YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS WITH US

VIRTUOSO LIFE

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YOUR TRIPS OF A LIFETIME + WISH-LIST DESTINATIONS

Soak it all in: GoldenEye resort's Ian Fleming villa on Jamaica.
I SPY REVIVAL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TARA DONNE

THE CARIBBEAN'S ORIGINAL JET-SET HIDEAWAY GETS ITS MOJO BACK.

BY DAVID HOCHMAN
EVEN FOR THE AUTHOR BEHIND AGENT 007,
Jamaica wasn’t swaying palms and shaken martinis. On his first visit to the island as a disinfectant British naval officer in July 1942, Ian Fleming cursed the “endless hairpin bends,” the “unaccustomed” flavors, and how it “ruined” every day at the beach. In short, Jamaica was his brand of paradise—a fabulously exotic and anything but dull. Fleming went to stay with the family of his friend, Bill King, who lived in Jamaica. Fleming fell in love with the island and his life was changed forever. He decided to stay and wrote the majority of his James Bond novels in Jamaica, continuing to write them there until his death in 1964.

The author’s time in Jamaica was not without its challenges. The island was still recovering from World War II, and the lifestyle was艰苦 than what we are accustomed to today. Despite this, Fleming found a sense of peace and inspiration in the island’s natural beauty and history. He was able to find solace in the island’s wild beaches, and he would often spend his afternoons swimming in the sea and reading books. The author’s time in Jamaica was a turning point in his life, and he would later return to the island to continue his work on the James Bond series.

Fleming’s love for Jamaica continued to grow, and he eventually purchased a villa on the island and spent most of his time there. He was known for his love of the island’s natural beauty and for his contributions to the James Bond series. The author’s legacy in Jamaica is still celebrated today, and his villa on the island has become a popular destination for fans of the James Bond series.

The author’s love for Jamaica is evident in his writing, and his descriptions of the island’s natural beauty and history are still enjoyed by readers today. His time in Jamaica was a formative period in his life, and it continues to inspire his work to this day. Whether you are a fan of the James Bond series or simply enjoy reading about exotic locations, the author’s love for Jamaica is a testament to the island’s unique charm and beauty.
THE MORE YOU DO IN JAMAICA, THE LESS YOU WANT TO DO.
THE “YA, MON” SPIRIT MAKES YOU KICK BACK LIKE THAT.

The next day, we set out to explore them, driving west to the cruise port of Falmouth before taking a hard left into the jungle. Called Cockpit Country because of its humid, and rugged terrain that reminded British officers of warships’ lower decks, this was once a nearly impenetrable region where Jamaican slaves, known as Maroons, enjoyed relative freedom amongst limestone cliffs and hills during colonial rule. Today it’s increasingly popular with tourists. Our first stop is Good Hope Estate, a vast eighteenth-century Georgian-style plantation made rich from the sugar trade. Next is an adventure park, with zip lines, tubing on the sparkling Martha Brae River, and colonial village.

The crowds thin out from there. Pushing south into Jamaica’s great green center, there’s little more to distract us from the jungle’s vines and guava and custard apple trees than a couple of jerk chicken shacks and a few tiny churches. Funny to think that some of nature’s biggest acts traveled this same road. Bob, Grace,4 Bob, and Bob Marley’s family have all frequented Punta Pescado. Blackwell’s secluded countryside retreat, the entrance to which is marked only by a battered sign that reads “Private Property: Last Exit for the first time since purchasing the 369-acre estate 25 years ago, Blackwell began letting one privileged party at a time overnight in his two-bedroom guest cottage there as part of a new service at Goldstrike.

The tour takes you out of the village and into a more remote area for mangoes. Afterward, with thunderous gathering, Blackwell’s long-time cook, Martha J, prepares us a feast: chicken and beef from the farm, salads and local and organic as they come (Blackwell sources the food for his island retreat almost exclusively from the garden here), homemade coffee ice cream with a Blue Mountain coffee pour-over mas for a time/sight just as the rains arrive.

Roughly the size of Connecticut, Jamaica is easy enough to navigate. Even when you’re covering “long” distances, most destinations are no more than two or three hours apart. If you prefer relaxed sightseeing to white-knuckle navigating, I’ll be steering a professional chauffeur-driven on the left side of the road, and the hazards can get quite hairy.

From Punta Pescado we head a few hundred miles south to hidden Saint Elizabeth Parish, which still feels untraveled in a Caribbean fantasy sort of way. On secluded Tinistreet Beach, painted wooden boats wait for ferry to the offshore Pigeon’s Pelican Bar, a curious, thatched-roof-cafe-style stall where the Red Stripe somehow tastes better and colder than anywhere else. Nearby, the YS Falls cascade down seven tiers of cliffs, with boardwalk pathways for easy climbing between their natural pools and grottos on hand for those willing to become rope swings that go from high to higher to “Yaad, get your GoPaw!” It’s a straight shot from there to Appleton Estate, one of Jamaica’s oldest rum distilleries. After the fun and informative factory tour, we get a chance to sample five rums, which, come to think of it, may be the best reason of all to hire that driver.

The more you do, the less you want to do. The “ya, mon” spirit makes you kick back like that. There’s no place better to accomplish very little than at 369-acre Round Hill Hotel and Villas, home base for the end of our trip and a longtime haven for the jet set and the British royalty. Oscar Hammon was the villa’s original owner and worked on The Sound of Music there. Paul McCartney took Villa 17 and a handful of others for his family holidays. Herb Alpert is a practical fixture on the beach. A decade ago, Ralph Lauren redecorated the 56-room house with an eye toward preserving the cottage-colony vibe, and today it feels like a tropical village—for the very, very important. Though it would be impolite to name names, we shall have a view on our last morning at breakfast with a world-renowned architect, an Oscar-winning director, and one of the Caribbean’s most distinguished families. It’s easy to imagine certain British Secret Intelligence Service agent finding right in.
FROM JAMAICA WITH LOVE
Create your own international thriller at one of five historic resorts.

Jamaica is great for large family reunions. Served out in a seven-bedroom villa complete with a private pool, golf cart, and butler chef, and housekeeper at Montego Bay’s Half Moon Resort.

— Sheila Gallant-Halloran, Travel Advisor, Toronto

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