

Robb Report

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Vacation Homes

EXCEPTIONAL WATERFRONT, GOLF, COUNTRY, MOUNTAIN AND VINEYARD PROPERTIES

CARIBBEAN CALYPSO

A Guide to Islands New, Rediscovered & Up-and-Coming

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Bahia Beach, Puerto Rico

For years, a two-mile stretch of white sandy beach, 483 acres of maritime forest and a former coconut plantation have quietly existed along Puerto Rico's northeastern coast.

Luckily, much has been learned in recent decades about environmentally sensitive building, and now that Bahia Beach is ripe to blossom, it promises to be a premier example of eco-luxury.

"You can't replicate the setting," says Federico J. Sánchez-Ortiz, president of Interlink Group, Bahia Beach's development managers. "We're being very careful not to overshadow that natural beauty." Buildings will be low-rise and low-density, allowing that beauty to take center stage. "Every building will sit below the tree line," Sánchez-Ortiz says.

By the time the community opens in 2009, around 300 residences inspired by vernacular plantation architecture will stand. Some 90 Las Verandas golf villas in 10 buildings will cost between \$675,000

and \$1.8 million. The villas range from 1,500 to 3,500 square feet and were designed by SB Architects—whose past projects include Napa Valley's Calistoga Ranch and Miami's Fisher Island. Ten 4,232-square-foot Las Olas beachfront townhomes—with four bedrooms, private plunge pools and two-car garages—start at \$3.9 million. Twenty-six St. Regis-branded Las Estancias estate homes start at \$3.6 million, and the St. Regis will offer 135 opulent beachfront resort residences. In addition, 24 Las Ventanas Villas, ranging from 1,700 to 3,400 square feet and priced from \$1.1 million, will join the flock. The new seaside golf course was designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. and is irrigated by water from the property's lakes, rather than the city water system, and fertilized according to Audubon International standards. There will also be a beach club and golf clubhouse, a seaside village of shops, a Remède Spa and Fitness Center, elegant and casual restaurants and ocean-

front swimming pools. Outside the development, the rustic surrounds include the adjacent El Yunque National Forest, rivers and lakes, and that turquoise ocean.

And though it may feel like another world, Puerto Rico is, of course, a United States territory, with no surprising rules or restrictions to overcome when purchasing property. "People fall in love with the location, but they also have a rational side," says Sánchez-Ortiz. That rational side should appreciate the short 16-mile drive to the San Juan airport, which offers direct flights from 20 cities, including a four-hour direct flight from New York. "People can leave New York in the morning and be playing golf by noon," says Sánchez-Ortiz. "That convenience makes it less like an occasional vacation home and more like a weekend getaway."

LISA SELIN DAVIS

Bahia Beach

866.529.3996, www.bahiabeachpuertorico.com

All structures on Bahia Beach's 483 acres will rest below the tree line. The low-density community will offer just 300 residences, which will be inspired by local architecture.

