



EXPERIENCES AT THE EXPANSIVE BAHAMA MAR PROPERTY INCLUDE DIPS IN NUMEROUS POOLS, DINING AT AN ARRAY OF ETATERIES SUCH AS CARNA (RIGHT) AND KATSUYA BY STARCK (ABOVE), AND TEEING OFF AT THE ROYAL BLUE GOLF COURSE DESIGNED BY JACK NICKLAUS.



QUICK TRIPS

BAHAMA Mama
The new, mega-chic Baha Mar impresses as the mother of all megaresorts

By Paul Rubio

The phrase “bigger is better” doesn’t typically apply to luxury island resorts, but the new 1,000-acre, 2,300-room Baha Mar complex on Nassau’s dreamy Cable Beach tells a different story.

Ten years and \$4.2 billion in the making, Baha Mar is a self-contained destination housing multiple hotels under three trusted brands (Grand Hyatt, SLS, and Rosewood), as well as 42 restaurants and lounges, 11 swimming pools, and a 100,000-square-foot casino—the Caribbean’s largest. Add several dozen boutique shops, a flag-

ship ESPA spa, an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course, and, of course, a gorgeous wide beach with powdery white sands, and we arrive at the true—and possibly the original—definition of megaresort chic. What’s more, it’s just a one-hour flight from South Florida

Despite its supesize, Baha Mar succeeds in delivering a personalized, world-class experience. Want an over-the-top, Vegas-style weekend on the beach? Overnight at The Reserve at Baha Mar, an exclusive hotel-within-a-hotel concept at the Grand Hyatt, where rooms glow from a whimsical mash-up of red lacquer inflections and flashy gold fixtures. High roll in the casino, party to the sounds of famous DJs at Bond nightclub, sleep off your hangover in the sun, and wake up later for retail therapy at resort boutiques like Rolex, Cartier, and Lilly Pulitzer. (Fun fact: This is how *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills* rolled during a recent trip to Baha Mar.)

Want a vacation that embodies understated beachside elegance? Check in to the Rosewood Baha Mar, where all rooms flaunt contemporary seaside flair and feature either a balcony or a terrace. Treat yourself to spa time, alternating between Sense, a Rosewood Spa exclusive to Rosewood guests, and the larger ESPA, accessible



STAY AT THE RESERVE (ABOVE) AND LOUNGE AT THE CASINO POOL. DINING OPTIONS INCLUDE HAUTE CHINESE DISHES AT SHUANG BA (LEFT), FRENCH-PRESSED COCKTAILS AT SKY BAR, AND SOPHISTICATED MEXICAN FARE AT COSTA (BOTTOM RIGHT).



to all Baha Mar visitors. Relax with a good read while sunbathing at the Quiet Pool, before having a light lunch at Costa, a seafood-forward Mexican restaurant presented as a series of islands and land-bridges surrounded by koi ponds. Come evening, savor a multicourse dinner at steak house Carna by Dario Cecchini, an eighth-generation Italian butcher and TV personality. Here, the focus is on simple, honest ingredients and showcasing the best-of-the-best charcuterie, premier cuts of meat from around the world, and sublime shellfish selections. Side dishes like the charred sweet corn and whipped potatoes are equally epic.

Looking to be the next Instagram darling? Book at the SLS Baha Mar, where rooms ooze a classic, South Beach-inspired, white-on-white aesthetic. Hang among an easy-on-the-eyes crowd during DJ-led afternoon pool parties, where you can rent your own cabana for added swagger. This is also the perfect place to show off your latest Vilebrequin swim trunks. We recommend picking up a pair from the three-piece limited-edition capsule collection designed by Baha Mar’s creative arts director, John Cox, and available at the in-house Vilebrequin outpost.

Pop out of your cabana for a Bahama Mama at Out Island Bar; the legendary, rum-based cocktail was invented here in the 1950s at the bar’s former incarnation within the Nassau Beach Resort. Walk with Baha Mar’s resident baby Caribbean flamingos daily at 3:30 p.m. For better selfies, book alone time with your new feathered friends by organizing a private feeding with the resort’s CFO, or “chief flamingo officer.” In the evening, begin with aperitifs in the design-forward Monkey Bar and move on to French-pressed cocktails

at Sky Bar, the only rooftop bar in the Bahamas. Then embark on an Asian dining adventure with an *omakase* tasting menu at Katsuya by Starck, or refined Chinese cuisine at Shuang Ba, where house-made shrimp and pork dumplings, hand-carved Peking duck, and Baijiu-based cocktails are served in an exquisite, Chinese-influenced dining room.

While all of this sounds very adults-driven, there’s another dimension to Baha Mar that’s all about the kids. The hotels warmly welcome families, though Grand Hyatt attracts the lion’s share. Young ones can look forward to choosing between a half-dozen family-friendly swimming pools, beachside fun-in-the-sun, nonmotorized watersports, mesmerizing fountain waterworks, encounters with marine animals and birds, kids’ menus at most restaurants, and, soon, a massive water park.

Best of all, couples, families, and groups can mix and match experiences across Baha Mar’s prolific offerings to craft their ideal Bahamian getaway. Baha Mar succeeds where other megaresorts have failed by giving travelers the luxury of choice and delivering world-class products, inclusive of stellar service. Operating on such a large scale typically compromises quality, but not here. Indeed, the new Baha Mar has surfaced as an idyllic island getaway for every type of traveler. (bahamar.com) ◀