

GRAND RESORTS AT CAP CANA

A LUXURIOUS NEW DOMINICAN RESORT COLLECTION FREE FROM TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES

By Matt Owen

One of the most exciting resort collections in decades has just opened on the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic.

Grand Resorts at Cap Cana, a Salamander Caribbean Collection, includes the luxurious oceanfront Sanctuary resort, the brand-new village-style Fishing Lodge and a future hotel called the Ocean Club. Together, they offer the Caribbean's most attractive new destination – all located only 10 minutes from Punta Cana International Airport, which is served by 38 airlines offering flights from 100 cities around the world.

Twice the size of Manhattan, Cap Cana is an ecologically pristine, 30,000-acre exclusive retreat featuring ocean, beach, cliffs and forest. In addition to hiking trails, an unsurpassed array of water-based options and a variety of nature-based activities, it features Punta Espada, the top-ranked golf course in the Caribbean and Mexico. Designed by Jack Nicklaus, the layout features eight holes that play directly along the ocean.

Unlike many other Dominican destinations which are only all-inclusive, the Grand Resorts' experience is open to all guest types and stays – from family reunions to executive group retreats. Guests can vacation a la carte or all-inclusive, but either way, service is performed seamlessly by the attentive and friendly staff. The cuisine is overseen by James Beard-nominated Chef Todd Gray, who serves as culinary director for Salamander Hotels & Resorts, the

Virginia-based luxury hotel company which manages the collection.

“The Sanctuary and Fishing Lodge are simply stunning properties that offer superior yet friendly Dominican service. And, the airlift makes the location amazingly easy to reach,” says Salamander's CEO and Founder Sheila C. Johnson, who also has ownership in three professional sports teams: the WNBA's Washington Mystics, the NBA's Washington Wizards and the NHL's Washington Capitals.

Well known for its US-based operations, Salamander also manages the Grand Golf Resorts of Florida, which features Innisbrook Resort in Tampa Bay, Reunion Resort in Orlando and Hammock Beach Resort in Palm Coast. The company also operates the Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond Woodlands Inn near Charleston,

SC, and is developing the luxurious Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, VA, which will open in 2013 and is just one hour from Washington, D.C.

The 176-suite oceanfront Sanctuary features architecturally eye-catching designs that reflect both Caribbean and European influences. There are number of memorable dining options, including the architecturally stunning Blue Marlin restaurant. Perched above the Caribbean Sea on stilts, it offers the area's finest seafood and most romantic location. Other restaurant themes include pan-Asian, Italian and a signature steakhouse, while continuous poolside and 24-hour room service are available.

The resort's luxurious and spacious accommodations range from 650 to 5,500 square feet and feature beautiful local stone bathrooms, with separate tubs and water closets, satellite television service and walk-in closets. Many include expansive ocean views, secluded beach access or even their own private islands.

In addition to a lavish spa already ranked one of the Caribbean finest, the resort also features an array of unique meeting and conference facilities, including a 4,800-square-foot ballroom, several stunning outdoor function spaces that overlook the ocean. Already a popular location for weddings, the addition of the picturesque Dominican-style chapel at the Fishing Lodge is helping make Cap Cana the most sought-after wedding destination in the Caribbean.

Just a five-minute drive from the Sanctuary and named for the Caribbean's largest inland marina which the resort surrounds, Fishing Lodge is located within a masterfully designed village, but with access to a private beach. Crafted around an engineering waterfront marvel, the destination achieves its architectural communal vision through the creative use of Mediterranean-inspired plazas, streetscapes and distinct accommodation styles. This blueprint has already proven very popular for groups, who have taken advantage of the unique spaces to hold variety of events, retreats and meetings.

With 298 spacious villas that enjoy extraordinary views and designer furnishings, there's never a shortage of room for guests. Built on low-rise docks, they range in size from executive to three-bedroom royal suites, while several feature private infinity pools and swim-out access.

The resort features an array of amenities, including two specialty restaurants and bars: the Bistrot, which enjoys spectacular views of the marina; and Market Salamander Grille, which offers a bountiful breakfast as well as classic cocktails in the evening. There are also four pools located throughout the Fishing Lodge, including the magnificent main pool area featuring the Bohio Bar. Set under a beautiful thatched Cana roof, it serves as the gathering place for most guests, who can work off any over indulgence at the state-of-the-art fitness center.

Web: GrandResortsAtCapCana.com

Phone: 1-866-855-4886

Depending on seasonality and availability, nightly rates begin at:

Fishing Lodge – \$149

Sanctuary – \$199

All-inclusive, golf and spa packages are also available