



RESORT REAL ESTATE

# HOME SWEET HOTEL

Plush new condo and villa developments promising hotel amenities, carefree ownership and rental income are going up at resorts all over the region. Meet three couples who've taken the plunge, and learn about real-estate opportunities throughout the islands.

BY SARAH GREAVES - GABBADON



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZACH STOVALL



Silver Sands and Palmyra  
Resort & Spa, Jamaica

# A DOUBLE SHOT OF JAMAICA

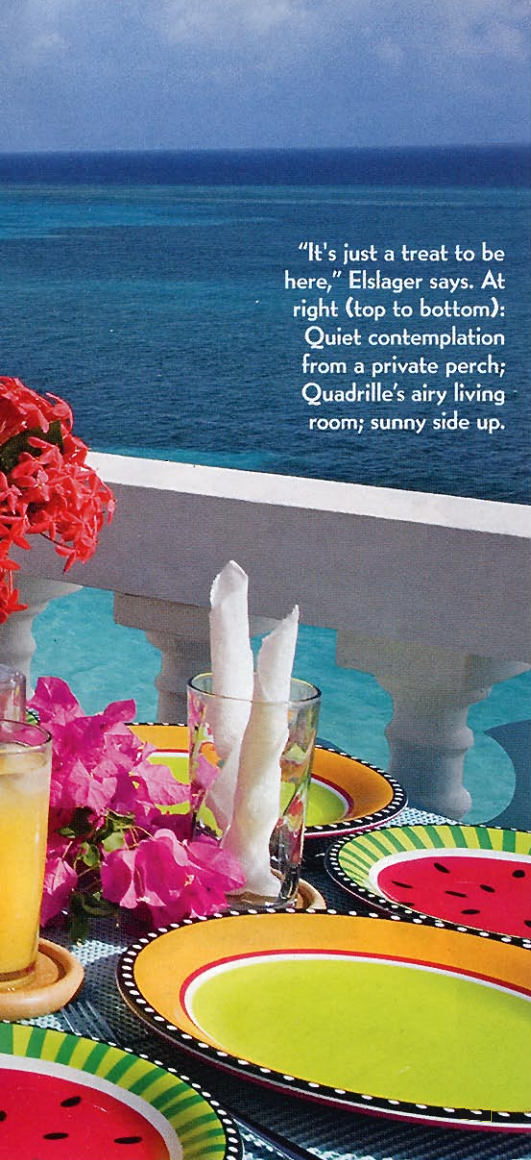
ON A FLAWLESS SUMMER MORNING, A BREEZE tempers the blistering sun as waves break on a freshly raked sugar-white beach. Enjoying a relaxed breakfast on his balcony overlooking this idyllic scene, Douglas Elslager is taking a pretty good stab at the Caribbean dream. Last year he and his wife, Jayne, bought *Quadrille*, a four-bedroom, 3,300-square-foot beachfront home in the quiet Jamaican villa community of Silver Sands. (You can look it over at [quadrillevilla.com](http://quadrillevilla.com).) After a year of renovating, the house is nearly ready for the winter rental season, and Elslager now has a chance to savor the fruits of his labor.

From the villa's front door, there's a stunning view across the open-plan, marble-tiled living room to the glittering sea. Bathrooms have been updated and bedrooms furnished with antique four-poster beds and chests culled from nearby villages. One level down, the pool and deck are freshly painted, and a private stone staircase descends to a shaded gazebo and an arc of beach where a hundred or so villas are clustered.

Halfway between Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, Silver Sands is a world away from the nearby megahotels that punctuate Jamaica's north coast. Its clubhouse and beach



Douglas Elslager (above) is king of his Silver Sands castle. An antique mahogany four-poster bed is placed diagonally to take advantage of ocean views.



"It's just a treat to be here," Elslager says. At right (top to bottom): Quiet contemplation from a private perch; Quadrille's airy living room; sunny side up.



bar don't even come close to the exhaustive array of amenities offered at swank resorts within an hour's drive along the new highway. But to the Elslagers, it feels like home.

"We love the Old Caribbean neighborhood feel of the place," Elslager explains. "We know all the staff. The lobster man comes to our door every morning with the day's catch. It's definitely not South Beach, but that wasn't what we were looking for."

What they were looking for, Elslager says, isn't easy to find. "Quadrille had a rare combination of assets: great elevation and view, private beach access and the privacy and security of a gated community, all for a reasonable price." (The villa, he says, cost something under \$2 million.)

While enjoying the old-school setting at Silver Sands, Elslager has also staked a claim on real estate's leading edge by purchasing a two-bedroom condo at Palmyra Resort & Spa at Rose Hall. The luxury condos and villas, scheduled to open just outside

Mo'Bay next summer, are being built by the owners of the adjacent Ritz-Carlton resort and represent the latest wave in Caribbean vacation homes. The yin to Silver Sands' yang, the 16-acre Palmyra enclave (with house prices beginning just under a half-million dollars) offers homeowners every imaginable convenience: a 23,000-square-foot spa, a restaurant, golf-club memberships and concierge service. Similar resorts exist on other islands, but Palmyra will be Jamaica's first, and Elslager, who owns a Cincinnati-based Caribbean real-estate firm, jumped at the chance to get in early, investing just under \$1 million.

"With the Ritz-Carlton and Half Moon next door, there's a certain patina that's bound to rub off," he says. "And the price per square foot was a bargain compared to elsewhere in the Caribbean. It was just too good to pass up."

