

Cap Maison

Naturally Charming

You'll curse the twisting rain-ravaged road to Cap Maison but five minutes after arrival you'll have forgotten all about it! Three acres of pristine gardens, ocean views and fine dining are what lies at the end of the road, that's what surrounds the 49 'Spanabbean' villas which make up the Cap Maison development, but if you're not in the market for a second home, don't worry! They're open to the public and are a piece of paradise you won't want to miss.

Blending in with nature was high on the priority list in the inception of Cap Maison, plants, shrubs and flowers abound around the villas which themselves are named after local trees and shrubs. Outdoors, the resort has a sort of Moroccan feel with its painted walls, dark wooden beams, alcoves and huge stone jars in the foyers and courtyards, it's all very tasteful.

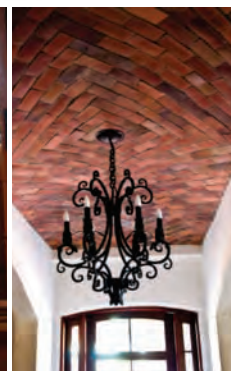
General Manager Ross Stevenson gave Cruiser a comprehensive tour of the elegant five-star resort. "We set out to raise the bar in quality and service," said Ross. "We have 84 staff, including 18 chefs, to make sure the bar remains raised. We have a Food and Wine Club with 320 members, and that's in just 18 months."

Indoors the resort has a simple Spanish theme with its use of dark wood, black metalwork

and arched mirrors. Tiled floors, ceiling fans and louvered windows keep the living rooms cool with AC reserved for the bedrooms. The living room doors open onto a nicely tiled deck complete with sun loungers and infinity pool. The two storey dwellings have the pool on the roof.

Villas have their own cooking facilities, the counter tops are all tastefully tiled, and residents can even hire a chef. However, if after a hard day on the beach you don't feel up to cooking, don't worry, there's plenty of on-sight options. For a start there's the Cliff Bar, Beach Bar, Theo's Bar, the Wine Cellar and then the jewel in the Cap Maison crown, The Cliff at Cap Restaurant (see review on page 34). It's spectacular! Panoramic views, tasteful rattan furnishing and open air ambience (it seats 60) make it one of the most popular island eateries.

Below the restaurant is an open deck surrounded on three sides by the sea which has hosted yoga, massage and the odd proposal! It's ideal for that special occasion and if you're worried about climbing up and down the wooden connecting staircase to refresh your drinks, don't be. There's a Champagne Zip Line connecting the bar in the restaurant to the deck, perfect for sundowners while you make up your mind what's for dinner . . . and you won't be spoilt for choice.



THE CLIFF AT CAP MAISON ...

Nothing comes close



The menus are far too extensive for us to list everything so go along yourselves, you won't be disappointed.

By Bruce McDonald
Managing Editor

Allow double the time you'd normally take when dining at The Cliff at Cap Maison. It's nothing to do with the service, far from it, with a 'brigade' of 21 staff (including stewards), headed by



Executive Chef Craig Jones (pictured above), good service is a given. The time bandits are the exquisite views and the lilting sound of waves lapping onto rocks . . . it's mesmerizing. However, if I said the food is as good as the ambience it gives you some idea of just how good it is!

Around 100 guests can enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner at The Cliff; a second deck has recently been added to the main dining area to increase capacity. "The new deck is ideal for watching sunsets, especially

with some complimentary nibbles in our Happy Hours (Thurs.-Sun. 5-7p.m.), they're extremely popular," smiled Jones . . . he likes his job, part culinary ambassador and a chef on a mission. "I'm forever developing as a chef," he said. "I want The Cliff to be the first Michelin recognized restaurant in the Caribbean." His background is in the highly regarded European Michelin circuit and has 12 years Caribbean experience.

In 2010 The Cliff invited over three guest chefs from the UK and in 2011 it's the turn of the USA to get a taste of the Caribbean. All the visiting chefs were impressed with the quality of the cuisine and service. "Our food is already up to Michelin standards it's just a case of being Michelin recognized," said Jones.

Although the view is million dollars the prices are extremely reasonable. The lunchtime menu includes such favorites as Jerked Chicken Satay with a Cool Caribbean Salsa and Caramelized Ripe Plantain for EC\$35. Island Seafood Chowder is just EC\$40 and the Jerked Chicken Smoked Bacon and Organic Romaine Wrap (pictured) is a mere EC\$45 . . . and that's just a few of the dishes on offer.

The dinner menu is truly international with such succulent dishes as Star Anise Spiced Pork Belly, Yellow Fin Tuna, Seared Foie Gras Shallot Tart Tatin with Bacon Dust, and Risotto of caramelized Crepes. Sweet Pea and Coconut Veloute. Then there's Spiny lobster Pancake with Arugula Salad and Ginger-Carrot Emulsion. If you prefer fish how about Chilean Sea Bass with Sweet Parsnips and Orange Spinach or Mussel and Vanilla Ojus. There's also Pan fried Dorado with Cherry Tomatoes and Green Asparagus. The menus are far too extensive for us to list everything so go along yourselves, you won't be disappointed.

Variety is also on the menu at The Cliff. Saturday is Tapas day and for a modest EC\$145 you can sample three starters, three main courses and three desserts and for an extra EC\$40 you can even have wine. Tuesday is Creole Tapas and if you're around on a Saturday you can accompany the Executive Chef to the Castries market, choose your food and then learn to cook it back at The Cliff with his help.

Don't miss the The Cliff it's perfect for every occasion . . . and pocket!