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Spotlight: Best in the Caribbean

FOUR SEASONS RESORT, NEVIS

BY CANDACE BUSHNELL

You can get arrested for cursing in Nevis.

This is a good thing to know, because by the time you arrive at the Four Seasons Resort there, after 10 hours of traveling in planes, mini-planes, a van, and, finally, a boat (picturesquely staffed by men in white captain's uniforms who exude the sort of friendly attitude one would expect from the Coast Guard toward potential drug runners), you will feel like cursing. You will also, perhaps, wonder whether you've arrived at the right resort.

"Is this it?" my traveling companion, Darren Star, whispers as we stand on a simple weathered wooden dock. In front of us, a small sign reads **FOUR SEASONS GUESTS ONLY**. There are palm trees, a beach (brown sand, not white), and water (greenish brown, as opposed to stunning Caribbean turquoise) *(Continued on page 212)*



Nevis Peak looms over the Robert Trent Jones II-designed golf course at the Four Seasons Resort, Nevis.



NIGHTLIFE

music

For jazz and blues in an intimate space, swing by the **Basement** (29 Reiby Place, Circular Quay; 61-2/9251-2797).

Local and international bands and deejays play pulsating beats at the cavernous **Metro** (624 George St.; 61-2/9264-2666).

a little ambience

Plumb your way into the cocktail haven-of the three-level **Burdekin Hotel** (2 Oxford St., Darlinghurst; 61-2/9331-3066). Croony lounge CD's spin in the below-ground Dug Out Bar; lesbians gather at the top-floor Lava Bar; pool players congregate at the Cherry Bar, located in between.

Lithe waitresses samba through a sea of suits in the bar at the **Hotel CBD** (75 York St.; 61-2/9299-8292). Climb the stairs for snacks at Restaurant CBD (open until around 10 P.M.); up another flight for pool tables.

The fashion world finds its late-night way to the **Grand Pacific Blue Room** (Oxford and South Dowling Sts., Paddington; 61-2/9331-7108) after the restaurant folds at 11 P.M. and a band or deejay takes control.

restaurant bars

Under local laws, these places can't serve you drinks unless you intend to eat—so if anyone asks, say yes. You can always "unexpectedly" change your mind.

There's lots of body piercing on view in the circular booths of **Café Iguana** (15 Kellett St., Kings Cross; 61-2/9357-2609).

Media and advertising executives trade gossip at the bar of the **Bayswater Brasserie** (32 Bayswater Rd., Kings Cross; 61-2/9357-2177).

Try a glass of Vin Santo at **Bel Mondo's Anti Bar** (Argyle Department Store, 18-24 Argyle St., The Rocks, top floor; 61-2/9241-3700). Use the night entrance on Gloucester Walk, just off Argyle Street.

drink in the view

Horizons Bar at the top of the ANA Hotel (176 Cumberland St., The Rocks; 61-2/9250-6000) is a great spot to watch the sun set. —T.B.

BOOKS

Time Out Guide Sydney (Penguin)—A compact, comprehensive volume with savvy descriptions of accommodations, restaurants, and shops.

Day Trips Around Sydney by Bruce Elder (*Seven Hills*)—Beaches, parks, and small towns. —MARTIN RAPP

ON THE WEB

Sydney Interactive Visitors Guide (host.webwin.com/tourism/sydney/)—Save the airfare. It's all here: museums, shops, restaurants.

Sydney Party Rave and Club Information (www.cia.com.au/spraci/index.html)—If you're looking to party all night, this funky site tracks the hottest gigs in town. —NICOLE WHITSETT

Additional reporting by Natalie Filatoff

(Continued from page 165) blue), with people paddling around on what appear to be giant tricycles. Our itinerary indicates that we are staying in Fig Tree Cottage, but we don't see anything that could actually be defined as a cottage. Instead, there are rows of two-story buildings with wooden trim.

Okay, maybe we were expecting something more glamorous. But what the heck. We're here to enjoy ourselves. Darren has just finished shooting the HBO pilot for *Sex and the City*, based on a book I wrote, and I've just finished shooting a series for VH-1. We have only three nights and two full days, but somehow we're going to get tanned, finish the books we're reading, eat healthy, exercise, and do a smidgen of work so we can return to New York smarter, more attractive, and in better shape than we were when we left.

5 P.M. Arrive at dock; enthusiastically greeted by staff all wearing bright flower-print shirts. A charming man, who asks how our trip was and is exceedingly nice when we rant, leads us to the Great House, where we "check in" by sitting in large rattan chairs thirstily gulping rum punch.

5:30 P.M. Go to suite, which is fabulous: two rooms, each with its own patio overlooking the pool and the ocean. Ooh and aah over large fruit selection dotted with chocolate truffles. Eat all the truffles. "We're going to be very happy here," Darren says.

7:30 P.M. Open the door to our patio and hear the sound of a steel band mixed with the loud, pleasant chirping of tree frogs. Cocktails on the patio of the Great House—blue tequila martinis and wonderful conch fritters and roasted coconut slices. Check out other guests, who all seem to be either young honeymooners (it is June, after all) or families on vacation. Everyone is well dressed and in good shape.

8:30 P.M. The Dining Room is lovely, with a wraparound screened porch, a giant stone fireplace, chandeliers, and huge flower arrangements. I eat a pork appetizer followed by some kind of fish followed by a Grand Marnier soufflé. We drink white wine and red wine. Nat-

urally, talk turns to the island. The schools are excellent, everyone is very upstanding, and, yes, you actually can get thrown in jail for swearing.

Day Two, 9 A.M. It's sunny . . . or is it? There's a big black cloud hanging around Nevis Peak. When I remark on it, a pool attendant says, "Don't speak of the wolf or he'll come to the door."

"Right," I say.

Breakfast. Darren and I are on this diet where we don't eat any carbohydrates—no pasta, no bread, no potatoes. It's a shame, because the food looks tempting, from the lobster hash to pancakes with bacon. Darren tries to convince me I shouldn't be on the diet, hoping I'll order pancakes so he can have a bite, but I don't fall for it. I ask for a large bowl of fruit. So there.

10 A.M. Sit by pool. Order iced tea. Open new book—*American Pastoral* by Philip Roth.

10:15 A.M. Put down book to sip iced tea.

10:30 A.M. Pick up book, but quickly put it down to discuss where to go for lunch. Decide on Sunshine's, a beach shack that serves grilled seafood and a special drink called the Killer Bee.

10:45 A.M. Go to room to get more suntan lotion.

10:55 A.M. Discuss with Darren how our room is "right where the action is."

11 A.M. Order another iced tea. Very relaxed. Wonder when it's going to be time for lunch.

12 noon. Walk 50 yards down beach to check out scene at Sunshine's. Smile at local teenagers playing by the water—the only other people on the beach.

1:30 P.M. Finally go to lunch at Sunshine's. It's run by a local man who started by serving lunch to the workers building the Four Seasons six years ago. Sunshine brazenly whips up a fresh batch of the special drink in front of us, knowing full well that, two hours and four Killer Bees later, we won't be able to remember what's in it anyway.



A boogie-boarder's view of the Four Seasons on Nevis.

We can't. We also can't quite make our island tour. Our reasoning is this: Everything we might possibly want or need is at the resort, so why leave?

We spend the rest of the afternoon snorkeling, paddle-tricycling, having massages, and playing tennis. We feel good. We definitely accomplished a lot.

It's a beautiful evening. Over blue martinis and conch fritters, we agree that nothing beats the Caribbean air. We're mellow, very mellow.

Meanwhile, someone passes out in the dining room. Too mellow. Too much sun, too much tennis, too many Killer Bees and blue martinis. We absolutely have to take it easy tomorrow.

Day Three, 10 A.M. It's raining—a clichéd warm, gentle rain. We spend the morning reading on our patio.

12:30 P.M. Lunch at the pool cabana. More conch fritters. We're wondering whether it's going to clear up but secretly hoping it won't. We got a lot of sun yesterday.

3 P.M. Still raining. Our snorkeling trip is canceled, so we take the island tour instead. There are only 9,000 residents on Nevis, and our tour guide, Bumby, seems to know them all. He points out each house and gives us a brief description of its inhabitants ("American, from Connecticut"; "local, teaches in the school").

We also find out that the island is filled with wild monkeys, which escaped from English sailors who brought them as pets. It's our lucky day—on a high mountain road we see them lounging on rocks, eating green mangoes. They have black faces, stippled brown bodies, and long yellow-tipped tails.

Bumby is impressed. Tourists are always demanding that they see the wild monkeys, but the monkeys don't always cooperate. This makes us feel superior. "We saw the wild monkeys," we tell each other.

That night, during dinner in the Grill Room (the best shrimp cocktail I've ever had and a grilled lobster tail), the mon-

keys are a big topic of conversation. When someone says the adult monkeys are "as big as small children," it leads to a discussion about zombies. A woman swears that once, unbeknownst to her, a zombie jumped into the back of her truck; when her brother saw it "his hair stood straight up." When zombies aren't scaring the *&%\$ out of people, they basically show up at beach parties as "balls of fire."

Back outside, we pass the remains of "West Indies Night," held in the pool cabana. Tacked up to a wooden wagon is a scarecrow-like creature—a hook-nosed bird mask with bright streamers. It's a zombie, all right.

We run screaming to our room.

Day Four. Up early to catch the 8 A.M. boat to St. Kitts. As we bounce over the waves, Darren reveals that he dreamed a zombie came into his room. "Prove you're a zombie," he commanded. "Turn into a ball of fire."

It did. But then he woke up and realized he was staring at the orange indicator light on the smoke alarm.

Oh, well. At least we're tanned.

FOUR SEASONS RESORT, NEVIS, *Pinney's Beach, Charlestown, Nevis; 800/332-3442 or 869/469-1111, fax 869/469-1085; doubles from \$250.*

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CONTRIBUTORS



Novelist **Ellen Gilchrist** writes about the winner of one of T&L's World's Best awards—the Ritz-Carlton in Naples, Florida (page 163), our readers' favorite American hotel. "I went for a lark and ended up having a marvelous time all by myself," she says. Gilchrist's 17 books include a story collection, *Victory over Japan*, for which she won a National Book Award. Her latest novel, *Sarah Conley*, is out this month from Little, Brown.

In her diary of a blissful two-day stay at the Four Seasons Resort, Nevis (page 165), **Candace Bushnell** proves that the Caribbean is more than a winter destination. From her sweltering Manhattan apartment in midsummer, she says, "It's cooler in Nevis than it is in New York. In fact, I wish I were there now." Bushnell, a columnist for the *New York Observer* and the author of *Sex in the City* (Warner Books), is a VH-1 host for the program *Sex, Lies, and Videoclips*.



Photographer **Geoff Lung** got a rare chance to stay put when he shot the feature on his very happening hometown of Sydney (page 168). "My family's been in Australia since the 1800's gold rush days," he says. "There are very few places in Sydney I don't know." Most of the time, Lung can be found traveling in Asia; last year he gave T&L readers a sublime look at Singapore (January 1996). He is a frequent contributor to the *Australian Vogue Entertaining Guide*.



"You must move to Sydney now," says **Tyler Brülé**, recently returned from his roundup of the latest must-sees and must-dos in Australia's first city. Canadian-born Brülé, a *Travel & Leisure* contributing editor, is the founder and editor of *Wallpaper*, an interior design and travel magazine published in London. He also writes regularly for *Vanity Fair*, *British Vogue*, London's *Sunday Times*, and *Guardian*.

(Continued on page 23)

