

Ritz-Carlton Reserve resort opens in Puerto Rico

By Gay Nagle Myers

Ritz-Carlton's first Reserve resort in the Americas opened right on schedule on Dec. 12 on the footprints of an estate once owned by Laurance Rockefeller.



Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve is 20 miles west of San Juan. It joins Phulay Bay on the Thai island of Krabi, which opened in December 2009, as the two Reserve properties in Ritz-Carlton's highest tier of luxury resorts.

"As a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, the philosophy behind Dorado Beach is to immerse guests into Puerto Rico's history and landscape while providing an unparalleled luxury travel experience," said Herve Humler, president and COO of Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co.

"Reflective of Rockefeller's vision of more than 50 years ago of a natural sanctuary, the island is a combination of historical charm and metropolitan life, a perfect location for the Reserve experience."

Dorado already has name recognition. In 1958, Rockefeller introduced the beachfront Dorado Beach Hotel and Golf Club on the grounds of a former 1,400-acre grapefruit and coconut plantation.

Dorado Beach Hotel was one of three Caribbean properties that made up the RockResorts brand, Rockefeller's resort-management company that was sold years later to railroad company CSX and then acquired by Vail Resorts in 2001.

The original hotel later became a Hyatt and remained so until it closed more than six years ago.

Dorado Beach includes 100 guestrooms, 14 one-bedroom suites on the beach and the restored Su Casa four-bedroom plantation villa that dates from the 1920s.

Check-in is handled in the rooms, and guests are assigned a personal concierge to handle requests, arrangements and reservations.

Dining facilities at Dorado Beach include the Mi Casa signature restaurant headed by Spanish chef Jose Andres; Positivo Sand Bar at the ocean; the open-air, bistro-style Encanto Beach Club Bar & Grill; and La Cocina Gourmet outpost for local coffee and homemade treats.

The five-acre Spa Botanico offers Puerto Rican healing traditions, modern therapies and treatments; warm and cool pools; waterfall showers; and open-air treehouse platforms.

Jean Michel Cousteau's Ambassadors of the Environment program for families explores Puerto Rico on land and sea through tours and activities.

Winter season rates start at \$1,499 per night, double.

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