

JAMMIN' IN JAMAICA: THE ULTIMATE BEACH LOVER'S GUIDE

CARIBBEAN

MAY 2008

TRAVEL & LIFE

SUMMER'S COOLEST DEALS!

(from under \$100 a night!)



ST. LUCIA
LUXURY'S NEW
FRONTIER

TOBAGO
OLD-SCHOOL
ISLAND VIBE

RUM
IT'S WHAT'S
FOR DINNER

OUR
TOP **25**
AFFORDABLE
HOTELS

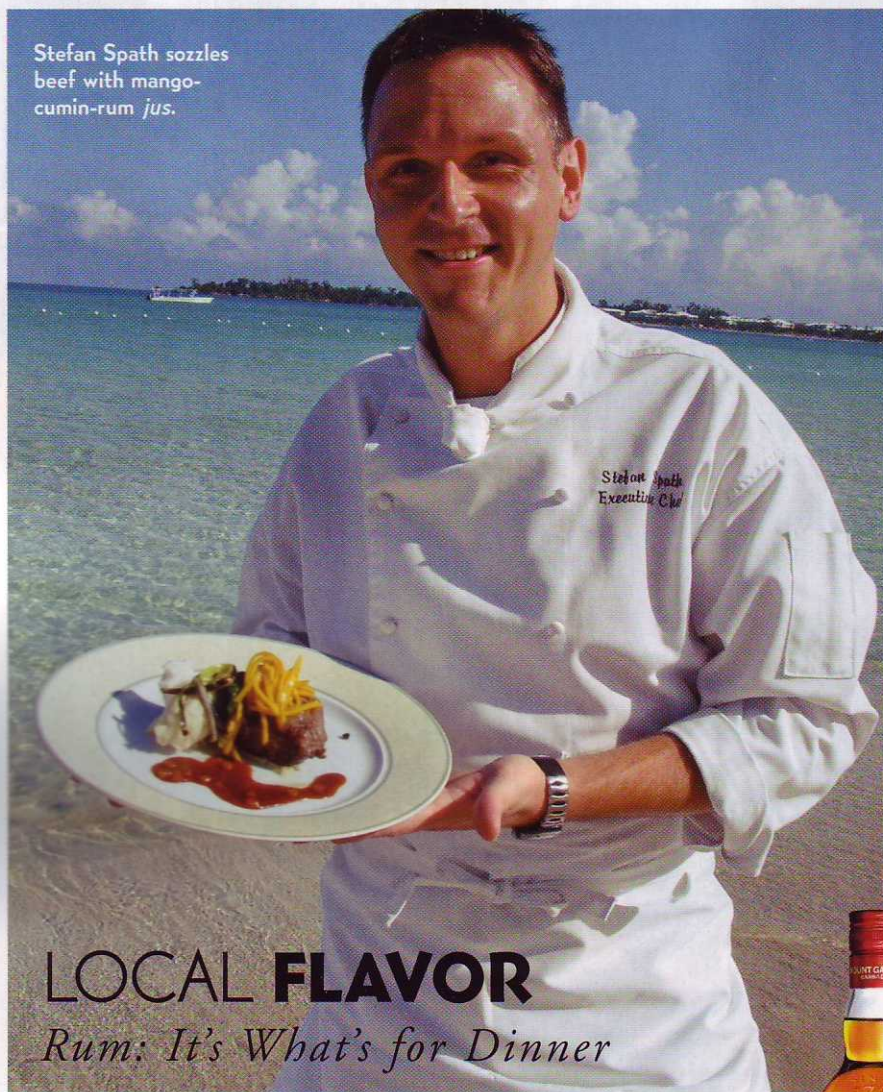
CARIBBEAN



caribbeantravelmag.com US \$4.99

ISLAND HOPPING

Stefan Spath sozzles beef with mango-cumin-rum *jus*.



LOCAL FLAVOR

Rum: It's What's for Dinner

YO-HO-HO! HERE'S GOOD NEWS FOR FANS OF CARIBBEAN rum: We're no longer cut off between cocktails and dessert. More and more, savvy chefs are using the region's signature potable to prepare all courses of the meal. According to the panel of culinary aces I consulted, rum not only brings out the flavor of herbs and spices but also adds sweetness and smokiness. There are entire books devoted to rum recipes, and when you're ready to really get cooking, don't forget the sage counsel offered by Stefan Spath, executive chef of Couples Resorts Negril: "Make sure you sample some of the rum at the same time."



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and Captain Morgan spiced rum.

Other meats get rummified as well. St. Kitts' Golden Lemon Inn has a rummy Caribbean beef stew; CasaMagna Marriott Cancún's *osso buco* has a surprising rum deglazing. Perhaps the most decadent entrée is Couples Negril's beef tenderloin, served with coconut mashed potatoes, pickled pumpkin and a mango-cumin-and-rum *jus*. "The sweetness and warmth of the brown Jamaican rum complement the mango and beef beautifully," says chef Stefan Spath.

SEAFOOD

SERVED WITH A SPLASH

In St. Lucia, the Landings' executive chef, Roland Czekelius, transforms rum punch into a glaze for shrimp. On the same island, Windjammer Landing offers a lime-habanero-and-rum-flavored shrimp

creole. At Coco Palm's Ti Bananne, chef Richardson Skinner creates a seafood lover's fantasy, combining rum-and-guava-jelly-glazed shrimp with lobster mousse and sweet-potato *rosti*.

Updating a traditional dish in Jamaica, executive chef Gal Kotzer creates an Appleton shrimp rundown at Grand Lido Negril, combining the "unique, round, smoky-sweet flavor" of Appleton Special rum with coconut milk, veggies and Scotch-bonnet peppers.

Tutto Bene's pan-seared, almond-crusted wahoo comes with a rich sauce of Cruzan coconut rum and butter. And Paul Yellin bakes pesto-swathed dorado in phyllo, with a rich sauce of cream, curry, coconut milk and Mount Gay Eclipse. Over on Antigua, Jolly Beach dishes up a shellfish rendition called Lydia's Lobster (see recipe) that contains a full three cups of Cavalier rum. — *Rich Rubin*

LOW-SEASON DEALS

package gets you a spacious ocean-view room, a one-day open-roof car rental, a boxed lunch for your excursion (check out the Punta Sur eco-park and the island's secluded beaches), and a hearty "Buena suerte!"

PACKAGE *Island Adventure*

RATE *From \$333 per person*

NIGHTS *Three*

AVAILABLE *Now to December 21*

CONTACT *800-FIESTA-1;*

fiestaamericana.com

Royal St. Kitts Hotel & Casino

ST. KITTS

This family-run all-inclusive has devised the perfect no-brainer getaway for the active traveler: Just show up and enjoy six days' worth of activities already mapped out for you (and included in the package). Day One, dive; Day Two, tour Brimstone Hill, a UNESCO

World Heritage Site; Day Three, catamaran and snorkel; Day Four, see the volcano and rainforest; Day Five, fish in Lake Zuiani; Day Six, head to the Lime Bar for some world-class (what else?) liming. And yes, you are permitted — every so often — to pause and catch your breath.

PACKAGE *Adventure Vacation*

RATE *\$120 per person per night*

NIGHTS *Six*

AVAILABLE *May 6 to August 31*

CONTACT *869-465-8651;*

royalstkitshotel.com

Coco Palm

ST. LUCIA

If your dream vacation centers around uninterrupted lethargy, this four-nighter in a garden-view room might not be your bag. The rest of you, check this out: The package includes a private, guided snorkel or dive excursion at

Anse Cochon; a catamaran day cruise to Soufrière (complete with Piton views and lunch at a plantation-style restaurant); limin' with the locals at the Friday-night Anse La Raye Fish Fry street party; a full-day historical rum-distillery tour (*avec* tastings, of course); and dinner and breakfast at Ti Bananne Caribbean Bistro. (See "Affordable All-Stars," page 99.)

PACKAGE *Explore St. Lucia*

RATE *From \$1,517 per person*

NIGHTS *Four*

AVAILABLE *Now to December 15*

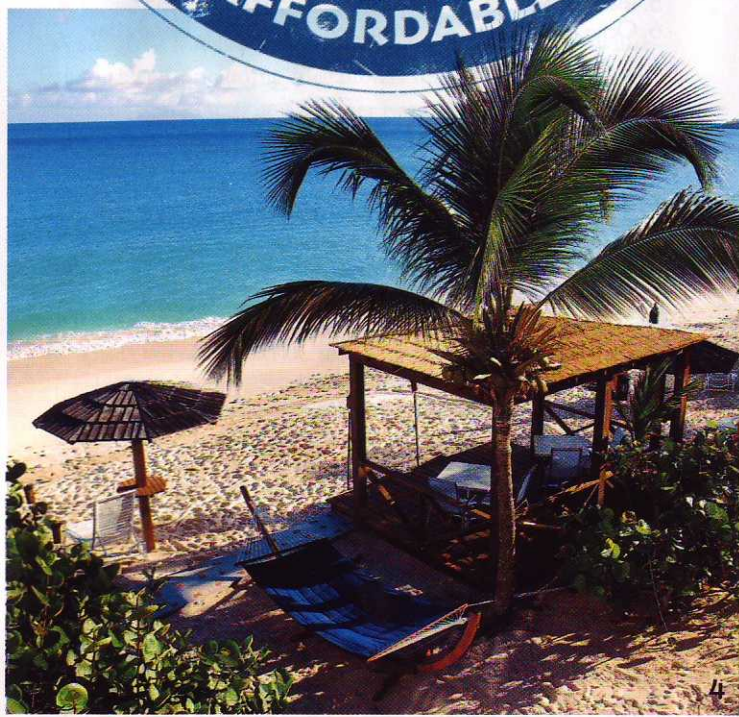
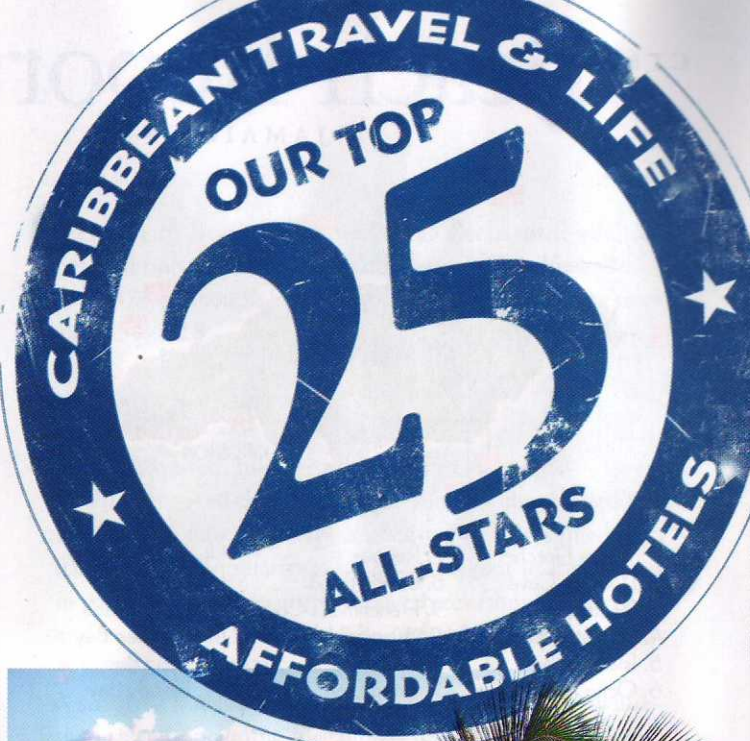
CONTACT *866-588-5980; coco-resorts.com*

For Divers

St. James's Club & Villas

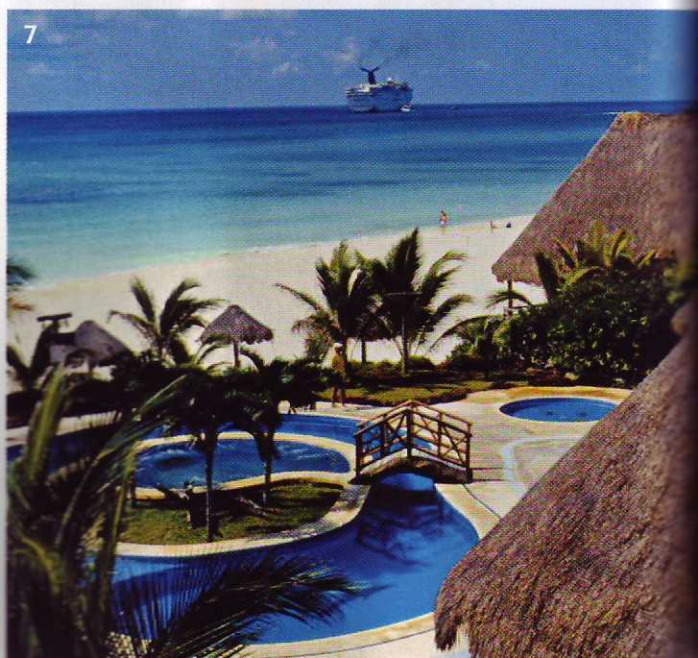
ANTIGUA

Call it an extended launch party for the south-shore resort's new Mamora Bay Divers on-site PADI scuba center. The



AFTER 10 YEARS OF BEACHCOMBING TO FIND THE REGION'S MOST SENSATIONAL HOTEL VALUES, THE EXPERT ON AFFORDABLE CARIBBEAN TRAVEL REVEALS HIS DREAM TEAM.

By David Swanson



1. GRAND CASE BEACH CLUB; 2. ZACH STOVALL; 3. BARRY TESSMAN/GETTY IMAGES; 4. MARY'S BOON; 5. HOTEL PLAYA COLIBRI; 6. ZACH STOVALL; 7. DAVID SWANSON; 8. TI KAYE VILLAGE

\$145 to \$200

18 Coco Palm

ST. LUCIA

At the new Coco Palm, the focus is on value, but not at the expense of service: A host both checks you in to your room and acts as your concierge. The four-story, 83-room hotel comes with the kind of amenities found in acclaimed American boutique hotels: rain-shower heads, minifridges, coffee makers, cordless phones, CD and DVD players and free Wi-Fi access. There's also a free-form swimming pool and a restaurant, and musicians play live several nights a week. The Rodney Bay location — a five-minute stroll from St. Lucia's best white-sand beach — means there are plenty of dining and night-life options nearby. *Doubles start at \$145 in low season (\$175 high; see page 48).*
758-456-2800; coco-resorts.com