

COMMUNITY/TRAVEL

Stay At This Antigua Resort For the Best Show in the Caribbean

By Dorothy Cascercer Simone Oct. 29th, 2024

*Images: Dorothy Cascercer Simone*

Many Caribbean all-inclusive resorts have nightly Broadway-caliber entertainment, and it has become something I look forward to every time I travel. For example, at the Hyatt Ziva Cap Cana in Punta Cana on the island of the Dominican Republic, I once watched a blow-your-mind level live performance of The Lion King that transported me to the bright lights of the New York City theater district. Another live performance of The Greatest Showman featured vocalists who seemingly just missed out on the roles to Hugh Jackman and Zendaya in the Hollywood movie.

But recently during my first-ever trip to the charming island of Antigua where I stayed at the adults-only, all-inclusive [Verandah Resort & Spa](#), I enjoyed my favorite form of live entertainment to date. No instruments were involved or people in costumes on stilts. In fact the only music I could hear was my Spotify playlist through my own Apple airpods. There was no set showtime,

no microphones involved, but it was breathtakingly powerful, beautiful and meditative.



I don't know the terms of their contract so I can't guarantee they will always be performing on Lover's Beach, one of two charming palm-tree lined beaches on the resort. But the "Verandah Pelican Show" as I referred to it during my 11-year wedding anniversary trip there, happened every day, all day, like clockwork.



I watched these prehistoric birds all day long with their long beaks and their large throat pouches, which I found out with a quick Google search are called "gular pouches," take flight overhead in packs of 6 or more and then divebomb one-by-one to grab a snack just below the water's edge. I watched them while sitting on a blue beach chair in the sand, sipping a pina colada from the Lazy Pelican Beach Bar, which is an ironic name given the fact that these pelicans were the farthest things from lazy. I watched them while kayaking on one of the complimentary glass bottom kayaks. I brought a Jodi Picoult book on vacation but only read 45 pages of it (sorry, Jodi) because I could not stop watching them complete this beautiful task, although maybe the fish didn't find it to be so beautiful, over and over and over again - up to 19 times I once counted. Then they would disappear from sight - I called this their "intermission" - and then return for another round. At one point I was dozing in a white water hammock floating in the water, and one came so close to me during its water landing that the next sip I took of the rum punch I had been holding tasted slightly saltier than before.

This was just one of the many highlights of my stay at this luxurious Antigua hideaway.

Here, the other top 5 in no particular order:



1. The Wavy Wicket Pub

I usually shy away from pubs of any sort in a tropical destination and reserve this type of dining and atmosphere (read: dark, somewhere you would park yourself on a rainy day) for trips to Ireland and England. But this place doesn't feel like a pub at all and is more of an elevated sports lounge featuring luxe white and black marble, rich navy velvet and brass hightop chairs, green palm print wallpaper and no fewer than 10 wall-mounted TVs playing every sporting event you could ask for. It was our favorite place to hang after dinner where we met great people and watched the Yankees in the playoffs.



Dorothy Cascercer Simone/ The Tranquility Spa

2. The Tranquility Spa

When you have two children, ages 9 and 19-months back home in Greenwich, CT with grandma and grandpa, there is no better place to enjoy a spa treatment than at an adults-only resort. You have the luxury of feeling relaxed going into it – and even better -- the rare luxury of relaxing afterwards. The Tranquility Spa is an oasis at The Verandah offering most services you would expect, like the Tropical Escape wrap with Pineapple and Papaya, a variety of Facials and Massages. My husband and I decided on the 90-minute Deep Tissue massage, but after being married 11 years, requested separate rooms. If you've been married that long, you understand I'm sure.



3. Nicole's Restaurant, Portofino Ristorante Italiano ... and really everywhere we ate

My first question to anyone recommending an all-inclusive resort is, "How was the food?" My second question is always: "How was the service?" At The Verandah, both were excellent, especially the dinners. We dined at Nicole's one night, which required a small surcharge on top of the all-inclusive package, that - believe me - you will be happy to pay. From my Grey Goose martini (up, very very dry, with blue cheese olives please) to the presentation (and taste) of my crabcake starter to the perfectly cooked steak and lobster tail, it was all perfection. It doesn't take much for me to enjoy a meal these days since I eat most of my dinners standing at our kitchen counter after serving our kids, but we really enjoyed it. Portofino Ristorante Italiano was no different with its blue and white nautical décor, same level of service and quality of food.



Even the more casual dining options were impressive. My lunch of a Cobb salad and fish tacos at Sails & Tales Bar & Grill, perched above Lover's Beach with great views of "The Pelican Show" down below was the perfect break from the sun, and the next day, I took a break from watching my waistline to indulge in the most delicious pizza right next door at Papa Ricco's Pizzeria, which had equally perfect views. On our last day on the other side of the resort, The Beach Grill at Rasta Beach served up chicken wings in a honey BBQ sauce and a chicken burrito I'm still dreaming of. I am not one to usually rave about a buffet – when you prepare and serve 3 meals a day to two small humans on the regular, you want someone to serve you. But the breakfast buffet at Seabreeze Restaurant was impressive. All in all, we were never hungry and never had "just an average" meal.



4. The Rooms

We had a Superior Waterfront Suite with an adorable balcony, views of the crystal clear water, and a fully-renovated modern bathroom with a huge shower, which made me want to stay a few extra minutes than my kids usually allow me to at home. My shower every night before dinner should have its own bullet point in this article – it was that much of a treat for this busy mom. The resort is walkable but somewhat hilly in places, so a complimentary golf cart service is available to get around which we utilized quite a bit, especially upon checking out with our luggage.





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5. The Calypso Cat

Due to scheduling conflicts, we did not get to experience the Calypso Cat (not to be confused with the adorable actual cats who roam the resort). But I did lay eyes on the boat, and I always believe it's good practice to have a reason to return to a particular destination. The 4.5 hour catamaran cruise departs a few mornings a week from the dock located on Rasta Beach (pictured), which makes this particular excursion very easy. It takes passengers to nearby Green Island for snorkeling (oftentimes with turtles), music, lunch and rum punch. Several guests I spoke with described the trip as 'fun' and 'memorable.'

For more information on The Verandah Resort & Spa in Antigua visit <https://www.theverandahantigua.com/>

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