UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM

BLACKWELL ON ISLAND HOSPITALITY

He is a legend in the music business, having discovered and produced records by such talents as Bob Marley, U2, and Grace Jones. But Chris Blackwell's second act as a hotelier has been equally successful. The son of an English father and a Jamaican mother, Blackwell operates several Jamaican resorts through his firm Island Outpost, including Strawberry Hill, the Caves, and GoldenEye, which is located on the grounds of the former home of Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series of spy novels. Blackwell's intimate hotels are the antithesis of the massive resorts that have colonized the Caribbean, with simply furnished villas and huts and a funky sound track that attracts the global creative set. "Our guests come from different parts of the world," Blackwell says, "but everybody speaks the same language." - INGRID ABRAMOVITCH

ROCK AND REGGAE

- When I was 18 or 19, a Rasta saved my life. My boat ran out of gas just as it was getting dark. I spent the night in a mangrove swamp. I set out for help in the morning and found a hut on a deserted beach. I was dying of thirst. A Rasta man appeared in the window. Rastas were considered dangerous then, but he was sweet and gentle, and he brought me a calabash with water in it. I asked to be down. When I woke up, it was pitch dark and there were lots of candles and seven other Rastas reading to me from the Bible. They helped me get back to town.
- We're working on a Bob Marley musical. Kwame Kwei-Armah, who wrote and directed it, is artistic director of Center Stage in Baltimore. We were able to try it out there last spring. It opened at the same time as the Baltimore riots. What was strange was how close those issues were to Marley's, whose lyrics refer to "burning" and "fading"—"stand up for your rights.
- It showed me that his music is still relevant.
- I'm no longer very involved in the music business, but somebody played me a tape of a fantastic new Jamaican artist, Chronixx. It's reggae but a bit hard to describe. I judge music on the basis of timing and phrasing—it's something that you have or you don't. He moves a song around like a jazz musician. His lyrics have a lot of social commentary. He's a young guy, but we hit it off and now we're working together.

COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE

- I always loved travel, even before I got into the record business. I was never very good at school. Travel is the greatest education. You learn to understand how all of us are both the same and different. You learn about politics and culture. You develop self-confidence.
- Jamaica is a blessed island. It has an incredible climate and soil that delivers some of the best coffee and chocolate in the world. It's only 150 miles long and 50 miles wide, yet in that small area, it has amazing geographic variety, from rain forests to mountains as high as 7,000 feet.

FROM TOP: Various images from the film "Dr. No" by DEX. Indulge in many facets of comfort, like the soothing warmth of the heated seat, the refreshing temperatures, and the soft glow of the night light. The SpaLet: your personal day spa. To learn more, consult your designer or visit dxv.com.

DESIGN CONSULTANT: Susan M. Jamieson, ASID
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- The Lindos, my mother's family, came to Jamaica in 1625. My grandfather owned a rum distillery, J. Why & Nephew. Seven years ago, I started making rum under the Blackwell label. We use Jamaican sugarcane, water, and yeast, and we age it in American oak barrels.

SUN IS SHINING

- My mother was a friend of Ian Fleming's. She used to swim at his home, GoldenEye. After he died, she asked me to buy it. I didn't have the money and tried to get Bob Marley to buy it, but he felt it was too posh. My finances recovered, and I bought it in 1970 for my mother.

- Fleming's house was simple but set on 19 acres in a gorgeous spot, so in that respect it was luxurious. In 1994, I opened up the main house, along with three other villas, for people to come and stay. I have since expanded it to 50 acres.

POWER OF EIGHT

- I once stayed at Tennis Pen, a resort in Negril, Jamaica, in a hut shaped like an octagon. It was magical. Ever since, I've built octagonal huts on my properties. Each one has lowered windows all around, high ceilings, an outdoor shower, and a verandah. You feel the breeze coming through.

- This winter, I added 26 new beach huts at GoldenEye. They will not be air-conditioned. When you go to an exotic destination, a big part of the experience is the way it sounds. I love to hear the chirps of crickets and frogs. It's nature's sound track. Air-conditioning cuts you off from that ambiance.

MRS. JOHN PRINCE AT ROUND HIL, C. 1954

[Image of a woman standing in a garden]

A RANGE OF CULINARY INSPIRATION

[Image of a Thermador oven]

FROM LEFT:

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Thermador REAL INNOVATIONS FOR REAL COOKS

Chromex in concert