

Laid back *lovin'*

There could not be a better place to spend your honeymoon than the beautiful island of Jamaica. Laura Lewis explains why

Glancing at my new husband, I saw a look of pure serenity on his sun-kissed face. Forcing my eyelids open again, I watched bronzed bodies floating around in the warm, turquoise seas below while a couple tucked into a freshly cooked batch of jerk chicken on the beach. Sultry beats, courtesy of Bob Marley played in the background, and I took a sip of Rum Cream as my eyes closed once more. This was it, we were finally here. After a long few months of wedding planning, we were finally on our honeymoon, a trip we had been day-dreaming about for months.

On arriving at The Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort and Spa, my eyes lit up. The Roman-esque columns and

pillars made a classy first impression, and the rest of the hotel did not disappoint. It is a huge resort, the biggest on the island, but it rarely feels busy when there are so many little places you could take yourself away to, including one of the three beaches that scallop the land.

The choice of seven a la carte restaurants, three buffets and 13 bars dotted around the complex means you can always find somewhere lovely to eat, and the buffet provides a huge selection of food for fussier tummies. Nothing is off limits here and I can see why families visit, as children are well catered for, with a children's club and well-trained staff to look after them.

Jamaica's rich culture and fascinating history mean it would be a crime not to leave the resort, but you



You can take a trip in a glass-bottomed boat and watch the fish

must always book your trips with registered companies or through your travel operator as they will always have full insurance. Remember the 1993 film *Cool Runnings* starring John Candy? Well, Jamaican Bobsleds really do exist at Mystic Mountain in Ocho Rios where, after taking a trip on the Sky Explorer, you can bob sled down the mountain and then zip-Line through the thick, green forests, for an exhilarating end to your trip. I think my stomach is still up there somewhere! Dunns River Falls is a must for visitors – capture the magic of seeing this rare waterfall which cascades straight into the sea. Looking to one side you can see the beauty of the waterfall, craggy rocks and lush forest, and on the other you see beach-goers sunbathing right next to where the river meets the sea. The fun part is making the 600 foot climb through the refreshing waters, stopping to capture a glimpse of the fast-flowing water glistening all around you. The sound of the water at times can be almost deafening, but the rush you get from clambering through the pools is something truly thrilling and invigorating.

First opened in 1974, Rick's Cafe in Negril has been demolished twice by hurricanes but each time has been carefully rebuilt and now consistently



Blue sky, blue sea, white sand; the perfect honeymoon spot



Jamaica highlights

Dunn's River Falls,
Ocho Rios -
www.dunnsriverfallsja.com/the-falls

Ricks Cafe, Negril -
www.rickscafejamaica.com/

Chukka activities for Horesback riding, river tubing, zip lining and more - www.chukkacaribbean.com/jamaica.php

Appleton Rum Tours -
www.appletonestate.com

Bob Marley museum, Kingston -
www.bobmarley-foundation.com/museum.html

Mystic Mountain -
www.rainforestadventure.com

Thomson offers seven night holidays to Jamaica staying at the 5T Thomson Platinum Grand Palladium Lady Hamilton Resort & Spa, on an all-inclusive basis from £1049 per person. Price is based on two adults sharing and includes flights departing from London Gatwick on the 16 January 2013. To find out more about this holiday or to book visit your local Thomson travel shop, **thomson.co.uk** or call **0871 230 2555**.



Jamaica is a beautiful holiday destination and makes all its guests feel welcome



makes it into the 'Top Ten Bars' in the world. It is the best place on the island to watch the sunsets due to its west side location, so grab a drink and enjoy some food whilst watching the cliff divers making breathtaking jumps off the craggy cliffs. Rick's is the perfect end to a day spent at Negril beach, where fresh lobster is served with chilled beers, and you can relax or explore the seven miles of glorious coastline and feel the soft sand between your toes.

You can truly leave all your troubles behind, because the Jamaican people don't seem to have any of their own. Everything is 'no problem' and soon enough, you will feel the same way as you come across the friendliest,

warmest people you could meet on holiday. We were serenaded by one of the gardeners, who sang us a love song, and told us how he made his own guitars and taught himself to play, in remembrance of his father who died when he was a boy; we were so lucky to meet such warm characters.

After a day of adventure, coming back to the Grand Palladium was something to look forward to, seeing friendly faces, and chatting to the staff before taking a dip in one of the three pools or relaxing our aching muscles in the Jacuzzi bathtub, before watching yet another glorious sunset from our balcony with a glass of Appleton Rum in hand, and the prospect of another wonderful day in Jamaica. }