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by Darren Dobson

Recently I was invited to experience a Caribbean vacation in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Preparing for my adventure, I did some initial research to learn about this paradise and what the Turks have to offer.

The Turks and Caicos Islands are about a three hour flight from Toronto or New York City. It is a British Territory that prides itself as being a Tourism and Financial Investment destination. The average temperatures rarely exceeds 33 °C (92 °F) in the summer and ranges between 20 and 27 °C (68 and 80 °F) in the winter months.

Known to be a premier diving destination for having one of the world's longest coral reefs, the Turks attracts more than 250,000 visitors yearly. There are eight major islands that make up the Turks and Caicos, which include Grand Turk, Providenciales, Salt Cay, North Caicos, South Caicos, Middle Caicos, East Caicos, and West Caicos.

Over the past decade the Turks and Caicos has been attracting upscale developers to build luxury hotels and resorts to attract the rich and famous. Some famous Hollywood stars have even built homes in the Turks, including Dick Clark and Bruce Willis. After arriving in Providenciales airport, it was a brief 15 minute trip to Grace Bay and to the resort property, fondly called The Palms.





Some of the amenities available to guests include a fitness centre and tennis courts. If golfing is your pleasure, there is an 18-hole golf course near by or take in a massage at the 25,000 square-foot spa.

This Resort was the second of three designed and built by The Hartling Group. About a decade ago Stan Hartling arrived to the Turks with a vision to develop luxury condominiums for discerning buyers to own a piece of heaven. It started with the Sands on Grace Bay, which was one of the first condo hotel concepts on the island, then the Palms, and currently taking reservations for The Shore Club on Long Bay Beach.

The Sands at Grace Bay resort is located in Providenciales and is considered a family-friendly four-star resort and was one of the first resorts on the Turks and Caicos Islands. I too had the privilege to absorb all the hospitality that there was to offer, while experiencing this quintessential Caribbean getaway. With the plantation style architecture and tropical surroundings, this oasis continues with the laid-back luxury theme combined with extraordinary cuisine at the signature Hemingway's Restaurant. On Tuesday's,



The Palms is a boutique hotel with 72 suites, all finely appointed and with most facing the turquoise waters and white powder beach. With the gentle breeze and fresh salt air, I know I have arrived in paradise. My beachfront suite was elegantly appointed with a king size bed with fine custom linens, kitchenette, and sitting area with sleeper sofa. Views from my private balcony are spectacular. The staff is extremely attentive to my every need and often offers complimentary fruit while lounging at the infinity pool. Plunge, the swim-up bar, is a great place for a spritzer to keep cool. Later, I opted for a more tropical fusion cuisine at Parallel 23, with a fine choice of international wine. Breakfast the next morning was full of fresh fruit and mouth watering pastries, delivered to my suite to enjoy while admiring the picturesque postcard view.



'Caribbean Night' at Hemingway's comes alive with music and island specialties. It is worth noting that this is the only beachfront restaurant on the whole island and this is where I most enjoyed my breakfast with the picture perfect panoramic view of the bay.

Located seven miles from the Providenciales Airport and only six miles from the center of town, you are not far away from other nearby attractions, which include the Provo Golf Course, Casa Blanca Casino and two local marinas. The resort, comprised of 114 suites from one to three bedrooms in six villas with views of the turquoise waters and steps to your very own white powder on Grace Bay beach were you can enjoy a multitude of activities that include kayaking, windsurfing, and snorkeling over colourful coral reefs or just relax on the beach chairs or hammock.

Founding the company back in 1997, Stan Hartling, with the help of his management team, has made the Turks and Caicos Islands a luxury destination second to none. The Hartling Group prides itself as being the preeminent luxury builder and developer in the Islands and as CEO, Stan Hartling plays a key role in all aspects of the development projects. Stan's 16 years as a successful property developer is proof of his commitment and success to his clients. In 2009, Stan was the recipient of the "Developer of the Year" Award presented by the prestigious Caribbean World Home and Living Magazine'. Stan Hartling and the Hartling Group have truly made the Turks and Caicos synonymous with luxury resorts.



Scuba diving excursions can also be arranged for the adventurous or hope on a bike and tour the surrounding area and meet the locals. On site, there is a gym and tennis court facilities, where private lessons can be arranged for guests. Just as in the Palms Resort, the Sands at Grace Bay has their very own spa facility for facials and body wraps, called Spa Tropicque, where I took in a massage to round out my extraordinary experience.

The Shore Club, on the other hand, is located on a private and pristine 3-mile long beach located two and half miles from Provo. This newest project from The Hartling Group will offer three pools with a limited 85 units, all with views of the ocean. The Hartling Group has become one of the most trusted and most experienced developers in the Turks and Caicos. Stan Hartling, CEO of The Hartling Group, realized that real estate ownership and investment was on the upswing, as more Canadians and Americans traveled to the islands, looking to purchase a little piece of paradise. With Stan's commitment to unparalleled quality to details, authentic Barbadian architecture, properties with full resort amenities, and choice of pristine locations, the Hartling Group developments offers investors a quality investment for life. 



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