

BUDGET TRAVEL

Cheap thrills: Resorts roll out the bargains

■ Combine the usual low season with the sputtering economy, and travelers can find deals like 'you've never seen before.'

BY JAY CLARKE

Special to The Miami Herald

The poor economy and the usual seasonal reduction in prices have combined to make a Caribbean vacation a better bargain than it has been in years.

"You see prices [now] that you've never seen before," said Hugh Riley, interim secretary-general of the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Besides reduced rates, many resorts are throwing in "added values" like free upgrades, free airport transfers, kids eat- or stay-free deals, or resort credits that reduce or eliminate the price of certain ser-

vice. The new W Retreat and Spa also will be home for acclaimed chef Alain Ducasse's first Caribbean site, miX on the beach.

A new Hyatt Regency is opening on the island of Curacao in January. Fronting on both the Caribbean Sea and Spanish Water, the 350-room Hyatt Regency Golf Resort, Spa and Marina will feature an 18-hole Pete Dye golf course, spa and fitness center.

Following its successful hotels in Manhattan and South Beach, Gansevoort has opened a 91-room hotel on Providenciales' Grace Bay Beach in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

On St. Maarten, a new luxury marina on Simpson Bay will debut at Porto Cupecoy in November.

However your Caribbean plans unfold, Riley advises to keep checking



THOMAS HART SHELBY

DEALS GALORE: Check out the specials at Hilton's Rose Hall Resort & Spa in Jamaica, above, and Long Bay Beach Resort on Tortola.

● **St. Lucia:** Guests at Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort receive 50 percent of their nightly accommodations cost in "Sun Dollars" (resort credits) that can pay for food and beverages, spa treatments, room upgrades or other activities. Available on new bookings through Dec. 20. Rates start at \$200 per night. 800-958-7376, www.windjammer-landing.com.

● **Tortola:** Long Bay Beach Resort has a three-night Sexy Beach Escape priced at \$399 per person, double, for travel through Dec. 20. Included is a couples massage, welcome cocktail, breakfast, one-day car rental. 800-345-0356, www.longbay.com.

● **Antigua:** Jolly Beach Resort offers an Escape Now all-inclusive vacation at \$267 per room per night

the price of certain services or activities.

Air service to the region also is on the uptick, Riley said, a sign that Caribbean tourism declines may have bottomed out.

American Airlines has added or will add additional flights this fall from Miami to Antigua, Curacao, Grand Cayman, Provinciales, St. Croix, St. Maarten and St. Lucia, plus La Romana, Punta Cana, Santo Domingo and Santiago in the Dominican Republic. Its American Eagle brand is putting on new flights to Harbor Island, Treasure Cay and Governor's Harbor in the Bahamas.

On the other hand, Air Jamaica pulled out of Miami in February and added only one flight to Kingston to its itinerary out of Fort Lauderdale.

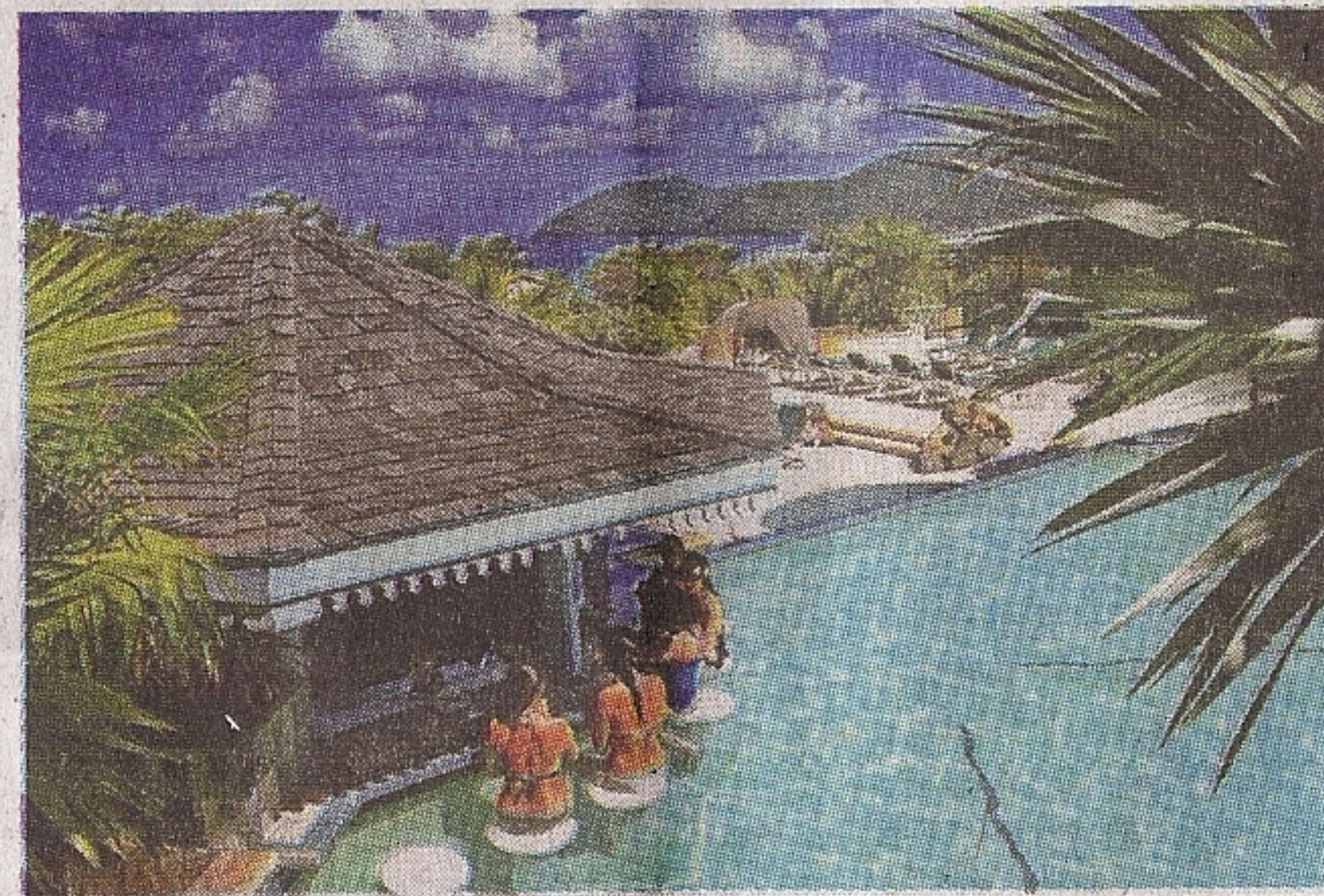
New hotels and other tourist facilities continue to open in the region. On the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, the first W hotel in the Caribbean will open in November. The 157-

advises to keep checking for bargains. "Not all the good deals have rolled out," he said. "We'll see more fall specials."

DEALS

Here is a sampling of fall/early winter deals. Prices are per person, double occupancy, unless otherwise stated. Taxes, resort and service charges may be additional. All-inclusive packages vary, but normally include accommodations, all meals and beverages (including alcoholic), some activities and/or entertainment. All package terms, including prices, are subject to change without notice.

● **Sandals:** Book a Luxury Included all-inclusive vacation by Aug. 27 and you receive up to 65 percent off regular rack rates at selected Sandals resorts in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Antigua and the Bahamas for travel through Dec. 28, 2010. Blackout dates, minimum stays apply. Rates, including discount, start at \$133.50 per



LONG BAY BEACH RESORT

night. 800-SANDALS, www.sandals.com. At the company's Beaches family resorts in Jamaica and the Turks and Caicos Islands, rates start at \$120 per adult per night, double, during the WonderFALL promotion. Booking deadline is Aug. 27 for travel to Nov. 30. 800-BEACHES, www.beaches.com.

● **SuperClubs:** Guests who pay for two nights get a third night free under a Third Night's a Charm promotion at any of 10 SuperClubs all-inclusive

resorts in Jamaica, Curacao and the Bahamas if booked by Oct. 7 for travel Sept. 1-Oct. 31. Rates for the three nights run \$129-\$378 per person, double occupancy. Included are meals, cocktails, use of all sports facilities and entertainment. No tipping. 800-467-8737, www.superclubs.com.

● **St. Kitts:** The island's Fall in Love with St. Kitts & Nevis Promotion offers good deals at a number of resorts. A seven-night October stay at

the Royal St. Kitts Hotel and Casino, for instance, runs \$1,464.36 for two people, including airfare from Miami, airport transfers and breakfast daily. Choose an all-inclusive option at that hotel (meals, drinks included) and the price would be \$1,910.40. Book through www.aavacations.com. St. Kitts offers a Worry Free plan that waives last-minute hotel cancellation fees if you have to cancel your trip (www.stkittstourism.kn).

● **Jamaica:** Hilton's Rose Hall Resort & Spa's all-inclusive rate starts at \$249 per room per night, double, and includes meals, standard brand beverages, fitness center, tennis, non-motorized water sports, resort fees and taxes. Children 4-17 staying in the same room as parents pay \$70 per night. The hotel also offers non-inclusive rates as well a premium all-inclusive plan. 800-445-8667, www.hiltoncaribbean.com/montego_bay.

at \$267 per room per night for travel through Dec. 20 with free upgrade to superior queen room. Two children 3-11 stay and eat free when sharing room with two adults. Package must be booked directly with Jolly Beach. 866-905-6559, www.jollybeachresort.com.

● **Montserrat:** Villa Tropicasa guests can enjoy seven nights' accommodations, seven-day jeep rental, six-day maid service, welcome dinner on arrival day, massage, volcano sightseeing, boat ride to a beach for farewell dinner on last night for \$1,999, double occupancy. Deal valid through Dec. 14. 786-264-1325, www.sunislandrealestate.com.

● **St. Thomas:** Point Pleasant Resort's Just for Two three-night romantic getaway package provides flowers, a bottle of wine and a romantic dinner for two. Cost is \$762 per couple to Dec. 22. (For seven nights, cost is \$1,475.) 800-524-2300, www.pointpleasantresort.com.