



## LONG WEEKEND BY ELOISE PARKER

# Isle do for two

Bermuda's the perfect anniversary getaway

If you're planning to celebrate your wedding anniversary in style this summer, a chic tropical getaway is closer than you think.

Bermuda, just an hour and a half flight out of New York, has been voted this year's most romantic island destination by Coastal Living magazine. With its unique pink sands, distinctive gleaming white-roofed cottages and temperatures hovering between 70 and 80 degrees from May to October, it's easy to see why this fertile string of islands just north of the Caribbean scores top marks.

There are plenty of options for a weekend of luxury, from the famously low-key Elbow Beach Resort, which occupies a sweeping stretch of sand on the south shore, to the historic Fairmont Hamilton Princess, just a five-minute walk from the shops and restaurants of downtown Hamilton.

Kick off your long weekend with a refined afternoon tea for two at the Hamilton Princess' Heritage Court, a longstanding island tradition served complete with

freshly baked fruit scones, clotted cream and jam amid views of the hotel's lush gardens, a social hot spot for Bermudians for more than 100 years.

For romantic waterside dining, try the Waterlot Inn next to the Fairmont Southampton. It offers dishes priced between \$12 and \$75, and has served fine steak and seafood to the likes of Mark Twain and Eleanor Roosevelt during its 300 years of operation.

Those with a hearty appetite will enjoy the romantic feast known as the Surf and Turf Seafood Skewer for Two, a "tower" of lobster, scallops, tiger shrimp and beef tenderloin served with Choron sauce.

For a more contemporary spin, the Barracuda Grill in Hamilton offers award-winning French- and Asian-inspired twists on local seafood specialties (from \$13 to \$50). Do what locals Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas do and reserve the "snug" table for two, which is tucked away from other diners.

### SO MUCH TO DISCOVER

When you're ready to explore, hop on the free ferry to the Fairmont Southampton, where a quiet stroll along some of the island's most picturesque and secluded beaches is just a short walk west from the popular Horseshoe Bay.

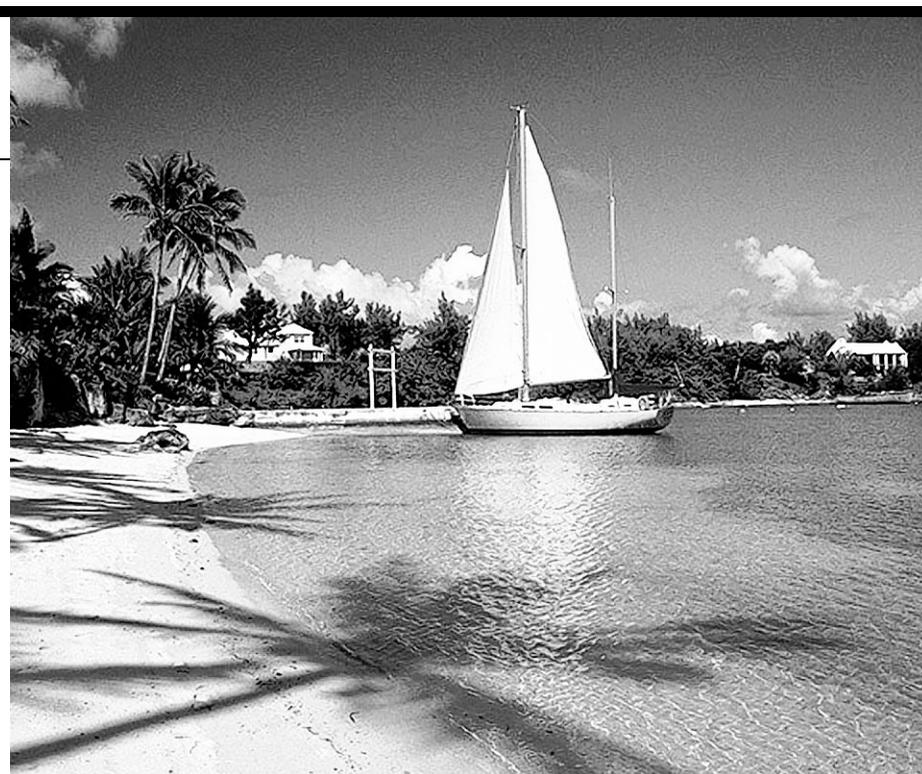
Car rental is not permitted on this island, but public buses are regular and cost between \$3 and \$4.50 in exact change. If you prefer more flexibility, consider a private tour of the island by taxi. Local drivers will tailor an itinerary for you and provide a lively insight into island life and its strong British and Afro-Caribbean influences.

Stop off at the stunning Crystal Caves, which were discovered thanks to a couple of fearless school kids and a lost cricket ball in 1905, or take a wander through the quaint colonial streets of St. George on the island's northwestern tip, where the first European settlers found themselves shipwrecked on the island's treacherous coral reefs in the late 1500s.

For a more adventurous approach, get a firsthand look at the island's hundreds



The historic Fairmont Hamilton Princess is a short walk from downtown scene.



With picturesque, pink beaches (above) and lovely, hidden lagoons (below), Bermuda was named this year's most romantic island destination by Coastal Living magazine.



of shipwrecks and coral reefs. Dive Bermuda at the Fairmont Southampton offers snorkeling trips and dive packages to suit all levels. Many of the best dive sites are located just five to 10 minutes offshore in shallow waters with minimal currents, making it a great destination for beginners.

For those who prefer to keep their heads above water, charter a boat for an offshore tour of the island and take in a few of the exclusive properties dubbed "Millionaires' Row," which regularly attract vacationers including Mayor Bloomberg and Oprah Winfrey.

You might even find yourself teeing off next to one of Bermuda's famous visitors on one of the island's many golf courses. A paradise for enthusiasts, it offers more fairways per square mile than any other country in the world. Whilst a handful of clubs remain invite-only, Port Royal, St. George's and the recently redesigned Belmont Hills Golf Club offers miles of challenging terrain with a turquoise ocean backdrop.

And with a ban on neon signs, billboards and high-rise buildings, Bermuda remains an exquisitely preserved haven of Old World elegance and charm. ♦

## If you go ...

### ■ GETTING THERE

**American Airlines** (www.AA.com) and **JetBlue** (www.JetBlue.com) has direct flights from JFK, while **Continental** (www.Continental.com) flies daily from Newark to Bermuda's international airport.

For more information on local transport, including taxis and buses, go to [Bermudatourism.com](http://Bermudatourism.com).

### ■ WHERE TO STAY

**The Fairmont Hamilton Princess** offers a "Romance" package including champagne, dinner for two and evening turndown service. For prices and availability, go to

[www.Fairmont.com/Hamilton](http://www.Fairmont.com/Hamilton).

Rooms at the **Elbow Beach Resort** start at \$295 per night. For more information on special offers and packages, go to [www.Mandarinoriental.com/Bermuda](http://www.Mandarinoriental.com/Bermuda).

### ■ WHERE TO EAT

**The Waterlot Inn** (441-238-8000). Enjoy surf or turf by the water at this historic landmark.

**Barracuda Grill** (441-292-1609). Catherine Zeta-Jones favors this contemporary second-floor hideaway in downtown Hamilton for date nights with Michael Douglas.

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