

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AUTHORITY

NOVEMBER 2012

SPECIAL ISSUE

BEFORE & AFTER

**DAZZLING MAKEOVERS
MUST-HAVE PRODUCTS
EXPERT DESIGN IDEAS**



**NATE BERKUS
RENOVATES HIS
DREAM HOME**



One of the waterfront spots at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve Dorado Beach.

IDYLL WORSHIP

If the shifting seasons have you longing for turquoise water and a sandy beach, consider an escape to one of these luxurious seaside resorts

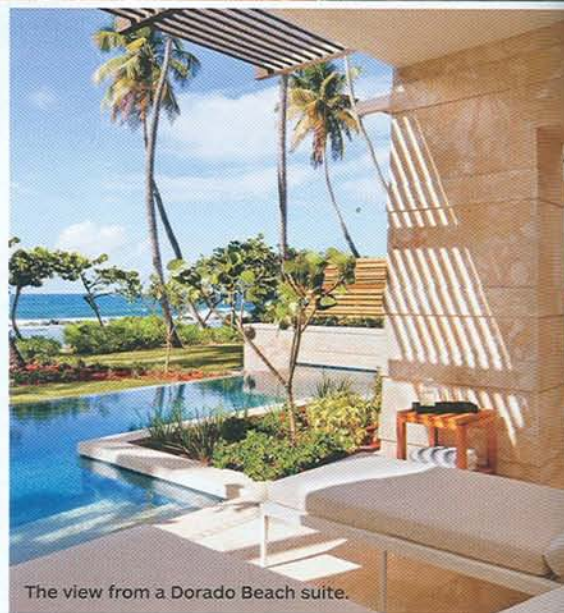
Plotting an early winter getaway? *AD* visits five unforgettable new—or newly updated—retreats in Mexico and the Caribbean. All feature sumptuous touches and noteworthy design but, most important, each is set in a distinctive, pristine beachfront location, with backdrops ranging from salt marshes to rain forests to dramatic tropical peaks. Go ahead—start packing.

RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE DORADO BEACH, PUERTO RICO

The most anticipated hotel opening in the Caribbean this season is undoubtedly the Ritz-Carlton Reserve Dorado Beach, a \$342 million resort that boasts a rare combination of location, luxury, and legacy. Easily accessible via modest flights from numerous U.S. cities, the second of Ritz-Carlton's new ultrapremium Reserve properties debuts in mid-December on a spectacular stretch of Puerto Rico's northern coast—on the same site where, in the 1950s, industrialist Laurance Rockefeller built a resort that hosted everyone from Elizabeth Taylor to Dwight Eisenhower.

The new Dorado Beach ups the ante for luxury stays in Puerto Rico, which has lately welcomed a St. Regis in Rio Grande and a W hotel on Vieques, with the redeveloped Condado Vanderbilt in San Juan opening soon. Ritz-Carlton brought in Scott A. Lee of San Francisco-based SB Architects to create 115 cabana-style suites, an expansive spa, and airy, light-filled restaurants and lounges that hug the azure shoreline. "We had an unimaginable amount of beachfront to work with," says Lee, whose Caribbean-facing guest bungalows meld Rockefeller-era modern design elements with fabrics and rugs reflecting traditional Taino motifs; they also feature private infinity-edge swimming pools. The Spa Botánico, spread across five lushly landscaped acres, comprises a dozen treatment pavilions, among them a pair of tree-house platforms for special canopy-shrouded therapies using freshly picked botanicals.

Lee also meticulously reconstructed Rockefeller's iconic tropical-mod Surf



The view from a Dorado Beach suite.

Room, which will be used as an event space. The only structure that Ritz-Carlton preserved and adapted was a 1920s hacienda built by heiress Clara Livingston, which has been stylishly restored as Dorado's exclusive four-bedroom, \$30,000-per-night villa, Su Casa.

After spending a day at the beach or on one of four Robert Trent Jones–designed golf courses, guests will have a trio of dining options, all utilizing the property's organic garden. The signature fine-dining restaurant, Mi Casa, will be overseen by celebrated chef José Andrés. Rooms from \$1,600/night; ritzcarlton.com →