

This Week: Brussels, Cancun, Fort Lauderdale, and Savannah



Fodor's

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zen with AQUA Cancun...

Mexico's Caribbean

Coast goes minimal-



In Brussels, Beauty Meets Luxury

The Dominican. Brussels has plenty of high-end accommodations, but it was not until the recent arrival of The Dominican that Belgium's capital could claim lodgings that combine the city's classical beauty with a luxuriously modernist aesthetic. From the smiling efficient front desk clerks to the

sensuous linens adorning deep plush beds, this is a hotel that understands luxury. When work must intrude, free Wi-Fi, expansive desk surfaces, and pod-style espresso machines are available, and, depending on the rooms, soaker tubs and rain-style showers. Pros: beauty combined with solid service and indulgent comforts. Cons: style sometimes negates efficiency, as with bathroom sinks that splash water everywhere. Rue Léopold/Leopoldstraat 9. Upper Town. 02/203-0808 (ph). 02/203-0807 (fax). www.dominican.be. 146 rooms, 4 suites. In-room: safe, kitchen (some), DVD (some), Wi-Fi. In-hotel: 1 restaurant; rooms service, 1 bar, gym, laundry service, concierge, public Wi-Fi, no-smoking rooms. AE, DC, MC, V. Rooms start at €250 (approximately \$394 USD).

In Savannah, a Noble Choice

Noble Fare. Diners young and old pack this intimate 32-seat restaurant as much for the food as for the sexy decor. Red and black wallpaper, ruby-red raw silk curtains, and glowing chandeliers give this place a bordello-chic flare. The menu features dishes such as rich venison with butternut squash, creamy big-eye tuna tartar with caviar and subtle curry oil, and sea bass in a lobster purée. The pistachio pesto that accompanies the homemade bread is not to be missed. Be sure to arrive early (or stay late) to enjoy a cocktail at the bar in the center of the dining room. 321 Jefferson St. Historic District. 912/443-3210. www.noblefare.com. AE, D, DC, MC, V. No lunch. Closed Sun. & Mon. Median entrée price: \$25.

A Zen Vibe in Cancun

AQUA Cancun. You won't find raucous spring breakers or screaming kids at this Mexican-owned Grupo Posadas property. Instead, expect soothing hues, large airy rooms, and resident DJ Gotttardo Dorado's tunes perfecting the Zen vibe. The guests are mostly luxury-minded thirtysomething sun-worshippers. MB Restaurant (by

Michelle Bernstein) and Siete are both top-notch dining experiences. Splurge for a suite, as they come equipped with freestanding circular Jacuzzi tubs and Aqua Lounge access, where you can enjoy complimentary continental breakfast, refreshments, and cocktails throughout the day, and hors d'oeuvres in the evening. Escape the sun in a beach or poolside cabana for \$100 fee, which includes a heavenly foot massage. Pros: huge suites; all rooms have oceanfront views; extensive spa services. Cons: aromatherapy scents in public spaces can be strong; sliding glass patio doors do not have screens. Boulevard Kukulcan Km 12.5. Zona Hotelera. 998/881-7600 or 888/782-9722 (ph.). 998/881-7601 (fax). www.feel-aqua.com. 371 rooms. In-room: safe, refrigerator, DVD, Wi-Fi (fee). In-hotel: 3 restaurants, room service, bars, pools, gym, spa, beachfront, laundry service, concierge, executive floor, Wi-Fi (fee), airport shuttle, parking (no fee), no-smoking rooms. AE, MC, V. Rooms start at \$465.

In New York, Choose Chop Suey

Chop Suey. It's all about the views at Chef Zak Pelaccio's Time Square outpost on the third floor of the Renaissance Hotel. The intensely red dining room has large windows on three sides, giving diners the bewitching sensation of being simultaneously afloat in and buffered from New York's symbolic hub. Pelaccio (of Fatty Crab and 5 Ninth), who is acting as consulting chef, has devised a Korean-influenced menu of small and large plates. Small plates like scallion pancakes with pear mostarda and an eastern riff on chicken wings are served in a lounge just outside the dining room; large plates include the delicate and tasty steamed halibut with prosciutto and clams in a green curry broth, and a densely flavorful lamb hot pot with mushrooms and leeks. The flourless chocolate cake and a pomegranate poached pear dessert were disappointing. The wine list includes a sake selection and a number of by-the-glass options. 714 7th Ave. Midtown West. 212/261-5200. AE, D, DC, MC, V. Median entrée price: \$30.



A Find in Fort Lauderdale

Il Lugano Hotel. A full range of amenities keeps everyone from businessmen to families happy at this brand new luxury hotel. Roomy suites range from 500 square feet to 950 square feet and each offers a furnished balcony, fully equipped kitchen, and washer/dryer. The homey rooms feature sleek furnishings, Bulgari bath amenities, flat-screen TVs, and iPod docks. Though the hotel's Italian restaurant will not open until late 2008, continental breakfast is offered and room service can be ordered for lunch and dinner courtesy of a nearby restaurant that serves delicious meals (mostly seafood). Pros: quiet location on the Intercoastal Waterway; well-equipped gym. Con: valet service can be slow; weak Wi-Fi signal in some suites. 333 NE 32 Ave. Fort Lauderdale. 954/564-4400 (ph.). 954/564-4401(fax). www.illugano.com. 105 suites. In-room: safe; kitchen; refrigerator; DVD (some); Wi-Fi. In-hotel: room service; pool; gym; laundry service; concierge; public Wi-Fi; airport shuttle (fee); parking (fee); some pets allowed (fee); no-smoking rooms. AE, D, DC, MC, V. Rooms start at \$349.

A Luxurious London Renovation

Intercontinental London Park Lane. The renovated Intercontinental London Park Lane, overlooking busy Hyde Park Corner and the Queen's back garden, offers luxurious rooms that appeal to the high-end business traveler. The bedrooms are comfortable and slightly masculine, incorporating dark woods, swagged curtains, and top-brand electronics (though oddly no CD, MP3, or DVD players). The makeover includes several new "themed" suites with clever titles like "The Cinema," which has its own screening room, and "The London," a self-contained

minimalist loft. Pros: central location; business facilities; spa. Cons: loud muzak in lobby; no outward-views from standard rooms. One Hamilton Place, Park Lane. Mayfair. 027/7409-3131 (ph). 020/7493-3476 (fax). www.intercontinental.com. 447 rooms. In-room: DVD (on request), hi-speed Internet, Wi-Fi (some), safe, refrigerator. In-hotel: 2 restaurants, bar, room service, laundry service, concierge, gym, spa, conference floor, executive club (fee), public Internet, public Wi-Fi, airport transfers (fee), parking (fee), no-smoking rooms. MC, V, AE, DC. Rooms start at £260 (approximately \$525 USD).

Contributors: Stephen Beaumont, Joanna Cantor, Karen Catchpole, Emma Fox, Ellin Stein