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Set on the Dominican Republic's Green Coast, the first four Amanera Villas were snapped up before the December opening of the resort's 25-casita hotel



SUN, SEA, SAND *and style*

What is it about the Caribbean that makes waking to the sound of breaking waves, taking breakfast on the terrace, lunch by the beach and dinner under the stars so unequivocally special? *Claire Pilton reports*

Purportedly declared by Columbus to be the most beautiful island that human eyes had ever seen, the Dominican Republic is certainly the most geographically diverse island in the Caribbean. An inherently varied region, the Caribbean embraces 30 territories, including sovereign states, and is home to some of the most exclusive residential

markets in the world. St Barts has long been a celebrity playground, while Barbados's Platinum Coast is the haunt of UHNWIs from around the globe. Tourism comprises 36.2% of the Bajan economy. In the Cayman Islands and British Virgin Islands over half of GDP is generated by the financial-services sector; both rank amongst the world's top 40 financial centres.



Bajan beauties

Platinum Bay will provide five fabulous beach-fronting villas on the west coast by Holetown. They're handy for The Cliff and Lone Star, and a stroll along the beach from Sandy Lane, with shopping close by at the Limegrove Lifestyle Centre and golf at The Green Monkey and Apes Hill. Available through Savills (020 7016 3740), the six-bedroom residences are being developed by London's Residential Land and Prestbury Investments, whose two founders are furthering their strong affinity with Barbados.



ISLAND ENVY

The sum of US\$17 million could see you residing on Jumby Bay, where Knight Frank (020 7861 1553) recommends a six-bedroom villa on Pelican Beach with a plethora of poolside patios. Famous for turtles and starfish, Jumby Bay benefits from an excellent airlift service, with mainland Antigua just a 10-minute boat-ride away: convenient should you tire of your own chef or the island's hotel.



VIRGIN TERRITORY

Made for sun worshipping and stargazing, this secluded fantasy home is built around the giant granite boulder fields of Virgin Gorda near The Baths. It has three bedrooms and costs US\$3.9 million through Sotheby's (+1 284 340 5555). Down the road, Diane Wildenstein's 19-acre Valley Trunk estate (www.valleytrunk.com) can be rented 'all in' from £3,850 a night. Perfect for test-driving the BVI!



FRANCE AT ITS BEST

Named for Christopher Columbus's brother, St Barthélemy is known as The Normandy of the Tropics. Here, €10.5 million will secure a four-bedroom villa on the Lurin hillside with views of St Jean Bay to the ocean. Set in tropical gardens with an emerald pool, it's a five-minute drive from Gustavia and just 10 minutes from the airport. Contact Christie's (+590 590 29 8891)



Bang on Seven Mile Beach

Occupying the best spot on Grand Cayman, in its best resort, are the six ocean-fronting penthouses at The Ritz-Carlton Residences. Ranging in price from US\$3.9 million to US\$16 million through Savills (020 7016 3740), they have two, three or four bedrooms and come blessed with the full RC package. A Greg Norman-designed golf course, Nick Bolletheri tennis centre, La Prairie Spa, kids' club, water-park and Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ambassadors of the Environment make for an amenity-rich resort.



Why settle for an Aman holiday...

...when you can have an Aman home? Set on the Dominican Republic's Green Coast, with views over Playa Grande beach and the famous Robert Trent Jones golf course, the first four Amanera Villas were snapped up before the December opening of the resort's 25-casita hotel. The restaurants, spa, tennis courts, golf course and phenomenal beach club are available to home-owners, as are the services of architect John Heah, who has fashioned the hotel to a 'raw, organic design': think concrete, teak and glass. The US\$7-million villas take 18 months to build. One purchaser, who couldn't wait, has also bought a two-bedroom casita, which cost US\$4 million. Contact the estate's owner, Dolphin Capital (www.playagrande.com).