



Atlantis Hotel: Salt Swept Sundays

By Karen Thomas. Photos by Jake Thomas.

The Atlantis Hotel evokes memories of salt swept Sundays for many a Bajan. Nestled into the rugged coastline of Tent Bay, St Joseph, the hotel has long been an island institution.

Established in 1883 and serviced by Barbados' only train line, it was a place that locals and intrepid tourists alike would visit for their annual vacations.

Founded by Miss Emmeline McConney, and offering accommodation on a part of the island that was largely uninhabited, the hotel became a success. The Journey from Bridgetown was 23 miles and took approximately two hours. Traversing through the lush greenery of St George and the more barren landscape of St. Philip, passengers at last arrived at surely one of the world's most picturesque stations. Situated on the rocks right below the hotel's verandah, it was a short journey from pebbly beach to the East coast's most popular accommodation. Such tales of Train journeys certainly paint a romantic picture, and today's Atlantis Hotel does not disappoint. Steeped in nostalgia, this magical spot and its amazing views are as satisfying as ever.

The East Coast of Barbados is wild and unpredictable. Local culture dominates in comparison with the more

polished glitz and glamour of the Barbados's Platinum Coast. Home to Barbados's most famous surf Spot, Soup Bowl, the beaches of the east coast do not lend themselves to soaking in the sea, but instead leave visitors

in awe of the beauty and power of nature.

The journey East shows us a different side of Barbados away from the bustle of daily life. Through villages, gullies and lush valleys, past the beautiful Andromeda Gardens we look to our left and are confronted with a magnificent view of the entire coast. We turn to our right, down a hill and we have arrived.

Purchased in 2008 by the Kirby/Warden families, proprietors of Little Good Harbour hotel and the ever popular Fish Pot restaurant on the West Coast, this landmark building has been given a new lease on life and is ready to satisfy the exacting standards of the 21st century traveller.

Taking 14 months to renovate under the expert eye of owners Andrew and Patricia, the resulting finish is one that reflects their vision of what an authentic





Barbados holiday style should be. Louvre doors wide open, the smell and sound of the sea drifting through, a casual yet elegant lobby leading to the dining area. One might say that this hotel gets right to the point. With 8 rooms in the main house, 2 self contained cottages and a staff of 40, the experience is an intimate one. The rooms, furnished with four poster beds, dark wood floors, tongue and groove cladding and lashing's of coral stone walls, combine a traditional West Indian style with a New England beach house feel.

Modern commodities such as iPod docks, flat screen TV's and wireless internet service are provided should you want a return to reality. The terrace and pool, a new addition to the property and the perfect location for a sundowner, overlook fishing boats bobbing in the sheltered lagoon and to the left the small fishing community of Tent Bay gathers to sell the days catch.

The Atlantis Hotel has forever been synonymous with Barbadian fare. In keeping with this tradition, Executive Chef Steven Belgrave has paid special attention to local produce when designing the menu. It is Barbadiana reinvented. Well known local restaurateur, Manny Ward oversees the restaurant and serving breakfast, lunch and dinner to visitors and guests alike, everyone is sure to find something to tempt them. With a special kid's menu the whole family is welcome.

Sundays will find the dining room full of locals enjoying the famous Atlantis buffet. Offering outstanding

value for money the buffet serves up some surprises. There are your staples such as 3 Cheese Macaroni Pie and Rice and Field Peas, but to compliment, try the Chilli, Tomato and Seafood Stew or the Whole baked Mahi Mahi with Escoveitch sauce. The Atlantis is a perfect stop for a sightseeing lunch. There are a wide range of options available and patrons can choose from local specialties including Rotis, Cutters (Barbadian for Sandwich) Pastas and Salads for an informal and affordable lunch.

Dinner sees the A La Carte lunch menu shortened; With delicacies such as Pickled Seacat (Bajan for Octopus) on an avocado and Tomato salad, Saltfish spring rolls with lemon, cucumber and bonnie pepper to start, a Spiced Rubbed Pork Chop with pineapple glaze or Grilled Lobster for your main course and a choice of inventive deserts including Breadfruit Cheesecake, Paw Paw Crème Brulee or Golden Apple Tart Tatin, you are sure to leave fully sated.

After just a few hours spent at this fabulous boutique hotel, I felt refreshed, invigorated and thoroughly relaxed. The combination of style, informal but attentive service and the incredible setting are certainly hard to beat. For an island that boasts some of the world's most renowned hotels, The New Atlantis offers something truly unique. It is the type of place that you may come for lunch and find yourself staying for the weekend. Once you have arrived, leaving is very hard indeed.

