

The LUXURY *of* QUIET

At Jamaica's Round Hill, preserved history meets understated elegance

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ike many of us, I became a fan of “White Lotus” over the last three seasons. After the music and murder sucked me in, my guilty pleasure was envisioning myself in one of its distinct, ul-

tra-luxury settings. Imagine my excitement when a friend and I had the opportunity to stay at Round Hill Hotel & Villas in Jamaica’s Montego Bay (Delta offers nonstop flights from MSP), a property I could easily imagine on a future season. She and I didn’t get chased in humid markets or hook up with hot Russian jewel thieves; I did, however, have a deep-tissue knot worked on by Paul McCartney’s favorite masseuse, and we dined every night on five-star meals, sometimes on the beach.

Round Hill is an unspoiled, time-stands-still kind of paradise, where you won’t find the party boat or jet ski crowd. There is no sound machine pumping out dance tunes at the pool, and the beach bar is for conversation and fresh wahoo, not chugging shots. Under a moonbeam, my friend and I sip cucumber-basil martinis while being served pumpkin soup and jerk chicken tacos with antique silver and heirloom linen. And while music plays during dinner hours, the sounds are the soothing cadent beats of steel drums—just the right volume to talk in low tones.

With no TVs in the rooms or speakers on the beach, the only sounds I heard while contemplating the aquamarine waters from my deck chair were the birds, the waves, and the wind. After days spent in this magical place, my pulse slows, my mind stills, and I discover that Round Hill provides the luxury of quiet.

In the mornings, we move soundlessly over the coral pathways to enjoy Round Hill’s twist on a full English breakfast—including freshly plucked spinach harvested from the same garden and herb beds that have provisioned Round Hill for generations. Sufficiency and sustainability are bedrock values at Round Hill, leading to initiatives like coral reef preservation, as the sea captain explained during our glass-bottom

boat ride after we launched off the property’s historic dock.

Round Hill stands apart as a meticulously preserved historical property where you feel transported to an era when a tanned Jacqueline and John F. Kennedy sat on the veranda a few chairs away eating crustless sandwiches at Round Hill’s traditional English tea. In addition to the Kennedys and Paul McCartney, Round Hill has hosted numerous storied guests including Oscar Hammerstein, who composed “The Sound of Music” in one of the villas, and more recently, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex who attended a friend’s wedding on Round Hill’s immaculate lawn. Ralph Lauren owns a villa on the estate. Having designed many of the guest rooms—including ours—his understated style and timeless design mixes seamlessly with the work of local Jamaican artists and the natural stone landscaping.

On a tour of the grounds, we’re invited inside several of the 27 private villas, each designed according to its owner’s style. Privacy and anonymity are paramount here; villas are hidden behind bougainvillea and hedges and come with your own personal chef, housekeeper, and sometimes a butler who will run into town to fetch whatever it is one forgets in a place where every need is immediately filled.

My dream of “White Lotus” luxury more than delivers in the elegant beauty of Round Hill, where friendly, impeccable service is just a step away. Yet there were no murders in the ocean-view buildings, and the only shock of red we found was the Ralph Lauren shawls thoughtfully laid out for us to wear when we sat on our private veranda in the evenings. After the sun whispered goodnight, the ocean breeze cooled our warmed skin after a day of doing not much at all, unless you count long talks between old friends. ●

A Note from NORTH:

Sadly, Hurricane Melissa devastated Jamaica and parts of the Caribbean in late 2025. We at NORTH were grateful to hear that Round Hill sustained only minimal damage and reopened shortly after.

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