

Globe
Style

TRAVEL 2015

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
GUIDE TO INSPIRED LIVING

Advisor

Great escapes

From Barbados's lush east coast to Hong Kong's secret dining scene (and stopovers at the world's best antique markets), 2015's first-class destinations are guaranteed to wow



Late-night Lebanon, African modernism, packing tips for Sydney and how to see it all on a private 757





THE LUSH LIFE

Barbados's sumptuous gardens and rugged east coast provide the perfect backdrop for a resort wardrobe mixing delicate fabrics with tactile weaves. As Andrew Sardone discovers during a visit to the island's less-travelled parishes, they also offer a balance of luxurious and laid-back experiences that add up to a unique Caribbean getaway

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAVIER LOVERA



Dress, price on request at Boss (www.hugoboss.com). Necklace, \$800, bracelet, \$438 at Arielle de Pinto. Preen by Thornton Bregazzi sunglasses, \$230 through www.shopbop.com.



INN STYLE

The original Crane, often called the oldest hotel in the Caribbean, is now the centrepiece of a sprawling resort combining a traditional Bajan aesthetic with contemporary amenities. Tunic, \$545 at Tory Burch (www.toryburch.com). Hat, \$25 at ALDO (www.aldoshoes.com). Necklace, \$800, bracelet, \$405 at Arielle de Pinto (www.arielledepinto.com). Paul Andrew sandals, \$495 at Nordstrom (www.nordstrom.com).



BEAUTIFUL RUINS

Once Barbados's grandest mansion, Farley Hill House caught fire in the 1960s and has slowly been reclaimed by the land. Its remains serve as the background for a series of music festivals held every year in Farley Hill National Park.

Kaelen dress, \$650 at Louis Boston (www.louisboston.com). Woven sneakers, \$350 at Michael Kors (www.michaelkors.com).

Earrings, \$250 at Arielle de Pinto (www.arielledepinto.com). Sofia by Vix bag, \$88 through www.vixpaulahermanny.com.



GOING COASTAL

Hidden below tall limestone cliffs and backed by a dense coconut grove, Crane Beach often makes it onto lists of the best stretches of sand in the world. Sportmax dress, \$1,295 for similar styles at Max Mara boutiques (www.sportmax.com). Preen by Thornton Bregazzi sunglasses, \$230 through www.shopbop.com. Earrings, \$187, ring, \$293 at Arielle de Pinto (www.arielledepinto.com).



ON THE WATERFRONT

On the east side of Barbados, the Atlantic Ocean often swells with large waves (hence this coast's rep as a surfer's paradise), while the wind blowing off the azure water keeps sunbathers cool on humid afternoons. Sweater, \$1,330 at Mulberry (www.mulberry.com). Skirt, \$379 through www.jennifertorosian.com. Earrings, \$250 at Arielle de Pinto (www.arielledepinto.com). Shoes, \$1,045 through www.valentino.com.

Anthony Hunte's secret garden fills a deep gully in the Bajan parish of St. Joseph. Its steep staircases and stone pathways are lined with bursting beds of papyrus pom poms and prehistorically scaled palm fronds that lead visitors to discreet clearings outfitted with rattan loungers and ornate patio sets.

To gain entry to this fairy-tale rain forest – known locally as “the most enchanting place on earth” – you ring a brass hand bell and wait for the eccentric horticulturalist to descend from his home high above the jungle. When you're finished exploring the lush landscape, he might invite you back up to the plantation property's original stable building for a glass of rum punch, the Caribbean island's signature cocktail.

That ubiquitous drink is well known to regular visitors to Barbados, as are the posh resorts (from Sandy Lane to the Fairmont Royal Pavilion) that line its well-travelled west coast. But there's a whole other, more relaxed Barbados to experience if you venture further inland to spots like Hunte's Gardens and emerge on the other side of the island, where some of the world's best beaches are nestled between towering cliffs and dramatic Atlantic breakers.

“The west coast of Barbados is more manicured, more pristine and more developed, [but] the east coast is more rugged, with crashing surf and dramatic coastlines,” says Canadian Paul Doyle, who has been the owner of The Crane, an iconic east-coast hotel, since 1989. Originally opened in 1887 with just 18 rooms, it now boasts 252 suites, many with their own meticulously manicured gardens and private plunge pools. Resort guests split their time between the property's six bars and restaurants (options include the white-washed L'Azure, host to hot-ticket Sunday gospel brunches, and the casual Carriage House overlooking the hotel's five pools) and the blue umbrella-shaded lounge chairs that line Crane Beach.

“We benefit from wonderfully clean air,” Doyle says, describing the attraction of the stretch of powdery pink sand that lies below the resort. “The breezes that hit land at The Crane have been cleaned all

across the ocean from Africa.” Doyle is so committed to this side of Barbados that he's currently developing a new property up the coast from The Crane called Beach Houses. On the limited land not set aside for Barbados National Park will rise 63 two- and three-bedroom contemporary villas with infinity pools and views over Skeete's Bay and Culpepper Island.

When built, those homes will be a 20-minute drive south of one of the island's most picturesque restaurant patios. Overlooking the ocean, The Atlantis Hotel's breezy terrace is quintessentially Caribbean. On Sundays and Wednesdays, a generous buffet of pepperpot, rice and peas, pumpkin fritters and other Bajan bites draws large crowds of locals and tourists.

The hot night to visit Oistins Fish Fry on the south coast is Friday. Colourful stalls like Pat's Place grill up swordfish steaks and other fresh seafood, serving it with traditional sides like macaroni pie and local Banks beer. Back by Crane Beach, Cutters Deli is known for its lime-smoked mahi mahi pate, battered flying fish and, arguably, the best rum punch of all the Barbados rum punches made with dark rum, raw sugar, lime juice, bitters and nutmeg (owners Roger and Kim Goddard also bottle the cocktail for visitors who want to extend their vacations with a glass back home).

The Goddards use Cockspur Old Gold in their mix and stock the Barbadian distillery's aged and overproof spirits at Cutters. Rum lovers looking to sip some of the island's other more refined vintages can also visit the Foursquare Rum Distillery (where the aforementioned Anthony Hunte created a 10-year-old reserve blend of column and pot-distilled rums) and St. Nicholas Abbey (a Jacobean plantation house in St. Peter).

If it's an interest in architecture that brings you to the abbey, nearby Farley Hill House should also be on your itinerary. The once-grand structure – visited often by British royalty and used as a set for the 1957 film *Island in the Sun*, but destroyed by fire in the 1960s – is off-limits to the public as nature slowly reclaims the ruin. Visitors, though, can still stroll the grounds and walk to the top of Farley Hill, where the wild beauty of Barbados' east coast extends out to the endless turquoise sea. **S**

ON THE GROUND

THE ATLANTIS HOTEL

A boutique hotel overlooking Tent Bay, this spot is known for buffet brunches featuring local flavours on Wednesday and Sunday. Brunch prices range between \$70 and \$90 Barbadian dollars. (Barbados's currency is pegged to the American dollar, with \$2 BDS equalling \$1 U.S. The greenback itself is widely accepted on the island.)

www.atlantishotelbarbados.com

BEACH HOUSES

This new east coast development will incorporate luxurious villas, a boutique hotel and a pair of restaurants for residents and visitors. Prices range from \$56,000 (U.S.) for four weeks of fractional ownership to \$2.5-million.

www.beachhouses.bb

THE CRANE

The Crane owes its laid-back vibe to a mix of residents and guests, many of them Canadian. Room rates start at \$500 (U.S.) a night.

www.thecrane.com

CUTTERS DELI

Just up the road from The Crane, Cutters is open daily for breakfast, lunch and early dinner and offers delivery to Crane Beach.

www.cutters.bb

FARLEY HILL NATIONAL PARK

The National Conservation Commission manages this 17-acre park that hosts events like Gospel Fest and Soca on de Hill.

www.nccbarbados.gov.bb

HUNTE'S GARDENS

Classical music mixes with the sound of the warm Bajan breeze rustling the leaves of towering palms at this lush destination.

Admission is \$30 BDS.

www.huntesgardensbarbados.com

OISTINS FISH FRY

Friday is the most popular night to visit this family-friendly food market, but it's bustling all weekend long with hungry visitors. A full dinner ranges between \$25 and \$40 BDS.

ST. NICHOLAS ABBEY

One of the island's most iconic plantation houses, St. Nicholas Abbey still maintains its eclectic interior and a museum documenting its 350-year history. Adult admission is \$40 BDS.

www.stnicholasabbey.com

To mark 65 years of commercial air travel between Toronto and Barbados, Air Canada recently launched daily Boeing 777 flights between Pearson International Airport and Bridgetown. Visit www.aircanada.com for details and bookings.

For more information on planning your own Bajan getaway, visit Barbados Tourism Marketing's website, www.visitbarbados.org.

Package SPLURGE

Luxury resorts like The Crane aren't necessarily the type of accommodation you associate with package travel, but the Bajan landmark is part of Air Canada Vacations's growing stable of deluxe destinations. Here are three more of the outfit's haute Caribbean hotels to add to your bucket list



CUBA

Air Canada Vacations just added the new, all-inclusive Eurostar Cayo Santa Maria to its roster of Cuban getaways. Located 90 minutes from Santa Clara, it offers six restaurants, six bars, a pair of pools and lots of outdoor activities, including windsurfing and tennis.

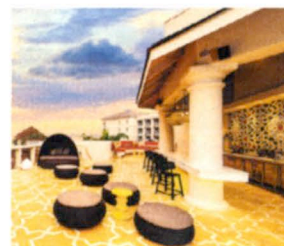
One-week all-inclusive packages start at \$969 plus taxes and fees per person based on double occupancy.



CURAÇAO

Located in Curaçao's capital Willemstad, the ACCOYA Hotel Suites & Villas features a range of accommodation options, including studios, one-bedroom villas and two-bedroom suites. On site, you'll find a spa, swimming pool and scuba diving centre.

One-week all-inclusive packages start at \$1,246 plus taxes and fees per person based on double occupancy.



JAMAICA

The five star Hyatt Zilara Rose Hall near Montego Bay is an adults-only resort with more bars, restaurants and pools than you can count (nine, nine and fourteen to be exact). Bookings include a \$50 spa credit plus a bottle of sparkling wine in suite upon arrival.

One-week all-inclusive packages start at \$3,774 plus taxes and fees per person based on double occupancy.



PLANT WORLD

The centre of the island is full of stunning natural rainforests and richly planted botanical gardens including Welchman Hall Gully, Orchid World and flourishing Hunte's Gardens, pictured here. Thakoon vest, \$1,850 (U.S.), skirt, \$590 (U.S.) through www.net-a-porter.com. Reinhard Plank for Tibi hat, \$245 (U.S.) through www.tibi.com. Necklace, \$1,606 through www.arielledepinto.com.



To watch this season's resort wear come to life in Barbados, download the free Globe Style Advisor iPad app at tgam.ca/styleadvisor.