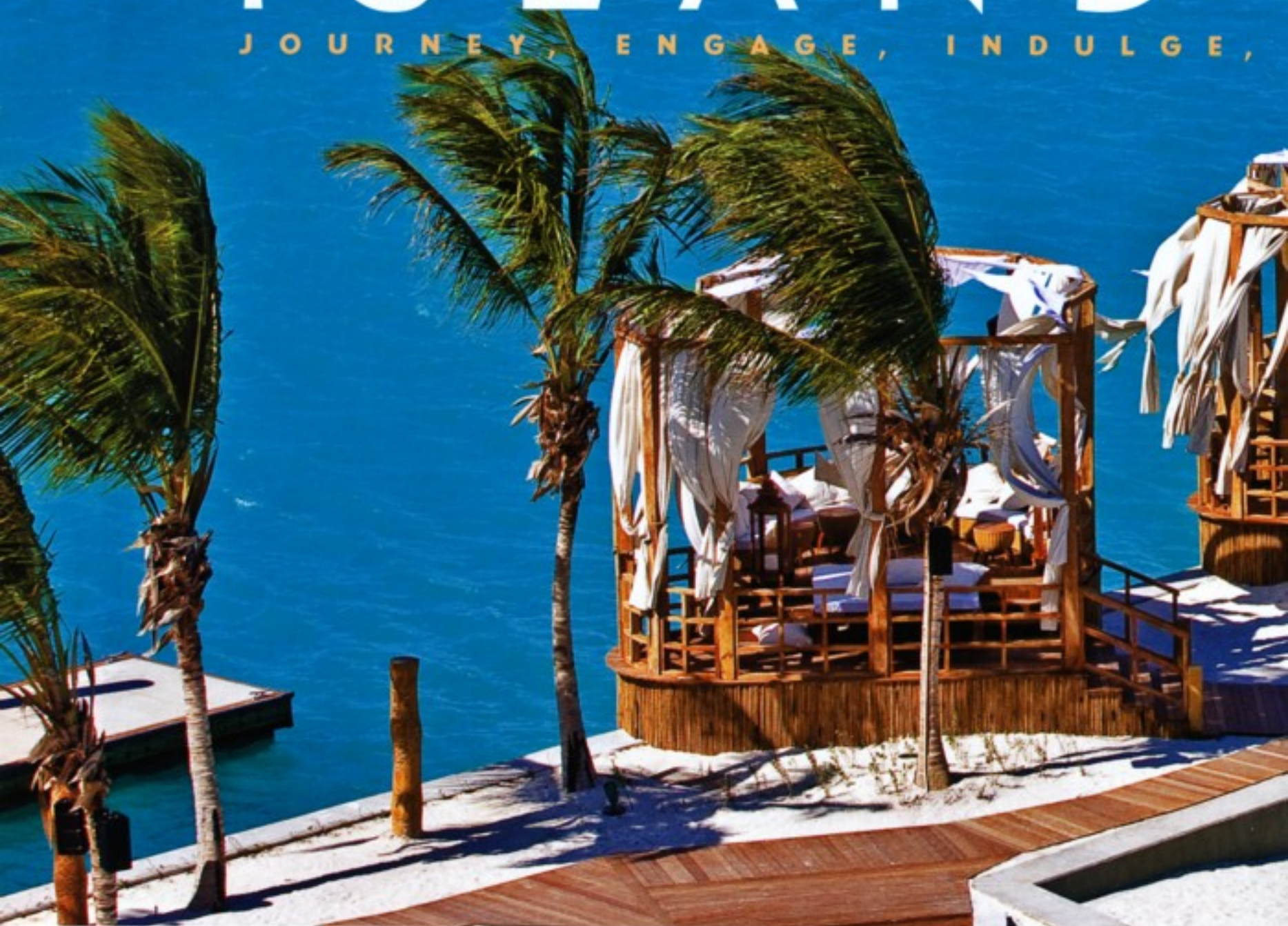


ISLAND

JOURNEY, ENGAGE, INDULGE,



JUST BACK **PROVO** *Puttin' on the Glitz*



PROVIDENCIALES — PROVO to those in the know — has seen a steroidal surge in development in the past few years, and it has just reached a crescendo. Along swanky Grace Bay, new high-end hotels are upping the ante on their already ambitious competitors. New fine-dining options have broadened the cosmopolitan appeal, propelling the most developed island of the Turks and Caicos archipelago into the starry stratosphere of chic, celebrity-sanctioned destinations.

Sax on the beach: plush seaside cribs and other delights at Nikki Beach (above and left).

HOPPING

UNWIND, DISCOVER AND PLAY



■ PARTY OVER HERE!

Bypassing Grace Bay for an exclusive locale on Leeward Channel, the ultra-sexy **Nikki Beach Resort & Spa** launched in April with an over-the-top party starring the likes of Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones, among other minglers. The \$100 million resort opened with 48 studios and one- and two-bedroom suites, plus a broad-daylight disco and king-size "Ali Baba" beds on platinum sands. Phase Two will add a 110-room, five-star hotel and spa and a casino built around a glass-walled modeling agency. 649-941-3747; nikkibeachhotels.com

The wow factor also gets cranked up at the **Grace Bay Club's** black-marble **Infiniti Bar**. Stretching 90 feet toward the

horizon, it appears to float on water. The bar's Boom Boom rum cocktail just might put you over the edge. 649-946-5050; gracebayclub.com

■ HIGHER HEIGHTS

Provo is on the up and up, and **Seven Stars** offers concrete proof, soaring an unprecedented seven stories high — a veritable skyscraper by local standards, thanks to a controversial relaxation of building height restrictions. The condo-resort, which officially debuted on July 1, exudes elegance in its 165 one- to four-bedroom studios and suites, with marble floors, wrought-iron four-poster beds and silky linens. Its clubby restaurant, **La Pergola**, delivers Mediterranean-inspired

seafood using fresh local ingredients such as sea urchin and sardines, thanks to ebullient Sicilian chef Antonio Fecarotta. 649-941-7777; sevenstarsresort.com

The Tuscany, another condo-resort newcomer, recently opened with 30 three-bedroom oceanfront suites, well-equipped

PROVIDENCIALES



ISLAND HOPPING



POINTS OF VIEW
Savor the scenery from the sky-high suites at the new Seven Stars condo-resort (left), or peer out from here to Infiniti at Grace Bay Club's slick watering hole, below.

kitchens and Tommy Bahama-style décor. 649-941-4667; the tuscanysresort.com

■ NIP/TUCK

With all the young blood around, old-timers have opted for face-lifts. **The Sands at Grace Bay** reopened last December after a \$6 million makeover that introduced a glamorous open-air lobby and elegantly redesigned suites in pale blue and cream hues. 649-946-5199; thesandsresort.com

Delicious renovations at Provo's grande dame of deluxe resorts, **Grace Bay Club**, include the Estate, a collection of 22 new luxury residences to be completed by the end of the year. Also new: the contemporary flair at its **Anacoana** restaurant, where Canadian chef Joel Rheume dishes up mouthwatering treats like conch chowder with cherry pepper and *añejo* rum. Guests love the seating pods on the sand where you can dine with your feet almost in the water. 649-946-5050; gracebayclub.com

■ WESTWARD HO!

Tucked between a coral reef and an 18,000-acre nature preserve at the secluded west end, **Amanyara** offers deep-pocketed house hunters a chance to own one of 33 sleek, Zen-like villas that will be completed in 2009. They're linked by walkways that "float" over tranquil reflecting pools. 649-941-7952; amanyaravillas.com

For the yang to Amanyara's yin, head to the old sloop-building settlement of Blue



Hills, where new restaurants, bars and craft shops are popping up along the beach. **Sailing Paradise Restaurant & Lounge** offers an authentic local experience, including sailing to harvest your own conch, boat-building workshops and regattas. Local bands strike up on weekends, and the place is perfect for a couple of cold beers and a game of dominoes. 649-946-5885

■ NIGHT AND DAY

Native boat building is a theme at the **National Environmental Center's** new exhibition hall, dominated by a coral-reef column replete with sea life. Scale models and interactive 3-D maps help you get a handle on the local environment and culture. 649-941-5122

For more daytime diversion, check out **Fun World**, Provo's newest attraction. Scale a 32-foot climbing wall and then strap yourself into a high-performance go-cart

to whiz around a sinuous track. There's also an 18-hole mini-golf course, and an old-fashioned carousel is in the works — just the thing when the kids get beached out. 649-941-4653; funworldtci.com

When night falls, head down Grace Bay Road, where you can dally with Lady Luck at the new **Casablanca Casino**, housed in a former Moroccan-style nightclub. Celebrate (or commiserate) in the rooftop lounge, which remains open until dawn. 649-941-3737; casablanca.tc

■ START YOUR ENGINES

Indy racing on tiny Provo? The Turks and Caicos government and Indy Racing League have signed a letter of intent to launch the **Indy Turks and Caicos Grand Prix** next March. A new racing track under construction in Blue Hills promises to make Provo the Monte Carlo of the Caribbean.

— Christopher P. Baker