

JULY 20, 2015

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SEE PAGE 10

INSIDE:

Belgium's Big Year

St. Kitts' Belle Mont Farm

Sailing Portugal and France

Ziplining in Hawaii

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JULY 20, 2015 | Volume 346, Number 5

www.travelagentcentral.com



Cover Story THAI FOR TWO

10 We joined a group of agents on a FAM trip to Thailand. Here is our take on the country as a honeymoon destination

COVER PHOTO BY Ana Figueroa

News

8 Bahamas' Baha Mar Files Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, Plans to Move Forward

In Every Issue

- 2** From the Editor
- 6** Trend Watch
- 33** Editorial Index
- 34** Agent Access



Features

- 16** **CARIBBEAN, THE BAHAMAS AND BERMUDA**
Belle Mont Farm is first of three properties to open on Kittitian Hill in St. Kitts
- 20** **EUROPE**
Belgium is enticing visitors with a new Waterloo museum and cultural events
- 24** **CRUISES**
Advice on how to sell and market Portugal's Douro and France's Rhone and Saone rivers
- 28** **ADVENTURE TRAVEL**
Ziplining provides thrills and amazing aerial views of Hawaii's diverse landscape
- 30** **HOST AGENCIES**
Host agencies and consortia prepare for upcoming national conferences

24



CARIBBEAN, THE BAHAMAS AND BERMUDA

St. Kitts' BELLE MONT FARM

It may not be the style Caribbean clients are used to — and that's just fine.

FOR YEARS, financial and construction delays halted the opening of the much-anticipated, \$600 million Kittitian Hill development that was to house three impressive hotels and bring St. Kitts to a new level of luxury. When the first hotel did officially roll out this past December, **Travel Agent** was lucky enough to be among the first media to check it out. Assessment? If the other two properties slated to open on Kittitian Hill are nearly as good as this one, the delays were well worth it.

Meet **Belle Mont Farm**, a haven for health and wellness and just about anything else that encourages a cleaner lifestyle both during and after your stay. This is not for the first-time Caribbean traveler, however; for one thing, there is no beach here. It is also not the right fit for anyone who insists on an insect-free environment. The hotel is high above the hills and beckons for nature to join the party, so it's not unlikely for ants or a few small spiders to accept the invitation. Rest assured that the hotel can

provide enough bug spray for guests to stay lathered up for the entire stay, if need be.

But enough about potential deterrents — here's more about what makes this hotel such a magical place for affluent clients craving something different in the Caribbean.

ROOMS: Belle Mont Farm is a collection of 84 guesthouses and seven four-bedroom farmhouses set within an organic farm. Five expansive villas are currently offered as well. The



Belle Mont Farm is a collection of 84 guesthouses and seven four-bedroom farmhouses.

bathrooms in every room are outdoors — not just the showers, but sinks and toilets as well. They are, however, completely blocked from outside view by foliage. Nevertheless, it may take some getting used to.

It gets a little chilly at night, so throwing on a pair of shorts and a sweatshirt every time you need to use the restroom can be a little odd. But brushing your teeth, doing your hair and such before hitting up dinner or the town is way better in the refreshing breeze that Belle Mont Farm usually attracts, with crickets providing the soundtrack. It was just great not feeling like we were wasting a second of sunshine too.

Most of the rooms have a full pool and sundeck with lounge chairs and a day bed. Each also comes with its own mini iPad, which doubles as the room's directory for everything from dining options to weather updates. But the room feature that truly blew us away was the full movie projection screen in our bedroom with access to Netflix. For an island that can see its share of nighttime showers, this feature ensures clients will have ample entertainment on any given night. Good to know: Your clients can also opt for butler service.

DINING: The food is spectacular, including all-natural produce. We were served perhaps some of the freshest and most flavorful dishes we've had in quite some time. Sunday brunch at The Kitchen is popular with guests and locals alike. The hotel's menu changes almost daily — it is basically at the mercy of the farm. If the produce is fresh enough and ripe enough to serve, it will most likely be on the menu in some way, shape or form. Tip: If on a given day French toast cooked in rum is on the brunch menu, tell your clients to do themselves a favor and order two servings.

Additionally, The Farm is a new al fresco dining option that exhibits a rustic communal table set amongst organic orchid, vegetable and fruit gardens.

Again, it may not be on the menu at the time of your clients' dinner here, but if it is, recommend the duck and grilled carrots.

The hotel is also home to a really

cool, relaxing pool bar overlooking the ocean and just downstairs from The Kitchen. If clients drop by for a drink, tell them to be sure to ask the bartender, the friendly and charismatic Daron, to whip them up one of his specialty manciport (a tropical fruit commonly referred to as mammy apples) daiquiris.

For any special food requests, agents should call 855-846-3951 or e-mail Reservations@kittitianhill.com. Agents should also note that reservations should be made at least two weeks in advance of the arrival date.

THE SPA EXPERIENCE: There are currently two treatment cottages. In-room treatments (massage, body scrub) and wellness experiences (private yoga) are also available. There were no locker rooms or waiting area. There were no forms where you had to declare any pre-existing injuries. You just tell the masseuse where you want her to work on or where you want her to avoid. From the moment we walked into the cottage, we felt like our spa treatment had begun. And it was quite the experience. We highly recommend our masseuse, Petula, aka "Pet," especially for the deep tissue portion of the 90-minute, full body massage.

By year's end, Kittitian Hill will be home to its own stand-alone Mango Walk Spa facility, which will comprise treehouses in a forest of giant mango trees, high on the mountain. It will have 10 treatment rooms modeled after the Belle Mont Farm guesthouses, and the current treatment rooms will become guesthouses. In-room treatments, which will be very similar to the experience **Travel Agent** had, will still be available.

CONTACT: Agents looking to fulfill any special requests from clients planning a trip at Belle Mont Farm should reach out Eva Chan (Eva.Chan@kittitianhill.com, 917-525-8307), director of sales.

The Rest of Kittitian Hill

Kittitian Hill, a \$600 million hospitality and real estate destination, is the brainchild of Val Kempadoo, a social entrepreneur with Caribbean roots. It



The bathrooms in each room are outdoors — not just the showers, but sinks and toilets as well.

is being designed by Bill Bensley, an award-winning architect known for his work with Four Seasons, Oberoi and Leela hotels in Asia.

Highlights of upcoming 2015 phases of its development include the Mango Walk Spa, a destination spa that will be secluded in a forest of giant mango trees, high on the mountain.

The Village, expected to open by the end of 2016, will be a central part of the Kittitian Hill experience, where community and culture will thrive. It will be a place where people can gather to relax, eat and drink, catch up on the latest news or just soak up the atmosphere. Eateries and shops will complement art galleries, artisan workshops, a film school and open-air cinema.

Finally, Yaya Groves, which we were told was to be completed by the end of 2017, will be a collection of secluded three- and four-bedroom private villas available to rent or purchase. All villa bedrooms will be master suites with ocean views through floor-to-ceiling windows. Villas will offer such amenities as professional kitchens, infinity pools and wrap-around verandas.

—JOE PIKE