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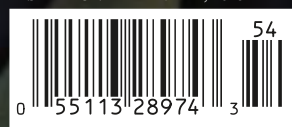
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A HAUTE HOLIDAY

Leaving winter behind for a vacation in the sun, Suzanne Rogers shares her favourite holiday tradition—Christmas and New Years in the Bahamas.

Tucked away on the western tip of New Providence Island in the Bahamas sits the picturesque, private gated community, Lyford Cay. Tall, lush palm trees sway effortlessly in the breeze, and sparkling ocean water caresses the pristine beachfront sand as the tide rolls restlessly in and out. Lyford Cay Club is an exclusive conclave established by Canadian horseracing tycoon E.P. Taylor in the 1950s, and has since drawn in its fair share of notable visitors. JFK stayed here during the early years of his presidency, and Sean Connery remains a prominent seasonal resident today. It's also where, for more than half a century, my husband's kin has maintained a warm and welcoming home-away-from-home. For nearly a decade now, we've congregated here for the Christmas holiday.

Our visits have become a treasured annual tradition; one that I hope to carry on for years to come.

As Jack Frost covers Toronto's busy streets in a blanket of snow, I head south for a six-week Caribbean escape, family in tow. Our stress-free sojourn begins the minute we're greeted by the community's elegant pink steel gates, and drive past the one-time home of CBS founder William Paley and his stylish wife Babe (where, before the couple's notorious falling out, Babe regularly entertained her good friend Truman Capote). The trip gives me an opportunity to truly unwind; the most hectic thing we have to deal with during the month of December is a tangle of golf cart traffic booting through the community.

We always drop by the Lyford Cay Club for a Rum Dum cocktail (the house specialty, made with two kinds of rum and an egg white). You never know who might be sitting beside you as you sip your tasty concoction, watching the sunset: a Greek shipping magnate, a European prince or princess, an investment banker, or a fashion icon.

With the chance of bumping into fashion royalty (and true royalty) on the island, I keep my style game strong. For seaside lounging, my go-to outfits include



colourful caftans by Pucci and TAJ, and for island-appropriate daywear, I'm partial to Miguelina's black or white all-lace cover-ups—they're divine and easy to wear. In the evening, I'll opt for something elegant, often from Oscar de la Renta.

When December 31st arrives, I pick something light and flowing from one of the aforementioned designers. The New Year's Eve celebration at Lyford Cay is vibrant; a festival full of colour and movement where everyone is dancing and enjoying themselves. Nothing can quite compare to a Bahamian "junkanoo," which is a traditional celebratory parade with performers dressed in brightly coloured costumes. The junkanoo begins at the stroke of midnight, as the Caribbean sky lights up with fireworks, ushering in the New Year. When the clock strikes 12, I always take a moment amid the colourful commotion to reflect on and appreciate life's simplest joys, like how blessed I am to be in this tropical paradise, and most importantly, in the company of those I love.

Until next time...