



ELITE DESTINATION HOMES

Villa Osprey, Turks & Caicos, Caribbean

www.VillaOsprey.com

TURKS & CAICOS BLOG

By: Jerry Nelson

Our initial sojourn to Turks and Caicos and Villa Osprey was a great success. In this blog, I will give our impressions of the good (mostly everything), the bad (a few minor disappointments) and the ugly (Baby Huey?).

I had never visited the Turks before or visit to Villa Osprey. A spectacular location, the villa has a great view of the western horizon (glorious sunsets) and Maggot Rock (should be renamed Osprey Rock!) The gazebo is great for colorful sunsets, card games, cocktails, reading, loafing or massages. The accommodations are excellent - two or three couples, which we had, works perfect for this villa.

Our outdoor activities included walking, running, beaching, swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking and golf. Tennis would be possible if we knew how to get on the Sunset Club courts. The walking/running around Villa Osprey is fine, if you are ok with the hard McCaddem. It's about one-half mile to the Silly Creek Gates, and then you can go in either direction for as long as you want on a fairly good road. Going left on the Chalk Sound road offers the best views of the Sound and Proggin Bay. Going right you can divert to the Taylor Bay beach. We did 3-4 miles most every morning, which was good for the soul if hard on the knees.

On our second full day at Villa Osprey, we got two masseuses from Spa Tropicque (ask for Gail and Vash) to troop out from Grace Bay with their equipment. With our help, they set up under the gazebo. Four 50 minute deep massages cost \$525 including tip. It was well worth it. You can also visit their office at Port O'Call for other services.

We determined that the best bet for sea activities was Big Blue Unlimited (649-946-5034;bigblue.tc) at the far Northeastern end of the island in Leeward. We were not disappointed. It is a 25 minute drive from the Villa but well worth the trip.

We only did a little snorkeling but did do a half day kayaking and a two-thirds day scuba dive. Both were spectacular. Setting out from the Leeward Marina, you can take a single or two person kayak out through Mangrove Cay to Bigwater Cay. There are spectacular beaches on the north side of Big Water Cay and its sister Little Water Cay. Little Water Cay is also home to the iguana trails with many protected iguanas. We went from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM and got great exercise and saw wonderful scenery (and a few fat iguanas). Later that week, two of us (experienced divers) did a two-thirds day dive off the Northwest point. For two dives with amazing scenery, the cost is \$150 per person. The kayaks were \$60 per boat (no sales tax!). It is a great deal.

Two of us did play golf one morning at Provo Golf and Country Club. The club is not really destination golf as it does not incorporate any of the nearby ocean in its layout. Provo is more like a Florida course - fairly tight fairways with lots of trouble - sand, water, bushes, rocks, etc. - both right and left. It's pretty much target golf. Two of us hit the ball fairly straight and still lost 8 balls! The greens are excellent with a lot of subtle breaks. The lunch spot is very good but at \$160 a round (including cart), I felt it was a little too expensive. Maybe for that reason, there's not a lot of play. They do rent clubs, so if you want to play, I would probably rent in the future.

Our dining experiences- breakfast, lunch and dinner - were across the board, from overpriced to bargains, from so-so to exquisite. For the local flavor, the Blue Hills area on the North Shore is the place to go - 3 Queens, Sailing Paradise, Horse Eye Jacks and Da Conch Shack. Our favorite by far was the newly opened Horse Eye Jacks, just east of Sailing Paradise.

Three Queens, the eastern most of these four, is “very” local, but the proprietor, Dick , is far too garrulous- you can’t get a word in and the do not serve food on Sundays when we went. It is also not on the ocean but across the street, which is a drawback.

Do not go to Sailing Paradise as the service is non-existent and if you are lucky enough to get a drink, it is horribly expensive. We were very impressed with Horse Eye Jacks, owned and run by “Ian”. A full lunch at Jack’s with tip cost \$60- the same meal at the Grill (Grace Bay Club) cost \$140. No contest. The view is as nice if not better than any Grace Bay resort as it sits right on a lovely and quiet beach.

We did not make it to Da Conch Shack but will on our next trip. We did sample quite a few Grace Bay spots, including O Soleil (Somerset), Hemingway’s, The Bay Bistro, Coral Gardens, and The Grace Bay Club. We just had lunch and drinks at most places, it is quite expensive, but the views are amazing.

Turtle Cove and the Saltmills are a better deal. The Saltmill Café is a good breakfast spot. Sharkbite next to Baci’s at Turtle Cove is a fun local hangout, sort of an upscale “dive” – bucket of beers, spicy buffalo wings, local hot sauce, etc. ESPN is on the tube, 24/7. Good T-shirts too! Baci’s next door is great atmosphere, excellent food, reasonable prices. It sits right on Sellar’s Pond. You can also bring your own wine without a corking fee. The owner “John”, takes reservations, seats you, buses and waits tables, calls you a taxi (if you want) and brings you your check. A fine spot.

The food up the road at Bella Luna’s (near Saltmills) is just as good if not better. It was probably our best meal on the island although Baci is almost as good. The seafood dishes at both places were superb. And you don’t have to break the bank! We ate our other dinners at the Villa which may have been the best ambiance of all!

We tried to organize a sailing trip but ran out of time- next trip. Ross (243-2093) is probably the guy to call as the others seem too expensive. Next time we may try some island hopping but there is still plenty we have not seen of T & C.

We had a great introductory trip and look forward to a return visit.