

OCEAN DRIVE

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ALEX ROGOWSKA

INTERNATIONAL TIP SHEET

GREAT ESCAPES FOR CHECKING IN AND TUNING OUT *Explore Serene New Mexico, Sandy Turks & Caicos and Sweet Savannah*

Looking for an antidote to the humid Southeast? Consider a weekend getaway to the Southwest, home to some of the country's most beautiful, luxurious boutique retreats. Take a gorgeous, 38-mile drive from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the beautiful **Rancho de San Juan** in Española, situated on 225 acres in the Chama River Valley—where the mouth of the Ojo Caliente River flows into the Rio Grande. This intimate, 15-room resort is a serene oasis where you can spend mornings exploring arroyos and centuries-old sandstone formations, golf and fish all afternoon, and then retire to your suite for a relaxing massage next to your own fireplace. Enjoy dinner at Rancho de San Juan's on-site dining room—an incredibly romantic spot for a candlelit, formal-yet-comfortable meal—where the menu boasts a decidedly Southwestern flair: Think roasted-quail salad followed by grilled swordfish steak with roasted tomatillo salsa.

The hotel is offering a great deal for travel this season: The Equine Escape runs from September 1st through November 30th and includes two nights in a luxury suite, a three-course dinner for two, breakfast each morning, a day of horseback riding through Indian ruins, a picnic lunch, and two 60-minute in-room massages for \$1,800 per couple, including taxes. Rates begin at \$275 per night. Call 505-753-6818 or visit ranchodesanjuan.com. —Suzy Buckley

Turks & Caicos: Sandcastle U

The three-month-old **Somerset on Grace Bay**, located in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, is offering something beyond the typical beach, sun and umbrella-laden cocktails typical of an island-resort vacation. The superplush tropical destination is home to The Somerset Sandcastle University, which teaches willing students of all ages how to build the tallest towers and deepest moats in the sand—and it's free to hotel



night for a four-bedroom estate penthouse during peak season. For more information, call 649-946-5900 or visit thesomerset.com. —S.B.

Southern Luxe in Savannah

Labor Day is the quintessential holiday for a three- or four-day getaway when it's steamy hot in the Magic City and you haven't had a real day off since July. So if you're looking to reward yourself for months of hard work, consider a trip to Savannah, Georgia, the riverside town best known for its pre-Civil War landmarks, brick-lined streets and Southern charm.



Clockwise from top left: Building sandcastles is serious business at Somerset on Grace Bay in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands; the gorgeous circa-1888 Mansion on Forsyth Park in Savannah; the entrance to Rancho de San Juan in New Mexico; Cate Blanchett is one of many celebrities who have enjoyed the secluded charm of Rancho de San Juan.

Rooms are ample, with oversized tubs, pillow-top mattresses, down comforters and pillows, flat-screen televisions and complimentary wireless Internet access.

If you need a challenge during your stay, attend one of the culinary classes (\$90) at the on-site 700 Kitchen Cooking School, where chef Darin Seibert offers themed courses. Afterwards, visit Poseidon Spa and indulge in one of its blissful treatments, then stroll through Grand Bohemian Gallery to check out the art on your way to dine at 700 Drayton Restaurant, which features "new Savannah cuisine." Feast on delectable dishes such as baked goat cheese and fried green tomatillo, and pan-roasted Gulf Coast grouper and Georgia shrimp fricassee.

September rates start at \$199 per night for standard rooms, \$249 per night for Bohemian rooms and \$449 nightly for suites. Call 912-238-5158 or log on to mansiononforisynthpark.com. —Camille Hunt

Learn how to craft your own mansion by the sea.

guests. A faculty of Somerset professors, all trained by South Florida's famed sand sculptor and Guinness world record holder Mark Mason, will lead private and group seminars on the intricacies of "sandcastleology." Learn how to craft your own mansion by the sea, a talent that will amaze friends back home. The Somerset is located on 4.6 acres of beachfront property and includes 54 oversized residence suites ranging in size from 2,600 to 5,300 square feet, all stocked with gourmet kitchens, Viking appliances and wine-storage refrigerators, which make it perfect for extended stays. Rates range from \$455 per night for a one-bedroom English-cottage suite during low season to \$5,000 per

And the city became even more fabulous last year with the addition of the **Mansion on Forsyth Park** (700 Drayton Street), its first true luxury hotel.

Nestled in Savannah's historic district and across the street from beautiful Forsyth Park and its idyllic fountain, the four-story, brick and terra-cotta hotel built in 1888 is an original Victorian-Romanesque mansion and served as a private residence, funeral home and synagogue before being restored in 2004. Now the 128-room gem blends classic Roman and contemporary styles, with 12-foot ceilings, crystal chandeliers, hardwood floors, a grand staircase and 400 pieces of American and European 20th- and 21st-century artwork.

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