



The Destination of Royalty

Half Moon Resort

Rose Hill, Montego Bay, Jamaica

by Jason Feinberg, Photos by Tina Guiomar

Travel

I collected my luggage from the airport carousel and the royal treatment began. I was standing (sitting, actually) in the concierge office of the Half Moon Resort at the airport. It would be another five days before I had to lift my luggage, or a finger for that matter. In 10 minutes we were heading through massive iron gates surrounded by a white wall with an elegant colonial-style building just beyond. The security guard opened the gate, smiled and waved us on to the 470-acres that is the Half Moon Resort.

As I entered the open grand foyer, I was immediately distracted by the ocean view at the other end. After a quick check-in with the concierge, we were taken via six-passenger golf cart to our villa ... yes, villa.

Half Moon Resort is not your typical resort. It by far exceeds any standard in luxury travel destinations. Located in Rose Hill, Montego Bay, Half Moon blends the dream vacation with the

so much more to see and do. We walked through French doors into the dining area, which was followed by a spacious living room complete with wet bar, flat screen TV and Internet access. The master suite was tucked away at the far end of the villa and adorned with a large mirror that reflected the ocean view.

While the resort has a beautiful oceanside pathway that leads to the main building, I couldn't resist using my personal golf cart and bicycle to explore the property and all it had to offer.

We stopped at the Seagrape Terrace for a light lunch. The Seagrape, named after the seagrape tree found throughout the resort, overlooks Sunset Beach and offers a wide variety of delicious delicacies and casual dining for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The hotel even offer a beachside Jamaican barbecue.

Our *Boulevard* staff was given a private tour of some of the other villas. With full living rooms, master suites and ocean-view terraces, every inch of Half Moon is truly a tropical paradise. The royal four-, five-, six- and seven-bedroom villas were mansions, to say the least. In addition to a private swimming pool and million dollar ocean view, each villa comes with a butler, housekeeper and 24-hour live-in personal chef. It is no wonder that the royal family has stayed here on several occasions.

We then drove along a road that hugged a long, white, sandy beach over to the Dolphin Lagoon. After a brief orientation by the resort's dolphin trainers, guests become part of the dolphins' habitat with the opportunity to interact with these amazing mammals for the next 30 minutes in Half Moon's natural lagoon. It is an unforgettable experience.

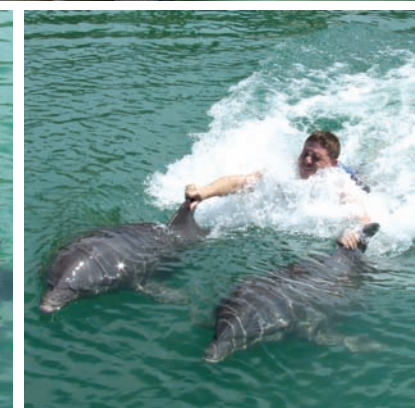
It was back to the villa for a quick dip in the pool, a cocktail and then off to dinner at The Sugar Mill Restaurant. The maitre d', Solomon Gardner, greeted us. His name sounded very familiar and there was a reason why. In my information about Half Moon, there was a story tucked away that read more like a bio titled *Keeper of the Mill*. The story was about Mr. Gardner, or Mr. G as his friends call him, who has been the maitre d' for more than 30 years. He is warm and friendly and most likely will remember your name and what you ordered on your last visit. The Sugar Mill offers contemporary Caribbean fusion cuisine with al fresco dining, as well as a first-class wine cellar. Open for dinner only, reservations required.

Most resorts in the Caribbean offer up some of the finest cuisine; however, an Italian restaurant in Jamaica seemed a little out of place and I wondered if they were able to pull it off. As you step into Il Giardino you are whisked away from the Caribbean and into the Mediterranean; it is like being in Tuscany. Il Giardino provided a dining experience that is commensurate to some of the finest Italian restaurants found in New York City and; as in most Italian restaurants, I was stuffed halfway through the meal but still managed to fit in dessert! A nice, long walk along the



preservation of traditional Caribbean culture, providing an unsurpassed concierge service that respects guests' privacy and provides for virtually anything that you require to make your stay unique. It's a service that has routinely attracted the royal family to the resort.

I walked up the pathway to the villa and opened an iron gate to a full-size swimming pool enclosed by a stone and lattice wall and surrounded by coral stone that overlooked the ocean. "...and this is your private pool," I heard our bellhop say. I could have just stayed at the pool all week and been happy but there was



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beach with a fine cigar from the onsite cigar shop was a perfect way to end the night.

After dinner, I stopped at the beach bar to listen to some live music at the Seagrape terrace. As I made my way back to the villa, I stopped and stared at the swimming pool. The temperature was still in the low 90s and my pool was open! So there I was, drink in hand, gazing at a vast array of stars while lounging out in the pool at 1:00 a.m. with an orchestra of tree frogs and crickets performing at maximum decibels.

The next morning after breakfast, I opted not to wait the obligatory 30 minutes and jumped right into the ocean. Like the pool, it was a lukewarm tub – the kind of perfect temperature that doesn't require a towel to dry off when you get out. Half Moon supplied the snorkel, mask and fins (as well as many other water sport activities) and I was off hovering above beautiful and vast coral cities bustling with life while being followed by the sea's curious inhabitants.

If the beach isn't your style, check out the resort's premier golf experience. Located across from the main property, Half

Moon boasts an award-winning golf course perfect for the novice and challenging enough for the semi-pro. After a day of playing the back nine surrounded by swaying palms and towering hill-sides, head over to the 19th hole restaurant to brag about the hole-in-one you almost shot.

On the way back, stop off at the stables where you will be greeted by Friday (the stable dog) who wants nothing but attention and a pat on his head. He will escort and introduce you to all the horses. You can also book some time for horseback riding along the beach.

From luxury and catered concierge service to private relaxation and fun in the sun, Half Moon has it all and will provide you with a memorable and unique vacation experience that will have you believing that you are royalty ... and feeling alright.

For more photos and videos go to www.boulevardli.com and for more information on Half Moon Resort go to www.half-moon.com.