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# On Anguilla,

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## High Rubs Elbows With Low



**\$1,000 a Day** *'Roughing it' at a chic resort: a chilly seaweed wrap and kids in the hot tub.*

**BY JULIET MACUR**

**A**N hour after arriving on Anguilla in early January, I was soaking in the hot tub at an exclusive resort, sunglasses on, eyes closed, sun warming my pasty Northeastern face.

Ah, Anguilla, a quiet island that has recently become "the next St. Barts," a hedonistic hideaway and magnet for members of the boldface set. At the northeast corner of this narrow isle, Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt spent New Year's in a villa on Captain's Bay. On its southwestern coast, Jay-Z and Beyoncé had cuddled on the sands of Shoal Bay West. Down the beach from my resort, Uma Thurman had kicked back at a local bar.

Just as I began to imagine that I, too, was a star on an escape-the-paparazzi trip, reality interrupted. A foreign object crashed into my hot tub and sent water slapping against my face. A

small boy and his father were throwing a ball wildly.

The father's next toss bounced off the boy's head and against a woman's forehead. The father laughed. The woman smiled. I growled and thought, "This doesn't happen to Jennifer Aniston."

I left in a huff because I had no time for distractions. This was serious business: I had to figure out how to get by on \$1,000 a day.

Though Anguilla is a relatively undeveloped island where goats might outnumber residents, \$1,000 a day at a chic resort amounts to roughing it.

At the Cap Juluca resort, the cheapest room in high season cost \$936 a night, including the 20 percent tax. Malliouhana Hotel offered a

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# High and Low: On Anguilla, the Beaches Belong to Everyone

**\$1,000 a Day**

*Continued From First Travel Page*

garden view room on the first floor for \$744.

If my best friend, Rose, and I were to eat, drink and even think of going to the spa on my \$1,000-a-day budget, the only high-end resort I could afford was the CuisinArt Resort and Spa, which sits near the island's southwestern end on Rendezvous Bay's beach, one and a half miles of flour-soft sand, blindingly white.

The turquoise ocean water was as clear as Evian, and you could see fish near the sea floor. The cheapest rate, \$550 plus \$110 tax — but including Continental breakfast — would allow us to pretend we belonged at this beautiful place.

The resort's grounds were simple and elegant. Eggplant-colored bougainvillea climbed the whitewashed stucco buildings that looked as if they had been plucked from a Greek cliff. In a nearby garden were trees heavy with guavas, fig bananas and star apples.

As we looked from the lobby onto a series of rectangular pools cascading to the beach, a receptionist said we had been upgraded from the main house to a suite in one of the 10 three-story villas clustered along the

shore. "We hope you don't mind," she said, unaware that I was a journalist.

No, we didn't, and certainly not after seeing the room. The upgrade, to a junior suite that would have cost \$120 more a night, allowed us to hear waves from our patio.

Our "suite" was a cheery, not fancy, single room, but at 920 square feet was nearly as big as my Manhattan apartment. A navy couch broke up the space into sleeping and lounging areas. Two double beds with wicker headboards faced the porch and a walkway to the beach. Paintings of Greek fishing villages and bright bedspreads splashed color against the white walls and tile floors.

A brochure called the bathroom "your own private sanctum," large enough for an oval tub for a honeymooning couple's bubble bath. But nothing was that private, considering one wall was made of warped glass. While on the outside walkway one day, I gasped when I saw a fuzzy version of Rose heading for the shower.

At the resort's free reception on our first night (with food and drink), the manager, Rabin Ortiz, told us, "Do not make plans for your weekend." We quickly learned why. There are no plans to make because, on Anguilla, there is basically nothing to do. And that's the point.

At CuisinArt, stay away from the main pool (where ball-tossing children congregate). Instead, sit on the beach and take de-

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library of homemade lemon sorbet from servers whose goal is to fill you with fruity rum drinks. After sundown, submit to spa treatments like the Anguillian coconut pineapple scrub, which smells good enough to eat, and the hydroponic cucumber and aloe wrap, using ingredients grown on the premises.

It was the perfect place for us: upscale, but not one bit snooty.

Night life is minimal. (At 10:30 on Saturday night, only one couple was at our resort's bar, where a trio sang "Endless Love.") Sea kayaks, sailboats, catamarans and tennis courts were available and mostly unused. For casino or dance club action, it's a half-hour ferry ride to St. Martin.

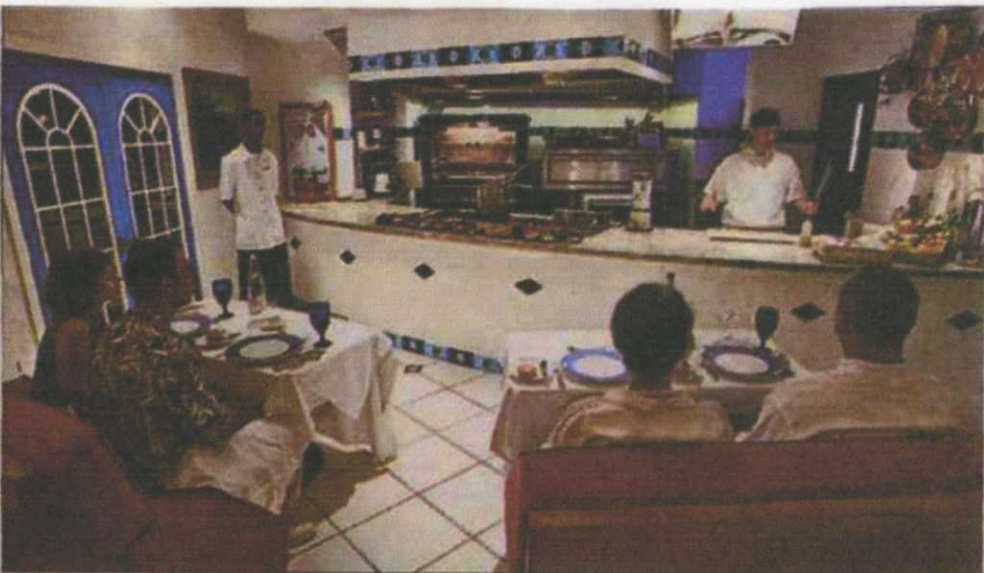
Still, after too many games of boccie and gin rummy — or perhaps not enough gin and rum — we searched for some fun. Down the beach was Dune Preserve, a delightfully mellow bar inside a wooden shack owned by the local reggae legend Bankie Banx. A CuisinArt bartender said that Uma had been there the night before.

We followed the shoreline to get there. But then, as if the local gods ordered punishment for all \$1,000-a-day cheapskates, two stray dogs charged us in the darkness. We couldn't see them, but they barked and snapped like rabid Rottweilers, sending us running back to CuisinArt. So much for Uma.

Cowards that we were, we rented a car the next day for \$55 (including \$20 for an Anguillian license) and that night drove 60 seconds to Dune Preserve, only to realize we were too full for a drink. Because, on Anguilla, what you do is eat — often.

Our gluttony had begun at Santorini, which, like CuisinArt's other heavenly restaurant, Cafe Mediterraneo, uses food grown in the resort's high-tech hydroponic garden or its old-school organic one. There, Rose and I went to a class led by CuisinArt's executive chef, Daniel Orr, formerly a chef at Guastavino's in New York City.

Neither of us is a great cook. (My fridge at home contains two bottles of seltzer, nail polish and AA batteries.) But we are great eaters. We stuffed ourselves with a tangy serving of stingray, a dizzyingly delicious chocolate soufflé and yellow lentil bisque so good we were tempted to lick our bowls.



ABOVE A cooking class at the CuisinArt Resort is led by the chef Gary Masterson. TOP The resort's stucco buildings, by one of the pools.

Afterward, I was shocked at the \$75 charge, well over the advertised \$55 I had budgeted (it had just gone up). I next heard my whiny voice telling the concierge:

"You don't understand. I cannot afford this extra \$20."

The concierge rolled her eyes, but, hey, I needed \$110 for the seaweed scrub later.

That evening, we took a cab (\$13 each way) to dinner at Blanchard's, a top-notch restaurant in a quaint cottage. Most of the 23 tables were arranged on the main floor, but we sat on a lower patio overlooking fountains and gardens and the sea beyond. The only disappointments were the rubbery lobster included in the \$56 Caribbean Sampler and the waiters' rushing us through the meal. Total for my dinner: \$110.40.

Perhaps the management could sense that we were not the stars of our imaginations. I asked the man at the bar if any real stars came in. He reeled off names of those who had been there "just yesterday": Denzel Washington. Johnny Damon. Liam Neeson and his wife, Natasha Richardson. Courteney Cox Arquette. And, of course, Jennifer Aniston.

The next day, though it was dry season, it poured. So on that rainy Sunday we rented a car and checked out Anguilla, which didn't

long. It is only about 16 miles long and 3 miles wide. We found it pleasingly devoid of cheesy T-shirt shops and fast-food joints but plentiful with road-roaming goats and the smiling people who own them.

We lunched at Gorgeous Scilly Cay, a primitive restaurant on a tiny island off the northeastern coast. With no electricity, it's open only from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. To get there, you stand on a dock and hail a boatman.

Normally, patrons sun themselves there on lounge chairs between courses, and get foot rubs from the restaurant's masseur, said the owner, Sandra Wallace. But not on this rainy day. On the boat over with us, she wore a garbage bag to stay dry; the masseur stayed home.

Still, a calypso band played upbeat music in the main house, which had about a dozen tables and was open on all sides. Outside, there were several palm-covered huts, each with a few plastic tables and chairs, where I ordered the crayfish and chicken plate for \$45, as sweet as their rum punch was dangerous. My lunch, with tip, came to \$74.

We found no famous people there, either — we were managing to repel them — though we did hear that Sharon Stone had recently rented out the whole island. And Jennifer Aniston (her again) had been there

the week before.

That evening, I had my second treatment at the Venus Spa — a place without much character or Zen — at CuisinArt. (In the thumbnail-size locker room, I awkwardly rubbed elbows with someone's naked grandmother.) The Caribbean warm stone massage (\$115, plus \$22 tip) was a step up from

## *A beautiful beach, cheery room and great food, but no Jennifer.*

the seaweed wrap of the day before — better called the seaweed chill.

That one began with me shivering in the treatment room. The masseuse said, "If I told them once, I told them 20 times, this room is freezing."

Then she spread cold seaweed gook over my goose bumps. I groaned while she mummified me with towels. Under those coverings, wrapped inside foil, I felt like a hypothermia patient.

But relief came with the warm stone massage. As the smooth rocks rolled over my muscles it felt oddly soothing, as if I were being seared by a giant stick of roll-on deodorant. I felt so much at ease that later I splurged on a smoothie for Rose, at \$8.05 the only thing I could afford to buy her all weekend.

When the sun came out on our last day, I passed the hot tub and saw that same annoying family with their dreaded ball, this time being tossed between two strollers. So I headed for the beach.

I bobbed around the water for a while, then moved my peaceful self to a lounge chair. There I sipped on my own smoothie until it was time to get back to the real world by way of the St. Martin airport.

At a terminal newsstand, I finally saw Jennifer Aniston — on a magazine cover. How terrible — her Anguillian experience included suffering greater than my seaweed chill — she and Brad had broken up.

"Hey lady!" the cashier yelled. "Did you see the sign? You can't read the magazines until you buy them!"

What, she thought I looked rich? I had already spent my \$2,000. So I dropped the \$3.95 magazine onto the shelf and walked away.

**TWO-DAY TOTAL: \$2,000.35**



## \$250 a Day A comfy guest house is a base for shopping, riding and beachcombing.

BY BONNIE DESIMONE

off we went, grinding through the swells on a 25-minute ride that is not for the faint of stomach.

From the Blowing Point ferry terminal, I took a cab to Lloyd's Guest House, where I'd reserved a single room, including a hot, cooked-to-order breakfast, for \$78 a night including tax. Perched atop breezy Crocus Hill, and managed by David Lloyd, whose parents opened the bed-and-breakfast 45 years ago, Lloyd's serves business travelers and savvy tourists. My fellow guests included an artist, two marine biologists and an itinerant financier.

During the revolution, partisans irked by the senior Mr. Lloyd's pro-independence leanings fired multiple rounds of ammunition into the hotel's exterior walls. No one was hurt, all was eventually forgiven, and the hotel is an island institution. I asked Mr. Lloyd if he considered selling the business after his parents died. He smiled. "They would come back alive," he said.

My spacious, high-ceilinged room had a stone-tile floor, worn but functional furniture and a private bath with a shower and a cold-water sink. There was a television in

was its largely nonviolent reverse revolution in the late 1960's, when islanders successfully staved off Britain's attempts to loosen economic and administrative ties. The island remains a British dependency.

It's easier to do Anguilla on a budget than it was years ago, and not just because the wake-up calls are free. Luxury accommodations have multiplied, but so have reasonably priced establishments. And it's a challenge to spend money on night life: there's hardly any.

On a Friday afternoon in mid-December, I flew from Philadelphia to the island of St. Martin and took a taxi to the port of Marigot, where ferries leave for Anguilla every 30 or 40 minutes. My suitcase was loaded alongside 52-pound bags of dog food and cases of juice, and

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*Get a tuna sub to go and relax on the same sands as the boldface set.*

the room but no phone. (Mr. Lloyd makes his office phone and Internet connection available to guests.)

Air-conditioning can be turned on for another \$10 a night, but a ceiling fan and an open window sufficed. Some of the 14 rooms are being renovated.

My first night, I walked down the short, steep and very dark hill (bring a flashlight) to Roy's Place on Crocus Bay, the quintessential beachcomber's joint, for a terrific lobster salad and a couple of beers (\$36), then repaired to the bar to join the island's best ongoing blarney session.

*BONNIE DeSIMONE writes about travel and sports.*

**I** KNEW the drill. An ever-punctual rooster outside my window would cut loose with a brain-curdling cry at about 4 in the morning. I put a pillow over my head, and, sinking back into sleep, I imagined this same rooster, its internal G.P.S. activated the second I set foot on Anguilla, ruthlessly tracking me down as it had on all my previous visits.

I was an old Anguilla hand, but this time on a new and interesting mission: how to live well on \$250 a day on a Caribbean island that promotes itself as an elite retreat.

The key? Chickens have the run of the place, but so do people. Anguilla's staggeringly beautiful beaches are public land, open to all no matter what high-price resort looms nearby.

I felt like a reverse infiltrator. That's apt, since the highlight of Anguilla's modern history

On Saturday morning, breakfast was scrambled eggs, bacon and potatoes. My only quibble with Lloyd's was the mix-it-yourself instant coffee; I went British for the weekend and drank tea.

A compact rental car awaited me outside the hotel. Mr. Lloyd booked it through Andy Connors's local agency, which delivered it. The daily rate was \$35 plus a one-time \$20 fee for a temporary driver's license.

Driving on Anguilla is a cross-cultural lesson. Islanders drive on the left, use high beams after sundown and routinely pick up hitchhikers. When I was detoured onto a dusty, cratered secondary road because of repaving on the main drag, I stopped to ask two women for directions and was somewhat startled when they opened the door and climbed in. We all got to our destinations.

Wanting affluent-looking feet, I had an

hour-plus basic pedicure (\$40) at the Taino Wellness Center in South Hill Village. Then I took my newly painted toenails for a picnic at Maunday's Bay, near the southern tip and the site of the very upscale Cap Juluca resort.

I assembled lunch en route at Wee-Gee's bakery and MacDonna's, a take-out place, stashing a tuna sub, water, a banana and a soda (\$10) in a soft cooler brought from home. I parked in Cap Juluca's public lot, spread my towel beneath a sea grape tree, ate, read, took a dip and gazed back at the resort's white Moorish-style villas and perfect palm trees.

Sharing space with resort guests is an interesting exercise in etiquette. I wouldn't have been comfortable flopping between the chaise longues where Cap Julucans reclined, and it's not kosher for nonguests to use the chairs during prime beach time. But

on previous visits, I've waited until late afternoon when the beach empties, then used the chairs with a wink and no interference from staff members.

Next on my agenda was a hike to Shoal Bay West, one beach over. Anguilla's southwestern end features a string of beaches separated by fossilized coral outcroppings. The passages range from easy to dicey and call for long pants and closed-toe shoes with good traction.

I walked over on a nonscenic inland path along a pond, emerging on another gorgeous strip of sand occupied by the chic Altamer and Covecastles resorts, the Blue Waters Beach Apartments and a pink mansion once owned by the actor Chuck Norris.

After rambling the length of the beach and back, I took a break at the dreamy little open-air Trattoria, Tramonto, whose sensory pleasures include colorful tile-and-wood





Photographs by Chris Ramirez/World Picture News, for The New York Times

ABOVE Lloyd's Guest House is set atop Crocus Hill.

LEFT At Elodia's on Shoal Bay, a chaise longue and umbrella rent for \$5.

RIGHT Joan Brooks serves Robert a nonalcoholic drink at Roy's Place.



of snapper with sweet-tart creole sauce, rice and native peas, canned mixed veggies and salad, a beer and tip came to \$16.25. A night-cap at Roy's (\$4), and I was ready for bed.

On Sunday morning, I chose cereal for breakfast to spare my arteries and drove 20 minutes to Shoal Bay East. It's a one-stop-shopping beach with lots of commercial activity, but still never seems crowded.

At Elodia's, a complex that includes villas and a bar-restaurant, I rented a chaise longue and umbrella (\$5) and snorkeling gear (\$10) and treated myself to a \$3 coffee.

When a glass-bottomed boat pulled up near the beach, I waded into the water and hailed Junior Fleming, who has worked Shoal Bay East for years. He proposed an hourlong one-on-one snorkeling outing for \$40 (less per person depending on the size of the group), then motored to an outlying reef.

The current was strong, so Junior literally took my hand and towed me around, pointing out huge schools of blue tang, the odd, long-nosed trumpet fish, stands of elkhorn and fan coral. I hauled myself back aboard wobbly, parched and exhilarated.

I rehydrated with a large bottle of mineral water (\$4) and strolled to Uncle Ernie's timeless beach-food shack for a cheeseburger, coleslaw, fries and a soda (\$8). I read, walked and swam until late afternoon, when the reggae band at Elodia's segued into Bob Marley's classic "Stir It Up," triggering a Pavlovian craving for rum. I nursed a frozen piña colada (\$7), dusted with cinnamon and topped with a maraschino cherry, while watching the sunset.

Wanting to dine somewhere with tablecloths without busting my budget, I headed to Tasty's in South Hill. I ordered lobster-and-corn bisque and seafood salad, and washed it down with a half-bottle of French rosé (\$46 with tip). I still had money to burn, so I made my now-ritual stop at Roy's before retiring.

On Monday morning, I squeezed in visits to several art galleries before going to the CuisinArt resort's Café Mediterraneo on Rendezvous Bay for a parting lunch: an entrée-size salad of greens and vegetables from the resort's hydroponic garden and a big bottle of bubbly water (\$33.35).

As I savored the meal and my lush surroundings, three plump hens stutter-stepped across the patio. A rooster called from afar. Two women sitting next to me started, and one giggled nervously. "At least they keep the floor clean," she said.

We budget travelers don't hog the poultry. The chickens, like all the best sights on Anguilla, are for everyone.

**TWO-DAY TOTAL: \$498.25**

décor, opera wafting from the speakers and freshly grated nutmeg on the exotic drinks. I ordered a cooling lime daiquiri (\$8 with tip) and discussed celebrity sightings with the bartender, who reported that Robert De Niro had stopped in recently.

I slowly worked my way back across the point to Maunday's Bay without encountering another person. Footing on the dead coral can be treacherous, and the "trails" are more like random openings in the thick scrub vegetation, but I was rewarded with views of the ocean and St. Martin and the beginnings of a double rainbow.

I'd never seen Anguilla on horseback, so I arranged for a private ride (\$25 plus \$2 tip) at El Rancho del Blues stable near Blowing Point. The facilities are a tad ramshackle and my Dominican guide spoke little English, but my chestnut rent-a-mare, Natasha, appeared healthy and the tack was in good

shape.

Our eclectic hourlong route wound through a residential area, sunlit fields of high grass and the crowded ferry terminal parking lot before it reached the beach. It wasn't a high-level equestrian experience, but I was content to take it easy.

I cleaned up in a gas station bathroom and made my way to the Devonish Art Gallery at West End to attend a reception for an exhibit of antique maps. Over complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres, I chatted with the gallery's owners, Courtney and Carrolle Devonish, and bought one of Mr. Devonish's woodcarvings, a "touch form" (\$20) meant to be cupped in the palm for stress reduction.

Dinner had to be inexpensive after my profligacy, so I headed for the English Rose, a tavern in Anguilla's central business district, The Valley. A trencherman's portion

## IF YOU GO

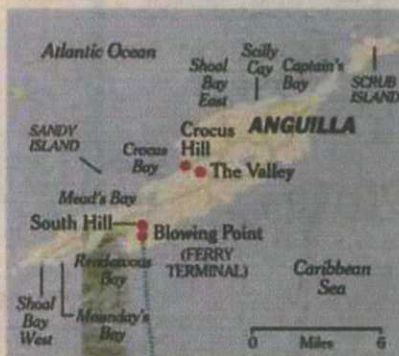
### GETTING THERE

Several United States airlines run flights to Anguilla, but most operate in connection with other carriers. Most flights go through San Juan, and the cheapest fares (from about \$646 round trip for late March) can require an additional connection in St. Martin. If you fly into St. Martin (from about \$561 round trip), you can take a 20-minute ferry to Anguilla (\$24 round trip plus \$2.75 departure tax from St. Martin and \$3 from Anguilla). Ferries run every half hour from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

### WHERE TO STAY

**Cap Juluca**, (888) 858-5822, [www.capjuluca.com](http://www.capjuluca.com), is tucked away on the secluded beach at Maunday's Bay, making it a favorite hideaway for celebrities. Doubles start at \$780 a night in the high season, from \$445 in April, and \$345 from May 1 through mid-November. (Add 20 percent in taxes to all rates.)

**Malliouhana Hotel and Spa**, (264) 497-6111, [www.malliouhana.com](http://www.malliouhana.com), is the perfect place to see an Anguillan sunset: it sits atop a cliff facing west over the crystal blue waters of Mead's Bay. Doubles start at \$400 from April 1 to 30, and \$290 from May 1 to Nov. 19; ocean-view one-bedroom suites are \$825 and \$660.



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**CuisinArt Resort and Spa**, (264) 498-2000, [www.cuisinartresort.com](http://www.cuisinartresort.com), is perched on Rendezvous Bay. Rooms start at \$550 a night from January through March, \$395 in April, and \$350 from May 1 to mid-December.

**Lloyd's Guest House**, (264) 497-2351,

[www.lloyds.ai](http://www.lloyds.ai), has 14 rooms on Crocus Hill, in walking distance of Crocus Bay. The spacious rooms, some recently renovated, go for \$65 to \$85, with breakfast.

### WHERE TO EAT

**Blanchard's**, (264) 497-6100, [www.blanchardsrestaurant.com](http://www.blanchardsrestaurant.com), has a romantic setting overlooking Mead's Bay, and serves food with a Caribbean flair. From mid-October through May, it opens for dinner at 6:30 p.m. and is closed Sunday. June through August, it is closed Sunday and Monday. Closed Sept. 1 to Oct. 20. Entrees from \$34.

**Gorgeous Scilly Cay**, (264) 497-5123, is an open-air restaurant on its own island, with free ferry service from Island Harbor. It is open on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Since there is no electricity, all food (chicken or seafood) is grilled. Live music on Wednesday and Sunday. Entrees start at \$25.

**Roy's Place**, (264) 497-2470, [www.roysplaceanguilla.com](http://www.roysplaceanguilla.com), is a charming beachcomber's joint overlooking Crocus Bay, with a lively beach bar and an Internet connection for guests (including wireless). There is a Friday happy hour with dinner specials for \$12. The Sunday specials are prime rib (\$20) and lobster (\$38). Lunch and dinner served daily, except dinner only on Saturday.

**English Rose**, (264) 497-5353, a tavern in the central business district of The Valley, serves generous portions of comfort food at reasonable prices: burgers from \$4, salads from \$6. Closed Sunday.

**Tasty's Restaurant**, (264) 497-2737, offers chic-casual Caribbean dining in South Hill; dishes like stewed creole-style lobster for \$30, and coconut-crusted filet of parrot fish in banana rum sauce for \$20. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, except Thursday.

**Trattoria Tramonto**, (264) 497-8819, has open-air dining and a beach bar on one of the island's prettiest beaches, Shoal Bay West. The Italian menu emphasizes game and seafood, including wild boar filet mignon (\$35) and spaghetti with crayfish, clams and shrimp (\$30). Lunch and dinner except Monday.

**Uncle Ernie's**, (264) 497-3907, is a quintessential beach shack on Shoal Bay East; open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### WHAT TO DO

**Taino Wellness Center**, off Spanish Town Road, South Hill, (264) 497-6066, [www.magma.ca/~phwalker/](http://www.magma.ca/~phwalker/), offers massages (from \$40 for 30 minutes), manicures and pedicures (from \$15), facials (from \$50), and body treatments.

**Devonish Art Gallery**, the Cove, West End, (264) 497-2949, shows works of local artists, including those by Courtney Devonish, a woodcarver and ceramicist. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday or by appointment Sunday.

Horseback riding with **El Rancho del Blues** in Blowing Point, (264) 497-6164 or 497-6334, starts at \$25 an hour.