



13

11 7:36 p.m.

CABARETE, D.R.
In the Dominican Republic's bohemian beach town of Cabarete, it doesn't get more romantic than an intimate evening at 7:36 p.m., a reservations-only, one-night-a-week dining experience set up in the candlelit back garden of the home of two local chefs. If fine food and the magic of moonlight is your kind of thing, this is your kind of place. 829-847-3290 — SGG

12 Long Live Elvis

ANGUILLA
Number of Google hits for *Elvis*: 176,000. Not a single one for *my Elvis*. Not in the first 10 pages, anyway. Not even on *ElvisFind.com*. If the good people at Google only knew. My Elvis, Elvis Fleming, to be exact, is every bit "the king." He reigns over a rum punch as strong as it is sweet (topped with amaretto; find the recipe at caribbeantravelmag.com) and commands his ship — a beached Anguillan Class C racing boat/bar — with a benevolent pour. It's true Sandy Ground is ground zero for Elvis and other celebrity sightings (Paris Hilton, Victoria's Secret models), for dancing like a fun-loving fool in the sand to Exodus or whichever local act has the stage, and for getting far too friendly with a bunch of people you just met. But please, people, let's get the facts straight: Elvis doesn't even have a damn building; it's a boat. And you need to be there. 264-476-0101; elvisbeachbar.net — ZACH STOVALL

CAPT. ANSIL

For more than 50 years, Ansil Saunders has been leading expeditions in the limpid waters off Bimini, in the Bahamas, stalking a silvery apparition called the bonefish. He took Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. here in 1968. It was a trip that inspired the civil rights leader to pen his Mountaintop speech — his last. Saunders will take you down the same mangrove-lined creek — holy ground, he calls it — and who knows, you too might be inspired to change the world. — MP

14 Conch Knocker

PROVO, TURKS + CAICOS
No one except the owner of **Da Conch Shack** and a handful of bartenders knows the secret ingredients in the signature shot, the Conch Knocker, and they're not telling. In fact, the recipe is so tightly guarded that the potent pink libation is literally prepared underneath the counter, out of sight of patrons desperate to replicate its strong yet sweet flavor. My best guess? It starts with a lot of white rum and ends with a splash or two of grenadine. The other ingredients? Sorry; I'm not telling either. 649-946-8877 — SGG

15 Bragging Rights

JAMAICA
As English writers in Jamaica go, Ian Fleming gets most of the ink. But the island was also home to the playwright, actor, director, composer and all-around wit **Noel Coward**. In a hilltop home he called *Firefly* (built on land formerly



owned by the pirate Henry Morgan), Coward entertained all manner of Hollywood and English royalty from the 1950s until his death in 1973; he's buried on the grounds. The house, about 20 miles east of Ocho Rios, is now a Coward-themed museum. 876-997-7201 — MP

16 Jake's Hotel

TREASURE BEACH, JAMAICA
On the island's south coast, Jake's is the kind of place that puts the

fun in funky. Like a back-lot movie set, the boutique collection of colorful and low-slung Moroccan-, Indian- and adobe-inspired cottages rises from rural grazing lands. A mellow reggae beat sets the soundtrack, with the lap of the waves on **Treasure Beach** the staccato filler. The plot is predictable — beach, Dougie's bar, pool, Dougie's bar, relax, sleep. But this is one old movie I want to watch again and again. — ZS

17 Beaches Not Seen

MEXICO AND JAMAICA
How did Mexico's popular **Tulum** ruins and Jamaica's iconic **Dunn's River Falls** make this list? Not for the obvious attractions, but for those everyone overlooks: their pretty, unheralded beaches. Fascinated by the ruins, too many leave Tulum never having descended the wooden staircase to the postcard-perfect shore below. At the falls, the rush to clamber up the rocks drives most folks past the crystalline water and white sand without a backward glance. Don't be one of them. Stop. Look. Enjoy. — CP

18 Cow Wreck Bar

ANEGADA
Follow the **cow skulls**, and you'll end up at one of Anegada's best beach bars. The spot got its name when a ship holding cow bones sunk offshore and the skeletons washed up on the sand. The green and yellow bar is open and breezy, its chaises resting beneath a palapa inviting you in for the view. Check in to one of the villas if you want to disappear for a few nights. Try the grilled lobster, dipped in butter and thrown over the hot coals, and wash it down with a couple of Cow Killers, the bar's tasty version of a rum punch. — DS

19 Sorrel Chutney

JAMAICA
Jamaica's famous for jerk sauce and Scotch bonnet peppers, but I crave a lesser-known, far less fiery flavor. Equal parts sweet, tart and spicy, **sorrel chutney** is made from the petals of a hibiscus-like blossom. Spiked with ginger and allspice, the ruby-red preserve pairs perfectly with meats and cheese. Think of it as cranberry sauce, Caribbean style. walkerswood.com — SGG



Rocker's International Record Shop

ZACH STOVALL (2); CORBIUS; OPPOSITE: JON WHITTLE

20

Kingston

→ JAMAICA

The beaches are lovely; the mountains are spectacular; the Appleton rum goes down easily. But attribute my Jamaica addiction to just one place: Kingston. A religious reggaeophile, I love the capital as much as I loathe the arched eyebrows it elicits. "You're going where?" comes the inevitable question, obliging me to sing the praises of this inexorably vibrant, culturally rich music-soaked hub. This is my Kingston for "flex" (that's Jamaican for routine): I check in to the uber-modern Spanish Court Hotel, in hip New Kingston, where I lounge beside the infinity pool on the roof and take in views of the lush Blue Mountains encircling the city like an improbable backdrop. I revel in the stark contrasts that make Kingston endlessly fascinating: the manicured lawns of well-to-do uptown neighborhoods, the historic buildings and museums comprising its downtown harbor, the humble ghettos — like Trench Town — where reggae music was born, the modern music studios responsible for the island's prolific music scene. I might pay homage to a musical king at the Bob Marley Museum, in the house on aptly named Hope Road, where he lived and recorded. If I'm lucky, I convince a friend to take the drive to Hellshire beach, where clapboard huts beckon with good food that belies their unadorned origins: Feast on brown-stew snapper at Screechy's, my favorite, and you'll be forever ruined for all other beachside fare. Nights are spent at haute Miami-style nightclubs or rugged street dances, where towers of speaker boxes pump out the latest reggae. My love affair with Kingston is more than a decade old, yet still I'm awed by a city that's really an island to itself, with an unbridled energy, spirit and passion that's 100 percent Jamaica, distilled and concentrated. — BAZ DREISINGER

GO NOW

Eat *Screechy's at Hellshire* — Sunday mornings are the liveliest (876-370-5046) **Stay** *The luxe Spanish Court Hotel* (876-926-0000; spanishcourthotel.com) **Play** *Bob Marley Museum* (876-927-9152; bobmarley-foundation.com)



CARIBBEAN
CONFIDENTIAL

21 Nassau → BAHAMAS

My Nassau isn't Nassau — it's New Providence. I didn't know this the first time I visited; like many tourists, I thought the island itself was Nassau, only to discover that Nassau is in fact the capital of New Providence island, itself the capital of the Bahamas. It was a geography lesson with metaphorical import: Beneath the commercial facade of an island too many visitors never scratch the surface of lies a bigger island, rich in sweet vibes and culture. Of course, the facade is not to be scoffed at: Bay Street, which runs the length of the tourist strip all the way to downtown, is the Caribbean edition of a broad European boulevard, a living painting made from lofty palm trees and a sea so gaudily blue you'll need sunglasses to glance its way. And Cable Beach does fit the picture-perfect bill, with its endless stretches of soft sand. But I drag myself off that beach to spend a meditative day at Clifton Heritage National Park, a historic slave village that's also a respite from all things commercial. There, I watch waves crash against cliffs and



take in the moving memorial to slavery erected by the isle's most feted artist, Antonius Roberts. I cruise around on a moped, stopping to savor fresh conch salad at local stands like those at the foot of the Paradise Island bridge. Strolling downtown, I take the back streets, ogling the pink colonial government buildings and stopping at the National Gallery to pay homage to the island's visual-arts legacy. And no trip ends without a Sunday night at Arawak Cay. Reggae and rake-and-scrape music take turns on the speakers, and hours of dancing make me forget the word *tourist* is even in Nassau's vocabulary. — BD

GO NOW

Eat *Homemade pizza at Cafe Matisse* (242-356-7012; cafe-matisse.com) **Stay** *Far away from the casino scene at Raycliff Hotel* (242-302-9150; raycliff.com) **Play** *Dive to see the Bond Wrecks (named after the 007 flicks), with operator Stuart Cove* (800-879-9832; stuartcove.com)

