

# THE DREAM BIG ISSUE

# ISLANDS®

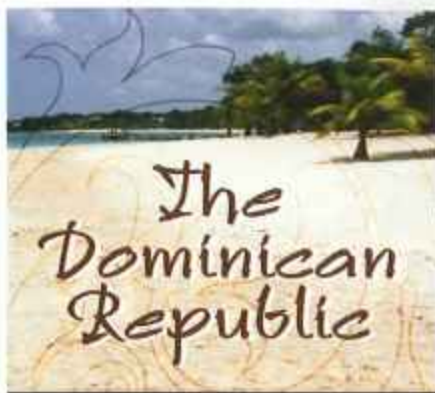
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PHOTOS  
EVER!

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NEW Wish List™ calendar  
at ISLANDS.com

DECEMBER 2009 U.S. \$4.99





#### CASA BONITA TROPICAL LODGE

Located in Barahona, in the still unspoiled, secluded and eco-rich southwest region of the D. R., this former private vacation retreat is now a Small Luxury Hotel of the World member with only 12 rooms along its modern tropical architecture. Featuring an exquisite Caribbean Fusion Menu that will provide a family "savoir faire" experience.

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#### CASA DE CAMPO

A lush retreat of unsurpassed elegance and breathtaking beauty, where action, relaxation and pampering service combine for an exceptional leisure experience. Activities abound with legendary golf, tennis, water sports, Cygalle Healing Spa and more. Spacious accommodations, family programs, and outstanding dining and shopping at the Marina and beautiful Altos de Chavon.

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#### BEST VIEW OF SUNRISE Cheeca Lodge, Florida Keys

> "I'm never leaving." That's the thought you'll have after waking up in Room 416 at Islamorada's Cheeca Lodge. Grab a cup of coffee and head out to your private lanai for a soak in your open-air tub filled by a steady stream dropping from above you. It's the perfect place for an unobstructed welcoming look at the sunrise. Don't even turn your head: Your fourth-floor room already faces due east out over the expansive ocean. Gaze out onto the resort's 525-foot wooden pier and Alligator Lighthouse, barely visible about five miles out. Fishermen are already bringing in the day's catch (mahimahi, grouper, wahoo, depending on the season), which you might find on your plate later that evening. Barefoot elegance surrounds you, from the glass rain shower to the West Indies decor. It's the perfect recipe of simplicity, relaxation and luxury. And when you eventually have to leave this room, you can't wait to come back. Rates from \$250. [cheeca.com](http://cheeca.com)

#### BEST VIEW OF THE PAST Aran Islands Hotel, Ireland

> The dramatic rolling green hills paint the picture already in your mind. As your ferry docks at Inishmore island off the western coast of Ireland, the real hills appear. Just being here seems like enough, but then you check into one of the five king rooms with balconies at the Aran Islands Hotel, the only hotel on this tiny gem of an island. Immediately open your window (even if it's wet and rainy). Panoramic views from Connemara to Clare are visible on a clear day. Thousands of miles of stone walls, built by hand over hundreds of years, meander atop the entire island. And when you just can't take it anymore, experience the view firsthand by walking this *ciúna gan uaigneas* (silent but not lonely) island. Dún Aonghusa fort has been sitting just a few miles from your window since the late Bronze Age. This is history only few see — and it's right outside your window. Rates from \$70. [aranislandshotel.com](http://aranislandshotel.com)



9 Beaches, Bermuda

#### BEST VIEW SEEN IN POSTCARDS Brampton Island, Australia

> Bird's-eye-view images of the Whitsunday Islands inspire awe. And Room 37 on private Brampton Island at the southern end of the Whitsundays puts you in the picture. See the calm, heraldic blue waters of the Whitsunday Island Passage just 20 feet from your window. Don't worry about passers-by interrupting the scene. This is the only resort on the island, and day-trippers aren't allowed. Look north to see the blues turn green on Carlisle Island, where the ancient Melaleuca Forest dominates the landscape. Look both east and west to find pristine, white-sand beaches, a national park, jogging tracks, picnic spots and outdoor massage crannies. Look up to see birds jealous of your view. Rates from \$250. [www.brampton-island.com](http://www.brampton-island.com)

#### BEST VIEW FROM ISLANDS' READERS 9 Beaches, Bermuda

> The view is dressed to the nines at 9 Beaches. This Bermuda resort overwhelmingly received the most votes from ISLANDS readers. Cabana 55 off the Paradise Pier takes home the top prize. Directly over the water, Cabana 55 boasts the most private locale with clean views of Daniel's Head Island and Atlantic sunsets. Limestone grottoes and hidden caves set the background. Sailboats and kayakers glide past in search of the shipwreck poking out of the water about 100 yards out. A Plexiglas window in the floor (called a "Bermuda TV" by one reader) lets you see the snorkelers and marine life swimming past. That's worth watching. Rates from \$205. [9beaches.com](http://9beaches.com) ■ [VOTE AT ISLANDS.COM/best](http://VOTEATISLANDS.COM/best)