

DECEMBER 2014

LEADER'S

edge

UNGODLY ERRORS

DEIFIED DOCS' COSTLY DECISIONS





HOLBOX ISLAND

Off the Grid

“**Live in the sunshine.** Swim in the sea. Drink the wild air.”

This Ralph Waldo Emerson quote is splashed across a retro beach poster at Casa Las Tortugas, a boutique

hotel on Holbox Island—a no-cars, no-banks, no-all-inclusive-resorts stretch of sand and mangroves off the Yucatan Peninsula. It is an eloquent description of life on the island, which is part of the Yum-Balam Biosphere Reserve. Flamingos draw a pink line across the blue sky as they fly by. Fishermen set

out as the morning sun flickers off the sea-green Caribbean to catch the shrimp, snapper and lobster that will be served that evening as ceviche or simply grilled. Locals and visitors gather along the shore to collectively admire the postcard sunset, a margarita made from freshly squeezed limes or icy cerveza in hand.

Accessible only by air (a 20-minute charter flight from Cancun) and sea (a 30-minute ferry ride from Chiquila), Isla Holbox (pronounced holebosh in Mayan) might be off the grid, but its natural beauty makes a stay here transcendent. Jacques Cousteau hired a local fisherman to help him track the whale shark, the world’s largest fish, which migrates off the coast during summer, as does the giant tarpon. Today, swimming with the whale sharks on an eco-tour offered by Holbox Adventure and fly-fishing with renowned guide “Mr. Sandflea,” owner of the Holbox Tarpon Lodge, are both world-class adventures.

Yet one needn’t rough it. Thanks to a legendary Italian pirate who plundered the island after discovering a nearby spring, in-the-know Italians like Gianni and Greta Golinelli, owners of the effortlessly chic Casa Las Tortugas and Mandarin Beach Club, are among the transplants who have added a low-key sophistication to this authentic Mexican island.

It is an intoxicating mix, as Chuy, who leads bird-watching by kayak tours for V.I.P. Holbox Experience, confirms. “I came here from Guadalajara for three days, and I’ve been here four years.”

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Top left: Keeneland Association Inc.; top right: Design Hotels

SEASONED TRAVELER GREG MILWARD

Lexington, Kentucky

Greg Milward, SVP, at Powell-Walton-Milward, a division of J. Smith Lanier



“I’ve been lucky in life to live and work in the town where I was born and raised. Lexington offers a fantastic quality of life, and our agency is proud to have been a part of this community for more than 100 years.”

Horse Country » Flying into the airport in Lexington, you quickly realize you are in the “Horse Capital of the World.” **Blue Grass Airport** is surrounded by beautiful horse farms and is directly across the street from **Keeneland Race Course**.

Best Time to Visit » Two of the best things about living in Lexington are thoroughbred horse racing at Keeneland and being involved in **University of Kentucky** athletics. I particularly love the fall when you can combine racing at Keeneland with a UK football game.

Favorite Eats » My favorite restaurant is **The Tulip Bistro + Bar**, which is owned by a close friend and employs a chef from central Kentucky. Together they have mastered the art of Southern cooking. I alternate between the braised short ribs over mashed potatoes and pan seared red snapper with white beans and country ham.

Where to Stay » When visiting Lexington, I would either stay at the **Hilton Lexington Downtown** or the historic **Gratz Park Inn**. In 2015, we will welcome two new hotels, the **Centre Pointe Marriott** and the eclectic **21C Museum Hotel**.

Client Outing » A great client experience starts with lunch and a day of racing at Keeneland in our company’s skybox (Keeneland will host the Breeders’ Cup next year, the “Super Bowl” of thoroughbred racing, Oct. 30-31, 2015) and continues downtown for a drink at **Dudley’s** to enjoy an extensive selection of Kentucky bourbon.

Don’t Miss » Head out on the **Kentucky Bourbon Trail** for a tour of several historic distilleries to learn about, and sample, the finest Kentucky bourbon. Last but not least, it doesn’t get much better than a Kentucky basketball game at **Rupp Arena**. GO BIG BLUE!

EAT » MED-MEETS-MEX

MANDARINA BEACH CLUB

» Tables spill out from the palapa dining room onto the deck, offering mesmerizing sea views during the day and under-the-stars romance in the evening.

» The Med-meets-Mex menu features fresh fish, seafood and pasta dishes, which are artfully presented and consistently delicious.

» Breakfast, which is included, is a choice of a sweet—fresh fruit with yogurt and granola—or savory, such as huevos rancheros. Light fare like a trio of seafood burgers and chilled gazpacho with ribbons of cucumber is served at lunch. Dinner offers more sophisticated preparations—like sesame

Bottom right: Mandarin Beach Club

crusted snapper—as well as a good wine list.

» **DON’T MISS:** Sunset cocktails at the upstairs bar, where killer views, tangy guacamole, and aguachiles (spicy shrimp ceviche) are on the menu. www.holboxcasalastortugas.com/dine-drink

EAT » LOCAL AND LIVELY

LAS ISLA DEL COLIBRÍ

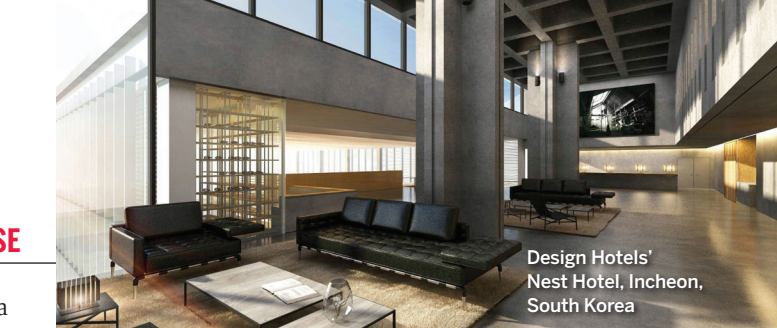
» With a Mayan jungle scene painted on the outside of the wooden house, you can’t miss this lively restaurant, which is located on the



Fish tacos at Las Isla del Colibrí

dinner on a beautiful day.

» Casual Mexican dishes include huevos montuleños (eggs with beans and cheese), chicken enchiladas suiza in a lime-kissed cream sauce, and fish tacos.



Design Hotels' Nest Hotel, Incheon, South Korea

BRIEFCASE

SLEEP In a new arrangement of the Martha and the Vandellas song “Dancing in the Streets”: Callin’ out around the world, are you ready for a brand new hotel? If so, check into one of **Design Hotels’** three new industrial-chic digs: The Flushing Meadows Hotel & Bar in Munich, Germany, which boasts loft studios designed by renowned musicians and designers; the Nest Hotel in Incheon, South Korea, on Yeongjongdo Island, home to Seoul’s international airport and a burgeoning upmarket tourist complex; and the Ovolo Southside in Hong Kong’s Wong Chuk Hang art and fashion district. www.designhotels.com



PACK With a SMRT FELT body and MCRO SUEDE trim, the **M.R.K.T. (Mad Rabbit Kicking Tiger) Martin Travel Bag** is as trendy as the use of social media abbreviations in the company’s name and the carry-on’s materials. Founded by a Harvard-trained architect, the company approaches designing its

bags and other accessories like designing a building—“conceptual, practical, versatile and very clean.” Stylish and functional, features in the Martin Travel Bag include a neon zippered main compartment; four exterior pouch pockets with stud closures; a large interior zipped pocket; two interior pouch pockets; and a detachable, adjustable shoulder strap. In a word: hip. www.mrktstore.com

APP As luxurious as a Ritz-Carlton hotel is, the constant peppering of “my pleasure” by the staff can become almost comical. So, for some rewards members, the welcome news about the new **Ritz-Carlton APP** may be the features that let them handle their stay without having to speak to anyone from checking in to making specials requests (can I get my shoes shined?) to reviewing their bill. Snark aside, it is the unexpected “pleasures” that set this upscale chain apart, and this is true even with the app, which lets users create vintage-inspired travel posters from their photos.

www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Mobile/Default.htm



SLEEP/DO/EAT » HOLBOX ISLAND

SLEEP » BOHO CHIC

CASA LAS TORTUGAS

» Seaside cocktail service and teak chaises, suspended day beds, and dories filled with colorful pillows create a boho chic beach scene.

» The Yucatan décor of the 21 rooms and suites features hand-carved armoires, hand-embroidered pillows and hand-painted bathroom sinks. Choose one with a balcony overlooking the Caribbean.

» Located off the free-form pool in the tropical courtyard, the small Agua Spa



Casa Las Tortugas

offers Mayan massages and top-notch yoga classes.

» **WINNING FEATURE:** The warm, professional staff. As cool as the surroundings. www.holboxcasalastortugas.com

SLEEP » REFINED

CASASANDRA BOUTIQUE HOTEL

» Opened in 2003 by Cuban artist Sandra Pérez, this upscale hotel is known for its refined design, service and food.

» Handmade Mexican furniture, Cuban antiques, and original art grace the 18 rooms

and one luxury villa, some of which have patios and balconies.

» **TO DINE FOR:** Gourmet Mexican cuisine is served at the poolside Blue Bar (lunch) and in the beamed-ceiling dining room (breakfast and dinner). Saturday nights feature a four-course Cuban menu and Cuban music. www.casasandra.com

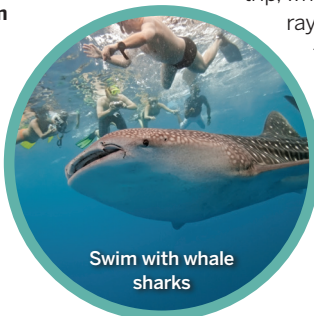
DO » EXTREME WATER SPORTS

» **Fly-fish** with Senor Sandflea. Booked months in advance by those longing to catch (and release) a 100+ pound tarpon, the adven-

ture starts with fishing on the open sea before heading into the mangroves to cast for baby tarpon and snook. www.holboxtarponclub.com

» Swim with the whale sharks, a surreal experience. A day tour with Jesus of **Holbox Adventure** also includes a snorkeling side trip, where you are likely to see manta rays and sea turtles and a lunch of freshly prepared ceviche. www.holboxadventure.com

» Kayak around to the island’s mangroves on a **V.I.P. Holbox Experience** tour to spot flocks of flamingos, sea eagles and crocodiles. www.vipholbox.com



Swim with whale sharks

Bottom right: iStockphoto