

NEW WINTER WHITES

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PIÑA COLADA PIE

COASTAL LIVING®

Island. Dreaming

**8 CARIBBEAN ESCAPES
YOU NEED TO VISIT NOW!**

BEACH HOUSE STYLE

**MODERN DESIGN
& ENDLESS VIEWS**

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Caribbean

The Dominican Republic's serene north coast is home to Playa Grande and the Playa Grande Beach Club (opposite)

COURTESY PLAYA GRANDE BEACH CLUB; OPPOSITE PAGE: TRACEY MINKIN



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BY TRACEY MINKIN AND JESSICA THUSTON

Meet the six islands—and their showstopping stays—that should be at the top of your winter escape vacation list



One-bedroom bungalow sunroom at Playa Grande Beach Club

THE QUIETLY CHIC SHORE

Dominican Republic

STAY: PLAYA GRANDE BEACH CLUB

For those who think they “know” the Dominican Republic—the eastern portion of the island of Hispaniola (Haiti lies to the west)—as a touristy haven of all-inclusive resorts, it’s time to think again. As did Celerie Kemble. The designer saw the rare magic in a mile-long stretch of untrammeled pale sands on the DR’s quiet north coast, marked only with a lively little cluster of kiosks offering beer, rum, grilled seafood, and a smattering of art and souvenirs. It was here that Kemble, with family and friends, built a Great House and nine whitewashed bungalows (with kitchens and one or three bedrooms) in the gingerbread-detailed vernacular architecture of the island. Kemble infused the interiors with her tropical-chic mood board of sun-bleached pastels, patterned textiles and Dominican floor tiles, and a masterful gathering of vintage and antique pieces. With its airy restaurant and bar; serene, lawn-surrounded pool; and fringe-parasoled beach loungers, the

intimate embrace of Playa Grande (and those kiosks next door) might be just the right amount of escapism. But the area offers even more: lagoon tours in Rio San Juan, swimming at the base of El Saltadero waterfall, and post-adventure lunches at De Norte a Norte, an inspiring, progressive new restaurant in Cabrera. What a place to get to think again; playagrandebeachclub.com.



St. Barts

THE ULTIMATE RETREAT

St. Barts

STAY: CHEVAL BLANC ST-BARTH

Talk about dominating the jetting of the jet set: According to the luxury travel gurus at Virtuoso, St. Barts bookings (always strong) are off the charts for this winter. Which means to join *the* Caribbean party this season, location is everything: The perfect St. Barts bolt-hole should possess a sense of remove from the spotlight chasers, a balance between high luxury and low pressure, a design that feels fresh and West Indian timeless, and (of course) fabulous food and drink. And all eyes this year are on snagging one of the 61 rooms, suites, and villas at Cheval Blanc St-Barth, the only property in the Caribbean to have won France’s “Palace” distinction (like getting extra credit in *haute* luxury) and celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. From Madison Cox’s lush landscapes to designer Jacques Grange’s 2018 resort-wide refresh, *savoir faire* meets *joie de vivre* on the bone-white sands of Flamands Beach; again; chevalblanc.com.

FROM TOP: COURTESY PLAYA GRANDE BEACH CLUB; COURTESY CHEVAL BLANC; OPPOSITE PAGE: TRACEY MINKIN



Jacques Grange design at Cheval Blanc St-Barth's La Cabane bar