

THE LAST VIRGIN ISLAND

Longing for an unspoiled paradise in the Caribbean? **Guana** is a wildlife sanctuary with a cocktail hour.



WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE: GUANA HAS OCEAN VIEWS FROM EVERY VANTAGE POINT. THE BEACH LOOKS OUT AT TORTOLA, AND FROM THE HARBOUR HOUSE VILLA (MIDDLE) YOU CAN SEE THE ATLANTIC AND THE CARIBBEAN SEA. AND THE SNORKELING IS SUPERB.

GUANA ISLAND
guana.com

In the weeks leading up to my trip to Guana Island, friends and colleagues tried to convince me I had no idea where I was going.

“Guana?” one asked. “You sure you don’t mean Ghana?”

“Positive.”

“Could it be Guyana?”

“No.”

“Wait, Guano? As in bat—”

“And again, no. Guana.”

“Never heard of it.”

“That’s the whole point.”

Although Guana has been a Caribbean destination for nearly 80 years—and was once home to an 18th-century Quaker sugar plantation—

it has kept a relatively low profile in the British Virgin Islands. In many ways, Guana is the last Virgin Island. First developed by Beth and Louis Bigelow in the 1930s, it was originally a private club where guests would often stay for months at a time. In 1975, entrepreneur and philanthropist Dr. Henry Jarecki and his wife, Gloria, purchased the 850-acre island, and while they have built new villas and upgraded the existing Mykonos-like white cottages, the Jareckis have preserved the rustic paradise they first encountered. Or, as Dr. Jar-



FAR AND AWAY

ecki describes the island: “It’s a wildlife sanctuary with a cocktail hour.”

Guests fly into Tortola, and then it’s a 10-minute boat ride to Guana. You arrive at a private dock on a deserted beach that looks like it’s expecting passengers from Oceanic Flight 815. Not that there aren’t other people on the island, but the resort has only 18 rooms (starting at \$700) and accommodates a maximum of 32 guests. (Thirty-five if you rent the whole island for \$22,000 a night.)

No matter which room you choose, it comes with a panoramic view of the ocean. In fact, from just about any spot on the island, you can see water—including a pond filled with flamingos. From the spacious Harbour House Villa, where I stayed, you can look out at the Caribbean Sea while on the patio, as well as the Atlantic—if you can muster the energy to turn your head to the left.

What makes Guana so special is that it has remained gloriously unspoiled—by design.

The Jareckis could have added even more rooms to the island—or a main pool—but instead they have built up the flora and repatriated fauna. In addition to repopulating the rock iguanas, which look like they might have been extras in *Jurassic Park*, they have restored several bird species, particularly those flamingos. (“They had a fatal genetic flaw,” Dr. Jarecki jokes. “They tasted like chicken.”) There is also a friendly donkey on the island and four tortoises at the Jareckis’ residence, who are quite happy to be fed by hand. And for a midafternoon excursion, a gardener will cut down fresh papaya, sugarcane or coconut from the island’s orchard.

As for that cocktail hour, it’s been a Guana tradition for half a century. Guests dress for dinner—*island casual*—and pour their own drinks on the honor system for an evening that feels like a page out of a John Cheever short story.

Guana—remember the name. —MICHAEL SOLOMON



THE SLOW LANE: THE JARECKIS’ VILLA, JOST HOUSE, COMES WITH AN INFINITY POOL, A FULL KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM, AND FOUR VERY HUNGRY TORTOISES. AND MEALS AT GUANA ARE ALWAYS SERVED OCEANSIDE.

RED ROOSTER, MEET PINK SAND

Marcus Samuelsson opens a new pop-up restaurant in Bermuda.

Can't wait until May 2015 to dine at Marcus Samuelsson's new restaurant at the Fairmont Hamilton Princess in Bermuda? You don't have to. The chef-owner of Red Rooster Harlem in New York has opened a two-month pop-up version, Samuelsson at HP, until August. Samuelsson HP features Bermuda-inspired cuisine prepared by Red Rooster alumni and is part of the hotel's \$90 million renovation and expansion. It's also the centerpiece of the new Culinary Escape Package (starting at \$779/night; fairmont.com/hamilton-bermuda), which includes dinner at the pop-up and a signed copy of Samuelsson's memoir.



A BIGGER LITTLE WASHINGTON

Patrick O’Connell’s legendary inn adds six luxurious new guest rooms.

Polymath chef-hotelier-designer Patrick O’Connell has just expanded his beloved Inn at Little Washington (theinnatlittlewashington.com), turning an 1850s Victorian house into six beguiling new bedrooms (from \$575). Across the street from the main inn and restaurant that’s been drawing gourmands to Virginia since the 1970s, the new Parsonage offers a more modern take on the inn’s theatrical English country house aesthetic—with touches of French country and George Washington Americana—as well as a quieter, more private environment. Most guests still leave the cocoon, though, to enjoy O’Connell’s famed “gastonaut’s menus” (\$228 per person), which begin with popcorn blanketed by freshly grated truffles and grow more luxuriant.

