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# BERMUDA'S WAITING

BY DAVID LaHUTA

Sure, the grinding, trimming, steering, and navigating are what you're focused on now, but on the other end of this race, there's an island full of fun to be had.

**J**UST OVER 400 YEARS AGO AN ENGLISH SAILING vessel crashed upon the pink shores of Bermuda—an unplanned arrival that gave birth to an island nation. Sent to aid the Jamestown colonists in 1609, the *Sea Venture* wrecked in what is now known as St. George's, Bermuda's historic colonial capital that was later named for the ship's captain, Sir George Somers. From the town's cottages and labyrinthine alleyways, to busy Hamilton, pink beaches, and the historic Royal Naval Dockyard, Bermuda is a beautiful, varied story that's been centuries in the making. It's a tale that unfolds in each of the mid-Atlantic archipelago's nine parishes. Explore them and

you, too, will discover why Bermuda remains an island playground with idyllic coastlines, superlative restaurants and some of the most scenic golf courses anywhere in the world.

## CITY OF HAMILTON

Docked in Hamilton Harbor? Then start your island tour in Bermuda's vibrant capital city and bustling financial hub. From Monday through Friday it's common to see businessmen strolling the sidewalks in colorful shorts and knee-high socks—a look originated by the British army so it could stay cool in warmer climes. For a pair of your own head to the English Sports Shop on Front Street, in the heart of the bustling shopping district.

While in town don't miss the Museum of the Bermuda Historical Society, with eclectic collections chronicling the island's past (think trinkets made by exiled Boer War prisoners in 1901 or furniture and artifacts from Bermuda's original settlers) and the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity. Consecrated in 1911, the massive limestone structure boasts an open-air viewing tower offering a sweeping panorama of Hamilton Harbor (just be prepared for the 155-step climb to the top).

Budding oceanographers will love the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute (BUEI), a 40,000-square-foot discovery center just a 15-minute walk outside of town. In addition to interactive exhibits celebrating Bermuda's diverse marine ecosystem and collections of artifacts recovered from island shipwrecks, the center also features the Jack Lightbourne shell collection with over 1,000 species of mollusks. When you're done, grab a seat at BUEI's Harbourfront Restaurant for lunch or dinner—serving sushi, seafood and sandwiches at outdoor tables right on the water—or for pub-style comfort food try the Hog Penny, a traditional English pub in the center of town.

Looking for a special night out? Then make reservations at Port O' Call, a Front Street favorite specializing in fresh local fish including tuna, wahoo, mahi-mahi and grouper grilled or pan-seared to your liking.

## THE EAST END

To explore beyond the City of Hamilton you'll need a scooter since car rentals are prohibited on the island. Of course taxis are a widely available, albeit pricey alternative, and there's always the public bus, which is inexpensive, covers most of the island, and departs regularly from town. And then there are the ferries. From the

## Mind Your Manners

**Bermuda may have pink sand beaches and swaying coconut palms, but before you start thinking it's the "no shoes, no shirt, no problem" Caribbean, think again. Most restaurants and bars request smart casual attire, which means collared shirts for men and dresses for women. Shorts and flip-flops are okay, but for upscale restaurants it's best to wear long pants and shoes (dress smart casual for the awards ceremony and fancy restaurants).**

**And when you're ready to square up for your meal or drinks, don't worry about the tip. At nearly every establishment, save the Swizzle Inn, a 17-percent gratuity is added to the bill. So, unless you're really pleased with the service, just pay what you see on your tab.**

**Drinking alcohol in public is prohibited unless you're on the beach, where it's tolerated and not at all policed. Drinking and driving however, is strictly enforced—a distraction you can do without considering that you'll be motoring on the left hand side of the road.**

D.L.

terminal right next to the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club, one of the island's four ferry routes will take you on a quiet, scenic, inexpensive, and often faster route to Paget, Warwick, St. George's, and (every visiting sailor's favorite destination) the Royal Naval Dockyard.

But if you want the flexibility to go where you may, rent a one- or two-seater and head out and explore. About a 15-minute ride east of town is Flatts, a quaint fishing village with attractions fit for the whole family—most notably the Bermuda Aquarium, Museum & Zoo (BAMZ), featuring a 140,000-gallon tank giving you a unique view of Bermuda's coral reef and the vast marine life it sustains. In addition to thousands of tropical fish, the BAMZ also has outdoor exhibits with animals from around the world including Caribbean flamingos, lemurs from Madagascar, and tortoises from the Galapagos Islands. If all of that touring has made you hungry then consider eating lunch at nearby Rustico, a cozy café within walking distance of the aquarium serving a family-friendly menu of pizzas and pastas daily.

Continuing east, don't miss charming, quiet, and historic St. George's, the island's oldest settlement. Founded in 1612, the town has since been named a UNESCO World Heritage site, with its well-preserved colonial architecture still very much intact. Must-sees include St. Peter's Church—widely believed to be the oldest Anglican house of worship in the Western Hemisphere—and King's Square, where you can

**Bermuda's Broadway and commercial center is Front Street in Hamilton—noisy but charming to the eye with its classic colonial architecture.**



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view a replica of *Deliverance II*, the ship built as a replacement for the ill-fated *Sea Venture*. Into historical forts? Then don't leave without seeing Fort St. Catherine, just a few minutes east of town. Built in 1614, the hilltop fortress features examples of gunnery used in battles and is open for self-guided tours daily.

## THE SOUTH SHORE

No visit to Bermuda would be complete without lazing on its famous pink sand beaches—a rosy hue derived from a mix of calcium carbonate, crushed coral and pulverized protozoa. Start your day in the sun by heading west on South Road. Just a 10-minute drive from Hamilton is Elbow Beach in Paget Parish, a prime stretch of sand that's adjacent to the Elbow Beach Hotel and its alfresco beachfront café, Mickey's Beach Bar & Bistro (perfect for a lazy afternoon lunch). Continuing west you'll pass the Swizzle Inn—a great stop for sandwiches, burgers and pitchers of potent rum swizzle—before reaching picturesque Warwick Long Bay, a half-mile stretch of pink sand that's often gloriously deserted. The



The pink beaches on the South Shore really are pink. Some are as empty as this one and aren't hard to find if you refuse to follow the pack.

reason is simple: When cruise ships dock on Bermuda's west end its passengers flock to Horseshoe Bay, a crescent beach with changing facilities, chair rentals, lifeguards, and refreshment stands. There's no doubting Horseshoe's beauty—or its convenience for that matter—but for a slice of sand to call your own stick to Long Bay or the secluded beaches just west of it, including Jobson Cove and Stonehole and Chaplin Bays.

Best of all, you won't be far from Gibbs Hill Lighthouse—Bermuda's highest spot. Opened in 1846, it's the world's oldest cast-iron lighthouse with an outdoor balcony that's reachable after a 185-step climb to the top.

When you're done, consider having a bite at the Dining Room—an Italian-inspired café adjacent to the lighthouse with tables overlooking the ocean—or a bowl of traditional Bermuda fish chowder at Henry VIII, an English pub with outdoor seating just down the hill.

## Party Anyone?

Beyond hotel bars and restaurants, you'll be hard pressed to find nightlife outside of the City of Hamilton, so stay in town for a rum-fueled night out. Start your bar crawl on Par-La-Ville Road, a tree-lined street on the west end of Hamilton also known as Restaurant Row. Your first stop should be Opus, a hopping bar and café that usually hosts a live deejay nightly. When you're done, head next



door to LV's, a dimly lit cocktail lounge with low-slung leather couches, a lively dance floor, and a handsome 30-something crowd. Next up, the wine bar at Little Venice. Don't let the name fool you—it serves much more than cabernet and sauvignon blanc—but if it's vino you're after there's no better spot in Bermuda to imbibe.

Once you've conquered Restaurant Row make a beeline for Front Street, Hamilton's main thoroughfare, where you'll find bustling bars like The Pickled Onion—with its second-story harbor-view balcony—and Flanagan's Irish Pub & Outback Sports Bar, the perfect spot to watch the big game alongside a tall pint of Guinness.

Most bars in Bermuda close around 1 a.m., but in case you're still rarin' to go, don't miss Café Cairo, a thumping Front Street nightclub that's often packed with locals and tourists until it closes at 3 a.m.

Of course there's much more to do in Bermuda than drink Dark 'n Stormies. For those hoping to explore coral reefs, diverse marine ecosystems, and historical shipwrecks, consider a scuba dive on one of hundreds of world-class sites. Non-certified divers can get started with an introductory dive on the Constellation, a four-masted schooner; the well-preserved wreck is in a mere 30 feet of water and can be explored via a beginner's course offered by Bluewater Divers & Watersports. Or, grab your snorkel and fins and head to Church Bay on Bermuda's south shore. From Hamilton it's about a 30-minute ride by scooter. This bay is perhaps the best best snorkling locaton in all of Bermuda. D.L.

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## THE WEST END

From Hamilton it'll take about 45 minutes to get there by scooter, but a visit to Bermuda's west end is well worth the trip, especially for sailors because of its maritime heritage. At the intersection of Middle and South Roads—otherwise known as Barnes Corner—head west where you'll first be greeted by Port Royal golf course. Don't feel like playing 18? Then grab a drink at 64 Degrees, Port Royal's brand new bar and grill. Continuing west you'll soon arrive in the town of Somerset, a small harborfront community best known for the Somerset Country Squire Pub, a casual café on Mangrove Bay serving traditional British favorites. Don't linger too long—you'll want to spend most of your time at the Royal Naval Dockyard, once a British stronghold in the early 1800's, it's now a major attraction with galleries, arts and crafts vendors, restaurants, and most notably, the Bermuda Maritime Museum, whose many exhibits include a gallery devoted to

the history of the Bermuda Race. Housed in the island's largest stone fort, the museum displays its collections of ship hulls, gunnery, and nautical artifacts in old munitions warehouses. Don't miss the 19th-century Commissioner's House, a restored naval mansion with exhibits about Bermuda's connection to the sea and a stunning 1,000-square-foot mural depicting 400 years of island life, which took Bermudian artist Graham Foster nearly four years to paint.

When you're done, watch live dolphins jump from the water in nearby Keep Pond or swim alongside them through an experience arranged by Dolphin Quest. Feeling thirsty? Then grab a pint of locally brewed ale at the Frog and Onion Pub right across the street. It's one of two restaurants in Bermuda where you can sip handcrafted beer from the Dockyard Brewing Company.

David LaHuta is a freelance writer who's recently landed in Bermuda.

## Relax Ashore

You've braved the high seas, battled the Gulf Stream and dropped anchor in Hamilton Harbor. Now what's there to do for the adults in the crew (note, we won't specify a particular age)?

It's no secret that Bermuda has its fair share of gourmet restaurants and world-class attractions, but figuring out where to spend your time on land is half the fun. In the City of Hamilton be sure to visit the historic Fairmont Hamilton Princess, celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. Opened in 1885 and named for Princess Louise, daughter of England's Queen Victoria, it's among Bermuda's most storied landmarks and one that continues to celebrate British traditions of the past. For a taste of old England, tuck in for afternoon tea

at The Heritage Court, the hotel's lobby-level dining room, open every day from 2:30 until 5 p.m.

For a fancy dinner nearby don't miss Harry's, a waterfront restaurant serving an eclectic mix of steaks and seafood in addition to its own blend of barrel-aged Gosling's rum stored behind the bar.

Care to explore beyond the streets of Hamilton? Then head to the Botanical Gardens in Paget Parish. It offers 36 wooded acres with 1,000 varieties of plants and flowers such as hibiscus, oleander, orchids and more. In addition to flowers, the Botanical Gardens boasts Bermuda's finest art gallery, The

Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art, featuring works by Winslow Homer, Georgia O'Keefe and others.

Those searching for more active pursuits should consider a game of golf at one of the island's seven



world-class courses. In Southampton, treat yourself to 18 championship holes at Port Royal—home of the 2009/2010 PGA Grand Slam of Golf.

Finally, for a special night out, make reservations at the Waterlot Inn. Steeped in history and nestled on picturesque Jew's Bay, the restaurant serves classic steakhouse fare in a traditional 18th-century Bermuda cottage. Its candlelit white-tablecloth dining room features Windsor chairs, exposed cedar beams and nautical oil paintings with a

menu that's no less impressive. Choose from sumptuous starters and entrees that include a 14-ounce Kobe beef ribeye or a wide selection of local seafood. D.L.

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