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**INDIA'S
MAGIC ISLES**
Exquisite Andamans

Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

JANUARY 2010

GOLD LIST

SPECIAL
36
PAGE
SECTION

681 WORLD'S BEST PLACES TO STAY

TOP HOTELS,
RESORTS,
CRUISE LINES



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CRUISE SPECIAL: 10 RULES FOR PERFECT PORTS OF CALL

THE **WORLD'S**
BEST
PLACES TO
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GOLD
LIST

681
HOTELS, RESORTS,
AND
CRUISE LINES

When deciding where to sojourn on your next vacation, there's one source worth banking on—our **SIXTEENTH ANNUAL GOLD LIST**. More than 25,000 *Condé Nast Traveler* readers, the world's most dependable source of travel intel, selected the best hotels, resorts, and cruise lines in our annual Readers' Choice Awards (see November 2009). But since figures don't express the whole story, we interviewed you on what makes these places the *crème de la crème*. Our findings? An index of extraordinary treasures that are the gold standard in international travel

**THE ART OF
 GRACIOUS LIVING**

Inn at Little Washington
 Washington, Virginia **88.8**

Named for the late food writer Craig Claiborne, the Claiborne House guest cottage has a living room with a fire-place, a dining room, and a veranda. This, the master suite, features a wall-papered barrel ceiling and a solarium.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
Julien Capmeil

THE AMERICAS

Of these 86 Gold List hotels and resorts, three receive a perfect score
for location: two waterfront lodges on opposite sides of British
Columbia and a contemporary seven-room sanctuary in Buenos Aires

ATLANTIC AND CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Cap Juluca, Anguilla

☉88.4 ☉85.6 ☉80.0 ☉95.6 ☉91.7 ☉80.2 **86.9**
"You can hear the surf day and night" from this Moorish resort on a mile-long crescent beach on Maundays Bay. Villas come with objets d'art from the souks of Marrakech and flat-screen TVs. Pan-Asian dishes at Spice include grilled crayfish with green tea noodles. Guests can use solar-powered golf carts to get around. \$\$\$\$; 98 rooms; beach, pool, tennis, water sports; 264-497-6666.

CuisinArt Resort & Spa, Anguilla

☉91.3 ☉85.7 ☉83.3 ☉96.0 ☉92.1 ☉84.8 **88.9**
This blue-domed ten-year-old Mediterranean-inspired resort on Rendezvous Bay offers guests "the most beautiful beach, with the whitest sand and the clearest water." High-ceilinged rooms have "great showers" and private terraces. The 27,000-square-foot Venus Spa offers hydrotherapy treatments. Sample tapas, cocktails, and champagne at the Lobby Bar. Three new villas opened in July 2009. \$\$\$\$; 96 rooms; beach, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 264-498-2000.

Curtain Bluff, Antigua

☉89.1 ☉92.7 ☉90.7 ☉94.5
☉90.9 ☉87.3 **90.9**
"Intimate and tranquil" best describe this cliffside all-inclusive on Antigua's southern tip. Rooms, all with ocean-facing balconies or terraces, have no need of air-conditioning: "Part of the charm is the reliance on the trade winds to cool things off." Every night, a different local band plays in the main restaurant, where the meals are "downright good" and the staff "provide excellent service." \$\$\$\$; 72 rooms; beach, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 888-289-9898.

One&Only Ocean Club, Paradise Island, Bahamas

☉93.3 ☉88.5 ☉88.4 ☉95.2
☉91.5 ☉84.8 **90.3**
Once the private residence of a Swedish industrialist, this two-wing property with plantation decor promises "the charm of the islands." "Impeccable staff" deliver complimentary champagne and fruit to rooms daily. "Terrific menus and fabulous water views" await diners at Dune and the Pool Terrace Café. Balinese Boreh Hot-Spice Therapy is a scrub at the spa. \$\$\$\$; 105 rooms; beach, golf, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 242-363-2501.

The Reefs, Bermuda

☉89.4 ☉92.4 ☉92.4 ☉95.0 ☉93.7 ☉87.6 **91.7**
The limestone walls of this cabana-style resort on

a cliff overlooking a private beach "mimic the surroundings." Suites have bathrooms "large enough for a tea dance," with rain showers. "Unfailingly excellent" meals at the three oceanfront restaurants include "a good rack of lamb." La Serena spa was recently expanded. "Staff have service down to a science." \$\$\$\$; 57 rooms; beach, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 441-238-0222.

✓ Peninsula House, Las Terrenas, Dominican Republic

☉100 ☉100 ☉96.6 ☉96.6 ☉100 **98.6**
"The most luxurious place in the Caribbean"—and the top-scoring property in the Americas—is "a magnificent hillside retreat with a glorious pool and Atlantic views." This two-year-old Victorian-style house is "like a museum," with eclectic art scattered through-

property have teal, coral, and gold color schemes and terraces with a table and chairs. The seven dining options include a steak house, 7 Prime Cuts and Sunsets, which delivers "great service and food." At the Silver Rain Spa, the eponymous body treatment uses crushed coriander to exfoliate. \$\$\$\$; 365 rooms; beach, golf, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 345-943-9000.

Couples Swept Away, Negril, Jamaica

☉80.6 ☉87.9 ☉85.0 ☉87.9 ☉88.8 ☉89.7 **86.6**
Spread across 27 acres, this beachfront all-inclusive has low-rise stucco buildings on "beautifully maintained grounds." Rooms "are not fancy schmancy," but showers "are the size of my bathroom." "Everyone on the staff seemed to be breaking their necks to please us." At Cabana Grill, "the Jamaican food is excellent." \$\$\$\$; 312 suites; beach, golf, pool, spa, tennis, water sports; 876-957-4061.

The Caves, Negril, Jamaica

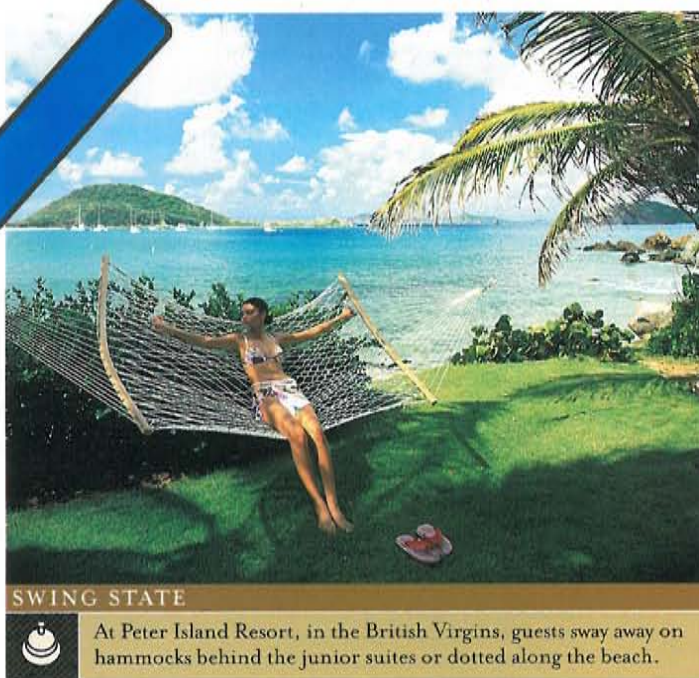
☉91.9 ☉94.6 ☉91.9 ☉94.6
☉94.6 **93.5**
This "warm, romantic private paradise" is a collection of cottages, grottoes, and caves on limestone cliffs. Coral stairs and walkways lead to sun-decks, ladders to the reef below. Cottages with garden showers are painted in colors that give them "a real Jamaican feel." Reserve a private dinner in a candlelit cave—"the setting and the service are unmatched." \$\$\$\$; 12 rooms; water sports; 876-957-0270.

Jamaica Inn, Ocho Rios, Jamaica

☉88.5 ☉93.4 ☉90.2 ☉90.2
☉90.2 ☉83.3 **89.3**
"Everything about this place is wonderful!" All rooms have fully furnished verandas with "unobstructed ocean views." Four-poster beds and Jamaican antiques reflect the colonial roots. Candlelit meals of jerk pork and grilled lobster tail on the restaurant terrace are "out of this world." "Staff feel more like friends than employees." \$\$\$\$; 50 rooms; beach, pool, spa, water sports; 876-974-2514.

✓ Jake's, Treasure Beach, Jamaica

☉87.5 ☉91.7 ☉87.5 ☉87.5 ☉87.5 ☉87.5 **88.3**
"The atmosphere is laid-back and friendly" at this waterfront south-coast hotel. "Eclectic rooms" have recycled-glass fused into the decor and Moroccan-inspired rooftop decks. "Staff are very friendly." The restaurant focuses on local produce and seafood, and Dougie's Bar makes "an amazing rum punch." Driftwood Spa offers treatments in outdoor cabanas. \$\$; 60 rooms; beach, pool, spa; 876-965-3000.



SWING STATE



At Peter Island Resort, in the British Virgins, guests sway away on hammocks behind the junior suites or dotted along the beach.

out. Suites have Brazilian hardwood floors and antiques such as Chinese bamboo storage trunks and an Indian ivory cabinet. The kitchen makes use of the on-site organic garden. Lunch is served at the Beach Club, a couple of miles from the property (rides there and back are complimentary). "The personal service was never less than excellent." \$\$\$\$; 6 suites; pool; 809-307-1827.

Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman

☉94.0 ☉92.7 ☉89.4 ☉94.0 ☉90.8 ☉90.7 **91.9**
Rooms at the "open and breezy" Seven Mile Beach

Key to Symbols ☉Rooms ☉Service ☉Food ☉Location ☉Design ☉Activities Scores in red = Overall

✓ = Newcomer * = Condé Nast Traveler 2009 Best Ski Resorts
\$ = \$199 or less \$\$ = \$200 to \$299 \$\$\$ = \$300 to \$399 \$\$\$\$ = \$400 or more

Reserve hotels and resorts—properties that do not score high enough to appear on the Gold List but are still worth highlighting—are online at cntraveler.com.