

REVIEWS

# SWOOPING INTO BARBADOS'S FAMED CRANE RESORT

TRADITION LIVES ON AT THE OLDEST CONTINUALLY OPERATING HOTEL IN THE CARIBBEAN.

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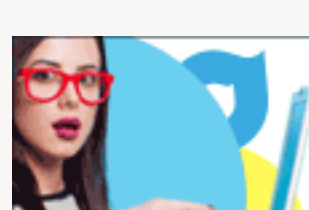
JULY 30, 2020



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Contributing writer



Opened in **1887**, **The Crane** was once the haven of visiting plantation owners and rich sea merchants. The 18 historic rooms are still there, now surrounded by 234 other one- to three-bedroom suites and penthouses in this expansive luxury resort and timeshare property.



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## STREET CRED: IT'S ALL ABOUT LOCATION

The Crane is tucked way over on the southeast coast of Barbados in the parish of Saint Philip, miles from the tourist-filled alleys and busy roads of the west side of the island. It gets its name from Crane Beach on which it sits, **once the site of a small commercial port in the mid-1700s**, where all you could see were cranes—the mechanical type, not the feathered variety—loading and unloading cargo. The south coast beaches are a 20-minute drive away and you can reach the beaches and nightlife of the west coast in 40 minutes. The airport is just a 15-minute ride.

## WHO HANGS HERE: IS THIS HOTEL FOR YOU?

You will meet well-heeled American, Canadian, British and European couples, groups of friends, retirees and families who have been coming back for years, including the timeshare guests who make you feel at home by being at home themselves. You're also bound to see a few newlyweds and at least one bride and groom since the cliff-top lawn is the perfect spot for a wedding ceremony.



## THE STRAIGHT GOODS: WHAT'S IN THE ROOM?

Even the one-bedroom suite is **like a small condo**, your two kids bunking down in the large living room. A dining room and full kitchen (fridge with ice dispenser, dishwasher, washer-dryer) is perfect for families who want to have at least a few meals in.



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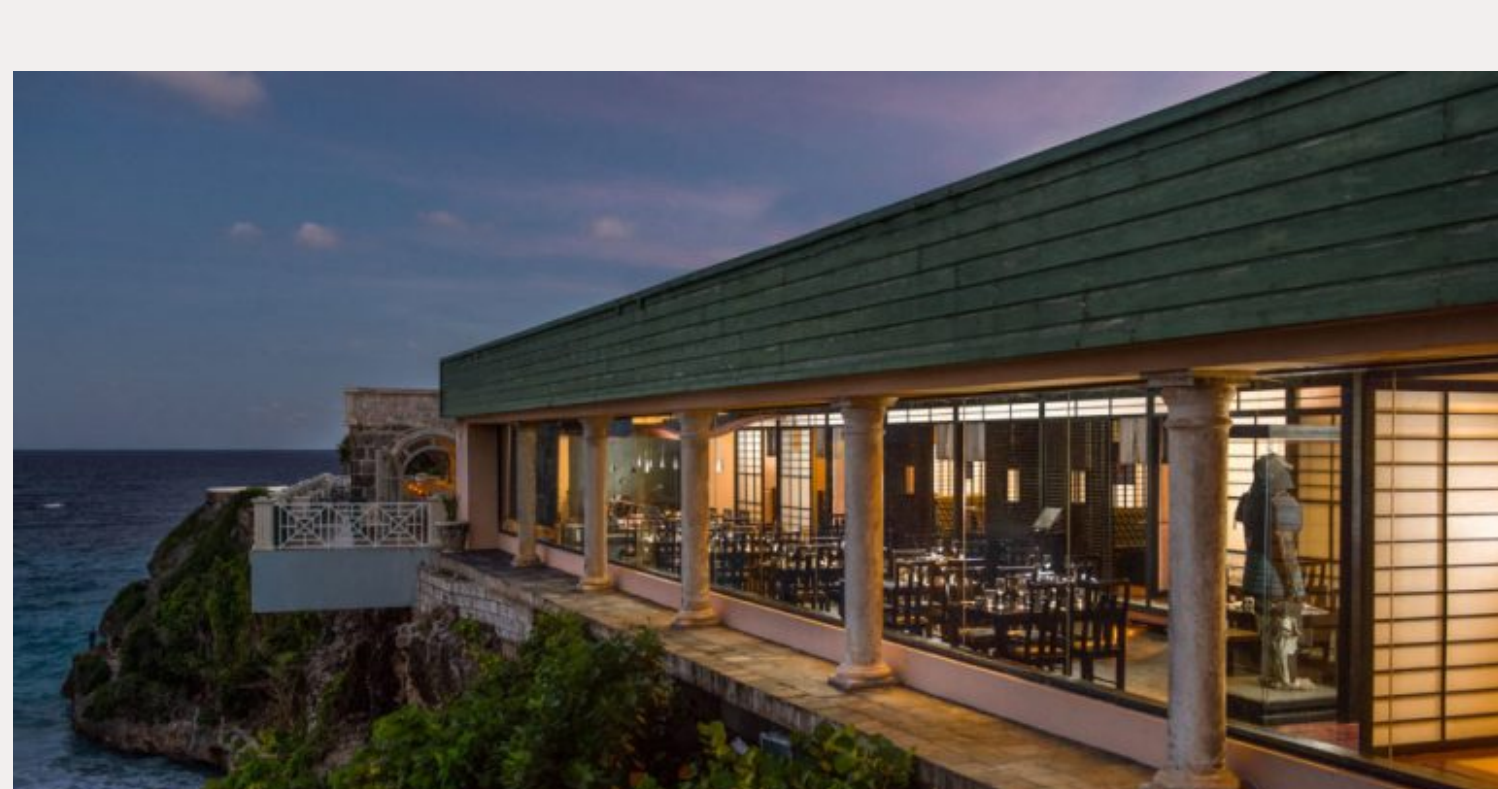


Bedrooms have a four-poster king-size bed and a writing desk, leading into a big bathroom with two wardrobes, whirlpool bath, separate toilet, separate shower and double vanity. Doors from the living room and bedroom **open to a large balcony**. There's mahogany absolutely everywhere—and it is beautifully cared for.



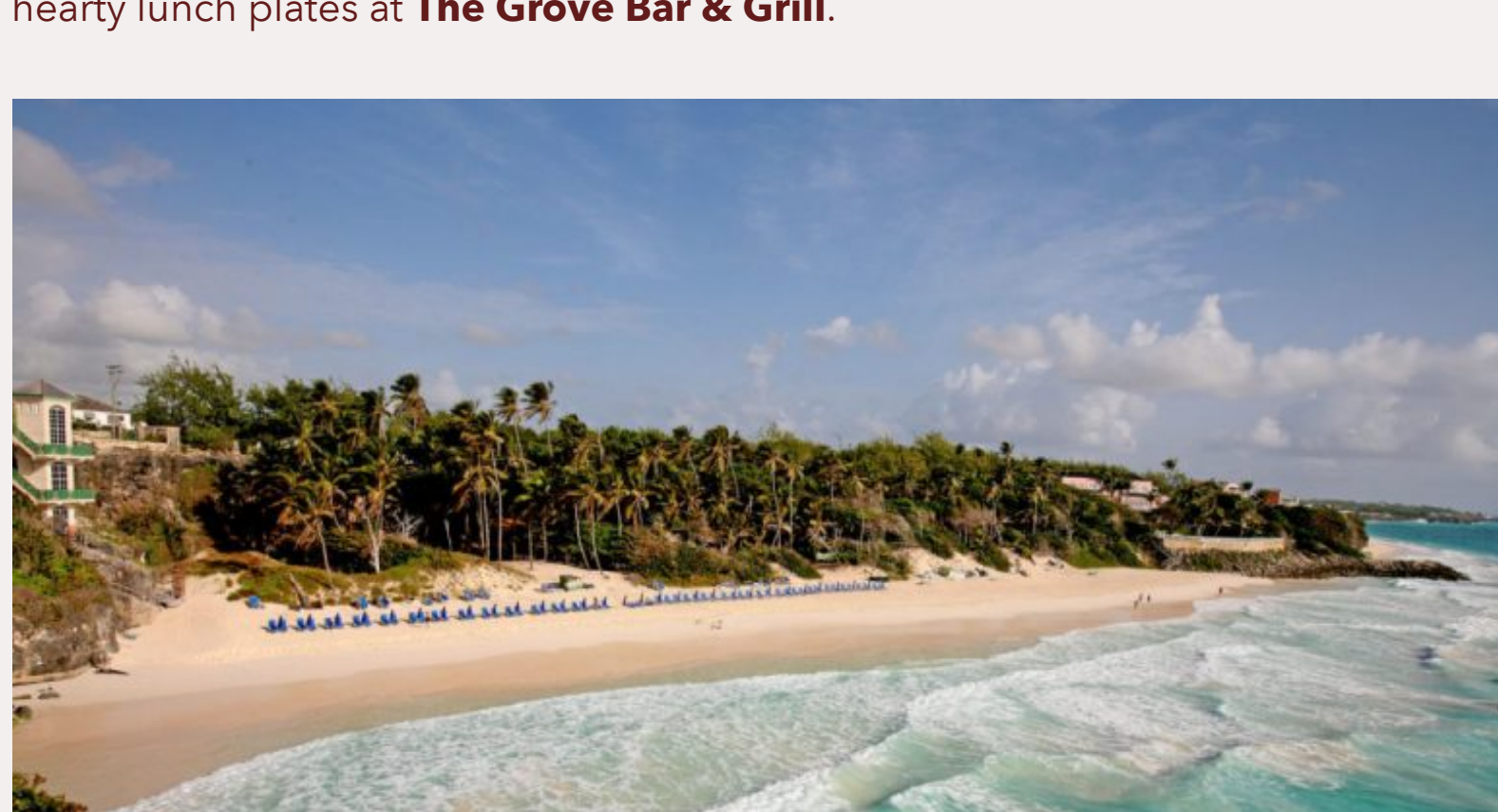
## BRAGGING RIGHTS: WHAT ELSE HAS IT GOT?

Swimming pools for days! Even the swimming pools have swimming pools. Many ground-floor suites have **private pools up to 28 feet long**. Corner rooms have plunge pools in the turrets on every floor and penthouse suites have 12-foot pools with rooftop garden decks. The resort is also equipped with the full-service **Serenity Spa**, fitness center and kids club. (Yes, there's a swimming pool for adults only, too.)



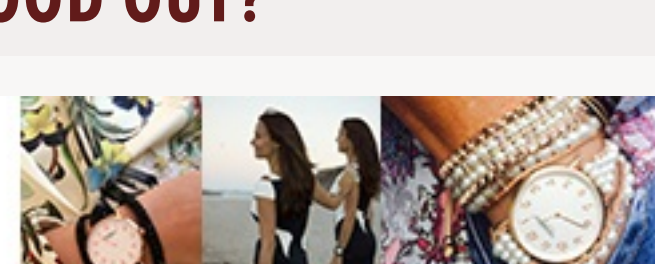
## GOOD EATS: COCKTAILS AND CUISINE

The **Zagat-rated Zen restaurant** is the island's go-to for Japanese and Thai food, its private booths elegant and inviting. **D'Onofrio's Trattoria** bills itself as casual family dining, but I must have dined when the children had all gone to bed. It serves absolutely the **best Italian food I have ever had**, in the Caribbean—full stop. Contemporary Caribbean food can be found in the all-right, ocean-facing **L'Azure** and **The Carriage House** does open-air poolside lunches right. Sun-worshippers flip-flop into the palm grove behind the beach for hearty lunch plates at **The Grove Bar & Grill**.



## A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS: WHAT STOOD OUT?

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The beach. A glass elevator takes you from the resort down the cliffside to **Crane Beach**, **one of the world's top 30**, its powdery sand almost the consistency of cornstarch. While the waves make swimming difficult despite the protection of a coral reef, the water is perfect for body surfing or boogie boarding. Brave souls walk up the stairs on the side of the cliff to jump off into the sea.

## PARTING SHOT: IF WE COULD CHANGE ONE THING

The entire front-desk area, from the concierge all the way to the bar, needs a refresh to make its decor as welcoming and glamorous as the resort itself.

We found junior suites at USD \$226 in the fall. Breakfast excluded.

*Doug was a guest of the hotel during his stay. The hotel had no editorial input for this review.*

*(Photos courtesy of The Crane)*