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**INSIGHTS FROM
THE WAY UP**

with PR Maven Erica Dias

THE POWER ISSUE

Meredith Lilly, Todd Gray, Jamel DaCosta & Qaadirah Abdur-Rahim are the ones to watch

Photoshoot by Alex Jones at the High Museum of Art Atlanta



THE PEACE AND THE DRAMA

By Kamille D. Whittaker

My mother's family hails from Bois Content, Jamaica in the hills north of Old Harbour Bay, on the South Coast of the island. My father lives in Linstead – of “Linstead Market” fame – an outlying lowland suburb, of sorts, to Kingston. My own house in the “land of wood and water” is 1.5 miles up a winding incline in the Prospect hamlet of the St. Mary parish, on the north coast.

Jamaica is home.

If you keep driving east along the coastline, you'll soon bend the curves of the little town of Oracabessa. Its commercial district consists of a covered produce market and a few shops and bars. The main street is a narrow promenade with a number of well-maintained buildings, vestiges of Jamaica's Spanish colonial run. The easternmost edge of this town – miles from the buoyant Ocho Rios and the lush Port Antonio is GoldenEye Hotel and Resort's home.

It's important to point out the sense of place – that Jamaica, Oracabessa specifically, is indeed GoldenEye's chosen home and not just some arbitrary island placement. Oracabessa Bay and Fisherman's Beach – once Jamaica's busiest banana loading port – and its labyrinthine coves, cays and caves are staples and participants in the surrounding ecosystem. There's not much that separates you – or the feel – from the outside-in for those in search of a rootsy chic aesthetic that's just mystical enough to remain aspirational. We are talking about one of James Bond's literary playgrounds after all. Ian Fleming, who penned all 14 Bond novels here called out the generative “peace and drama” of living and creating by the sea.

Island Records founder Chris Blackwell then transformed what started as Ian Fleming's writer retreat into a 52-acre, post-cool, post-glamour respite cut out of Oracabessa Bay, the flagship of Blackwell's Island Outpost properties.

As if it needed more to make it perfect, they added 26 one- and two-bedroom beach huts to the inventory of

lagoon cottages and shore line-fronting villas.

Octagonal in shape to permit more natural light and to enclose space more efficiently than its square counterpart, the free standing, pastel-stained wooden structures jut out at varying heights above the sand, and have their own new beachside bar, and freshwater pool, centered in between Snorkeler's cove and Button Beach.

“Inside,” luxury linen, a canopy bed and rich touches of locally inspired design accent the sturdy wood. They all boast indoor and outdoor showers and waterfront or fauna-facing terraces.

A complimentary bottle of the requisite Blackwell Rum adorns every mini bar, also stocked with local treats like plantain chips and rum cake. In fact, all restaurants here serve up locally grown fruits and vegetables and, most importantly, national dishes like ackee and saltfish, callaloo, curry goat, Fish tea, jerk chicken – there is no limit.

There is also no air conditioning – precisely the point. The huts narrow the rind between indoor and outdoor living; strategically positioned and designed to maximize the best of the elements. Vaulted ceilings that crest louvered windows volley currents of idle breezes from the ocean and hills and panoramic views, for good measure.

At nighttime is the true test – inky black spills all around you with faint sounds of the nightlife, in the distance. I'm always amazed at the gentleness with which the wind would foreshadow its own eminent frenzy in Jamaica. Just before the storm, the air ceases being muggy, overbearing, and stifling. The mosquitoes seem to scatter. And the gentle wind caresses you with a cunning compassion that – if you did not know what it foretold – would lull you into a calm. In the hut, you were safe and sound.

At 3:02 a.m. one night, the rain came ferociously. And it was glorious. **AT**