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Tidal

BY IAN KEOWN

At these beachfront lodgings, sand is the only thing between your room and the water.

Suites



7 INTERCONTINENTAL PRESIDENTE COZUMEL RESORT SPA, Cozumel

InterContinental Presidente Cozumel Resort Spa

COZUMEL

7 The 63 Beachfront Superior rooms and Reef Suites Deluxe at this recently renovated five-star resort offer direct access to *la playa*, as well as amenities like flat-screen TVs, coffee makers, outdoor shower areas and private terraces with loungers, gliders and hammocks. The 1,400-square-foot reef suites are more expensive, but for snorkel fanatics these rooms also offer primo entry to the National Marine Park. **BOOK:** *Beachfront Superior rooms and Reef Suites Deluxe*. **RATES:** *Beachfront rooms from \$307 in low season (\$542 high); reef suites from \$847*

in low season (\$1,308 high). **CONTACT:** 888-424-6835; ichotelsgroup.com

Turneffe Island Lodge

BELIZE

8 You want escape; you get Escape. For starters, you can only get here twice a week, Wednesdays and Saturdays, and only by boat, a 35-mile trip. (You could, of course, charter a helicopter, but that's not quite in the spirit of such an eco-oriented, idyllic spot.) Picture a circular cay, 14 acres in all, with an expanse of sand larger than a football field at one end, a tropical cove at the other, and somewhere among the sea grapes and palms a 12-room, eight-cabana resort. There's no TV, no

radio, no phones, no Internet, and your shower is heated by solar panels. Fishermen and divers love Turneffe, but so will romantics who don't mind fish talk or family-style dining — there's all day for billing and cooing and hoping Saturday and Wednesday never come. **BOOK:** *A cabana*. **RATES:** *From \$864 in low season (\$1,000 high), including meals and a few extras*. **CONTACT:** 800-874-0118; turneffelodge.com

The Reef Resort

GRAND CAYMAN

9 Most of Grand Cayman's sites and activities are on the island's most popular stretch, Seven Mile Beach, but over on East End Beach, the



10 LA SAMANNA
St. Martin

Reef Resort enjoys exclusive frontage on 1,600 feet of isolated, sandy white shoreline. All 110 suites (42 more will open in July) have beachfront views, and those on the first floor of the three-story hotel deliver max beach exposure. The simple but elegant resort was renovated in 2004, adding a second pool and palapas on the sand. Studios, one- and two-bedroom units come with premium facilities like kitchens and Jacuzzis. **BOOK:** *A first-floor suite.* **RATES:** From \$205 in low season (\$290 high). **CONTACT:** 888-232-0541; thereef.com

La Samanna

ST. MARTIN

10 The 81 rooms and suites here are top-drawer elegant, the bluff-side restaurant is drop-dead romantic, the grounds are a floral kingdom, and

Baie Longue, on which this legend is perched, really is long. The owners, Orient-Express, have just installed estate-wide Wi-Fi, a new infinity pool, beach cabanas and a beach lunch bar. What more could you want? Easy beach access, of course. Guests in the four-story Main House have great views, but it's a bit of a hike to the beach. Savvy sand lovers check in to ground-floor suites tucked among the sea-grape trees, just 20 paces from the turquoise bay. **BOOK:** *One-bedroom Suites A12, A14, A20, A22.* **RATES:** From \$1,095 in low season (\$2,100 high). **CONTACT:** 800-854-2252; lasamanna.com

Palm Island

THE GRENADINES

11 This 135-acre Grenadine isle was made famous by its

original owner, charter-yacht skipper "Coconut" Johnny Caldwell, who rowed his passengers ashore for picnics, planted a few coconuts on each call and eventually built a castaway resort among his grove of palms. Now part of the Elite Island group of all-inclusive resorts, Palm Island still revolves around the splendid, soaring Polynesian pavilion (with dramatically improved cuisine), but the stone-and-timber bungalows now have air conditioning (still no TVs or telephones). Palm is all about beach and sea, with most of the 37 rooms rimming a dazzling boomerang-shaped strand. **BOOK:** *Beachfront Cottages 7 to 19.* **RATES:** From \$795 in low season (\$960 high), all-inclusive. **CONTACT:** 800-858-4618; eliteislandresorts.com

LEFT: JEAN-PHILIPPE PITER; MACDUFF EVERTON