



The Frankfort

— A HISTORIC FORTRESS NOW
TOP VACATION HOME

This 17th Century fortress on the outskirts of Ocho Rios, is brilliantly restored as a remarkable vacation home on a picture-perfect, soft Caribbean beach . . . breathtakingly lovely, exquisitely tasteful. — by Linda Smith

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Today the Frankfort is among my top vacation home recommendations, but it wasn't always so. I didn't like it. Not a bit. I wanted to leave the minute I walked in that unfortunate afternoon back in 1999. Its rooms were windowless save for narrow slices of old gun slots. It was an inhospitable, dark, and dank cave with claustrophobically low ceilings. But I guess that's how fortresses were made in the 17th Century. Sure, it had an impressive history of residents and blue blood guests, but I'm not in the history business. I'm in the business of screening properties for my firm's clientele who rely on me to vouch for the quality of a property before I even mention its name to them. One thing was sure: This one would never make it into my exclusive portfolio of deluxe villas.

Fast forward to 2006. At the urging of an enthusiastic new property manager who mentioned a renovation, I reluctantly agreed to one more brief visit. Remembering the bones of the old barracks-style building, I was sure no level of renovation could've made a dent in its deficiencies as a deluxe rental villa. I packed an overnight bag and drove from Montego Bay to Ocho Rios, planning to do a one-hour courtesy walk-through or a hasty overnight at best.



Two frisky pups and a shy butler greeted me. I think I made some sort of unintelligible squealing noises as I entered the house and began to walk, mesmerized, from room to room at its transformation, my mouth gaping open like a fool's, pausing at the piano Churchill had played, the table where queens had dined, the bedrooms where statesmen had slept. I had walked through an old wood frame doorway like Alice through the looking glass, into a world I swore did not exist until that moment. While I wasn't watching, Frankfort had become a paradigm of 21st Century laid-back elegance. The original two-foot thick rough stone walls now wrapped themselves around smart Euro-chic interiors.

A brilliant and pricey renovation had introduced Italian Travertine floors, stylish comfy sitting areas in crisp white fabrics, and stunning modern bedrooms with airy well lit en-suite bathrooms and glass-wall showers. Furniture and fabrics were imported from the UK and Europe, many designed exclusively for Frankfort by Caroline Shasha Interiors of London. Every objet d'art

Footnote:

It is revealing that Frankfort is the only villa without a swimming pool that I have chosen to include in my collection. A concrete pool would be a detraction from the perfection of nature against the idyllic masterpiece of buoyant, translucent 78-degree sea that is Frankfort's front yard. What defines the new wave of the luxury Jamaican villas available through Linda Smith?

- modern communications: wireless broadband Internet access, free calls to the USA and Canada, cell phones, flat screen cable televisions
- state-of-the-art remote control split system quiet air conditioning
- glamorous en-suite bathrooms of glass, marble and granite, often with oversize showers and double showerheads
- private outdoor showers in walled gardens
- Jacuzzi's and hot tubs
- interiors of the highest standard
- private tennis courts lit for night play
- private air-conditioned gyms
- private spas on site
- heated pools
- butlers exuding warmth and charm
- nannies trained in CPR and child care
- trained chefs who have raised the bar on jerk chicken, elevating today's Jamaican cuisine to Gourmet

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and furnishing had been thoughtfully selected with an eye to pleasing the most sophisticated and well-heeled guests.

The old gun slots were still in place, now gently lit by tiny invisible halogen spotlights, reminders of Frankfort's days as a British fort defending the island against Spanish invaders and pirates. Two old cannons dug up from the beach now held reign squarely on the lawn ... lest, in all this panache, we forget what once was here.

The character of the old fort had been saved with all the respect due a veteran of such standing, and a fresh new influx of creature comforts and high tech welcomed it to the 21st Century. For those of us who cherish stone walls worn smooth by time and creaky old wooden floors but wouldn't even consider life without cable, wireless Internet and a/c, Frankfort had morphed like a street urchin into a princess.

A beautiful jewel on the finest, fairest fantasy of seascape I've ever seen.

But it doesn't stop here!

Fast forward again to August 2010. The site remains the same idyllic four-acre waterfront with the softest sugary sand that ever caressed a bare foot. But now



come two more bedrooms to convert the Old School house from cozy cottage into a seamless extension of the Frankfort Great House. The new rooms will be located so near the sea that guests will fall asleep each night to the sound of waves lapping on their own beach. The current owner's daughter was tutored in the Old School house while, across the lawn, her father engaged in meetings with world statesmen Henry Kissinger, Winston Churchill, and Pierre Trudeau.

By Christmas 2010, Frankfort will be a spacious and even more beautiful six-bedroom staffed villa on the sea, waiting to host those fortunate enough to take a holiday there and know they've experienced a piece of paradise. **!JAQ**