

BOLD

INSPIRATION FOR TRAVELLERS

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THE ROMANCE REPORT:
FROM THE SEXIEST SPAS TO THE
HOTTEST HONEYMOON DESTINATIONS

HANDS ON OR

TWO WAYS TO GET A TASTE OF
BARBADOS, THE CARIBBEAN'S
CULINARY CAPITAL

— by Bianca Bujan —

PEG FARM AND NATURE RESERVE, ST. JOSEPH

Dampened by the early morning rain, the grass below my feet shimmers in the warm sunlight, revealing an underlay of muddy soil below its surface. I have two options as my group prepares to venture on foot through the 108 acres of property that makes up the PEG Farm and Nature Reserve in Barbados: soil my sneakers or go barefoot.

Following in the footsteps of my nature-loving guide, Georgie, I remove my shoes and sink my feet into the cool mud, enjoying the sensation as it squishes between my toes. As our group begins our trek, the faint scent of fresh mint fills my nose. The first stop on our two-hour walking tour is the on-site medicinal garden. As we pick, sniff and taste the fresh herbs that are grown on the lush land on which we stand, Georgie explains the medicinal properties of each plant. Many are imported from around the world: Bloodwort from China, used to treat blood-related issues; Cerasee from India, used as anti-inflammatory; and the Bay Leaf from the Caribbean, which has soothing antiseptic and antibiotic properties.

More than just a sensory experience, PEG Farm and Nature Reserve strives to educate locals and visitors with a focus on four farming pillars: farm and food, combining the principles of free range animal husbandry, biodynamic and permaculture to create healthy, organic foods grown locally on the island; education, hosting conferences, workshops and guided tours to educate visitors on the importance of their farming practices; nature sanctuary; and community, creating an opportunity for social and economic change on the island of Barbados.

Our tour takes us through the gardens, and up to the grazing pastures, where we pet piglets, call cows and attempt to catch chickens, all free-range animals that roam freely through the well-kept land.

Further ahead, we stroll along the edge of Hackelton's Cliff, which provides breathtaking beach views from 3,000 metres above sea level, overlooking protected old growth forest that runs from the edge of the cliff to the shoreline below.

Our tour wraps up with a visit to the on-site Chrysalis Café, where we sip freshly squeezed juices and nosh on farm-fresh snacks. We take in views of the lush landscape that surrounds us as we enjoy a truly organic culinary experience. Our hands dirty and our hearts full. pegbarbados.com



HIGH END

HUGO'S RESTAURANT, SPEIGHTSTOWN, ST. PETER

The click clack of my heels on the concrete floor seem jarring in contrast to the quietly chic atmosphere of Hugo's Restaurant. As the server guides us to our table, I'm taken aback by the natural beauty that surrounds the contemporary two-level structure, which houses an expansive dining area. It feels sophisticated, but not stuffy. The lower-level dining room stretches out along the beachfront, with the sound of the waves crashing against the shore enhancing the atmosphere.

On the walls are historic items and throwback photographs imported from the Ivy restaurant in London. Décor from the late Lord Glenconnor's home is a nod to the man responsible for transforming the Caribbean island of Mustique from a neglected rock in the middle of the ocean into a multi-millionaire's paradise, frequented by pop stars, aristocrats and royals.

The servers at Hugo's offer a warm and welcoming greeting as they share menu highlights and take our drink orders. They are happy to answer our endless questions about menu items, and the newly opened restaurant at which we are dining for the first time.

The menu provides a wide range of flavours, highlighting fresh Caribbean cuisine sprinkled with international flair. At our request, the server brings out an eclectic mix of appetizers, ranging from beef tartar to breadfruit-and-lentil-pea balls, stylishly presented on our plates.

It's difficult for our group to choose main entrées, so we agree to order a variety of dishes and share bites. The seabass, caught locally and served with tarragon-infused corn meal, bell peppers ragout, crispy okra and saffron sauce, seems to be popular, but I'm quite pleased with my choice, the night's special of lamb sausage and rack of lamb.

As much as you'll want to fill up on the savoury items, saving room for dessert is a must. The warm homemade bread pudding, served with a Mount Gay Rum (locally made on the island of Barbados), condensed milk sauce, and rum and raisin ice cream makes for a sweet ending to a fine dining feast fit for royalty.

hugosbarbados.com

