REVIEW: The Ritz-Carlton Dorado Beach Reserve (it's a special one)

This was my first time at a Ritz-Carlton reserve and it will not be my last. I usually have a rule that I won't go to the same place twice (this was a rule I instated after realizing I had spent much of my money over many years getting incremental returns on visiting the same hotels/locations repeatedly). However, the Ritz-Carlton Reserve is something special.



A view of a portion of the property

Upon arrival at the front gates of the property you are given a fresh towel, a fruit popsicle of your choice (made from fresh fruit grown on the property), and introduced to your own private concierge which they call your "Ambassador". One of the overwhelming themes of this hotel is the ultra-personalized service. Your ambassador can reach you via your cell phone, and make pretty much anything come true (including running to the local store and picking up an iPhone cord or

other sundry you're missing).

The rooms are all incredibly spacious, with the smallest ones starting at 1000 square feet and some of the large units being as big as 10,000 square feet and over $100,000 a night. The difference between the Ritz-Carlton Reserves is that they are integrated into the environment they're set in. This one was melded directly into the rainforest around it, every bike and golf cart path was surrounded by lush greenery and the associated sounds of the forest – tropical birds singing and geckos running around. This isn't a hotel for those who don't like nature, because it really is part of the environment.



Even the spa is immersed within the rainforest, set in a treehouse

The food was incredible at each one of the establishments on the property. This included Mi Casa by Jose Andres – the leading Spanish tapas chef, Encanto – a beachside bar with great local style cuisine, La Cocina – where you can eat directly at the chef's table, and my personal favorite – Positivo, which served some of the best Mahi Mahi tacos i've ever had. I would say that by far the food at this property

was some of the best i’ve had at any hotel i’ve been to (yes, all 500 of them).



Want to have breakfast where the chef serves you directly? Do it at La Cocina

I’ve never felt more relaxed at a property, and spent all of my time without leaving Dorado beach, even though I knew Puerto Rico had much to offer – and this was because the experience at the Ritz-Carlton Reserve left me with nothing to ask for. I truly cannot remember an experience as fully immersive, well thought out, and luxurious as my stay at this hotel. It is by far my favorite relaxing experience that i’ve ever had at a resort.



The massive infinity pool overlooks the ocean with plenty of chairs and lounge areas around it

Every room has an incredible view



…and an indoor and outdoor shower

PROS:

- Impeccable service through your own private concierge
- Stunning environment and rooms with some of the nicest bathrooms – the outdoor shower in a tropical setting just makes sense
- The food at every place on the property had incredible dishes
- Well thought out and relaxing, to the point that I didn’t want to ever leave the property
- The private beach with its own cove was stunning

CONS:

- One of the only hotels where I couldn’t come up with a con

SECRETS:

- Have the front desk give you a free bike to use during your trip, and ride around the trails on the Dorado Beach property – explore the gym at the country club, it’s stunning
- On weekends the water park on the Dorado Beach property is open, and it has a bar!
- Cooking classes are taught at La Cocina, they book up early so ask your Ambassador to help you with a reservation before you even get to the hotel

OTHER STUFF IN PUERTO RICO:

- Cueva Ventana which translates to window cave is a cool rock formation that looks over a lush green valley. I didn’t really leave the resort much but after a ton of research I thought this was one of the cooler things to do. Check out the pic below!

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