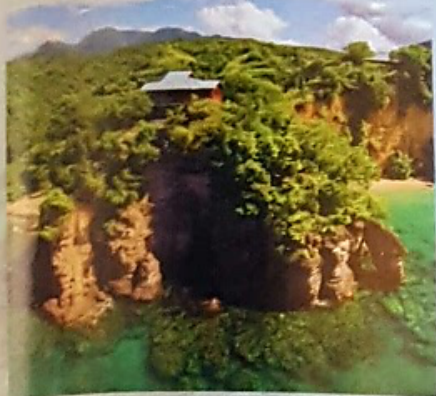


CARIBBEAN GETAWAYS

LAURA HOULDSWORTH ROUNDS UP THREE HOLIDAY OPTIONS - WHETHER YOU WANT TO RELAX WITH A COCKTAIL OR PUT ON YOUR WALKING BOOTS



THE PRIVATE BOLT-HOLE

With just six villas and two bungalows, Secret Bay on the island of Dominica is the ultimate bolt-hole for a special Caribbean experience. At this eco-luxury villa resort, there is no front desk, no restaurant and no common swimming pool - personalised service comes to your room in the form of bespoke meals, massages, yoga classes or even a one-man jazz concert. The location is incredible: on the edge of the rainforest on a cliff overlooking the sea. The Dominican-born owner and his Venezuelan wife have chosen a design that combines floor-to-ceiling glass walls, exotic hardwood, locally crafted furniture and state-of-the-art bathrooms. Rooms start at £460 a night, B&B (00-1-767-445 4444; secretbay.dm).



THE RELAXED CHOICE

The friendly atmosphere at The Sandpiper in Barbados is no surprise, as the boutique hotel is owned and managed by the Capaldi family, who have personal input into every aspect of the 50-room property. They have overseen the design of three new beach house suites, which feature large patios, breathtaking views of the ocean, whitewashed wooden ceilings and bright fabrics - a more contemporary version of the original garden view rooms. Another addition for this season is the 18-metre lap pool, set among orchid trees, bougainvillea and swaying coconut palms. The hotel offers complimentary non-motorised water sports, tennis lessons and access to the spa at the nearby sister hotel Coral Reef Club. The renovated Harold's Bar on the beach is the perfect spot to enjoy a rum cocktail as the sun goes down. Carrier (0161-492 1354; carrier.co.uk) offers seven nights for the price of six, from £2,040 per person, B&B, based on two adults sharing a Garden View Room including flights and transfers*.



THE ADVENTUROUS GETAWAY

For a holiday with a difference, Colombia has become a must-visit destination.

Thanks to its brightly coloured architecture and buzzy bars and hotels, Cartagena has a groove that makes it one of the most alluring cities in the Caribbean. Cazenove+Loyd can put together any trip, but after you fly into the capital, Bogotá, which has a wonderful historic centre and fascinating gold museum, it recommends visiting Cartagena and then putting on your walking shoes for a visit to the 37,000-acre Tayrona National Park.

A five-day trek will lead you over impressive mountains and past pristine and remote beaches that back onto tropical forest. All itineraries are bespoke, but as a guide, Cazenove+Loyd (020-7384 2332; cazloyd.com) can arrange seven nights in Colombia from £4,000 per person, B&B, based on two adults sharing, including excursions and transfers but excluding flights.

packing list

'HYDRA LIFE BB CREME' TINTED MOISTURISER, £45 for 50ml, from Dior, available at all major department stores



'MULTICOLOUR STRIPE' BEACH BAG, £58, from Sunuva. sunuva.com



'CAPE COD' BIKINI, £200, from Heidi Klein. heidiklein.com