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OF VOGUE & GLAMOUR



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Like the remnants of a sandcastle toppled by the incoming tide, the private island of Cayo Espanto barely peeks out of the Caribbean. But as your driver tilts the motorboat toward this patch of crushed coral, something makes you sit up and take notice. For lined up on the pier to greet you is the resort's entire complement of white-and-blue-tiled staff. Your hostler (he's the one holding the *piña colodas* you ordered from the boat) leads you to Casa Malena, a blue-dotted affair with a king-size bedclothed in mosquito netting, an all-white shower for two, and one wholly wall-floing open to the outside panorama. When your Man Friday disappears to refresh your drinks, the two of you try to decide where to relax first: in the plunge pool, at the water's edge, or on the twin lounge chairs at the end of your very own dock. No worries about jockeying for position on the sand; the five villas are situated so that you may not see another guest for the duration of your stay—that is, unless you sign up for a group expedition to snorkel the world's second-largest coral reef or to wander the mainland's Maya ruins. (Two *reclusos* can request private tours.) Meals happen whenever and wherever you'd like. Is your cultural? On the sand? Under a *palapa*? Your hostler will arrange it, covering your table with a succulent spread (Grand Marnier you had during salad, "Cayo" lime pie) that was created based on a professor's sheet you filled out. Statistically, that list adds him to being you a kayak, at Cayo Espanto, sunset is best witnessed from the surrounding shallow waters, with only your host, and the occasional bonafish, for company.

—TILLYNIA ORLOFF