

## EXQUISITE EXUMAS

### OVER YONDER CAY

By C.L. Frey

At the heart of the Bahamas lies the Exumas archipelago, 365 cays and islands that represent the country at its most naturally beautiful. It's a special place where footprint-free beaches are the norm, palm trees far outnumber people, and celebrities frolic in ultra-exclusive hideaways. Within this tropical fantasyland sits Over Yonder Cay, a privately owned, full-service resort island 70 miles south of Nassau that has taken celebration of the Exumas' secluded allure to new heights.

A onetime fishing outpost, over the last five years the 72-acre private island has been transformed into a showcase for nature and architecture

co-existing in harmony. It is now available to rent exclusively to a single group at a time. Four highly stylized villas created from limestone, coral, and hardwoods accommodate up to 28 guests, cocooning them in a landscape of tropical greenery surrounded by cerulean sea.

Villa Fiamma, the "sun villa," perches at the highest point of Over Yonder Cay, providing superb views from its four suites, each with a private courtyard and terrace. The expansive 2,300 sq ft master suite includes an enormous bathroom with steam-shower, a viewing tower, and salon. Rare tapestries, marble floors, and classical sculptures



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bring a touch of Rococo to the contemporary beach setting. The villa's theater encourages group gatherings.

Hilltop Villa Cielo takes its décor cues from France, blending the modern and traditional. The master suite and guest suite each have wraparound balconies, while two secondary guest rooms have sleeping lofts with kid appeal. A two-tier infinity pool overlooks a private beach.

Villa Acqua, as its name implies, cozies right up to the water's edge near the island's longest white-sand beach. This relaxed four-bedroom

residence has a covered outdoor dining area, sunset-facing hot tub, and sky murals to bring the outdoors inside.

Three-bedroom Villa Terra, on the island's south side, sits on a sandy promontory and features a wraparound patio, infinity hot tub, and a recreation room with a pool table, ping-pong, and arcade games. The sounds of the sea flow through the open floor plan of the communal areas.

Although the accommodations are luxurious, great care was taken





during Over Yonder Cay's development to preserve the island's natural ecosystems, including stands of mangroves that serve as feeding zones for birds and breeding grounds for reef fish. Wind and solar energy provide more than 95 percent of Over Yonder Cay's power on average (though there's a diesel generator back-up system, just in case). It's the first island of its size powered almost entirely by renewable energy. A trio of 120-foot turbines with 60-foot rotors twirl quietly in the trade winds, and 1.5 acres of solar panels are bathed in the Bahamian sun year-round. The renewable power is stored in state-of-the-art batteries that make the island's water, run the golf carts used as local transport, and supply the accommodations and marina.

Energy systems and architecture aside, the vast range of activities and facilities available to guests at Over Yonder Cay is outstanding for a private island for rent. Installation of a floodlit tennis court was completed in the spring, and a brand new nine-hole, par-three golf course presents players with some of the most spectacular views around. Hiker-friendly cliffs, beach volleyball, a state-of-the-art gym, and an on-call yoga instructor provide diversion on shore.

For water babies, snorkeling or scuba diving the warm, gin-clear waters of the Exumas is as simple as drifting to the coral reef just off the island's western shore. Water visibility in the region tops out over 100 feet – rivaling hotspots like the Maldives and Red Sea – and swimmers can expect to see a rainbow of exotic fish, turtles, rays, harmless nurse sharks, and the occasional dolphin. Fishing, jet skiing, paddle boarding, kite surfing, and just about any watersport imaginable are also on offer.

Those looking for a more sedate pace can head to the island's many infinity pools and hot tubs, which provide a perfect view for reflection. And massages can be indulged in anywhere on the island, from a relaxing beach hut with the gentle breeze drifting through to a reviving setting against the north cut's backdrop of waves from the Exuma Sound.

The key to the personal and relaxed vibe of Over Yonder Cay is its hugely attentive and friendly staff. Led by husband-and-wife duo Duncan and Liza Hipkin, the team is on hand to make guests feel at home, whatever their request.

"Our focus is to ensure each group has an experience tailored to their specific desires; it's the opposite of the generic package that you can find with some resorts. Whether it's a romantic pagoda dinner for two, taking a hop in our seaplane to a sandbar for a picnic, sailing lessons for the kids with the best sailors in the business, anything is possible. An Over Yonder Cay stay is all about having your very own island and all the luxuries that accompany that," says Duncan Hipkin.

Although all tastes are catered to, the island's food leans towards the distinctly healthy and flavorful. The chef team creates gourmet meals that combine artisanal imports and the freshest of local ingredients (like fish caught just offshore), serving them at the villas or the island's sunset-facing Beach Pavilion.





## OVER YONDER CAY, BAHAMAS 23.

Over Yonder Cay is one of the deepest private marinas in the Exumas. With a draft of 13 feet at mean low tide, the marina can accommodate superyachts of more than 150 feet (draft dependent) and the island welcomes guests arriving by sea, who can hook up their vessels directly to the island's renewable energy system.

"We are fortunate to be the home berth for S/Y Tenacious, a beautiful 115-foot sloop built especially for Bahamas cruising," says Hipkin, who is also an experienced superyacht captain. "Her shallow draft allows for adventurous day trips. We include a half-day cruise on Tenacious in our rental package when she is at the island. Explore the Exumas or simply enjoy lunch or a sunset sail aboard, before returning to the luxury of Over Yonder Cay."

Closer to home, guests can travel by speedboat to the Thunderball Grotto, a renowned snorkeling spot made famous in a pair of James Bond films; "The Aquarium" in the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, a protected marine sanctuary; the quaint ex-pat town and yacht club at Staniel Cay; and 6,000-foot-deep Exuma Sound, paradise for deep-sea anglers. For longer-term exploration of the Exumas, Tenacious is available for day or weekly charter as a package with the island.

Rates start at USD 50,000 per day for up to 16 people (five-night minimum). The rental price includes transfers on Cessna Grand Caravan seaplanes from Nassau, Great Exuma, or Florida, an additional two hours' of seaplane usage for sightseeing, customized menus, beverages (including wine, spirits, and champagne), and all the island's amenities. The closest airports to connect to the island's seaplane transfer are Nassau and Georgetown.

Whether you're searching for the perfect location for a corporate retreat, milestone event, or family getaway, Over Yonder Cay delivers the complete whole-island rental package. For luxury and seclusion that is also environmentally conscious, there's no other island quite like the one you'll find Over Yonder.



**OVER YONDER CAY**  
Exumas, Bahamas

**FROM USD 50,000 PER DAY**

**RESERVATIONS**

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