

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THE AOPA PILOT

Golden Getaways



THE BAHAMAS ESCAPE ROUTE

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AOPA 124393

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AND FRANK KINGSTON SMITH

Golden Getaways

THE BAHAMAS ESCAPE ROUTE

About November each year, as the specter of another frigid winter begins to arise, northlanders start to look for places to run and hide from Jack Frost, their minds lightly turning to thoughts of sun and sand, sparkling waters, palm trees, azure skies and soft, balmy nights. It is time to fly to the Bahamas. The question is, where? Let's start with the places that usually come to mind first.

Nassau is a small city (or a large town). It's located on the northeastern rim of 21-mile-long by five-mile-wide New Providence Island, which lies about in the geographic center of the widely dispersed Bahamas archipelago.

Inbound by lightplane to Nassau's aerial gateway, Nassau International Airport, you can take in the entire island of New Providence at a glance from 3,000 feet. The airport (formerly called Windsor Field), is a large, busy jet air carrier-served passenger hub that lies at the western end of the island next to an enormous green lake, appropriately named Killarney.

The island of New Providence offers all sorts of divertissements, including casino gambling on Paradise Island (the "barrier island" that forms the harbor). There are a half-dozen championship golf courses within 30 minutes of Rawson Square, which lies in the heart of town. For tennis buffs, there are more than three dozen courts in the Nassau area. You can scuba dive, hard-hat dive, ride in glass-bottomed boats, and rent sailboats and motorboats. There are broad white beaches, jammed with bikini wearers and bikini viewers, and hotel swimming pools with nearby oases. In Bay Street stores you can buy perfume, crystal, woolens, antiques and booze. There is something for every budget, so that anyone who wants to do so can have a wonderful vacation in Nassau. We recommend that lightplane island-hoppers plan to spend at least one day and one night here, particularly when returning from the more southerly Out Islands.

Because of its unique — and to a large degree, non-Bahamian — characteristics, Freeport must be treated separately, although it is located on Grand



Bahama Island, which is historically one of the Out Islands (any place out from Nassau is an Out Island).

Just as Brasilia, the present capital of Brazil, was carved out of a wilderness, Freeport has been conceived, designed, built and placed in operation within the past two decades on what was almost barren terrain. The purpose was to create a modern, cosmopolitan, year-round playground resort to attract large numbers of foreign tourists who would come by jet airliner to enjoy sophisticated recreation. Only a half hour by lightplane from the coast of the United States, with a climate that has aptly been described as "June, all year," Freeport is sort of a cross between Reno and the French Riviera.

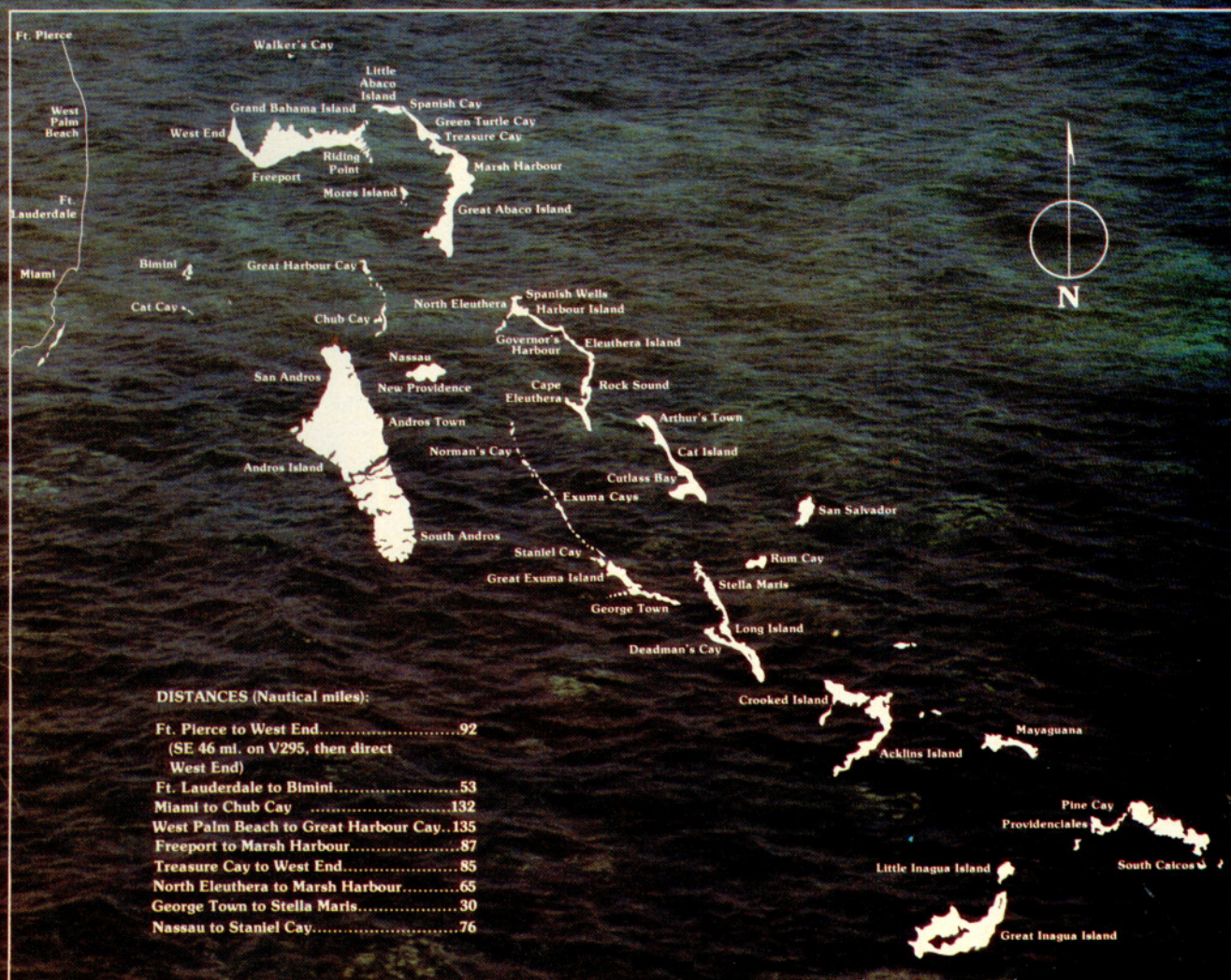
Freeport's public image may be of the gambling-hall category, but it is more than that. Freeport has not only El Casino, and 15 large, new stateside-type hotels, it also provides everything that a mass-market transient population could want: blazing sun, broad beaches, large swimming pools, pellucid waters, sailing, skin and scuba diving — the renowned Underwater Explorers Society (UNEXSO), perhaps the most extensively equipped scuba-diving organization in the world, is headquartered there.

You can play on five championship golf courses, 36 tennis courts (12 lighted for night play), dine at some 60 restaurants, and enjoy a wide selection of night life.

Freeport, and Nassau to some extent, can be compared with such cosmopolitan resorts as Las Vegas, Acapulco or Havana in the old days. If you want to know more about what they offer, write to the Bahamas Tourist Office nearest you (or to the Nassau headquarters) and ask for the full-color brochures listed elsewhere.

The romantic term "island-hopping," which implies jumping around from one island to another like a checker piece, may be slightly misleading to someone who has never been to the far-flung Bahamas.

In the northern Bahamas (i.e. Grand Bahama, Abaco and Eleuthera) few of the hotels, clubs, inns, lodges — let's



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The Bahamas

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Nassau/Paradise Island
San Salvador
and hundreds more.

call them all "resorts" — are within easy access of the airstrips supporting them. Getting from the tiedown area to the resort often requires a taxicab ride for several miles, followed by a water-taxi trip, which means that it can take as long as an hour from the door of your airplane to the door of your room. Furthermore, the average cab ride between airport and resort (or boat landing) costs about five bucks a head and water-taxi rates are about the same. However, there are a number of resorts in the southern end of the Bahamas that are handy to the airstrips supporting them so that if you get bored with sunning, beach walking, snorkeling, scuba diving, sailing or fishing, you can walk to your airplane and go sightseeing on island-hopping day-trips.

Weather and Climate

The climate of the Bahamas is remarkably uniform and varies no more than an average of 10° all year — about 70-75°F in the winter and 80-85°F in the summer. Unlike most of southern Florida, there is not a heat-and-humidity problem, because the hot sun creates thermals, which act like chimneys, sucking cool air in from the surrounding sea, so that there is almost always a cooling breeze.

In the fall of the year hurricanes may form far out in the Atlantic Ocean, beginning as "tropical depressions." However, they are spotted and tracked by the satellites and the U.S. Navy Hurricane Hunter squadrons long before they begin to consolidate and move westward, so all you need to be informed anywhere in the Bahamas is a small, battery-powered standard broadcast receiver. The 20,000-watt Nassau commercial broadcast station ZNS-1 (pronounced, in British fashion, "Zed-Enn-Ess-Won"), on 1540 kHz, can be heard all over the archipelago and broadcasts Bahamas area and island-by-island weather all day long, beginning at 6:30 in the morning. You will always have plenty of time to make the decision whether to stay or run for it.

Out Island Resorts

Every island and every resort has a personality, a flavor, a natural charm all its own. There are large resorts and some so small that they can accommodate only four or six guests at a time. It all gets back to the question of what you want to do. This is not a *Baedecker's* or *Fielding's Guide* resort-rating article. It cannot be, for we have not been to every resort/hotel/lodge/inn/club or guest house of the dozens in operation, but we will tell you about those we know to be aviation-oriented. All those

to be named have unicom (122.8) unless otherwise noted, so that you can call ahead from aloft and arrange for surface transportation.

Now, let's take a trip around the Out Islands, starting at the north end. It would be helpful from here on to follow our course on the accompanying map of the Bahamas (page 77) as we discuss resorts.

Grand Bahama Island

Having discussed Freeport as a separate facility, we must mention two other resorts on Grand Bahama, and they could not be more dissimilar.

The first, *Grand Bahama Hotel and Country Club* at West End, spreads over 2,000 acres and includes a 577-room hotel, replete with restaurants, cocktail lounges, bars, nightly dancing, floor shows, a swimming pool large enough to float the QE II, several miles of sugarlike beaches along the open sea, a complete scuba center (with scuba rating instruction available), a championship 18-hole golf course (with pro shop and all the trimmings), an array of tennis courts, badminton, shuffleboard, trap and skeet ranges (with instruction), baby-sitters at some seasons of the year, its own yacht club and marina and a private airport with two concrete runways (6,000 and 8,000 feet) and its own control tower (no unicom).

This is the closest thing to the give-'em-everything-they-want-and-then-some style of the resorts in the Catskills that you will ever find in the Out Islands, and it's only 25 minutes from Palm Beach.

About 50 miles east of Freeport, also on the southern shoreline of Grand Bahama Island, is the tiny, 10-room *Deep Water Cay Club*, which specializes in fishing — the bonefishing here is said to be the best in the Bahamas — and has its own 2,300-foot grass strip. If you are a bass or trout fisherman who likes ultra-light tackle, this is a great place to try your skill on a new and (I find) more thrilling kind of sport. Be sure to call on unicom ahead of time to check on the condition of the airstrip, because sometimes it gets soft. No golf. No tennis. No night life. No swimming pool. Just boating and fishing. But, oh, what fishing!

Abaco Island and its Cays

Walker's Cay ("Cay" — pronounced "key" — is the ancient Lucayan word for "small island"), about 58 miles northeast of Freeport, is considered one of the Abaco cays. Although the entire cay is about the dimensions of a nine-hole golf course, Walker's has its own two-runway airport, the longest

runway being 2,400 feet (and the shortest about 1,800 feet), with dropoffs at the water's edge on each end.

The **Walker's Cay Club** is a luxury resort dedicated to big game fishing. Many world's-record fish have been taken here. There are some 42 air-conditioned guest rooms and villas, a tennis court, two swimming pools (one fresh water, one salt), scuba diving instruction and boating. Few places can beat this resort for a fly-in fisherman and, if you are addicted to outdoors magazines featuring fishing, you may very likely cross trails at Walker's Cay with some famous fishing editors and writers whose names you recognize.

Great Abaco Island's two 5,000-foot airstrips provide access to a number of top-notch resorts. The northernmost airstrip, Green Turtle/Treasure Cay, serves two areas. The first is Green Turtle Cay, a lushly tropical island three miles long by half a mile wide, lying in the Atlantic Ocean about two miles offshore of Abaco. Getting there from the airport requires a five-minute cab ride, plus a water-taxi ride across the bay, to reach any of the three presently operating facilities, all separated from one another by water: the **Bluff House Club** (15 units), the **Green Turtle Club** (33 units) and the **New Plymouth Inn** (8 rooms). The last-named is in the quaint, diminutive town of New Plymouth, which seems to have been transported from New England. It is so pretty, so sparkling clean, that it is like a motion picture set, slightly scaled down. All three resorts have swimming pools and offer sailing, boating, skin/scuba diving. There is one tennis court, as I recall.

If you want Bahamian-style barefoot elegance, where you can walk for miles on unsullied beaches, do some leisurely skin diving and bonefishing, and unwind completely, you may find it all right here. But Green Turtle's offshore location makes spur-of-the-moment flying almost impossible, so you must be mentally prepared to park your airplane at the airstrip, lock it and leave it there for your vacation.

About seven miles south of the same airstrip by taxicab lies Treasure Cay, really a misnomer, for it is not an island at all, but a peninsula jutting out from the shoreline of Abaco.

The **Treasure Cay Beach Hotel and Villas** is another extraordinary Out Island resort. Located where one might reasonably expect to find only small clubs, lodges and inns, this sprawling resort has 218 rooms, including a number of private villas, spread over a vast estate. In addition to miles of beaches on which snowblindness is always a



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possibility at noon, there are two large swimming pools, boat rentals and charters for fishing, skin diving and sailing, a scuba-diving center and a gourmet menu. Moreover, there are ten tennis courts (four of which are lighted for playing at night) and an 18-hole championship-quality golf course, designed by Dick Wilson. Tennis, greens fees, water skiing and snorkeling are free for guests. The village of Treasure Cay is, in fact, completely self-contained, with shops, grocery stores and vehicle rentals. Many guests take their children along, down to toddlers, for the hotel provides baby-sitters if arrangements are made in advance.

The Marsh Harbour airstrip, about 30 miles south, serves a number of facilities, including several in the town of Marsh Harbour itself, which is the

About taking color pictures in the Bahamas

The Bahamian sun is extremely bright so that you will not need high-speed film or fast lenses. Most of the color shots will come out best with ASA 25 — Kodachrome 25 — although the faster ASA 64, stopped down (most shooting with ASA 64 will be at 1/125th of a second at f.16). Also, go to your local camera shop and have your camera equipped with a "haze" filter or a UV (ultra violet) filter, which will produce better photos from the air. I recommend color slides (transparencies), which can be projected on a screen and reproduce the feeling of being there again, whenever you view them. Unless you are a professional photographer, don't waste your time on black and white photos. —FKS

hub of the main island's activity and economy.

Marsh Harbour is about 10 miles' worth of rough road from the airstrip that bears its name, but don't let that deter you. A thriving community through which you must pass en route to any of the offshore cays, its two best known sanctuaries are the highly recommended *Lofty Fig Villas* (of which there are six) and, just across the street, the very popular *Conch Inn* (no unicorn) usually jammed with visiting cruising-yachtsmen who take advantage of the protected harbor and who, after a few weeks at sea, may hanker for a few days on the beach, hot showers and unmoving beds.

Marsh Harbour is the locale of two sailboat-leasing operations, Bahamas Yachting Service, Ltd., and Wind Song Marina. You can fly in, lease a fully

equipped and food-stocked boat for a week or two (or three, or four) and sail, skin dive, fish, explore and relax on the gin-clear, protected waters off Abaco's east coast between Green Turtle Cay and Little Harbour, some 50 miles end to end, and never spend two nights on the same anchorage. Then, you simply check the boat back in, cab it out to the airstrip and fly home. It is just like sailing in the South Pacific, or on the Spanish Main.

A spectacular boat ride from Marsh Harbour to Elbow Cay, about four miles offshore, takes us past the red and white candy-striped lighthouse—the most photographed scene in the Bahamas—as we approach picturesque Hope Town, which always evokes memories of a reduced-scale Provincetown, Mass.

Just at the southerly end of the charming, pastel-colored village, the 21-unit *Hope Town Harbour Lodge* sits high on a natural ridge overlooking the spotless, powdery-white Atlantic Ocean Beach on one side and the protected anchorage, dominated by the lighthouse, on the other. With several individual cottages clustered around its poolside patio on the eastern side, this is one of the oldest and best-loved places in the Bahamas and, like wine, seems to improve with age. The new owners of the Hope Town Harbour Lodge also own and operate a "bare boat" yacht-leasing/charter company — Abaco Charters, Ltd.

Not far away is the *Elbow Cay Club*, essentially a yachtman's stopoff, but offering all water sport activities except scuba diving and featuring the new sport of windsurfing, in which you stand on a modified surfboard holding on to a mast and sail contraption. This 12-room club is casual and low-key.

A couple of miles south (they will arrange to pick you up at the boat landing, without charge) *Abaco Inn*, only 10 rooms and secluded, is one of the most leisurely of all the "barefoot elegance" spots. The clubhouse, perched atop a ridge, offers an unobstructed view in all directions, encompassing pink sandy beaches, waves spuming on ocean reefs, a swimming pool built into the side of the hill, the Bay of Abaco and the candy-striped lighthouse. The meals are excellent, and here one can scuba (both of the operators are divers), snorkel, go reef-, deep sea- or bonefishing, sail small boats and drive outboards.

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

BAHAMAS continued

heavily traveled airways in the region, you will see the entire central Bahamas area. Let's discuss the islands as they will appear.

Bimini

There are nine or so resorts between North Bimini and South Bimini (known simply as "Bimini" and called "The Capital of the Fish Kingdom"). Dozens of world's-record fish of all types have been caught off Bimini, which is perched on the eastern edge of the Gulf Stream Abyss.

About a half an hour or less (if it is normally clear) out of Bimini, the north end of Andros Island — Joulter's Cays — will show up slightly off to the right, and the southernmost of the stirrup-shaped chain of the Berry Islands will be seen off to the left.

Andros Island

Despite its vast bulk — Andros is 100 miles long and 40 miles wide — this immense island offers only a few resort facilities. The most northern of them, the **Andros Beach Hotels and Villas** has been one of our favorites for many years. It's served by the San Andros airstrip, which lies some five miles inland from the nearest beachfront. This 65-room resort (no unicom, by the way) is eight miles from the San Andros strip, which means a long cab ride through miles of lumbered-over pine woods, but the trip is well worth the somewhat expensive jaunt. With a mile of its own beach and fronting on the world's second-largest barrier reef, this sophisticated, soft-plush resort with 90 air-conditioned rooms, including a number of private villas, sits right at the edge of the 6,000-foot drop-off down into the "Tongue of the Ocean." Fishing of all kinds abounds — the Tongue of the Ocean is a huge natural fish trap — as well as boating, skin diving and a couple of tennis courts not far from the beachside swimming pool. Take along your own rackets and balls. There is no golf. At this slickly informal resort, the menu is outstanding, excellently prepared and served. My wife, whose concept of nature in the raw is raw silk, loves it here. Me, too.

Another widely advertised spot is the **San Andros Inn and Tennis Club**, which is located right at the San Andros airport and offers 22 rooms and its own large swimming pool as well as two tennis courts.

About 30 miles south, the Andros Town airstrip at Fresh Creek serves what has become a mecca for deep diving: the **Small Hope Bay Lodge**, with 22 units, which is about as informal as it can be, totally unaffected and uncere-monious. As a case in point, there is a



large California-type hot tub right on the beach. Dick Birch, one of the most famous scuba divers in the world, conducts diving expeditions into the Tongue of the Ocean, right down the underwater precipice — they call it “Going over the Wall.” If you are an experienced, rated scuba diver, this is the place for you. Going over the Wall in water that is as clear as plate glass, exploring the sheer face of the reef until you are so deep that daylight is soon filtered to a violet hue by the water above you, is a never-to-be-forgotten experience for anyone who has ever strapped on weights and tanks. If you are addicted to scuba diving, you will love it.

Forty-five miles farther south, on South Andros, is the modern **Las Palmas Hotel**, with its 20 rooms all under

one roof, like a U.S. motel, and served by the 5,000-foot paved Congo Town airstrip about a mile south of it. A relatively new resort, Las Palmas is on the south end of the Tongue of the Ocean drop-off, so that there is good informal fishing. There is a large swimming pool, a long clean white beach, sunfish/sailfish sailing and a beachside building for eating, drinking and socializing. This is a favorite get-away place for Nassauvians.

The Berry Islands

Chub Cay, the southernmost of the Berry Islands, has its own landing strip within walking distance of the **Chub Cay Club** (about half a mile). Visitors coming to this 60-unit club are mostly fishing-oriented, but those who are not so inclined may loaf around the pool,

stroll the long, curving two-mile beach, swim, skin dive (they just opened a scuba center), play tennis or sail rental boats. Then, if they get the itch, they can walk to their airplane to do some local flying, sightseeing and picture taking; Chub Cay is only 18 miles from North Andros, 35 miles from New Providence, 70 miles from North Eleuthera or the Exuma Cays, so the term “island-hopping” has meaning.

Furthermore, the Berrys themselves are eminently see-worthy and can be flown end-to-end in 25 minutes, simply by following the gentle arc of islands all the way to Great Harbour Cay. When you see some of the beautiful homes and estates on some of the Berry Islands, complete with broad, manicured lawns, formal gardens, swimming pools and their own secluded beaches, yacht harbors and private landing strips, you can't help dreaming of what it would be like if. . .

THE EASTERN OUT ISLANDS

For some psychological reason, whenever we fly easterly from New Providence Island, a completely different feeling of excitement develops, sort of a here-I-am-in-the-South Seas sentiment, which increases, the further we fly from civilization. Let's start at the top end of the eastern group and work our way down.

Eleuthera Island

Eleuthera Island, 110 miles end to end but only a mile or two wide for most of its length, contains altogether some 35 resorts, but we will continue to discuss only those involved with flying.

From Nassau an eminently photogenic string of cays leads the way to North Eleuthera, about 35 miles away, to a break, or “cut” known as “Current Cut,” with a town known as “The Current” just northeast. This is the location of the 19-unit **Current Diving Club**, which now caters to diving groups. We have found it to be one of the most restful, charming, enjoyable places in the islands, if you like boating, fishing and diving. No tennis and no golf, though. It is about eight miles from the North Eleuthera airstrip. Also located on North Eleuthera is the 40-room **Whale Point Club**, which is air-conditioned and offers all hotel amenities as well as pool and private beach. Several small islands lie northwest of the airport. On one—St. George's Cay—is another tiny New England-style town, Spanish Wells, so named because it was a regular stopping place for Spanish galleons on the way home, laden with Inca treasure, to replenish their drinking water casks with the clear water from the natural wells.



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Transportation from the North Eleuthera airstrip to Spanish Wells involves a taxicab trip of about five miles followed by a three-quarter-mile boat ride. This is one of many places in the Bahamas where you simply must have your color camera loaded and ready to shoot at all times and as frequently as possible, because you pass close by the lovely, unspoiled village, which looks elfin as you draw near. The major resort for fly-in visitors here is also pretty much focused on skin diving, as by now you will have realized is the case with most of the Out Island resorts. The 39-unit **Roberts Beach Resort** has only one tennis court, but its beach is beautiful and the nearby town is in itself a delight. We recommend staying in one of the beachside cottages facing on the sea, for privacy.

Another small island—the two-square-mile Harbour Island just east of the airport—is unsurpassed as a vacation spot. From the North Eleuthera airstrip, a mile and a half taxicab ride followed by a two-mile water taxi brings you to Harbour Island's Government Wharf, right in the middle of Dunmore Town, more than 300 years old and the original capital of the Bahamas. Today, Dunmore Town remains totally charming, a picturesque community with sparkling clean, pastel clapboard houses in the New England style, and whitewashed picket fences covered with blossoming bougainvillea, hibiscus and aromatic night-blooming jasmine. Here everyone says "Good morning," and "Good evening," and smiles.

I will unhesitatingly recommend four Harbour Island resorts to anyone who wants to savor the utterly relaxed, leisurely, lighthearted milieu of the Bahamas Out Islands.

For more than 30 years, Allen Malcolm, a transplant from Connecticut, has operated the internationally renowned **Pink Sands**, now offering 48 rooms and 31 individual villas sprinkled over the low, rolling hills that front on the island's incredibly pink beach, beyond which a small living reef breaks the waves that sweep in from the broad Atlantic Ocean. Individual villas give complete privacy, the menu is of the highest quality and there are several tennis courts. Allen Malcom runs a tight ship, and an elegant one. The Pink Sands bar, for example, is located on the other side of the island, on the bayfront of Dunmore Town, to provide peace and tranquility for his early-to-bed guests. It is, however, only a five-minute saunter from one side of the island to the other. Pink Sands does not have unicom, but may be reached by a unicom plus citizen's band radio patch

from any nearby unicom facility.

Only a pop-fly away, overlooking the same pink beach, is the completely air-conditioned, 33-room, two-story **Coral Sands and Pink Elephant**. Coral Sands is operated by AOPA member Brett King, an active pilot whose DeHavilland Dove may be seen at the North Eleuthera airstrip. Brett, a former motion picture actor, offers fun for the entire family (even television for the kids, in a sequestered game room), including scuba and skin diving, bone-fishing, boating, tennis and deep-sea fishing. Coral Sands provides every type of relaxation except golf. The Yellow Bird Bar is noted for regular meetings of the Pilots and Fishermen Story Telling Club, where the first raconteur doesn't have a chance.

A two-minute walk from Government Dock, where your water-taxi lands, is **Valentine's Yacht Club and Inn**, formerly the Briland Yacht Club—"Briland" is a contraction of "Harbour Island," and natives are called "Brilanders". With 27 rooms arranged around its swimming pool, Valentine's also offers water sports. Although it is not directly on the beach, no spot on Harbour Island is more than a couple of minutes from the beach on foot. Valentine's is a yachting-stop, principally, but pilots also like its informal, casual style. It also has tennis and has recently begun a scuba diving operation.

About a half-mile south of Dunmore Town, nestled in its own quiet cove that has offered shelter to sailors for hundreds of years, is the superlative **Romora Bay Club**, which has accrued an international reputation and renown as a scuba-diving center. Diving programs have been created by Roy Schmidt, himself a master diver, to appeal to both experienced scuba-divers and neophytes, so it is a great place for anyone to be introduced to the glories of the underwater world. The clubhouse is a courtly, graceful, formerly private residence sitting high on a hillside overlooking the tranquil anchorage, with some 23 cottages nestled around its lower slopes, only a three-minute walk to the Atlantic beach. AOPA member Roy's beauteous wife, Moyra (Roy + Moyra = "Romora"), who has filled the old manse with antiques and art objects, oversees the gourmet cuisine and the romantic, intimate surroundings, including candlelight and fine wine at dinner. There are tennis courts, sail and power boats and a great bayside bar at which you can salute the end of the day in the light of a spectacular sunset after a day of skin diving. Someone once said that the reefs around North Eleuthera were hell for ships but

FUEL AVAILABILITY

According to the Ministry of Tourism, the Bahamas have had no shortages of aviation gasoline, and they have been advised by the oil companies that the supply should be adequate for the foreseeable future. Since fuel is delivered to the Out Islands by barge and must be tested after delivery, short-lived spot shortages are possible. Pilots are advised to check fuel availability in advance through Vero Beach FSS or Miami International FSS.

heaven for divers: there are half a dozen shipwrecks in the club's diving area, including the famous "train wreck" — a locomotive on a sunken barge.

Sixty miles south, served by the private airstrip at Rock Sound — if it is correct to call a 7,205-foot-long, 150-foot-wide concrete runway an "airstrip" — are four fly-in-oriented facilities.

About a mile away from the airstrip is the recently reopened **Rock Sound Club**, which has a huge swimming pool surrounded by towering royal palms, several tennis courts and 33 individual cottages. The club's private beach is accessible by courtesy car. Originally, the Rock Sound Club was the place to go in the Out Islands and catered only to the very well-to-do category of clients. As a result, it was formal dress-for-dinner in its style. Located in the middle of a beautiful, flower-filled plantation estate, with a splendidly appointed dining room, this has since the early 1950's been a top resort; however, its creator moved on to larger things, and for a while the Rock Sound Club was closed down. Now it has been taken over by a new management more disposed towards barefoot elegance. Water sports are available, but if you are not the water-sports type — and let's face it, not everyone is — but want to savor the warm sun in serene surroundings where you can catch up on your reading, shuck all of your tensions and relax completely, you may not have to seek any further.

Rock Sound is only about a half hour east of Nassau. A unicom is going to be installed by the manager, who is a former military pilot.

The Beach Cottages on Winding Bay, now called **Winding Bay Beach Resort** located several miles north of the Rock Sound airstrip, has 11 cottages nested on the two-and-a-half miles of clean white sand beach facing the ocean. Here you can scuba dive, snorkel, sail, water-ski and fish, or loll beside the fresh-water swimming pool between sets of tennis. Another delightful spot. Good scuba.

Also in the Rock Sound area is the **Windermere Island Club** with 79 air-conditioned rooms, offering a more sedentary vacation in a palm-tree environment, with beachwalking, shelling and dipping in the ocean as its major offerings, along with boating. This is another place where the more mature set may enjoy a quiet spell, too quiet to attract the vigorous vacationer. Here you can sit in a rocking chair for two days, before you start to rock — and no one will notice. This is a first-rate retreat.

continued

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Log of Christopher Columbus, Oct. 16, 1492—Long Island, Bahamas



THE STELLA MARIS INN: 40 air-conditioned rooms, suites, apartments and cottages with up to 3 bedrooms.

Cape Santa Maria Club



CAPE SANTA MARIA CLUB: 10 air-conditioned lanai suites, two each located in beach cottages on white powder sand beach. Both club-type resorts together offer Full American Plan including the finest Continental, Bahamian and American cuisine.

ACTIVITIES include 3 pools, 5 reserved beaches, sailing, fishing, SCUBA DIVING, island excursions, barbecues, cave parties, live music for dancing, rental bicycles, motor bikes, tennis courts and AIRCRAFT RENTALS.



ESSO STANDARD OIL COMPANY is currently installing an aviation refill station at Stella Maris Airport. Completion is expected by mid-November with aviation gas available by December 1, 1979.

PILOT INFORMATION: UNICOM 122.8. Stella Maris Airport —4250 Ft. paved airstrip. NO TIE-DOWN FEES.

RESERVATIONS: See your Travel Agent or call Toll-Free 800-327-0787, Florida 800-432-5594, Miami 443-3821. Write: STELLA MARIS, P.O. Box 105, Long Island, Bahamas. Phone STELLA MARIS sales office Toll-Free 800-327-2514 or 305-764-8309. Dial Direct 809-336-2106.

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About 15 miles south of the Rock Sound airstrip is the fabulous, fashionable, incredibly beautiful 77-unit **Cotton Bay Club**. Situated on the edge of the sparkling sea, with five miles of immaculate beach, its 6,510-yard championship golf course, designed by Robert Trent Jones, is rimmed by the private homes of many famous personages, including the incomparable Juan Trippe, founder of Pan American World Airways, who created the Cotton Bay Club (and the Rock Sound Club, and Winding Bay Resort, and the Rock Sound airstrip). This is one of the more exclusive, expensive resorts in the Bahamas, or for that matter, North America. But it is well worth it if cost is no object, and you want to go first class all the way. Cotton Bay has everything you could ever want on a Bahamian vacation, except scuba.

Ten miles southwest of Rock Sound, the Cape Eleuthera airstrip (6,500 feet long, concrete, and being extended for large air carrier jets) serves the more-than-100 unit **Cape Eleuthera Resort and Yacht Club** — a new development of sizable proportions with miles of its own beaches, six tennis courts (two night-lighted), a great scuba-diving operation, sailing, motor boating and an 18-hole Devlin-Von Hagge championship golf course. The developers unabashedly focus on the high-income market: its marina will accommodate yachts up to 150 feet long, and every individual villa/cottage features a stereo tape system and a choice of 2,000 tapes from the club's library. There is a centrally located large swimming pool and a kiddies' pool, as well. The club is about five miles from its airstrip, which now has air carrier service and airline charters from the United States.

Cat Island

About 30 miles southeast of Cape Eleuthera lies Cat Island (not to be confused with Cat Cay, a tiny isle just south of Bimini). There are now only two resorts on Cat Island, and both resorts are at the bottom end, the "foot" of the island. The **Cutlass Bay Club**, begun by the well-known entertainer and comedian Herb Shriner, is a 12-room resort offering rather rustic facilities the last time we were there. Warning: the club's own landing strip was rough as a cob and pretty marginal, particularly on a hot day, when our airplane (a Cherokee Six-300) had six people aboard.

At the southern tip (about where the big toenail would be) is the ten-unit **Hawk's Nest Club**, a smaller version of the Windermere Island Club, except that Hawk's Nest has its own private

3,000-foot-long airstrip; you can walk from your plane to the clubhouse in less than a minute — a true fly-in club. Although it has its own marina and caters to cruising yachtsmen, this resort is supported mostly by the flying trade, which takes advantage of the informal, low-key, convivial life-style. The beach is magnificent; the food, excellent, and you will meet some wonderful people there. Last time we were there, they were talking about building a tennis court, so if you are a tennis nut, check in advance.

San Salvador

This most-famous-of-all Bahamas Is-

land, only 10 or 15 minutes east of Cat Island, is surprisingly large, measuring 11 miles from north to south and a good 4 miles east to west. From aloft you will see that almost all of the island's interior is watery, since the island is full of lakes, from 2 to 6 miles in length, all fun to swim in and boat on.

The airstrip is less than half a mile from the **Riding Rock Inn**, a 47-unit hostelry offering a number of individual cottages and all sorts of water sports in surroundings that are still unspoiled and serene — and its own pink-tinted beaches, too. And tennis.

This is a delightful get-away spot for a vacation holiday, almost exclusively



reserved for the enjoyment of those who fly in light airplanes. The food is excellent and there is a swimming pool. And the scuba diving is nothing less than sensational.

The Exuma Cays

The first Exuma Cay you will see, coming out of Nassau, is Norman's Cay, which vaguely resembles an inverted saxophone about four miles long. The 3,000-foot hard-surface runway at about the neck of the saxophone makes it readily identifiable.

Forty miles down the Exuma chain is Staniel Cay, home of the six-room *Staniel Cay Club* (the adjacent *Happy People Marina* has 11 rooms), served by its own 3,000-foot, hard-surface airstrip, as befits its owner, Joe Hoher, an AOPA member. Staniel Cay offers accommodations in waterfront cottages and a guest house. You can explore the island's many beaches, sail, swim in protected waters, scuba dive (Joe Hoher is also an accomplished diver), and the bonefishing is excellent. Guides are available for that and for deep-sea fishing, too. Here, you can abide in an almost authentic Tahitian tableau, where you can partake of a potion of pineapple punch under the thatched roof after sundown, and talk about flying or diving or fishing.

Great Exuma Island

The mile-long hardsurfaced airstrip at George Town, Great Exuma, serves the *Club Peace & Plenty* and the *Out Island Inn*, both about five miles from the airstrip's tie-down ramp.

Peace & Plenty — one of the oldest, permanently established of all the Out Island resorts — and one of the most attractive — sits right on the edge of Elizabeth Harbour, with beautiful, low-lying Stocking Island rising from the sea only a mile to the east. Each of the 32 rooms has a view of that dazzling panorama of sea, land and sky, where the sun bursts each morning like a golden bomb. Every room has a private balcony. The dining area overlooks the much-photographed poolside sun deck, where you can swim, swizzle, snack, sun and socialize. Although Peace & Plenty does not have an immediately adjacent beach, it does have one on the west shoreline of Stocking Island, and most George Town visitors cross the quarter of a mile of Stocking Island's ridge to the Atlantic Ocean beach. Crossing the protected bay in any kind of boat is fun; the water is so clear that you can see the details of the bottom 15 feet below, so the lack of beach has never made a difference.

Only 100 yards or so away is the *Out*

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from Paradise...



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A **water sports equipment store**, scuba dive shop, gift shop, liquor store, beauty salon, barber shop, drug store and news stand are on our premises for your added convenience. You'll enjoy our superb Bahamian, American and European cuisine along with locals and other tourists alike in our air-conditioned restaurant or outside in the cool unpolluted Bahamian air surrounded by lush, tropical gardens. **Dancing nightly** to the lilting tunes of our local musicians.

RATES E.P.	STANDARD	SUPERIOR	DELUXE
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	DOUBLE \$27	\$29	\$33
12/16/79-4/19/80	SINGLE \$39	\$45	\$53
	DOUBLE \$45	\$53	\$63

M.A.P. Add \$15 per person per day. Children under 6 are always FREE.

Res: See your Travel Agent or call Toll-Free 800-327-0787, Florida 800-432-5594, Miami 443-3821. UNICOM 122.8.

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Ruth Maury—
Jerry Whiteleather

UNICOM 122.8

ABACO INN

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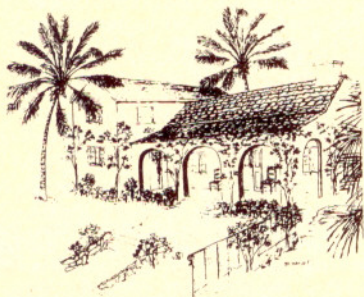
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DAILY FLIGHTS from Miami and Fort Lauderdale via Shawnee Airlines and scheduled flights from Miami on Mondays and Fridays via Bahamasair.

RES: See your Travel Agent or call Toll-Free 800-432-5594, Miami 443-3821, or write: P.O. Box 146, Harbour Island Bahamas.

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HARBOUR ISLAND, BAHAMAS

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Res: See your Travel Agent or Call Toll-Free 800-327-0787. FREE Brochure: CORAL SANDS, Box 535, Pompano Beach, Fla. 33061.

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Canada Zenith 9-9110.

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Island Inn. With 88 rooms, some of which are in two-story buildings built of native stone, it offers tennis and all water sports including sailing, sunfish/sailfish right off the crescent-shaped beach only a few feet from your cottage door. There is a first-class scuba operation at George Town, about a mile or so away; the dive-master will usually pick you up.

Long Island

Long Island is the southernmost of the Bahamas to which we will recommend all but the most adventurous fly-in tourists. Except for a couple of guest houses on Crooked Island — one at Colonel Hill and a new 15-room establishment at Pitts Town (with its own 2,400-foot landing strip placarded with warnings), the southern Bahamas (Crooked, Acklins Island, Mayaguana, Great Inagua and Little Inagua) have no real tourist resorts and are not yet ready to be considered as vacation spots for any but those ready for almost primitive conditions.

On the north end of Long Island a trio of German lads operate two facilities: *Stella Maris* and the *Cape Santa Maria Club*, both of which have their own private landing strips. Stella Maris is 4,200 feet long and the Cape Club's is a bit more than half of that length. Both are perfect for island-hopping, since the former is less than a half mile from the club house and the latter is so close that the people on the beach can read your N-number when you land. As a result, it is easy to climb into your airplane and run south on a sightseeing mission to hop the 30 miles or so to Crooked Island over water with only another 30 miles or so to Mayaguana.

Stella Maris can house 100 guests in its 42 rooms, cottages and apartments and has no less than three swimming pools, three private beaches and a tennis court. The skin diving is magnificent, whether you want to don tanks and go deep, or just free dive in the shallows. It is also a scuba-rating resort. Because of the ancestry of its operators, the menu changes from American-style to German-style on alternate days. If Jorg Friese, Peter Kuska and Gerd Fuhrman can't get you to unwind, no one can. No diets.

The ten-unit Santa Maria Club, about 12 miles north of Stella Maris, is obviously much smaller and operates at a slower pace. However, all of the facilities — including scuba diving — offered at Stella Maris are available to guests of the latter club, as well. No airborne island-hopper could ask for more.

WRAPPING IT UP

It is impossible to include here all of the resorts in the Bahamas, or to create the real feeling, flavor or personality of the ones that are mentioned. You have to go and find out for yourself. But among the places we have mentioned in the Out Islands, you should be able to find one that fits you like a glove. Go ahead, and have fun! □

Bahamas Islands Brochures

Here is some literature to feed your fantasies.

The Bahamas — Hotel Rates (ask for current issue)

The Bahamas — Nassau/Paradise Island

The Bahamas — Grand Bahama Freeport/Lucaya

The Bahamas — The Out Islands

The Bahamas — General Information

The Bahamas — Sports Holidays

The Bahamas — Skin Diving

The Bahamas — Golf

The Bahamas — Tennis

The 700 Bahama Out Islands

All of these should be available from all Bahama Islands Tourist Offices. If they do not have them, write directly to the Ministry Of Tourism, Nassau, in the Bahamas.

In Addition, each club/hotel/inn/lodge/resort in the Out Islands has its own advertising brochure. To receive detailed information or to make reservations at any Out Island spot we have mentioned, you can call on a toll-free number:

800-327-0787 (anywhere in U.S., except Florida)

800-432-5594 (for Florida only)

ZEnith 99110 (in Canada)

For informational brochures on the Bahamas, write to the Bahamas Tourist Office nearest you:

In Canada:

MONTREAL 1255 Phillips Square
Montreal, Quebec H3B3G1 (514) 861-6797

TORONTO 85 Richmond Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5H2C9 (416) 363-4441

In United States:

ATLANTA ... 1950 Century Blvd., N.E., Suite 26
Atlanta, Ga. 30345 (404) 633-1793

BOSTON 1027 Statler Office Building
Boston, Mass. 02116 (617) 426-3144

CHICAGO 875 North Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60611 (312) 787-8203

DALLAS 2825 Southland Center
Dallas, Tex. 75201 (214) 742-1886

LOS ANGELES 3450 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 208
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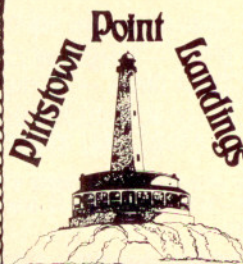
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