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CANDID REVIEWS BY A WRITER WHO TRAVELS INCOGNITO AND ALWAYS PAYS HIS OWN WAY

New and Revitalized Caribbean Resorts



THE CARIBBEAN IS AN EASY place to take for granted. The islands are so close to our shores and are so easy to get to that their extraordinary history and scenic and cultural variety are frequently forgotten. Our

recent trip took us back to Antigua, St. Barths and Puerto Rico. In a two-week journey, we found ourselves surrounded by speakers of English, French and Spanish, and traveled from a coral microdot to a large and mountainous island, mostly covered in rain forest.

Not for the first time we found ourselves reflecting on all the changes that have taken place since our first visit to Barbados more than 35 years ago. In the 1970s, affluent American travelers were a captive market. If you wanted a tropical beach vacation, the idea that you might

opt for the Seychelles, Thailand or Micronesia would have seemed preposterous. White sand and turquoise sea were to be sought preeminently in the Bahamas or the West Indies. But over the decades, changing travel patterns have obliged Caribbean resorts to provide cuisine, service and amenities that now bear comparison to the best international competition.

These are turbulent times in the Caribbean, with some well-known hotels in financial difficulties and numerous development projects having been shelved. But despite the unfavorable economic climate, new upscale properties continue to open and major refurbishment projects have been completed at several prominent resorts.

Antigua

We have been visiting **JUMBY BAY** regularly since it opened in 1983. A 320-acre private island two miles north of Antigua — 15 minutes by speedboat — it has been widely regarded as one of the top resorts in the Caribbean for most of the past 28 years and has long enjoyed the affections of many Harper members. The hotel's history has not been uneventful, however. Initial problems included weed on the main beach and noise from planes taking off at Antigua's nearby international

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airport. Then, in the mid '90s, a legal battle erupted that wasn't settled until 1998, when residents bought out the island's owners. The newly formed Jumby Bay Island Company announced that it intended to make the island a first-rank residential-resort community. To that end, it devised a master plan and, in 2002, hired Rosewood to manage the property. But although Jumby Bay continued to thrive, the world had moved on and the resort began to show its age.

In 2008, the company decided to close the hotel for a \$28 million renovation. Actually, it was pretty much razed except for some of the original rondavels, and 28 new suites were built — for a total of 40 rooms — as well as two new restaurants and a spa, all of which debuted at the end of 2009.

We arrived in Antigua late, thanks to the dependably undependable schedule of LIAT, an airline whose chief purpose is to increase the revenue of Marquis Jet. But the frustration and annoyance were washed away by the exceptionally warm greeting we received after clearing immigration. This proved to be an intimation of the charming service throughout our stay. Whisked through customs, we were escorted to a dedicated stand, where a car awaited us for the three-minute drive to the resort's dock.

The resort's launch was already visible, and within moments, courteous crew members decked out in crisp whites were helping us aboard. The stretch of turquoise sea that separates Jumby Bay from the mainland is frequently referred to as "our moat" by the island's homeowners, and on arrival, there is an unmistakable air of privilege and seclusion. Brief registration formalities took place in the new bar of *The Verandah* restaurant, and as disagreeable memories of LIAT began to fade,

we sat for a few minutes in quiet contemplation of the sparkling white sand and aquamarine water.

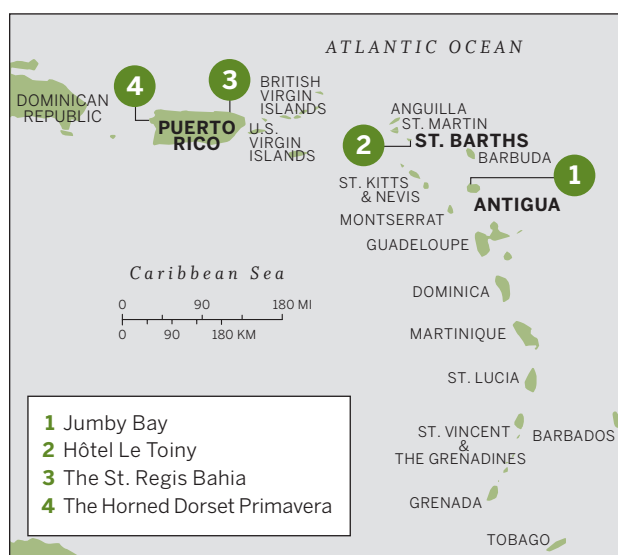
We had opted for one of the new Courtyard Suites, which are housed within stucco cottages with tile roofs. Entering through an attractively landscaped courtyard, we found a spacious room with a vaulted ceiling, a sitting area and large four-poster bed. It was decorated in a muted palette and appointed with furniture that seemed vaguely Caribbean British Colonial, thanks to details such as pineapple finials on the bedposts. French doors opened onto a spacious terrace with ocean views. A large dressing area led to an expansive tiled bath with mosaic walls, and a captivating outdoor bathing courtyard came with a shower and soaking tub. Bliss.

Just outside the entry courtyard, two bicycles awaited. These are the preferred mode of transportation on the island — with golf carts always on call as an alternative. Jumby Bay is ribboned with paths, and the atmosphere is one of informal congeniality, with young and old, couples and families all dismounting to chat. And unlike some comparable properties, there seems to be little or no friction between the homeowners and the resort guests. (Mustique, for instance, is notorious in this respect.) The residents have a strong proprietary interest in the well-being of the resort, as the profits go back into the maintenance of the island's shared facilities.

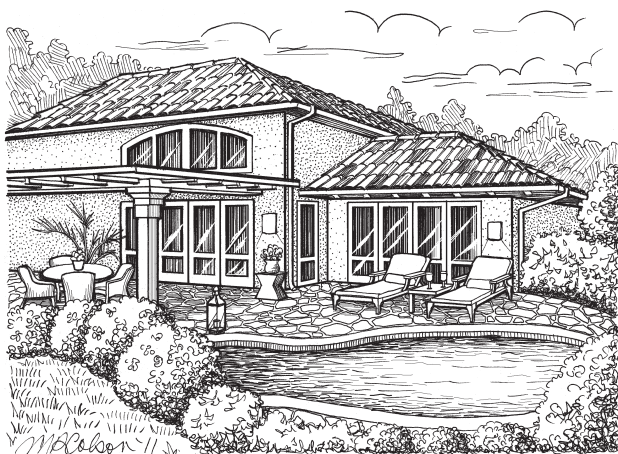
Both *The Verandah* in the main building and *The Pool Grille* offer fine casual fare, however, we most enjoyed *The Estate House*, a Spanish Colonial structure dating to 1830 that was once at the center of the island's sugar plantation. Surrounded by palms and hibiscus, the terrace is a delightful place in which to enjoy the Caribbean-inflected food. Two highlights were lobster ravioli in a spicy broth, and lamb enlivened with "mojito" flavorings of rum and mint. The resort's numerous activities include tennis, kayaking, non-motorized boating and snorkeling. The open-air Sense spa offers a predictable catalog of treatments, plus special therapies such as the "Sun Worshiper," a hydrating body treatment for those who have spent too much time basking on the beach.

Which, frankly, was about all we did. Having eased into one of the chaises longues under the shelter of a palm-thatched palapa and summoned a cooler of iced water from one of the attendants, we would settle down to read, letting the hours slip by.

Jumby Bay is the most accessible of the Caribbean's leading private island resorts — its principal competitors being Petit St. Vincent and Mustique in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Peter Island in the British Virgin Islands — and now that planes taking off from Antigua



airport do not routinely fly over the island, you experience the desired sensation of detachment from the world. After more than a quarter of a century, Jumby Bay seems



Pool Suite, Jumby Bay, Antigua

finally to have fulfilled its potential. It is now one of the Caribbean's finest resorts and has our unequivocal endorsement. **97 Rondavel Room**, \$975-\$1,420; *Oceanview Courtyard Suite*, \$1,350-\$2,200; *Pool Suite*, \$1,525-\$2,550. Rates are all-inclusive and vary according to the season. P.O. Box 243, St. John's, Antigua. Tel. (268) 462-6000 or (888) 7673-9663. jumbybayresort.com

St. Barths

Over the past 30 years, I have watched this enchanting island go from a sleepy French outpost to a chic hot spot. Yet aside from the crowds — which clog the principal roads at high season — and the superyachts, surprisingly little has changed, and St. Barths remains a beautiful place of forested peaks, alluring white beaches and appealing restaurants. And in the main, its Gallic inhabitants are extremely friendly (although cynics will tell you that this is because they nearly all came from Brittany, which belongs to Europe's Celtic fringe and ethnically and culturally is scarcely part of France at all!).

Those in search of complete seclusion need look no farther than the **HOTEL LE TOINY**, set on a hillside overlooking the sparsely populated Côte Sauvage, four miles east of the island's capital, Gustavia. (A hired car is required for trips to swimming beaches 15 minutes away.) I have long recommended this delectable enclave, but my previous visit was prior to a 2008 refurbishment, and hearing that further changes were afoot under the direction of the new general managers, Guy and Dagmar Lombard, an incognito stay was clearly overdue.

The 14 suites and one three-bedroom cottage complex were laid out to ensure optimal privacy, as well as panoramic views of the Bay of Toiny. We had opted to stay in a 1,075-square-foot One-bedroom Villa Suite. These are self-contained, pastel-colored tin-roofed Caribbean cottages, whose seclusion is augmented by 24-hour room service. Now decorated in an elegant French Colonial style, each comes with a spacious living room, separated from the bedroom by a sliding partition. The large four-poster bed is draped with mosquito netting, while the plush bath comes with a walk-in shower and soaking tub. During the recent refurbishment, the white walls were repainted an attractive shade of light gray-green, and the terra-cotta tile floors were replaced by dark wood planking. Glass doors lead out onto a terrace, in which is set a 10-by-20-foot private swimming pool. The current program of improvements will substitute creamy-white travertine for terra cotta on the terrace, and reline the pools with black volcanic stone, changing the color of the water from turquoise to a deep marine blue.

What has not changed at Le Toiny is its superb restaurant, *Le Gaiac*, which remains the top dining spot on St. Barths. The enchanting open-air space is fronted by a half-moon infinity pool — in which I have never seen anyone dip so much as a toe — beyond which an expanse of the Caribbean is punctuated by the volcanic profiles of the islands Saba and Sint Eustatius. Chef Stéphane Mazières' sumptuous cuisine imaginatively blends French and Creole elements, with favorite dishes from our stay including sea urchin roe in a cauliflower cream with dots of caviar, and perfectly prepared turbot served with a flavorful eggplant caviar and tomato tartare. The service at *Le Gaiac* proved as congenial and professional as it was everywhere during our stay.

Hôtel Le Toiny's only real drawback is that it is not on a beach, or even close to one that is suitable for swimming. Overall, however, it is a sophisticated hideaway that continues to improve with time, ideal for those who want to recharge in idyllic surroundings. **96 One-bedroom Villa Suite**, \$2,385 (winter season); *Three-bedroom Villa*, \$3,845. *Anse de Toiny, Saint Barthélemy, French West Indies*. Tel. (800) 680-0832. letoiny.com

Another well-known property on St. Barths that has recently been remodeled is the **HOTEL CARL GUSTAF**, which is splendidly situated on the hillside at the end of Gustavia's picturesque harbor. In 2008, the main building was replaced by a multi-level structure with a new lobby, bar and lounge, restaurant, spa and a four-bedroom suite with its own infinity pool and

St. Barths Restaurant News

ST. BARTHS HAS NO SHORTAGE OF GOOD RESTAURANTS. My general strategy is to find a place on the water for lunch, and then go somewhere at night where a view is less important.

With minimalist interiors designed by Christian Liaigre, Le Sereno hotel does not greatly appeal to me. However, its restaurant, **LE RESTAURANT DES PECHEURS**, certainly does. Affording lovely views of the Grand Cul de Sac bay, it offers excellent fresh fish. I invariably start with the bouillabaisse, here prepared with a variety of reef fish and augmented by a lively rouille. At a recent lunch, I ordered delicious grilled triggerfish, which came as a welcome departure from the snapper-dorado-tuna trinity that dominates the island's menus. Tel. 590-29-83-00. lesereno.com

SAND BAR, the beachside restaurant at the Eden Rock hotel in Baie de St. Jean, is a relaxing space with peerless people-watching. A few weeks ago, I particularly enjoyed a refreshing soup of puréed cucumber flavored with basil and enriched with goat cheese, followed by a delicious linguine with shrimp and a confit of tomatoes. Tel. 590-29-79-99. edenrockhotel.com

The well-known **DO BRAZIL** is under new management, and I was curious to try it. Located on Shell Beach, right at the edge of Gustavia, this is the ideal seaside restaurant with a great view and delicious food. There, I enjoyed a refreshing gazpacho, followed by soy-lacquered chicken with stir-fried vegetables and Chinese noodles. Tel. 590-29-06-66. dobrazil.com

In Gustavia, **BONITO** has an all-white interior, plus an expansive semicircular open-air pavilion with memorable views. (This is a terrific spot for sunset cocktails.) The menu features delicious ceviches, plus fine salads. The fish is always good, a standout being the sliced wahoo in a ponzu sauce with basmati rice, shiitake caps and baby bok choy. Tel. 590-27-96-96. ilovebonito.com

L'ISOLA is sister to the popular *Via Veneto* in Santa Monica. Set in a small Caribbean-style house on Gustavia's Rue du roi Oscar II, it is romantic and candle-lit. The Italian food is excellent, a welcome respite from the usual diet of grilled fish. Carnivores in severe withdrawal need look no farther than the superb *costata di manzo*, a delicious Tuscan-style rib eye steak. I greatly enjoyed an appetizer of grilled Portobello mushrooms with fried arugula and shaved Parmesan, plus a fettuccine Bolognese that was as delicious as any this side of Emilia-Romagna! Tel. 590-51-00-05. isolastbarth.com

Jacuzzi. Its exterior, in beige stucco with metal railings and picture windows, struck me as completely at odds with the 14 red-roofed Caribbean-style cottages tiered below. These offer charming interpretations of colonial style with traditional wooden furniture, smart fabrics, atmospheric lighting and terraces with private plunge pools and panoramic views of the harbor. Genuinely baffled by the hotel's aesthetic schizophrenia, I asked a staff member how the design of the main building was conceived. "Oh," she replied, "it's so that there could be a big suite for the rich Russians."

Nearby, *Victoria's Restaurant* enjoys a lovely harbor view, but at nighttime it struck me as cold and charmless. To further detract from its appeal, I suffered a memorably bad dinner, which included a barely cooked veal fillet, totally lacking in flavor, accompanied by a grapefruit-based sauce that lent the dish an unpleasant sourness — a tang made all the more apparent by sides of sweet potato purée and carrot mousseline.

I came away saddened because the Carl Gustaf could be a wonderful hotel in a magical setting. Alas, in its current manifestation, it is unworthy of consideration. **83 One-bedroom Suite, \$1,705 (winter season).** Rue des Normands, Gustavia, Saint Barthélemy, French West Indies. Tel. (866) 297-2153. hotelcarl gustaf.com

Puerto Rico

This self-governing territory of the United States lacks the white beaches that are so quintessentially Caribbean — with the exception of the offshore island of Vieques, the sand tends to be reddish-gold and often quite coarse — and consequently, few sophisticated resorts have been developed here.

However, the game changed with the 2010 opening of **THE ST. REGIS BAHIA BEACH RESORT**. Located an easy 40-minute drive east of San Juan's Luis Muñoz Marin International Airport, the St. Regis is sequestered on a 483-acre former coconut plantation. Now, the enclave is home to the 139-room resort, a Robert Trent Jones Jr. 18-hole golf course and two miles of unspoiled golden sand. The heart of the property is a spectacular pavilion accessed by a covered walkway across a koi pond. Inside, we found a double-height lounge, a small but eclectically stocked library (also home to the concierges) and the *St. Regis Bar*.

As evidence of the resort's commitment to the preservation of the environment — for which it has received recognition from Audubon — there are few roadways linking the rooms, but rather boardwalks that

leave minimal footprints among the lush vegetation. Even the ride from the main house to our suite seemed quite an adventure!

Of the accommodations, 35 are one-bedroom suites, and I heartily recommend them. Ours had a spacious living room decorated in soothing tones of beige dark wood, which opened on to a handsomely appointed deck overlooking a narrow expanse of lawn and the beach. An equally large bedroom came with a clever lighting scheme, while a large bath featured an expansive wet area and a rainfall shower adjacent to a soaking tub. A butler was on hand to help with unpacking.

Lazy days at the St. Regis tend to be spent beside the stunning pool. Terraced on three levels with waterfalls, free-form bays, landscaped gardens and fully mature palm trees, it is a wonderful oasis. During our stay, there was never a shortage of loungers, and waiters hovered attentively with cold drinks and additional towels. The adjacent open-air *Seagrapes* restaurant offers fare that is modestly billed as “deli” and includes one of the best California rolls I’ve ever eaten.

The showcase restaurant, *Fern*, in the main pavilion, is nominally under the direction of chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten (as are all of the formal dining rooms at St. Regis properties). In an elegant setting of dark wood floors and silver-leafed walls, executive chef Maycoll Calderon has created a menu that reflects the island’s flavors, with dishes such as a refreshing chilled watermelon gazpacho, and delicious roasted grouper with black beans and scallions. Also well worth a visit is *Molasses*, the informal restaurant at the golf clubhouse, where you can try the local specialty, *mofongo*, a fried plantain-based dish, here served with slow-braised meat, caramelized onions, peppers and a zippy salsa criolla.

The primary pastime at the resort is golf, but the excellent concierge staff is full of other ideas for activities, both on and off the property. These include catamaran sailing, kayaking, tours of the nearby rain forest, horseback riding and visits to Old San Juan. Alternatively, the 10,000-square-foot Remède Spa offers seven massage cottages overlooking a colorful garden.

During our stay, the St. Regis was at full occupancy, yet it never felt crowded, even at the pool. (The space, number of activities and high degree of organization all make the property ideal for families.) Overall, this is a fine new resort and one that greatly exceeded our expectations. **94 Oceanfront Room, \$985 (winter season); One-bedroom St. Regis Suite, \$1,655. State Road 187, Km. 4.2, Rio Grande, Puerto Rico. Tel. (787) 809-8000. starwoodhotels.com/stregis**

Previously, I have recommended only one other property on Puerto Rico, **THE HORNED DORSET PRIMAVERA**, located on the far west coast of the island, near the town of Rincón, a three-hour drive from the San Juan airport. (Helicopter transfers can be arranged.) Having recently received a few minor complaints, I made a point to revisit it.

Set on a secluded hillside sloping down to the ocean, the resort comprises a group of charming whitewashed neo-Mediterranean villas with tiled roofs, surrounded by gardens. All of the 22 suites are duplex. In ours, the downstairs came with tiled floors accented by Oriental carpets, a seating area, a dining area, a kitchenette and a marble bath with shower. Outside was a private plunge pool. The upstairs bedroom was similar in style, with a sitting area, a four-poster bed and a lavish marble bath with a walk-in shower and an oversize freestanding soaking tub. There is no TV, but Wi-Fi is complimentary.

In addition to the private pools, three others are available to guests. The largest is a palm-bordered oasis adjacent to the restaurants. Dining options include the formal, sophisticated *Restaurant Aaron*, (named for chef Aaron Wratten, an alumnus of New York’s *Daniel and Aureole*). His food is delicious, and standouts during our visit were a starter of lamb cannellini, and an excellent snapper on a bed of herb-infused couscous.

The beach is a small wedge of golden sand backed by a seawall and reached by a somewhat awkward set of stone steps. And at the top of the steps, there is an outdoor shower that, lacking paving and proper drainage, quickly transforms the area around it into a muddy mess. The outdoor dining patio nearby is in need of spiffing up, as is the whole beachfront area. Amenities include a wellness center with a spa and yoga pavilion.

Overall, The Horned Dorset will suit those in search of low-key seclusion. I continue to recommend the property, but more attention should be paid to the service. While I found the staff to be friendly, I was surprised at check-in that there was no one to take the bags to our suite, a walk that included stepped pathways. The same was true at checkout. The resort’s owners live in central New York, where, in the small town of Leonardsville, they own a small inn and well-regarded restaurant, also called *The Horned Dorset*, the name of a breed of sheep they have raised. Apparently, they are currently attempting to create a writers’ and artists’ colony there. Perhaps they are preoccupied and need to cast their eyes south more frequently. **87 Primavera Suite, \$595-\$1,070 (winter season). Apartado 1132, Rincon, Puerto Rico. Tel. (800) 633-1857. horneddorset.com**

Istanbul's Legendary Pera Palace Hotel

AFTER NUMEROUS VISITS TO ISTANBUL, I AM still enthralled by its diverse and fascinating neighborhoods. On a recent trip, I chose Beyoğlu — known as “Pera” in Greek, the language of historic Constantinople—an arty and lively district, the local equivalent of New York’s Greenwich Village, and home to one of the world’s most storied hotels, the Pera Palace.

Once the mandatory address for passengers alighting from the Orient Express, the Pera Palace has a rich literary history that includes mystery writer Agatha Christie, who is said to have written “Murder on the Orient Express” while staying in Room 411, and Ernest Hemingway, who was a loyal patron of the famed *Orient Bar*.

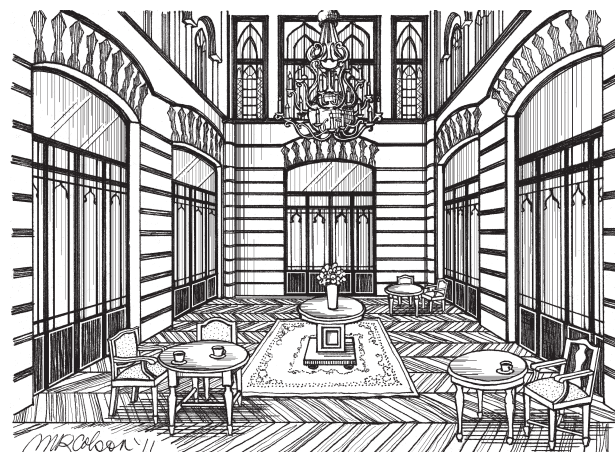
When it opened in 1895, the Pera Palace was the most luxurious hotel in Istanbul. Designed by French-Turkish architect Alexander Vallaury, the building mixes art nouveau, neoclassical and Oriental styles. First in the city to boast an electric elevator and running hot water, it quickly attracted a beau monde clientele from every corner of the globe. But after World War II, when airplanes and the Iron Curtain brought an end to the golden age of European train travel, this grande dame aged and her glamour faded.

My recent visit came shortly after the 115-room hotel reopened following a \$30 million renovation. The danger inherent in any such project is that the period ambience of the property will vanish. Fortunately, the Pera Palace avoided this fate, thanks to a brilliantly sensitive overhaul, and entering the lobby you are instantly aware of the hotel’s romantic history. Four glass-paned domes glow above the central atrium. And up a short flight of stairs, the grand public rooms — a tourist attraction in themselves — are furnished with magnificent Ottoman and European antiques. An outdoor terrace now adjoins the *Orient Bar*, and nearby is a French patisserie and a glittering tearoom.

Room 101 occupies a special place in the history of the hotel and the nation, as it was the favorite of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic. He stayed there numerous times after his first visit in 1917. Still painted “sunrise pink,” his favorite color, the room has been converted into a small museum displaying his personal belongings, books and other memorabilia.

Our corner suite, named after French novelist Pierre Loti, retained only one or two original antiques, but it was stylish and comfortable. The sitting room came with a Murano glass chandelier, Oushak carpets, an oak parquet floor, a velvet sofa and a writing desk. Heavy Wedgwood-blue brocade curtains framed tall windows. And from the quiet bedroom, French doors led to a small balcony that overlooked the Golden Horn, the historic inlet of the Bosphorus that divides the old city of Istanbul. The white Carrara marble-faced bath held a replica Victorian claw-foot tub and separate rainfall shower, along with a single vanity.

At *Agatha*, the hotel’s gourmet restaurant, chef Maximilian Thomae offers a menu of French, Italian and Turkish dishes that echo the principal stops on the original



Lobby, Pera Palace, Istanbul

Orient Express: Paris, Venice and Istanbul. Service here was excellent, as it proved to be throughout the hotel. Our Turkish-style room service breakfast — tomato, cucumber, cheeses and smoked meats with jams, honey in the comb and *kaymak* (a clotted cream) — was delivered on the dot of the requested hour. And the concierge desk was consistently helpful and proficient.

In terms of leisure facilities, the Pera Palace cannot compete with its chief rivals, the Four Seasons and the Ciragan Palace on the banks of the Bosphorus. It has no gardens or outdoor pool, although it does offer a luxurious spa with a traditional Turkish bath and indoor jet-streamed pool. Still, it is an atmospheric place for anyone who wants a taste of the great age of steamer-trunk travel.

92 *Deluxe Room (Golden Horn View)*, \$545; *Corner Suite (“Pierre Loti”)*, \$1,010. *Meşrutiyet Caddesi No. 52, Tepebaşı, Beyoğlu*. Tel. (90) 212-377-4000. perapalace.com

The Romanos: A New Base in the Peloponnese

OVERLOOKING THE INDIGO-BLUE IONIAN SEA and surrounded by countryside planted with gnarled groves of silvery olive trees, The Romanos is one of the most important hotel openings in Greece for several years.

Located in the southwestern Peloponnese, the 321-room property is part of the Costa Navarino complex—which includes a large Westin resort—conceived by the late Vassilis Constantakopoulos, a billionaire Greek shipping magnate who wanted to bring prosperity to the economically distressed Messinia region where he grew up.

After a 40-minute flight from Athens, we arrived at the Kalamata airport, picked up our car and headed off along a well-maintained two-lane road that passed through tidy whitewashed villages. Several signs indicated nearby archaeological sites, a hint at the cultural riches of the region, which include the Mycenaean ruins of King Nestor's Palace, the ancient Greek city of Messene, and Olympia, the site of the Olympic Games in classical times.

Arriving at the hotel after a pleasant 26-mile drive, we were taken aback to find the main entrance blocked by orange traffic cones, necessitating a detour through a parking lot. Check-in proved interminable and, feeling rather testy, we finally boarded a golf cart on which a pleasant bellhop drove us to our Infinity Room. The resort is set back from the sea for environmental reasons and has been beautifully landscaped with olive, cedar, fig, palm and pine trees. It is centered on several large swimming pools, with the rooms distributed among tile-roofed stucco-faced pavilions. Ours came with a limestone floor, white walls decorated with black-and-white photography, an oatmeal-colored sofa, a lacquered coffee table and an oblong limestone desk. Greater use of local furnishings would have been an antidote to the slightly anonymous tone. However, Greek toiletries had been provided in the well-lit bath, which was equipped with a separate stall shower and soaking tub. Internet access was complimentary, but some standard-issue fittings, such as an iPod dock, an espresso machine and a tea kettle, were missing.

A highlight of the Costa Navarino complex is its 43,000-square-foot Anazoe Spa—the name is derived from the Greek word for rejuvenation—the specialty of which is a range of oleotherapy, or olive oil-based treatments. Further offerings include hydrotherapy, heat

treatments (including ice-grotto rooms) and herbal saunas. The complex boasts no fewer than 11 restaurants, including *Eleon*, where we enjoyed good if slightly under-seasoned swordfish. The service was charming, and we chatted at length with the friendly maître d', who had formerly worked at *Milos* restaurant on 55th Street in New York.

Costa Navarino has already become one of the great golfing destinations in the Mediterranean. Its signature

Costa Navarino has already become one of the great golfing destinations in the Mediterranean, with a signature course designed by Bernhard Langer

Dunes course was designed by Masters champion and former Ryder Cup captain Bernhard Langer. A second seaside 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. will open this autumn. The next phase of development will include two more hotels: One will be run by Banyan Tree, while the branding of the second has yet to be announced.

Although The Romanos still has a few minor problems, we expect it to mature into a sophisticated destination resort. But even now, it provides an excellent base from which to explore this fascinating and scenic corner of Greece. **89** *Deluxe Room*, \$470; *Infinity Room*, \$680. *Navarino Dunes, Costa Navarino, Messinia. Tel. (30) 272-309-6000. romanoscstanavarino.com*

Hideaway Report on iPad®

THE HIDEAWAY REPORT ONLINE HAS NOW BEEN formatted for iPad®. Of course, it can still be viewed on screens of all sizes: your desktop, laptop or iPhone®. Look for the *Hideaway Report Online* in your email inbox, click on the cover, and watch the issue come to life. Alternatively, go to AndrewHarper.com and in the *Hideaway Report* section, click on "Digital Edition." Each month, you will find exclusive stories in addition to those in the print newsletter. For example, this month's issue features a greatly expanded Reader Survey. You will also discover an array of striking photographs and videos. And a conspicuous lack of advertising!



**2011
READERS'
CHOICE**

Top 20 Hideaways

Your favorite hotels and resorts with 75 or fewer rooms

UNITED STATES

- 1 **POST RANCH INN**
Big Sur, California
- 2 **BLACKBERRY FARM**
Walland, Tennessee
- 3 **TRIPLE CREEK RANCH**
Darby, Montana
- 4 **TWIN FARMS**
Woodstock, Vermont
- 5 **AUBERGE DU SOLEIL**
Rutherford, California
- 6 **THE INN AT PALMETTO BLUFF**
Bluffton, South Carolina
- 7 **THE POINT**
Saranac Lake, New York
- 8 **SAN YSIDRO RANCH**
Montecito, California
- 9 **THE INN AT LITTLE WASHINGTON**
Washington, Virginia
- 10 **BLANTYRE**
Lenox, Massachusetts
- 11 **RANCHO VALENCIA**
Rancho Santa Fe, California
- 12 **LITTLE PALM ISLAND**
The Keys, Florida
- 13 **LAKE PLACID LODGE**
Lake Placid, New York
- 14 **STEPHANIE INN**
Cannon Beach, Oregon
- 15 **AMANGANI**
Jackson Hole, Wyoming
- 16 **THE LOWELL**
New York City, New York
- 17 **JENNY LAKE LODGE**
Moran, Wyoming
- 18 **WHEATLEIGH**
Lenox, Massachusetts
- 19 **THE SWAG**
Waynesville, North Carolina
- 20 **KESWICK HALL**
Keswick, Virginia

INTERNATIONAL

- 1 **VILLA FELTRINELLI**
Lake Garda, Italy
- 2 **PALAZZO SASSO**
Ravello, Italy
- 3 **LE SIRENUSE**
Positano, Italy
- 4 **BUCKLAND MANOR**
The Cotswolds, England
- 5 **SINGITA BOULDERS LODGE**
Sabi Sand Reserve, South Africa
- 6 **LA CASA QUE CANTA**
Zihuatanejo, Mexico
- 7 **THE WICKANINNISH INN**
Tofino, British Columbia, Canada
- 8 **IL SAN PIETRO**
Positano, Italy
- 9 **CHATEAU EZA**
Côte d'Azur, France
- 10 **HOTEL SPLENDIDO**
Portofino, Italy
- 11 **AMANJIWO**
Borobudur, Indonesia
- 12 **THE FARM, CAPE KIDNAPPERS**
North Island, New Zealand
- 13 **HOTEL SAN REGIS**
Paris, France
- 14 **BLANKET BAY**
South Island, New Zealand
- 15 **IL SALVIATINO**
Florence, Italy
- 16 **SOUTHERN OCEAN LODGE**
Kangaroo Island, Australia
- 17 **HOTEL CARUSO**
Ravello, Italy
- 18 **AMANSARA**
Siem Reap, Cambodia
- 19 **THE WAKAYA CLUB & SPA**
Wakaya Island, Fiji
- 20 **HOTEL D'AUBUSSON**
Paris, France

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Rates provided are published nightly room rates and are subject to change.

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Reader Survey

EACH YEAR, WE ASK YOU TO tell us about your travel plans. Despite the continuing downturn, I am delighted to report that Andrew Harper members still vacation an average of 32 days a year. Most encouragingly, 31 percent of respondents say they will travel *more* this year than last, with a clear majority (58 percent) saying that they expect to travel "about the same amount."

Amazingly, almost 10 percent of *Hideaway Report* readers say that they travel more than 65 days a year! One correspondent replied to our question, "Where will you travel in the next 12 months?" as follows: "Three weeks in Italy, in Cernobbio, Positano and Ravello. Four weeks in Bangkok, Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai and Singapore. Five weeks in Dorset, Brittany and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat. Two weeks or more in Switzerland (Wengen and Kandersteg). Then back to Italy in the fall; Southeast Asia in the winter. Would like to fit in India or Morocco." To which I can only say that it is a travel schedule of which I myself would be proud!

On this page, I list your Top 20 U.S. and International Hideaways, properties with 75 or fewer rooms. However, in this month's *Hideaway Report Online*, you will find lists of your favorite beach resorts, city hotels, family escapes, food and wine properties, golf resorts and spas, accompanied by extensive color illustration.

Among 2011 winners, special mention must be made of California's Post Ranch Inn, which has now been voted No. 1 U.S. Hideaway for the *fourth* year in a row. My sincere congratulations to the management and staff of this superb resort!

— Andrew Harper