

Jamaica Inn-Credible!

by

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We just spent five nights and six days at Jamaica Inn in Ocho Rios. Not since our honeymoon in Venice in 1976 have we actually cried upon leaving. This should give some indication as to the intensity of intimacy Jamaica Inn provides. You don't just "stay" at Jamaica Inn, you experience it spiritually.

Our Jamaica Inn "journey" began in its alluring lobby with a warm "welcome home" greeting from owner Eric Morrow, General Manager Mary Phillips, and the breathtaking, multi-colored Caribbean Sea framed by lush tropical landscape. Eric, having grown up on the property and taken over the reins from his father, has intriguing details about the history of Jamaica Inn. Mary is the perfect hostess, the type of person who, after only a few minutes in her company, makes you feel as if you have known her forever.

The lobby, which is pictured on the website, www.jamaicainn.com, was for us, one of the immediate selling points. It drew us - wanting to experience it live, and unlike many other "brochure-type" photos, it was more magnificent in person. This entrance sets the tone for the entire resort - a natural, inviting, quiet elegance.



One may think of an "Inn" as quaint and rustic, but Jamaica Inn is far from that. The simplicity of its name is deceiving. Confident of its identity, for over half a century Jamaica Inn hasn't needed to hyperbolize or aggrandize its name with descriptors like

“Royal,” “Palace,” “Grand,” “Excelsior,” “Majestic,” *et al.* It knows what it’s about, as do its discerning guests, many of whom have been returning for decades.

Jamaica Inn’s high style and sense of decorum have attracted many notables including Noel Coward, Joan Collins, T.S. Elliot, Princess Margaret, former Prime Minister John Marsh, Winston Churchill, and Marilyn Monroe with Arthur Miller on their honeymoon (pictured below).



It speaks well of Jamaica Inn that some of its staff have been serving loyally and energetically long enough to actually recall having served and engaged these famous guests. Teddy, the singing bar tender, for instance, has been at Jamaica Inn for fifty-three years, riding his bicycle to work and still going strong.



All the ambience and rich history in the world, however, cannot take the place of excellent accommodations and cuisine, both of which are first class at Jamaica Inn. Every room is pristine and has been thoughtfully and elegantly appointed. We have stayed in penthouses, presidential suites, European palaces and castles, yet in terms of intimacy, none, so far can compare with the ultimate White Suite - Churchill Suite

("room" 21). It is the "be all, end all" of any accommodation we have stayed in thus far - period. You can look at pictures and read descriptions, but nothing will prepare you for this villaesque playground for intimacy.



French Doors lead to expansive living quarters with an intricately carved wooden four-poster bed.



Exotic orchids and floral arrangements abound, created by a sweet and creative lady named Winsome. A walk-in closet, sofa, loveseat, 1940's vanity, library, and a colonial desk with seemingly anachronous 21st century WI-FI, complete the room's furnishings.



There's even a fancy chess set on a wooden pedestal in case you want to try your hand at checkmating your soul mate.



Odd, we never did get around to checking - just mating.

The newly remodeled dual-sink bathroom is adorned with small crystal chandeliers, a fancy old-fashioned footed bathtub and separate shower. But the amazing part is when you open the three sets of double-shutters, the Caribbean Sea suddenly becomes part of the room. Bathing and showering with this live marine mural promotes almost involuntary sighs of contentment.



Adjacent to the bathroom, another set of double doors leads out onto an enormous ceramic-tiled wrap-around terrace with the Caribbean Sea “right there,” practically at eye-level. It’s the perfect place for the outdoor breakfast table for two along with a coffee/tea corner and mini refrigerator to store your champagne.



Continuing around, gives you a full view of your private pool. This is not a plunge pool. This is a good size pool for swimming and frolicking. No need to toe-dip in this pool. The temperature is perfect for getting right in and the water feels "light" and not overly chlorinated. Two white pool rafts are available for your floating pleasure as well as two sets of chaise lounges on either side of the pool for your land leisure. Anthony, our pool man, kept our pool and pool area immaculately maintained daily.



Don't miss the opportunity of also taking a dip on a balmy Jamaican night.



Mr. Henry cared for the surrounding tropical garden whose centerpiece is a more than two century old fig tree, which is romantically illuminated at night.

A few steps, down a short ramp, your private stairway awaits to bathing in the crystal clear water of the Caribbean Sea. Buoys mark the protected swimming area and complimentary snorkeling gear is available for perusing sea life by the coral reefs below.



After a nice cool swim in the ocean, you may want to dry off and sun at your very own private "point lookout" promontory with double chaise lounge, some 25 steps away along a path just past a hammock and tree-shaded chaise lounges.



This spot (which you will quickly name “our spot”) is the epitome of intimacy, and we returned there often to view the magnificent



sunrises



sunsets.

and

Make sure you set aside one night here for a romantic torch-lit dinner, impeccably served by your private wait staff.



All in all, the entire feel of the White Suite accommodation is that of an Italian villa with a vista of its northern lakes or Gulf of Sorrento.



But if you can tear yourself away from your suite, perhaps while the expert housecleaning team spruces it up, you can enjoy something the northern lakes and Sorrento don't have - an absolutely perfect exclusively Jamaica Inn beach. No stones, no pebbles, no seaweed, no mucky bottom, and no crowds - all with a temperature-perfect clear, clean, sandy-bottom sea. It just doesn't get any better than this.



Who needs food when you can live on love? We all do and in fact, living on love can make you mighty hungry. Breakfasts were sumptuous (not a buffet, but prepared to order) and the five-course dinners delectable, so we strongly recommend the MAP plan the Inn offers. We ordered an intricate breakfast for delivery to our room and it came on time and precisely as ordered.



Every meal at Jamaica Inn was first-rate, as was the service. The “catch of the day” and the lobster tails on Lobster Night (Saturday) were outstanding.

Travel Tip: Jamaican seasoning can be spicy, so make sure to tell your waiter exactly how you would like your entrée prepared.

If you are like us, always “worried” if you are going to snatch that romantic table in the corner, don’t be. The corner table for breakfast and another at dinner is already reserved for White Suite guests.



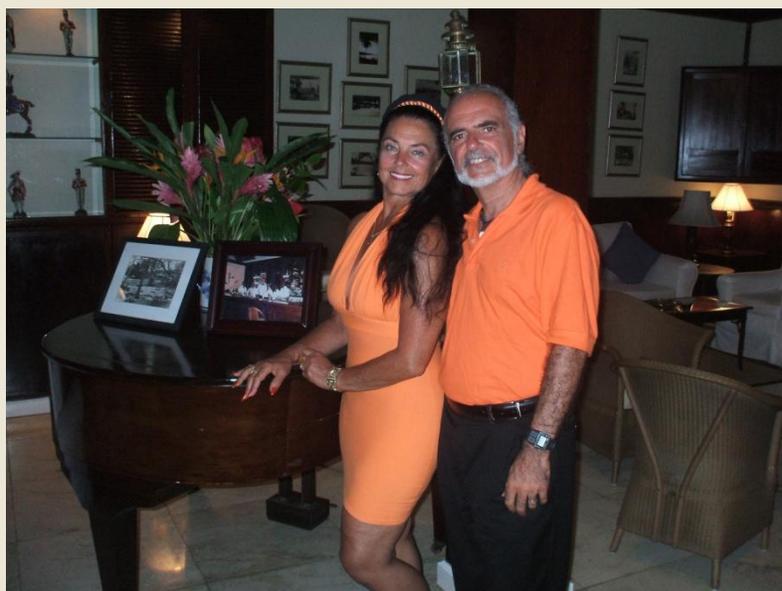
Weather permitting, which luckily in our case it always was, meals are served *al fresco* under the moonlight. The indoor dining area is a chic and artistic all-glass enclosed alternative.

Kudos to chef Derrick Mullings, who incidentally, took time out to discuss menu options prior to our private torch-lit dinner.



Somehow, we never made it to lunch, but did partake of the complimentary “Tea” and delicate finger sandwiches elegantly served on the terrace daily from 4:00-5:00. Of course you can opt for the amazing “Blue Mountain” Jamaican coffee instead of tea if you prefer.

The main bar is tended by Derrick Walker who can serve up just about any drink imaginable. The room also boasts a grand piano, which Noel Coward played on many occasions while visiting and entertaining Jamaica Inn guests. We were able to reminisce while playing our favorite songs on this fine instrument.



Although we were staying at the White Suite, Nicole Henry, Director of Sales graciously escorted us to view the other accommodations available. There are one and two bedroom cottages with ocean-view plunge pools, private access to the ocean and tropical outdoor showers. (Cottages 3 and 4 are the more exclusive ones.) Smaller suites are right off the beach or overlooking the pool and ocean. All are appealing in their own way and you just can't go wrong no matter where you choose to stay. This was confirmed by other guests we spoke to, all of whom were delighted with their own choices.

We also took a tour of the KiYara Ocean Spa located on a cliff overlooking the sea. Its color scheme and layout reflect its philosophy of balance and nature. It offers a full range of treatments and of course, couple's massages using local, organic ingredients. Hair braiding is reasonably priced and expertly but gently done.



KiYara staff have a passion to please and go out of their way to cater to individual needs, so much so that someone was dispatched to the local market to purchase a particular color bead that was not on hand. More details and pricing can be found at <http://www.kiyaraspa.com/home.html>.

For activity buffs, Jamaica Inn offers croquet, swimming pool, snorkeling, kayaks and sunfish sailing, which are all complimentary. Exercise equipment includes a top-of-the

line Landice treadmill, stair climber, stationary bicycle and free weights. Tennis and golf (with preferred rate green fees) are nearby.

For love buffs, this is the perfect place for a destination wedding and/or honeymoon; a place for young lovers to discover each other and for the more mature to rekindle their "heightened depths."

The entire Jamaica Inn staff is extraordinary – ultra-attentive, yet unobtrusive. Uniformed guards are stationed at its gates and we felt safe and secure. It's not surprising that Jamaica Inn has garnished so many top awards. The most recent are:

Travel and Leisure's 500 World's Best Hotels 2011 – #1 in Jamaica, # 3 in the Caribbean and # 38 in the World.

TravelandLeisure.com March 2011 World's Best Island Hotels – #3 Island Hotel in World.

GQ Magazine(UK) December 2010 - "the world in 20 Perfect Nights"-- #5 on the list including cities, restaurants, etc.

Travel + Leisure 'Worlds Best Service' June 2011 – 3rd in The Caribbean, Bermuda and The Bahamas and 1st in Jamaica.

And the list goes on.

If you are in love, you'll want to stay at Jamaica Inn. You are sure to fall in love with it and more deeply in love with one another.

