

Puerto Rico's Luxury Boom

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St. Regis Bahia Beach's central Plantation House has been built in a low-rise plantation style.

It started when the classic El Conquistador hotel reopened as a Waldorf Astoria in 2008; the floodgates were thrown open and five-star resorts haven't stopped pouring into Puerto Rico since. Recently, two luxury brands have set up shop and three others are on their way.

St. Regis Bahia Beach

The **St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort** opened last year and embraces the island's natural beauty with two miles of private beach and a private bird sanctuary.



The Pool at St. Regis Bahia Beach has private cabanas.

We hear the most requested rooms at this resort are the St. Regis Suites and Ocean View rooms. Nice Touch: Suites come with the services of the signature St. Regis Butler.

Top Pick: The 2,510-square-foot bi-level Governor's Suite is the premier accommodation and has a second-floor terrace with ocean views. A graciously styled living room with a soaring, beamed ceiling, separate bedroom and two marble bathrooms, provide a luxury of space. Traveling gourmets will love the full kitchen, and a dining room seats six.

Nice Touch: Expansive all-marble rain forest shower and a separate oversized tub are available in the master bathroom, complete with an LCD TV embedded in the mirror.

The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort provides numerous settings, both indoors and outdoors, for wedding ceremonies and receptions, including three outdoor lawn spaces (think classic Caribbean backdrop), the Astor Pavilion and the Astor Ballroom. Advisors should contact Alejandra Soto (alejandra.soto@stregis.com; 787-809-8028), wedding manager, with queries.

Spa enthusiasts will love the Remede Spa. We hear guests are in for regal relaxation with the Queen Lozia's Royal Treatment. This involves a golden sugar scrub followed by a warm Vichy shower massage and a 24-karat gold shimmer oil massage. For more information, advisors should contact Spa Director Nicole Miller (Nicole.miller@stregis.com; 787-809-8031, ext. 136).

Tip: For some great energy work and massage, we suggest booking with Josefina; for the deep tissue massage, ask for Maritza; for a sports therapy treatment, suggest Jose; for nail treatments, request Karyn; and for prenatal treatments, seek out Millie.

In addition to the St. Regis Bar, there are three dining venues, including the signature restaurant, Fern (a product of Jean-Georges Vongerichten). Molasses is an oceanfront bar and restaurant serving up American cuisine with Puerto Rican touches. We love Seagrapes for its oceanfront views and contemporary Mediterranean cuisine. Hint: The black pepper octopus, sweet onions and aji dulce is a must, followed by the roasted grouper with aromatic black beans, avocado and scallion.

Golf, anyone? The resort's 6,979-yard Robert Trent Jones, Jr. Golf Course overlooks the Atlantic, saltwater lagoons, beach, mountains and native maritime forest. Luxury travel advisors should contact Jossell Velazquez (jossell.velazquez@stregis.com; 787-809-8000), chief concierge, with questions.

For any additional VIP requests, contact General Manager Erik Berger (erik.berger@stregis.com).

Getting There: It is recommended that guests fly into San Juan's Luis Munoz Marin International Airport, just 35 minutes from the resort. Private helicopters can land by Las Estancias residences on the property.

Hint: Guests' experience at the resort begins at the airport with a transfer in a Bentley Mulsanne.



At W Vieques, Fabulous Ocean Front Escape Suites have the best views.

Advisor Insight

"At the W Vieques, there is an area called the Chill Side, says Susan Shevlin, a luxury specialist for Tzell Travel New York. "This is where agents should book their adult clients. There is no pool on this side and no music, just silence and ocean. For families, book a room on the Pool Side and recommend a cabana for the day." She adds, "One of the best features of the St. Regis is that it [has been built] on an absolutely stunning beach. This is a great spot for families since most of the rooms are suites and are large. Be sure to tell your clients to get an oceanview room. You walk over a small lawn from your room to the beach."

W Retreat and Spa Vieques Island

The Caribbean's first W hotel, **W Retreat & Spa-Vieques Island**, which opened in 2010, has some of the most impressive accommodations in the region. The most-requested rooms here are the WOW Ocean Front Retreat Suites, which come with direct access to Whisper Cove and Paradise Edge.

Families in tow? Tell your A-listers about the Pool Oasis rooms, which open directly to WET, the resort's poolside area.

If it's views your clients are after, we suggest the Fabulous Ocean Front Escape Suites, which have private balconies. Advisors should contact Virgil Napier (virgil.napier@whotels.com; 954-624-1770).

When you wed in a W hotel, you get exclusive Whatever/Whenever services (think tailored dream wedding). W Vieques' services extend from the pre-wedding festivities to the actual wedding and post-wedding celebration. Nice Touch: For the wedding, W Vieques offers Alain Ducasse catering, roundtrip luxury transfers, a W Suite on wedding night, seaside partner massages and more. Luxury travel advisors should contact Wow Vows Specialist Haydee Soto (haydee.soto@whotels.com; 954-624-1770).



The Remede Spa at St. Regis Bahia Beach is known for the Queen Lozia's Royal Treatment.

The resort's spa is 6,000 square feet with eight indoor/outdoor treatment rooms. Hint: Book treatments about one to two weeks in advance. The most requested treatment is the Café con Coco body scrub (think local coconut and coffee grounds). Note: The spa offers buyouts, group treatments, champagne parties, and Spa Brunches. Advisors should get in touch with Spa Director Tanya Ilustrisimo (Tanya.ilustrisimo@whotels.com; 787-741-7021).

A five-course tasting dinner varies nightly but Alain Ducasse has a signature cook pot dish that is available every night. Reach out to Steve Moberly (steve.moberly@whotels.com; 787-741-7052), director of beverage and food.

Fashionistas will love the on-site W The Store, with designs by **Marc Jacobs, Mara Hoffman, Melissa Odabash** and more. W The Store features a rotating cast of designers for its Global Glam collection.

Getting There: Vieques Airport is a short 18-minute hop from San Juan International Airport, with direct connections on Cape Air. Major carriers, including American Airlines, JetBlue and Continental provide interline service with transfer of luggage all the way through to Vieques. Note: There is also a helipad adjacent to the hotel.

Nice Touch: Upon arrival at the Vieques airport, guests of W Retreat & Spa–Vieques Island will be whisked away to the W Airport Lounge for refreshments and light fare. W Talent, part of the resort staff, will take care of the luggage while guests await transportation to the resort.

For additional information, contact General Manager **Greg White** (787-741-7044).

On the Horizon

Condado Vanderbilt is slated for November this year and the **Ritz-Carlton Reserve** for late 2012. **JW Marriott** is expected to debut in 2013 in Coco Beach, Rio Grande.



Weddings at W Vieques can be staged in intimate, scenic settings.

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