by latter 20th-century artists just by staying in the same place where works by Warhol, Koons – even Mandela (yes, Nelson) – make their homes in stairwells, the grand entry way, the back terrace and even the chef’s table dining room, where Warhol’s Mick Jagger series of four prints holds court.

The sculptures with their organic forms spoke to me in a deeper way. KAWS’s near-20-foot-tall wooden Mickey Mouse-based sculpture, *At This Time, Companion Series*, had me grinning every morning while I ate breakfast on the patio. Yayoi’s spotted pumpkin made me want to go barefoot and feel the cool grass between my toes as it lounged on the lawn. *Untitled (Divina Proportione)*, Ai Weiwei’s sphere of wooden pentagons like a see-through soccer ball was just begging me to give it a push and see how far it might roll.

It gave me an appetite for more. Banksy gave way to Murakami, ►



(Clockwise from top) The Hamilton Princess and Beach Club, a.k.a. the Pink Palace; dishing chef Marcus Samuelsson's fare at Marcus' and the man himself; *Miffy*, by Tom Sachs, stands guard.



For more of the writer's Bermuda adventures, including where to go and a few of Marcus's recipes, go to www.everythingzoo.com/bermuda-adventures.

who gave way to Hirst, who gave way to even more Warhol – *Flowers* topped the main staircase, while *Reigning Queens: Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, 1985* greeted guests at the front desk and also reigned over the Trudeau ballroom (after Pierre). The pieces are all part of the personal art collection of the Green family, Bermudian hoteliers who bought the property in 2012. “We have been very excited to share our collection with hotel guests as well as Bermuda,” said Alexander Green, after *Architectural Digest* named the hotel one of its top 17 hotels with amazing art collections in 2016. And the contemporary works, when juxtaposed against the historic architecture, “enliven the space,” added GM Alan Federer.

Not to be outdone, the food, too, was an elevating experience, due to the recent opening of Marcus’, the outpost of New York City-based celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson. He’s known for Red Rooster, the groundbreaking Harlem restaurant where his interpretation of American comfort food informed by the storied NYC neighbourhood is fused with his adoptive parents’ Swedish roots and his own Ethiopian heritage. Don’t miss Sunday jazz brunch. The live music enlivens a buffet of Samuelsson’s trademark cuisine, tweaked, of course, to suit this mid-Atlantic island vibe. I even managed to charm the chef into sharing a few of his Harlem-meets-Bermuda recipes (www.everythingzoo.com/bermuda-adventures).

I, too, am now feeling in the pink. And before I’d even made it to the beach. —Vivian Vassos

IF YOU GO www.thehamiltonprincess.com
The property is host to America’s Cup 2017, the premiere sailing event.

■ Air Canada (www.aircanada.com) and WestJet (www.westjet.com) fly direct from Toronto.

Island Getaway #3 VILLA-ING IN ANGUILLA

Winter may still be howling in the Great White North, but the weather’s fine on Anguilla, the up-until-now secret beach getaway for the likes of Liam Neeson, Paul McCartney and Denzel Washington. The island is wonderfully less travelled, highly cultured and also high on the list of safest places in the British Caribbean. Here, five reasons to visit.

■ **The Beaches** There are 33 of them – on an island that’s only 91 square kilometres. Barnes Bay, Meads Bay, Shoal Bay and West End Bay are among the most scenic. Or take a quick speed boat to Scilly Cay, a rustic islet just off shore with swimmable beachfront and a restaurant, serving fresh daily catch and lobster on the barbecue with live music.

■ **The Tunes** The island is a music lover’s paradise, with Bankie Banx the island’s premier reggae musician and resident poet lauded as the Bob Dylan of Anguilla leading the charge. Banx, who also hosts the annual Moon splash reggae festival, has his own outpost, Bankie Banx’s Dune Preserve, but he plays all over the island. There are plenty of other local musicians performing fast-beat soca, calypso and reggae at local hangouts such as Pumhouse or Straw Hat. Tip: Thursday is the new Friday – the night to catch some of the island’s best live music acts. www.bankiebanx.net

■ **The Food** Banx’s club is just down the road from the CuisinArt Golf Resort and Spa – the Cuisinart of culinary fame, where you can take cooking lessons, then dine on your creations and spend the night. In November, The Reef by CuisinArt opened, a boutique extension of its sister property with 80 suites. www.thereefbycuisinart.com



**BANKIE
BANX**

Looking for something even smaller? The Manoah Boutique Hotel, another member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, launched in early November with just 25 rooms. www.the-manoah.com; www.slh.com

■ **The Luxe Change-Up** Last October, the Four Seasons took over the Viceroy and added its own brand of Canadian luxe hospitality. It’s a switch-up from the island’s mostly villa offerings – although it will have 166 of those to choose from along with standard hotel rooms. The resort has access to not one but two stretches of beach. Oh, and did we mention the hilltop view from the infinity pool? www.fourseasons.com/anguilla

■ **The Villas** Even though there’s been an influx of more traditional hotel resorts to the island, villas are still the most popular way to stay, and many have set up hotel-style services to ensure you get the best of feeling at home and, at the same time, treated like a guest without having to make the bed every morning. When we visited, we stayed the weekend at CéBlue Villas, with eye-candy views of Crocus Bay Beach and some of the sexiest bathrooms on the island, with local chef-in-villa dinner experiences optional. Boats dot the clear water, a sea of complex blues and greens that almost defy description. Gaze into it as meditation, and the mind will feel calm, cool and, even after a sunset cocktail or two, remarkably collected. The best reason for a holiday, after all. www.ceblueanguilla.com —VV

IF YOU GO www.ivotanguilla.com

■ Air Canada Vacations, Sunwing and WestJet offer direct flights to nearby St. Maarten (take a high-speed ferry to the island), Antigua and San Juan (for air connections). Recently, Puerto Rico-based regional carrier, Seaborne Airlines, announced that the airline is expanding its flights to the island from three days a week to five.