





# ISLAND STYLE

A vibrant tropical beach scene. In the foreground, a large, white umbrella with thin red and blue vertical stripes and a fringed edge stands on a sandy beach. To its left, two wooden chairs with red-painted cross-shaped backrests are visible. A small, dark, hexagonal stone table sits in front of the chairs. In the background, the turquoise ocean meets a clear blue sky. A palm tree is on the right, and another striped umbrella is partially visible behind the main one.

The Bahamas is home to 700 islands but only one of them is Kamalame Cay. A 15-minute flight from Nassau, but a world away from its resort-lined beaches, this award-winning, family-owned, private island is redefining barefoot chic.

**BY Viia Beaumanis**





On an early 1990s Bahamian sailing trip with their children, Brian and Jennifer Hew spotted an untouched, 96 km island just off Andros. Impulsively deciding to buy it and transform it into a private resort, what seemed a Herculean folly to their friends and family at the time, is now, two decades on, among the premier luxury destinations of the Bahamas. Equal parts home and hotel, Kamalame Cay blossomed into a tropical escape celebrated as much for its cool vibe as its gorgeous landscape. One that's architecture and atmosphere is the labour of love of a sixth-generation West Indies clan that hails from Jamaica and brought with them an innate understanding of gracious coastal living.

Installing everything from water and electricity to solar panels, filtration systems, and 5,000 coconut palms, Kamalame slowly expanded. Today it includes 25 hotel suites and a dozen private residences, many also available for booking; each tucked into a lush, flowering jungle and overlooking miles of deserted, white sand beach. Happy guests exploring the island's conch shell lined pathways

on golf carts, indulging in wellness treatments at the overwater spa, lounging by the palm fringed freshwater pool, and playing doubles on the clay tennis courts. With kaleidoscopic coral gardens, The Great Barrier Reef just offshore offers an abundance of snorkeling, diving, and deep-sea fishing excursions, while bone-fishing buffs head straight for the world class flats that fan out along Kamalame's mangrove coast.

With the Hews son, David, and his husband Michael King taking over management in 2010—and bringing their sophisticated touch to everything from design and décor to events and entertaining—Kamalame is now overseen by two generations who live, work, and play, on the island. Welcoming long-time homeowners, hotel guests who return again and again, and a revolving door of friends and family, as denizens hop between chatty villa cocktail parties, lazy lunches at the oceanfront Tiki Bar, fine dining at the Great House, blazing beachside bonfires, and lively gatherings hosted by the owners in homes they seem to have purposebuilt for entertaining an endless stream of guests.













A champagne splashed, private island where a sarong is all that's required to be 'dressed' for dinner; the bikinis and Bollinger ambiance reflects the family's convivial take on island elegance. Kamalame's distinctive South Asian-influenced Bahamian menus and rollicking monthly Luncheons making it the go-to island outpost for fashionable day trippers from Nassau who arrive by yacht and seaplane from Lyford Cay—or the Rosewood Hotel and Albany Club with whom Kamalame shares membership privileges.

While a famously genial social scene, it's one guests can dip in and out of thanks to the secluded settings of the island's bougainvillea-draped cottages, beach houses, and multisuite villas. Tucked into tropical gardens with panoramic views, each fronted by deserted beach, the turquoise ocean just beyond is scattered with sand dollar cays that the hotel ferries guests out to for castaway picnics and snorkelling.

Against a backdrop of stunning tropical beauty and stylish design, Kamalame's warm family vibe and natural flair for entertaining lends the island's insider quality an unassuming air that's equal parts laughter and luxury.

With its secure, remote setting—the cay is accessible only by seaplane, helicopter, or private ferry from the Andros mainland—it's also become a favourite amongst those with an eye for discrete, yet chic, destinations. A low-key hotspot where everyone's too relaxed and worldly to bat an eyelash when Penelope Cruz or Nicole Kidman stop by for the weekend, Mr. David Rockefeller is lunching with his family in the Tiki Bar, or Serena Williams hits the seaside tennis courts.

With two decades of remarkable history behind them and the future looking very bright, the family is looking forward to celebrating Kamalame's 20th Anniversary with a vibrant calendar of events for 2020 (check online for details) while enhancing the island with an array of new facilities. Next year will see the addition of two new tennis courts and a yoga pavilion along with four Deluxe Beach Bungalows and two new villas. The occasion will also be marked by the launch of COCO Bahama Seaplanes. With its initial Nassau to Kamalame itinerary poised to expand throughout the islands, this boutique seaplane venture will introduce an elegant strata of air travel to the Bahamas with a fleet of state-of-the-art aircraft and exceptional service. If there was ever a time to go—it's now.





## SIDEBARS

### WHEN TO GO: THE LUNCHEON

Book your stay over a Luncheon weekend to experience Kamalame's signature gift for good times, great wine, and gourmet food. Catering to 100 island guests, and those on the waiting list in Nassau, this \$160/per person monthly event is a hot ticket that always sells out. Cohosted by Young's Fine Wine in Nassau, the daylong, open-bar beach party is held on a Saturday, October through June, and revolves around dining, drinking, DJs, a sandy dance floor, and wine-paired fine dining under the seaside loggia off the Tiki Bar & Beach Club. Be sure to pack a glamorous kaftan or smart linen look for this affair!

### WHERE TO STAY: ROMANTIC ESCAPE OR FAMILY HOLIDAY

#### THE BUNGALOWS:

These whitewashed, charmingly appointed, studio cottages span 660 sq. feet with seating areas, kitchenettes, oceanfront verandas, and outdoor showers.

#### ROCK HOUSE:

An elegant, 1100 sq. foot beach house that takes its name from David Rockefeller, for whom it was built, sleeps four guests across a master bedroom and double sleeping nook with a full kitchen, spacious living/dining space, wrap-around veranda and a two-level plunge pool.





#### HUMMINGBIRD:

With its grand, double-height, shaded terrace, this airy, 2700 sq. foot house is ideal for entertaining and accommodates six guests in three bedrooms with a full kitchen and generous indoor/outdoor living and dining space.

#### MAGNOLIA:

Four bedrooms and a spacious seaside terrace with sweeping views, this 2600 sq. foot villa is equipped with a full kitchen, indoor-outdoor living and dining areas and features a furnished, beachfront gazebo for lounge-y afternoons on the shore.

#### ISLAND EVENTS: WEDDINGS & SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Michael and David King-Hew put Kamalame Cay on the map as a stylish event destination, arranging tropical-chic weddings that have been featured by Vogue. Intimate celebration or island wide blow-out, benchmark birthday, family reunion, nuptials, or anniversary fete, the duos approach is distinguished by the panache, originality, and visual impact they bring to every affair, layered with the laidback glamour and graciousness that makes Kamalame so special.

[www.kamalame.com](http://www.kamalame.com)

 **VIA BEAUMANIS**