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This photo: Over-the-water suites at Sandals Royal Caribbean in Jamaica. Bottom: The Cove Atlantis in The Bahamas (left) and The Level at Melia Caribe Tropical in Punta Cana (right).

Resorts within Resorts



Ed Wetschler

While staying at **The Level at Melia Caribe Tropical** in Punta Cana a couple of years ago, I could have dipped into the Melia Caribe Tropical's many pools, eaten at its dozen or so restaurants, played golf and tennis, or tried my luck at the casino. And I did do some of these things, but mostly I stuck around

The Level, a compound within the Melia Caribe Tropical. Thanks to its combination of exclusivity and access to the amenities of the whole Melia property, this resort within a resort represents a smart trend in the Caribbean. Here's a quick guide to some hotels that do it right.

Lady Hamilton

The **Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa** is just one reason why the **Palladium Group** is a leader in the resorts-within-resorts trend. Part of the all-inclusive **Grand Palladium Jamaica Resort and Spa**, southwest of Montego Bay, this family- ➤



Top to bottom: *Penthouse Suite* at Seven South at The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman; *Butler Suite* at Serenity at Coconut Bay in Saint Lucia; and the spa at Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa in Jamaica.



friendly, all-suite property refurbished in 2015 with white walls and gold accents has a luxurious look. The Lady Hamilton has onsite restaurants and the best adults-only facilities for couples (Coral Beach, a pool, Hemingway Bar), too, and, of course, guests there may also use the larger resort's beaches, pools, bars, sports facilities, and water park. Rates from \$315 per couple.

The Cove Atlantis

You might say that each tower at **Atlantis, Paradise Island** is a resort within a resort, with its own check-in set-up, lounge, pool(s), restaurants, and shops, but **The Cove Atlantis** is unique, with a design that's sleek rather than traditional (e.g. **Beach Tower**) or themed (**Royal Towers**). Moreover, its Mosaic and 77° West restaurants and Cove-adults-only pool with a DJ, cabanas, bar, and outdoor casino are equally urbane. Families as well as couples may stay at The Cove, and there is a family pool. Will Atlantis ever top the Cove? Maybe, because the **Coral Tower**, now undergoing a \$20 million renovation, will soon relaunch as adults-only **Corals Atlantis**. Rates from \$399, D.O., plus 34.7 percent taxes and surcharges.



Serenity

Another resort-within-a-resort on the horizon is adults-only **Serenity at Coconut Bay**, which opens at this Saint Lucia all-inclusive next month (March 2017). The smallest of Serenity's 36 suites is 1,200 sq. ft., and all suites feature natural stone and mahogany decor, private plunge pools, butler services, and 24-hour room service, etc. There's a restaurant for Serenity guests only, as well as use of Coconut Bay's other amenities, including its highly rated watersports facilities.

Overwater Suites

Unlike the other recommendations here, the **Over-the-Water Suites** at **Sandals Royal Caribbean** are not officially a resort

within a resort, but they work like one because they're the only lodgings on the resort's private island, Sandals Cay. The cay has a beach, two restaurants, a new pool, bar, and ferry service to the main resort. Each villa features a Feng Shui-influenced design, teak bed, private infinity pool, glass floor panels, and 24/7 butler service. This enclave evokes the overwater bungalow clusters in Bora Bora, but it costs less money (and jet lag) to fly there. More such accommodations will be appearing in the Caribbean, as you know, but Royal Caribbean is hard to beat. Rates from \$2,200.

The Level

The Level at Melia Caribe Tropical in Punta Cana is still the gold standard for resorts within resorts. Naturally, it has its own lounges and check-in areas (two of them; you'll soon see why), concierge services with staffers who go beyond the call of duty,

swimming pools, and a restricted area of Bavaro Beach, but there's more: The Level is really two resorts within a resort: one for families and one for adults only. Thus, the two check-ins. Moreover, there's a *GABI Club* with its own restaurant just for families at The Level, and Cuatro, a four-restaurant complex for guests in the adult section of The Level. Yes, four—that's on the level. From \$228 per couple, plus 28 percent tax.

Seven South

If **The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman** is for the elite, **Seven South** is for the elite of the elite. With its own entrance and concierge, its 3-bedroom penthouse and four 2-bedroom suites on the top floor of a tower may be combined as an 11-room unit that, with 6,500 sq. ft. indoors plus a landscaped 1,500-sq.-ft. terrace, is the largest suite in the Caribbean. Combined or rented separately, Seven South has a style—e.g. a glass-walled

greatroom—that's surprisingly modern; this is not your father's R-C. When I asked general manager Marc Langevin who books Seven South as one unit, he said, "Celebrities." Could he name a few? "I couldn't reveal that," he said apologetically. I prodded a bit, saying that I've gotten the names of celebrity guests from other hotels. Langevin chuckled, "Well, I suspect they weren't Ritz-Carltons." ■

Contact Information

The Cove Atlantis:

atlantisbahamas.com/rooms/thecoveatlantis

Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa:

palladiumhotelgroup.com/en/jamaica/grand-palladium-lady-hamilton-resort-spa

The Level at Melia Caribe Tropical:

melia.com/en/hotels/dominican-republic/punta-cana/the-level-at-melia-caribe-tropical/index.html

Over-the-Water Suites at Sandals Royal Caribbean:

sandals.com/main/royal/rj-over-the-water-suites

Serenity at Coconut Bay:

serenityatcoconutbay.com

Seven South at The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman:

ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/caribbean/grand-cayman

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