

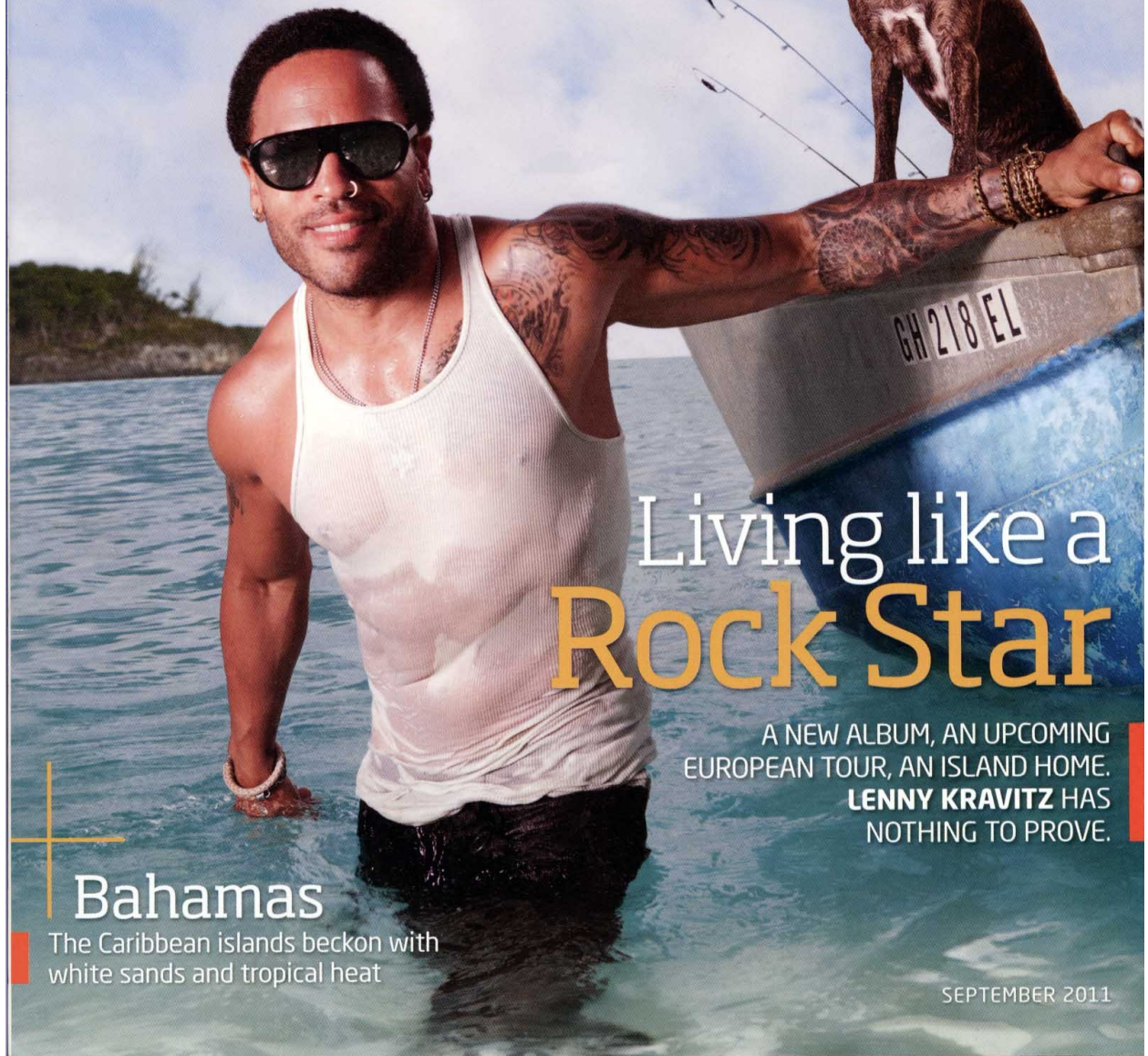
# sky

 DELTA 

// SHANGHAI: 1 CITY 5 WAYS

// TANTALIZING THAILAND

// TALK SHOW WITH *BOARDWALK  
EMPIRE'S* KELLY MACDONALD



## Living like a Rock Star

A NEW ALBUM, AN UPCOMING  
EUROPEAN TOUR, AN ISLAND HOME.  
**LENNY KRAVITZ** HAS  
NOTHING TO PROVE.

### Bahamas

The Caribbean islands beckon with  
white sands and tropical heat

SEPTEMBER 2011



**I AM A  
ROCK STAR,  
THIS IS  
MY ISLAND.**

**On North Eleuthera in the Bahamas,  
Lenny Kravitz has everything he needs:  
his shades, a white sugar beach,  
an Airstream trailer and a state-of-the-art  
recording studio.**

BY STEVE MARSH /// PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON WARKOV





### **ENNY KRAVITZ DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO PLAY DOMINOES.**

He's sitting in on a game of bones with a group of Bahamian locals on the patio of a tiny dive bar in North Eleuthera, a few miles down the road from a property he's owned for the past 18 years. It's not that Kravitz is playing particularly badly, but the locals do seem a bit annoyed at first that their quiet little game has been interrupted by a camera crew shooting a rock star in skinny black ops pants and the most avant-garde b-ball high-tops I've ever seen ("They're Rick Owens," he says), while the rock star's Egyptian supermodel girlfriend is arguing with somebody on her cellphone in French. I know Kravitz doesn't know how to play dominoes because when he sits down to play, he asks, "So, how do you play dominoes?"

Nobody is particularly fazed by Kravitz's appearance, and in the end, most of the local guys seem happy to take a break from their game to hang out in the street and take pictures with the rocker and Leroy Brown, his famous potcake dog (an especially friendly local breed of mutt named for what the locals feed them: the burnt cake of rice left over in the pot). For one thing, the camera crew is springing for a round of Heinekens. For another, this is Eleuthera (Greek for *freedom*) and this kind of mashup between local dudes and ultrawealthy bazillionaires happens all the time. And it's been going on for a long time.

The only person to whom this mix of cultures seems at all a big deal is me—the tourist taking it

all in. In fact, later, when I get back to Harbour Island after my day with Kravitz, I experience it again playing basketball on the back dance floor of an open-air nightclub called the Vichum, run by a gigantic Bahamian bartender nicknamed Hitler. I play 21 against four Rasta regulars—some of them blazing joints during the game, some of them with dreads piled into 2-foot wraps on top of their heads—as well as some British teenagers and Pavlos, the Crown Prince of Greece. It is as surreal a situation as I've ever found myself in. (At least I could tell that Prince Pavlos didn't know how to play basketball without him saying a thing.)

When we get back to Kravitz's Bahamian spread, the photo shoot continues on his private beach. He supplies the soundtrack: a mix of '70s and early '80s funk and R & B, from The Brothers Johnson to Prince. (What did you expect?) This is his little island place, and it's as beautiful and idyllic as anything you could also describe as "spartan." He stays here with Leroy in a shiny, air-conditioned 2005 Airstream trailer 20 yards off the beach, like Detective Riggs and his golden retriever in *Lethal Weapon 2*. Whenever he has an idea, he walks the length of a football field or so through silver palm trees and past a couple of hammocks to his brand-new concrete bunker of a recording studio, with glass walls looking out onto his property.

"I got tired of recording in New York," he says. "Of recording in a box. At least when I'm here I can look out, I see the trees, the sky. I can walk to the ocean." (As I'm transcribing the tape of this interview in my apartment later, I can hear the Caribbean breeze blowing through the palm trees that Kravitz looks at every day.) "It's the dream I've always had," he says. "I've always wanted to have a studio *here*. And I never did it, because you're in the middle of nowhere. You have to triple think everything. And you have to be very careful about not letting all this salt air get into the room—

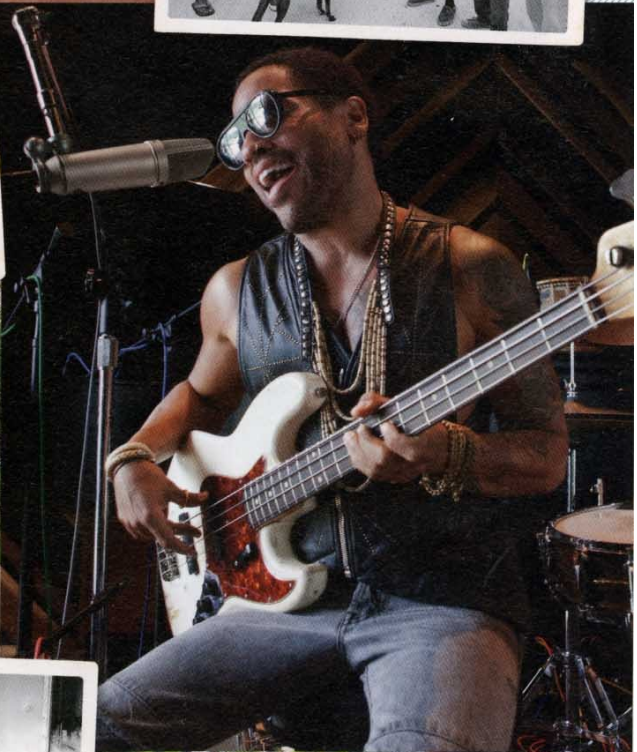
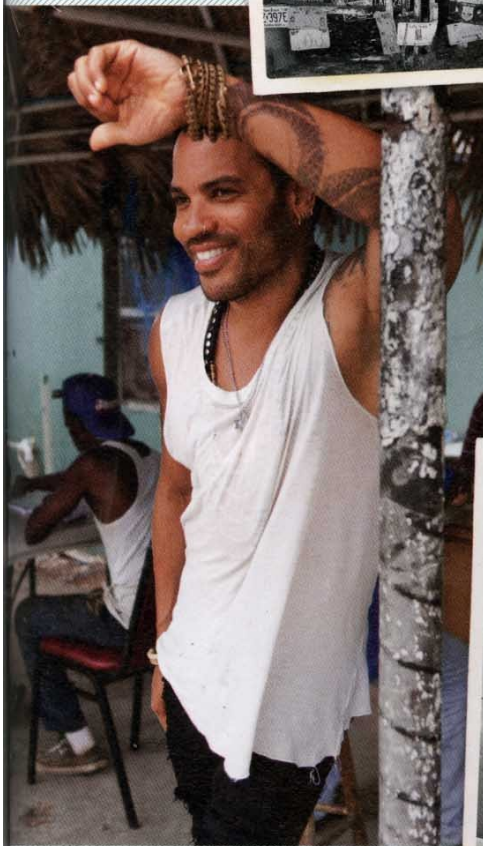
I have all this vintage gear that breaks no matter where you are in the world. So being here . . . it's difficult. But we planned it, it's well executed. And now I record in this paradise. I'm going to do the rest of my stuff here."

Kravitz bought the land in 1993, when he was a huge star coming off his untouchable first three albums. But his roots in the Bahamas run even deeper: His mom, Roxie Roker of *The Jeffersons* fame, would send him to Nassau to spend his summers as a kid. Her father (Kravitz's grandfather) was born on Inagua, the Bahamian island closest to Cuba. But other than a beautiful place to wake up from a dream and record a riff, the islands weren't a big influence on his newest album, *Black and White in America*. "I'm not one who tends to go to a place and, say, make an album that's *Bahamian*," he says. "I still make the music that I make when I go somewhere foreign—whether it's Brazil or here. This place just makes me feel good."

Still, there is one track, "Boongie Drop," that represents the boneyard mashup nature of the islands.



**"I GOT TIRED OF RECORDING IN NEW YORK, OF RECORDING IN A BOX. AT LEAST WHEN I'M HERE I CAN LOOK OUT, I SEE THE TREES, THE SKY. I CAN WALK TO THE OCEAN . . . IT'S THE DREAM I'VE ALWAYS HAD."**







The spoken intro is by DJ Military, a guy who spins Boongie-droppers at a club nearby in North Eleuthera. The song also features a few bars from the most famous MC beyond the islands, Jay-Z. DJ Military's real name is Vardo, and he spends most of the afternoon I'm there hanging around the studio and the shoot. "I mean, how cool is that?" Kravitz asks. "Vardo and Jay-Z on the same track."

Kravitz has recently divested himself of some of his famous bachelor pad properties, including his apartment in New York and mansion in Miami. He still has homes in the Bahamas and Brazil, as well as in Paris and New Orleans—but in some ways they are outsider locales, not centers of commerce or even commercial culture. To not have even a rock-star pinkie in LA or NYC seems deliberate, so I ask him about it, and he says he's gotten more comfortable with himself: "I think maybe due to insecurities or not wanting to show a lot of myself, I was always behind the shades." Granted, this is coming from a dude who in fact wore shades for most of today, but we have been outside in the sun for most of it, and now that we're in the studio, his only protection is a thin beach hoodie. (Though the hood is up—he's still protective of his long-term image.) "I may have come across as kind of mysterious," he says. "Who's that guy? I don't know. I get what people might think, but I was still this same guy you see now."

That guy really always has been his own guy, preternaturally OK with being one of a kind: Kravitz is an almost magical product of two famous mixed marriages, one in real life (between Roker and his father, Sy Kravitz, a NBC News executive in New York), and the other meta, and much more famous, between his mother's character on *The Jeffersons*, Helen Willis, and her white husband, Tom Willis, played by Franklin Cover—their's was the first interracial marriage portrayed on network television. As a kid, Kravitz's dad took him to Jackson 5 shows at the Garden and James Brown concerts at The Apollo while his mother worked her way up from reciting Langston Hughes poetry in the park to being discovered by Norman Lear while killing it on Broadway. "I grew up sitting on Duke Ellington's lap when I was 6 years old," he remembers. "I didn't know who the \*\*\*\* he was."

At 7, Kravitz was acting with his mother's close friends Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee in their off-Broadway *Christmas Special*. After his mother was cast in *The Jeffersons*, the family moved to LA, where Kravitz enrolled in Hollywood High, skateboarded with the Humpston brothers (the original Dogtown and Z boys) and played guitar with the kid who would grow up to become Slash. "I'm smoking weed at 11 years old, listening to 'Black Dog' by Zeppelin. . . . Like, wow." His life has always been insane, in a landing-on-his-feet kind of way. When he was 18, his dad kicked him out of the house, and he ended up couch surfing with the original white queen of soul, Teena Marie. These are the reasons he thought it was OK to rock velvet hip-huggers and dreads in 1989, like he was the second coming of Hendrix. "But have you seen the cover of my new album?" he asks. "I'm 7 years old and I've got the peace sign on my head and *peace* and *love* written on me. And that always was me. And when people see this, they're going to go, 'Oh, that *Let Love Rule* thing wasn't a put-on for 1989.' I always was that guy, just by virtue of my parents." Kravitz is as much a member of rock royalty as Pavlos is Greek royalty.

And while the rest of us were a little taken aback by how good he was in *Precious*, he explains how it came about as if it was the most mundane, rational process possible. "I was having dinner at Mr. Chow in New York, and a friend of mine, Julian Schnabel, says, 'Lenny, Lee Daniels wants to meet you.' So Lee says, 'I've been trying to find you for years.' 'You have?' Like, 'I wanted you to be in a movie that I produced—*Monster's Ball*—but I couldn't find you. I'd like to make a movie with you, about a music business lawyer-turned-junkie." That project fell through, but Daniels got him for a day on *Precious*, and when that movie earned critical accolades, Kravitz got another call, this time from Gary Ross, the director of *The Hunger Games*. Without an audition, Ross offered him the plum role of Cinna, the fashion adviser to the main character, Katniss. "I'm like, 'I'd be honored.' And then he says, 'Starring Jennifer Lawrence.' Which is great because she was in *X Men* with my daughter. They were filming in London, so they would come over on the Eurostar to Paris—seven or eight of them from the cast would come—and crash at the house for days at a time, and it was fun." Kravitz literally shrugs here. "And Gary says, 'Oh so you've already been kind of looking after her—that's great.'"

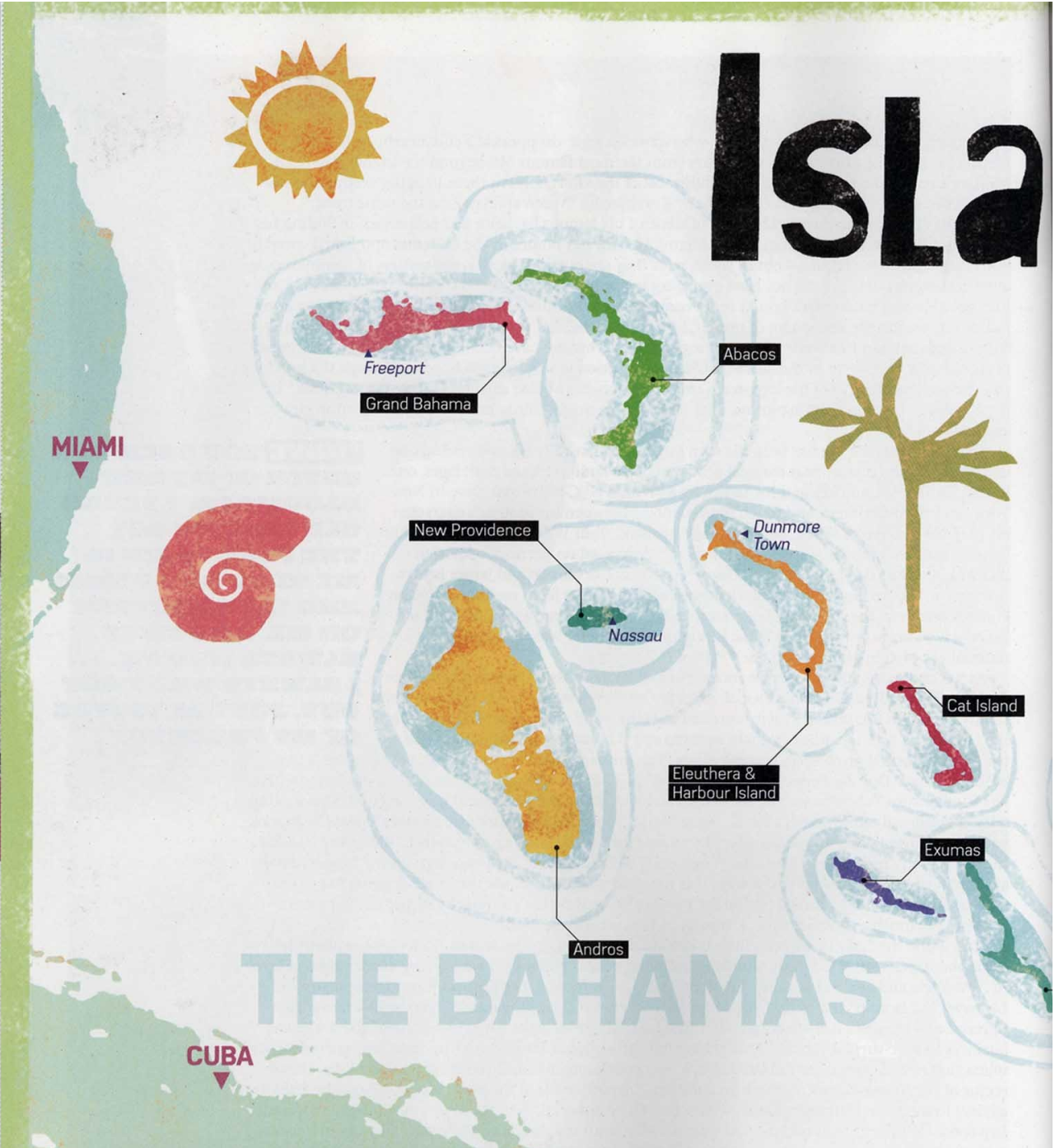
And that wasn't even on magical Eleuthera, on the island in the Bahamas where everybody knows everybody. It is just his normal life. And, yes, a big part of Kravitz realizes that it's not normal at all, but what is he supposed to do about it? "I live in a trailer and I make my music," he says. "If you ask me for money right now, I don't even know where it is, you know what I mean? I just live really low here. Which is luxurious, to be able to live like that. I've been incredibly blessed." //

**"HAVE YOU SEEN THE COVER OF MY NEW ALBUM? I'M 7 YEARS OLD AND I'VE GOT THE PEACE SIGN ON MY HEAD AND PEACE AND LOVE WRITTEN ON ME. AND THAT ALWAYS WAS ME. . . . I ALWAYS WAS THAT GUY, JUST BY VIRTUE OF MY PARENTS."**



To see more from Sky's shoot with Lenny Kravitz, visit [deltaskymag.com](http://deltaskymag.com)

# Isla



## THE BAHAMAS

### FIND YOUR FAVORITE CELEBS AT HOME IN THE BAHAMAS:

**Eddie Murphy**  
owns Rooster Cay, a private island.



**Johnny Depp**  
owns Little Hall's Pond Cay, a private island.



**Oprah Winfrey**  
has a villa on Paradise Island.



**Diane Von Furstenberg**  
has a home on Harbour Island.



**David Copperfield**  
owns Musha Cay, a private island.







# nd Time

OVER THE PAST THREE CENTURIES, THE PINK- AND WHITE-SAND BEACHES AND (MOSTLY) SLEEPY TOWNS OF THE BAHAMAS HAVE BEEN A HAVEN FOR PIRATES, BRITISH LOYALISTS, BLOCKADE-RUNNERS, FREED SLAVES, IMMIGRANTS, FINANCIERS AND VISITORS RANGING FROM ARISTOCRATS TO FAMILIES ON SPRING BREAK.

Life in the Bahamas moves a little slower. The rum tastes better. The sand is softer, and the vibe is Caribbean chill crossed with a colonial edge. There are over-the-top luxury resorts and tiny towns where everyone has known each other for decades. There's incredible turquoise water and, on the other side of the coin, a banking industry known for its discretion. But while the commonwealth is now one of the wealthiest countries in the Caribbean, the islands have a complicated and storied past.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BAHAMAS

Originally inhabited by the Lucayans people, the islands were inexorably changed when Christopher Columbus landed there in 1492. Many of the native peoples were enslaved and shipped off to Hispaniola as laborers, as most of the inhabitants of that Caribbean island had been sold into the slave trade. In the mid-1600s, British colonists from Bermuda arrived—along with pirates drawn by the hideout potential of the area's shallow waters and hundreds of islands. Britain made the Bahamas a crown colony in 1717, using it as a base to fight piracy.

More than a half-century later, after the Revolutionary War, British loyalists came to the Bahamas with land grants given to them by England. Today, many of the islands' residents (those who aren't immigrants from Haiti and elsewhere) are descended from slaves brought to the islands by the loyalists to work on their plantations, or from African slaves who were granted their freedom by the British Navy when the slave trade was abolished in 1807.

The colony prospered during the Civil War as a base for Confederate blockade-runners and during Prohibition as a base for rumrunners. An Allied airfield built during World War II (when the Duke of Windsor was governor) became Nassau International Airport; it was the first step in the colony's development as a tourism destination. The Bahamas were granted self-governance in 1964 and full independence as a parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth of Nations in 1973.

Tourism in the Bahamas started to thrive in the 1950s and '60s, when it drew a rarified crowd of movie stars, millionaires and aristocrats, thanks to the weather and the closure of Havana to U.S. tourists. The islands' biggest challenges today are hurricanes and the impact of the recession on tourism, which now makes up 60 percent of the country's GDP. And while Bahamians don't pay any income or sales taxes, they do face high tariffs and import fees. →



# VISITING THE ISLANDS:

## New Providence



**Sean Connery** has a home here in the exclusive gated community of Lyford Cay.

**1** **One&Only Ocean Club** is a stately boutique hotel on Paradise Island. A Versailles-inspired garden, 18-hole golf course and Jean-Georges Vongerichten's sleek **Dune** restaurant are just a few of the property's luxe amenities.

**2** Nassau's oldest hotel is the **British Colonial Hilton**, located on the site of Old Fort Nassau and on downtown's only private beach.

**3** Sol Kerzner's sprawling, larger-than-life resort on Paradise Island, **Atlantis**, made him the Bahamas' second-largest employer by 1998. For a romantic hotel-within-the-hotel, book a suite at **The Cove**. And don't miss dinner at **Café Martinique** or the Bahamian outpost of **Nobu**.

**4** Get your Om on at **Sivananda Ashram Yoga Retreat**, offering yoga vacations and workshops.



**5** In Nassau, eat grilled lobster al fresco on the garden patio of **Café Matisse**, then stop at the **Bahamas Rum Cake Factory** for one of its signature coconut rum cakes.

**6** If it's quirky and laid-back Bahamian charm you're after, book a colorful oceanside hut at **Compass Point Beach Resort**.

**7** Nassau is the capital of the Bahamas, and the governor general of the country lives in the circa 1801 **Government House**, a pink mansion in the center of the city that blends American colonial and Bahamian influences.



## Exumas



**Faith Hill & Tim McGraw** own a private island in the Exumas.

**1** A private island getaway in the Exumas chain of 365 (mostly) tiny islands, **Royal Plantation Island at Fowl Cay** includes six luxury villas where you can live like a pampered castaway.

**3** The Stromatolite reefs that rim **Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park** are 2,000 years old, and they're joined by grouper, lobster, conch and sea turtles in this protected marine reserve.

**2** Rent your own kitted-out villa at **February Point**, an 80-acre property on the quiet island of Great Exuma, which boasts secluded beaches and terrific bone fishing.



## Abacos

**1** The Ritz-Carlton-managed **Abaco Club**, on a secluded 534-acre private estate on Great Abaco, boasts an impressive list of amenities, including a championship golf course, European spa, elegant cottages and cabanas—and two miles of sugary beach.

**2** In the 18th-century boating village of Hope Town on nearby Elbow Cay, both the **Hope Town Harbour Lodge** and the **Abaco Inn** make couples and families feel at home. Don't miss dinner at Harbour's Edge, overlooking the town harbor.



# Grand Bahama



1 Head to the suburbs of Freeport to Lucaya, a quieter area where you'll find the sprawling **Our Lucaya** complex, which has two resorts (the quieter Reef Village and the family-friendly Radisson), four pools, 13 restaurants and Senses Spa.

2 From Freeport, travel along Queen's Highway to West End, where you'll find the five-suite **Nandana**, a luxury estate centered around an Asian-inspired beach mansion with its own yacht and jet skis.



3 **Freeport** is a bustling city and dock for many cruise ships, though most of the tourist action is in Lucaya.

4 Also on West End is **Old Bahama Bay**, a resort of traditional, relaxed suites in cottages around a 72-slip marina. Don't miss the conch fritters at **Bonefish Folley's Bar & Grille**.

5 **Lucayan National Park** boasts one of the most extensive underwater cave systems in the world—spanning more than six miles.

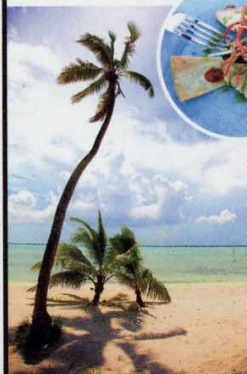
# Andros

1 Just off the coast of Andros is idyllic **Kamalame Cay**, a 96-acre private island resort with just 19 stylish rooms and suites and a cossetting spa.

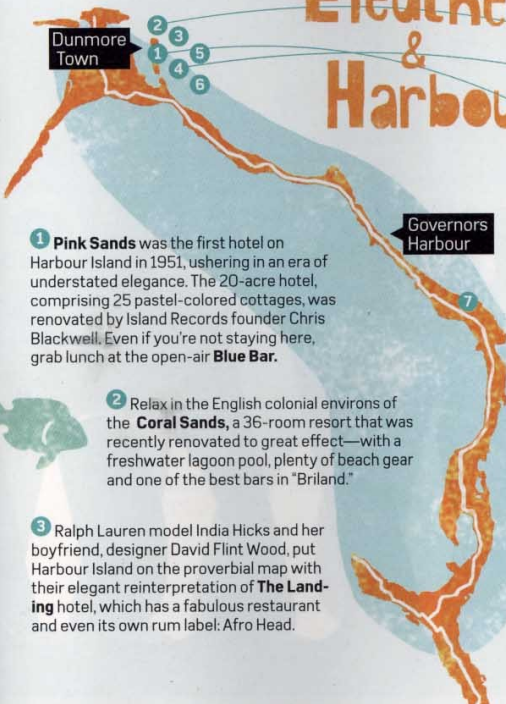
2 For a more rustic vacay, **Small Hope Bay Lodge** is nothing fancy, but the diving is terrific and you'll soon be charmed by the laid-back, family-friendly vibe.



3 The eco-luxe **Tiamo Resort** underwent an extensive renovation last year, and its 10 beachside cottages are now not only solar-powered, but chic and lovely. Leaving won't be easy.



# Eleuthera & Harbour Island



1 **Pink Sands** was the first hotel on Harbour Island in 1951, ushering in an era of understated elegance. The 20-acre hotel, comprising 25 pastel-colored cottages, was renovated by Island Records founder Chris Blackwell. Even if you're not staying here, grab lunch at the open-air **Blue Bar**.

2 Relax in the English colonial environs of the **Coral Sands**, a 36-room resort that was recently renovated to great effect—with a freshwater lagoon pool, plenty of beach gear and one of the best bars in "Briand."

3 Ralph Lauren model India Hicks and her boyfriend, designer David Flint Wood, put Harbour Island on the proverbial map with their elegant reinterpretation of **The Landing** hotel, which has a fabulous restaurant and even its own rum label: Afro Head.

4 There's no lack of shopping in Dunmore Town. Check out **The Blue Rooster**, **Miss Mae's**, **Bamboo Bamboo** and **The Sugar Mill** (pictured, co-owned by India Hicks) for eclectic fashion and home goods.

5 Other stellar hotels on Harbour Island include **Romora Bay**, the vintage (yet updated) **Oceanview Club** and the 10-room boutique-styled **Rock House**.

6 While many of the best restaurants are in the hotels and resorts of Dunmore Town, head to **Sip Sip** and lunch on its famous conch chili.

7 On nearby Eleuthera, the unpretentious **Pineapple Fields** has 32 condo units outfitted for families—plus **Tippy's**, the perfect beach restaurant. The resort is situated across from an idyllic beach of calm blue water.



Lenny Kravitz has a recording studio on Eleuthera.

