

THE MAGAZINE OF THE WORLDWIDE HOTEL INDUSTRY

APRIL 2013



# HOTELS

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## NATURAL RESERVE



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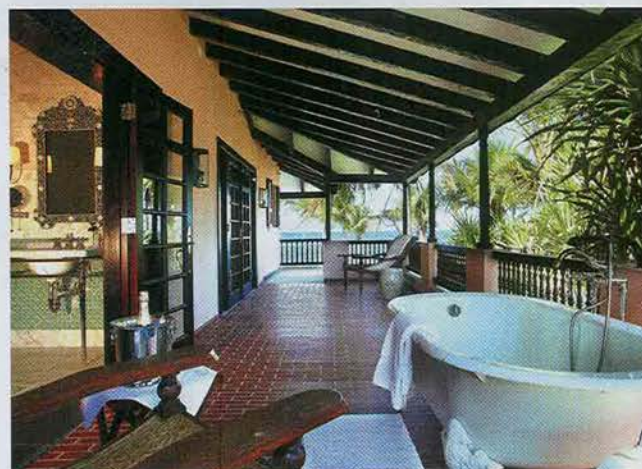
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## about the cover



All the guestrooms at Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, in Puerto Rico feature outdoor showers, a testament to the property's open-air design. SB Architects and Bill Bensley Design designed the hotel with the property's natural environment as a focal point. Originally a plantation and then one of Laurence Rockefeller's RockResorts, the hotel underwent a five-year, US\$342 million redevelopment ahead of its December 2012 opening. Read more in Design starting on p38.

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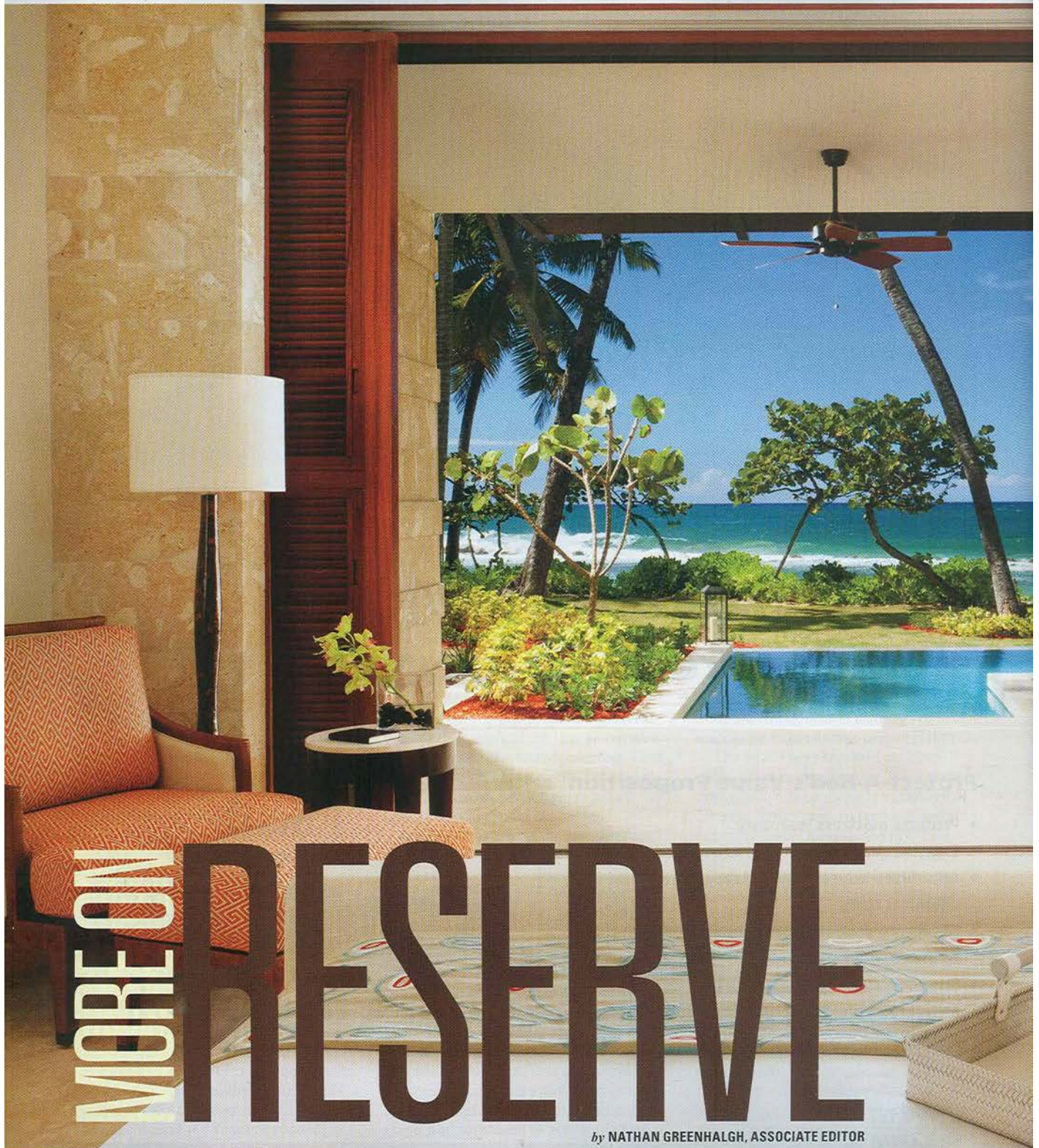
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Curtis Smithen, Four Seasons Safari Lodge, Serengeti



**DESIGN:** DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

100%  
COTTON  
SHIRTS & SUITS



# MORE ON RESERVE

by NATHAN GREENHALGH, ASSOCIATE EDITOR





## DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

**OPENING DATE:**  
December 12, 2012

**SIZE:**  
115 guestrooms, 14 condominiums, three restaurants and a cafe, a 5-acre (2-hectare) spa and an 11-mi (17-km) nature trail located on a 1,400-acre (566-hectare) site

**LOCATION:**  
20 mi (32 km) west of San Juan on Puerto Rico's Atlantic coast

**COST:**  
US\$342 million

**GENERAL MANAGER:**  
Alejandro Helbling

**OWNERS:**  
Caribbean Property Group, New York City; PRISA Group, Dorado, Puerto Rico; and an anonymous third party

**ARCHITECT:**  
SB Architects, Miami and San Francisco

**LEAD INTERIOR DESIGNER:**  
Bill Bensley Designs, Bangkok

**DESIGN AESTHETIC:**  
An open-air concept in which ocean views and foliage take center stage. Buildings are modern and minimal with a focus on natural tones.



The hotel's ground floor guestrooms feature floor-to-ceiling sliding doors with ocean views.

The latest ultra-luxe Ritz-Carlton offers open-air design in an historic setting.

**D**orado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, is the second property to open under this new Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. brand, where open-air design highlights the natural beauty of the setting.

The site was formerly one of Laurence Rockefeller's RockResorts, where Rockefeller intended guests to immerse themselves in the natural surroundings when it opened in 1958. "The hotel today follows essentially the same design structure as the original hotel, as it is comprised of a series of buildings no larger than two stories high similar to how Rockefeller originally intended," says Alejandro Helbling, the hotel's general manager. "Harmony amid nature, as well as environmental preservation, were key design components during the Rockefeller days, and we adhered to this aesthetic and ideology when constructing the resort. The interiors reflect a modern yet minimal design style that focuses on natural tones and the hotel's beautiful backdrop."

That's not to say the redesign from the property's previous life as a Hyatt resort was not extensive. The cost of the redevelopment was US\$342 million, and it took five years. "It was not a renovation as much as it was a redevelopment," Helbling says. "We tore down the original hotel buildings (except Su Casa) and raised new buildings on the footprints of old buildings."

The Su Casa building, an 8,000-sq-ft (743-sq-m) four-bedroom villa, dates back to the 1920s when the site was a plantation, and the architectural firm that designed the hotel says the history of Puerto Rico influenced the property's design.

"The architecture and interiors incorporate patterns from the natural environment and from multiple and stylistic influences that came together on this island — patterns from Tahino culture, design details inspired by Spanish Colonial architecture and fixtures and furniture inspired by the seashore and surrounding coral reef," says Scott Lee, president and principal of SB Architects. "The architecture is contemporary, but we drew heavily from the mid-century modern vernacular in a direct reference to the period that gave rise to the original Dorado Beach Resort."

"It is a more intimate experience than a Ritz-Carlton," Herve Humler, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. president and COO, says of this second Ritz-Carlton Reserve (the first is located in Krabi, Thailand). "The core service philosophy is the same, and Reserves will have a higher staff-to-guest ratio. We will provide more discrete service by a personal concierge or butler. For example, if someone wants to eat on the beach at twilight with a bonfire and their kids — we can make that happen for them. This is our first Reserve in North America, and the reception has already been a testimony to the demand for it."

Despite opening in the challenging Caribbean market, the starting opening rate during high season is US\$1,499 per night, and Helbling says occupancy levels are solid. "We're having a very strong season," he adds.

Humler says the next Reserves to open will be located in San José del Cabo, Mexico; Tamuda Bay, Morocco; and Ubud, Bali.

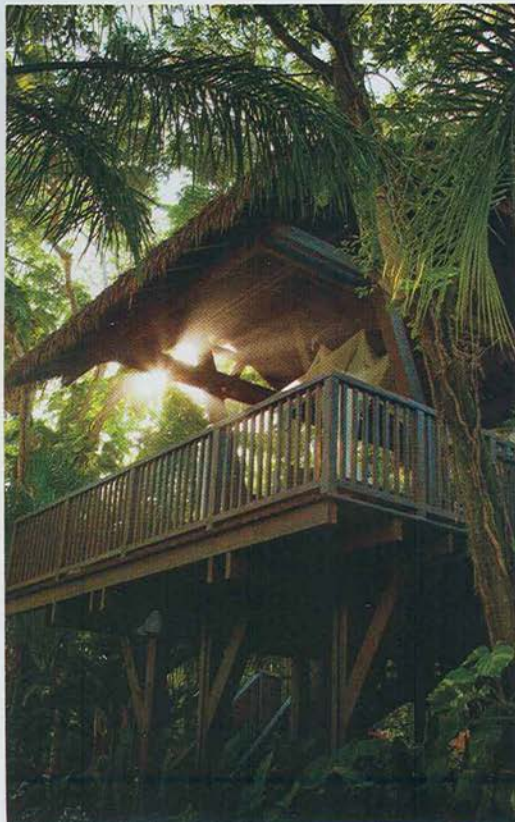




**DESIGN:** DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE



The raised arrival pavilion is designed to make guests feel as if they are walking on treetops.



The hotel's sprawling Spa Botánico features a treehouse for open-air massages.

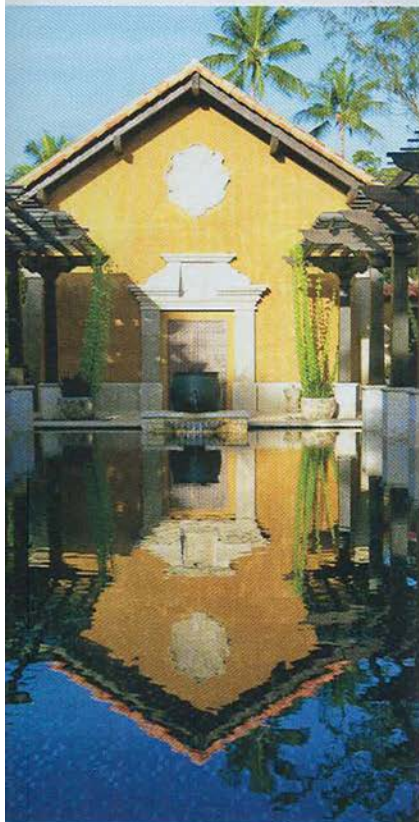


Bensley Design Studios designed the hotel's infinity edge pools.

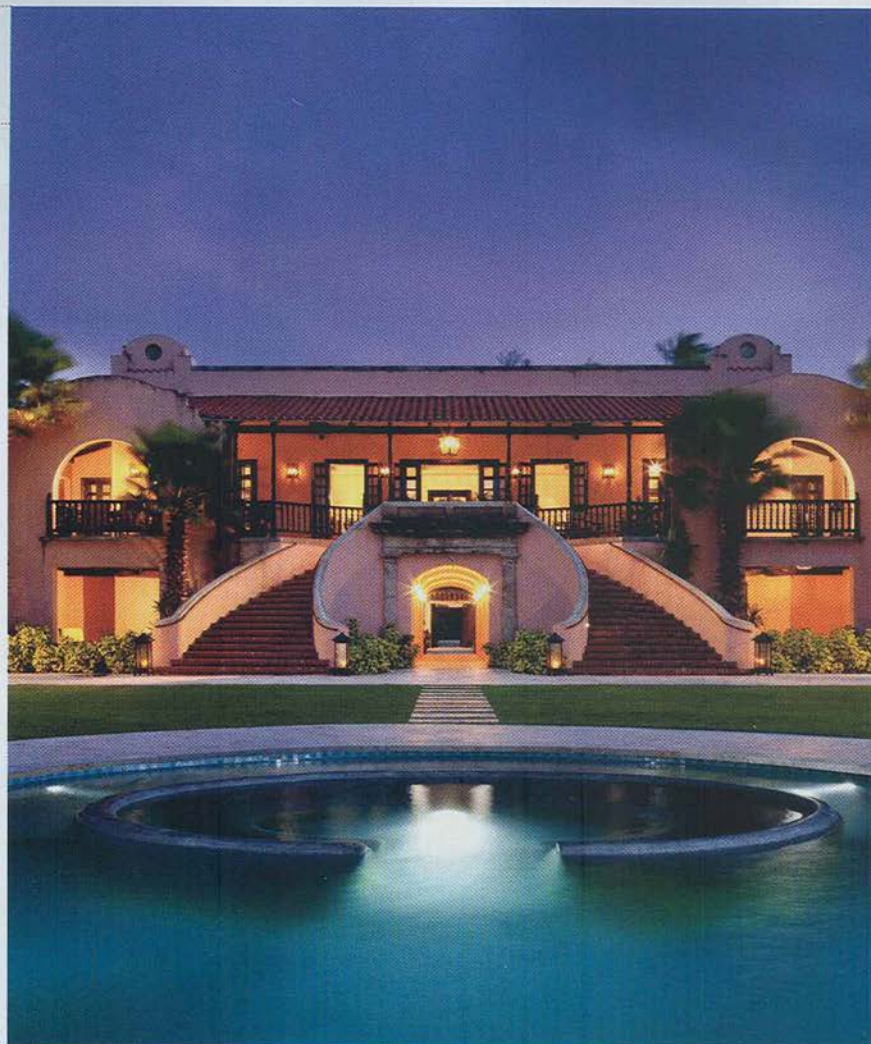


## DESIGN: DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE

The restored  
1920s hacienda  
Su Casa features  
four bedrooms.



Spa  
Botánico's  
shade house.



A deep soaking  
tub is just one  
guestroom bath-  
room feature.

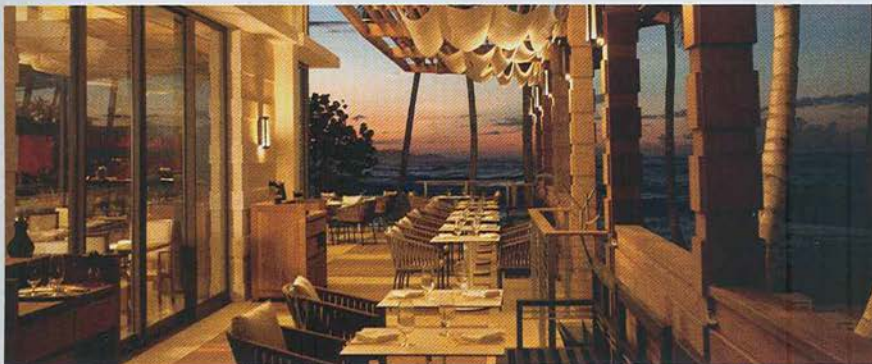




**DESIGN:** DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE



A casita guestroom patio—all guestrooms on the first floor have a private plunge pool.



The hotel's signature Mi Casa by José Andrés restaurant, which features Puerto Rican, Spanish and American cuisine, offers an outdoor patio.



The Livingston Library provides a quiet space for guests to read and relax.