

Summer Escape 2019 - Issue 33  
Catherine Fairweather



out of this world

ONE DAY THAT SUMMER

## GoldenEye, Jamaica, 1962

When they famously Bonded on a deserted beach in *Dr. No*, the sexual chemistry between SEAN CONNERY and URSULA ANDRESS captured the world's imagination – as did the hedonistic delights of Jamaica's northern coast

When they sped across the exhilarating turquoise waters of Oracabessa Bay in a Lyman Runabout near Bond creator Ian Fleming's villa – or sipped martinis, flirted on a beach and cavorted in waterfalls – Sean Connery and Ursula Andress were mirroring the high jinx and excesses of the jet-set crowd who loved to holiday there (Vivien Leigh, Marilyn Monroe, Liz Taylor, Sophia Loren, Noël Coward, to name a few). The airy villas and lush tropical gardens, the energizing surf and sparkling beaches – this was the heady real-life backdrop for a stage set of fun, games and misbehavior; dancing under the stars at Errol Flynn's villa, naked swims and gambling at Fleming's GoldenEye or at Noël Coward's Firefly, cocktails at socialite Blanche Blackwell's Bolt villa. In fact, Blanche was the inspiration for Fleming's Honey Ryder, the original Bond girl, island babe and beachcomber, as immortalized by Ursula Andress emerging from the beach in the most iconic bikini in cinema history. Andress was enchanted by the company of the elegant Brits Coward and Fleming, at whose villas she spent most of her time. "They were a joy to be with," she remembers; "Two great personalities with a sense of humor, witty and interesting."

Today, GoldenEye belongs to music pioneer Chris Blackwell, Blanche's son, who was only 24 when he landed a job as location scout on *Dr. No*. A hotel since the Eighties, it attracts a fabulous cultural mix, from the rock 'n' roll set to quiet families from the Home Counties and Manhattanite honeymooners. Although Winston Churchill's favorite turtle soup is no longer available, you will instead be able to witness turtle hatchlings making a break for the ocean in one of the conservation projects that is close to Blackwell's heart. Instead of gas-guzzling Bond-style speedboats, guests can help themselves to kayaks, paddleboards and non-motorized boats to glide out over Oracabessa Bay, honoring the marine life that the Oracabessa Foundation was set up to protect in 1997.

True luxury, it turns out, is not so much about an infinity pool or lobster thermidor and a bucket of champagne, but more about the sense of unhurried time that is at the heart of GoldenEye. Guests are encouraged to engage with the community and the landscape, whether it's planting a tree that can be named after you or enjoying the organic farm and soil-to-table food that comes from Blackwell's admirably self-sustaining private estate, Pantrepant. As Blackwell has said, GoldenEye is a place where you can connect, where ideas can be seeded and fermented, where inspiration can grow, where, ultimately, when you visit, "you feel life". Catherine Fairweather

*Elegant Resorts can organize a seven-night stay at GoldenEye from £2,055, including return British Airways flights from London; elegantresorts.co.uk; goldeneye.com*

### The PORTER guide to luxe island life

**CHILL-OUT ZONE** GoldenEye has three beaches and three bars to suit different moods. Enjoy a Blackwell Rum spritz at the Bamboo Bar, shimmy down to Bizot for the best music, or watch the sunset at Shabeen bar from its laid-back rooftop terrace. Lunch at Button Beach is a must.

**HOLIDAY HIDEAWAY** Family groups or friends should consider renting the three-bedroom Strangeways villa, beside the sea next to Fleming's house. This is possibly the loveliest and most private villa, tucked into a grove of moringa and banana trees and open to the elements and sounds of the sea. Belonging to artist Pauline Amos, it is furnished with antiques from Kingston, her paintings, a beautiful gazebo dining room and a private swimming patio with direct access to the lagoon.

**COUNTRY LIVING** Ride the fenceless fields and rainforest terrain in Cockpit Country and spend a couple of nights at the rustic guest cottage at Pantrepant, Chris Blackwell's private estate and working farm, where he raises Red Pole cattle, sheep, chicken and geese. From farm-to-table dining and long hikes to swimming in the river amid old sugar-plantation ruins, the experience is all about unbridled freedom and being close to nature. *Pantrepant.com*

**CITY LIFE** Let Blackwell's personal driver take you on a trip to Kingston, immortalized in the opening scenes of *Dr. No*, which is just as colorful and vibrant now as it was back then.

**MOUNTAIN MAGIC** Make like the crew of a Bond film, who stayed in the mist-veiled Blue Mountains at Strawberry Hill. This 18th-century coffee-plantation house offers the quintessential Jamaica experience, with four-posters and views some might recognize from the *Live and Let Die* Bond film. *Strawberryhillhotel.com*



SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED  
Sean Connery and Ursula  
Andress are towed to safety  
in the final scene of *Dr. No*