Treasure Beach is off the beaten path, but never far from tasty jerk chicken and a Red Stripe
A home to Jamaica a few decades ago, when we could barely afford the airfare. We did what most tourists do - stay at all-inclusive in Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril. At Rick's Café we drank too much rum and watched the sunset as mahattys drifted off the cliffs.

This time I wanted to go the road less travelled but I also wanted to return to Negril and Montego Bay and experience the laid-back island life. I was also smitten with bonobos and a new zoom how a passion for them and their fate has blurred — but not replaced — rum and reggae.

After a two-hour taxi ride south (and a pit stop at Border for extremely tasty jerk chicken and requisite Red Stripe) along a two-lane road with scenery becoming more jungle-like, I arrived at Treasure Beach and Jakes Resort, a colony of 30 array-funky "cottages" dotted about spacious grounds that includes a salt-water pool, two restaurants and a bar (we're parallel Internet access. I'd vowed not to go there.) Miss Pumme, the manager, welcomed us with ice-cold towels and fresh-squeezed watermelon juice.

I noticed a sign in the lobby: "Support your local farmers." This was my kind of place.

Octopus - my oceanfront abode, immediately made me think of Gulliver. Owners talk about the island life by Jason Henzell's mother simply was inspired by the artist when she designed the resort. I only booked three nights here! The word "enchanted" barely does it justice. The surf about lapped at my outdoor bathtub, which was surrounded by walls studded with seashells and coloured glass. My roof deck with Cushak-style daybed and silk cushions was - pardon the cliché - jaw-dropping.

In the not-too-distant past, Treasure Beach was a little fishing village and it still managed to avoid most touristy trappings. The next morning couldn't have been better planned. Jason's wife, Laura, just happens to be a yoga instructor (check out their yoga retreat packages). At 9 a.m., we met on the rooftop yoga deck with glittering sea at backdrop and one hour later, the long journey here washed away. I got into the groove.

Jakes had arranged a boat day. Dreadlock Ted and his dog Skippered us in his boat "De love yunga" to Floyd and his quirky Pelican Bar. Talk about getting away from it all. "When I built this place as a hangout my friends thought it was wise and everyone else thought I was crazy," Floyd Forbes said, as he took a break from a game of dominos. Floyd handled wood on his fishing boat to this sandbar a quarter of a mile out to sea and the hangout now attracted more than Floyd's fishing buddies.

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It’s Jamaica, mon ... where you go to really get away

It went down in Hurricane Isun but Jason E_WEEK and other local bus-
ness owners shipped it—in tourists were only deprived of Pelican Bar for a
month.

We zipped over to Black River and Jiggins’s for lunch, got a pot
fish on the menu today. And a bucket of steamed bread made from cas-
ava, rum cocktails and Red Stripe. We stopped by the market on the
road and perked up with a few crocodile sightings (keyholes and caimans are not
allowed).

Back to that sign in Jamaica. Unlike many resorts that import food,
Jakes restaurant uses produce from local farmers. I know this for a fact
because I had the good fortune to join Joss—his majesty the ambassa-
dor to Jamaica—on a tour of the island. We found some of the best gro
guava and noodle basil Black River, and perked up with a few crocodile
sightings (keyholes and caimans are not allowed).

On our tour, we visited a local farmer’s market. I was impressed
with the variety of produce available. It was a far cry from the
imported produce we normally find at home.

As we drove through the lush rainforest, we passed by a small village
where we purchased fresh vegetables and fruits. The locals were very friendly
and it was clear that they were proud of their produce.

It was a refreshing change from the usual produce that we find at home.

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