

# CENTURION

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PRISAGROUP®





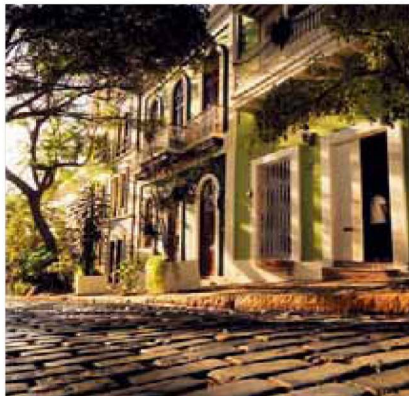
Clockwise from above: the verandah and private infinity pool of the Ocean Sanctuary Suite at the Ritz Carlton Dorado Beach; the colourful façades of a typical San Juan street; Plantation House at the St Regis Bahia Beach; a shaded balcony of Su Casa, the Ritz Carlton's hacienda, with outside bath

## CHECKING in

• **RITZ CARLTON**  
ritzcarlton.com;  
from US\$1,600

• **ST REGIS  
BAHIA BEACH**  
stregisbahia beach.  
com; from US\$800

• **CONDADO  
VANDERBILT**  
condadovanderbilthotel.com



## WHERE TO STAY

Puerto Rico's hotel scene is keeping pace with the changing face of the island

Green design was still in its infancy when industrialist Laurance Rockefeller first established the Dorado Beach resort back in 1958. Now the historic hideaway 30 minutes east of San Juan is being reborn as the first **Ritz Carlton Reserve** in the Americas. Set directly on the Caribbean and spread over 20 thickly forested hectares, the 115-key resort has been meticulously renovated and expanded over the past two years. Lead architect Scott A Lee has retained much of Rockefeller's tropical-modern aesthetic, accenting it with the ultra-earthly two-hectare Spa Botanico, a pair of Jose Andres-helmed restaurants and perfectly positioned Caribbean-front rooms and suites.

The Ritz Carlton may be Puerto Rico's highest-profile newcomer, but it's certainly not alone. On the island's opposite end is two-year-old **St Regis Bahia Beach**, a former coconut plantation transformed into an Asian-inspired resort compound with 139 rooms set in a series of duplex villas. Elaborately landscaped with zen-like reflecting pools, the self-contained resort – with its own three-kilometre slice of beach and sprawling pool complex – is ideal for families and just 20 minutes from San Juan.

In San Juan itself, all eyes are on the historic **Condado Vanderbilt**, built back in 1919 by family heir Frederick Vanderbilt and now the first part just reopened after an ambitious head-to-toe renovation. The US\$270m overhaul includes 323 rooms, opening in spring 2013, in both the original structure and a pair of adjacent towers right in the heart of San Juan's restaurant and casino district. ■