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Beach bonding

YES, I suppose I bought it for mum." Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records and scion of powerful Jamaican landowners, is telling me how he came to own GoldenEye, the cliff-top bungalow on the north coast of Jamaica where the author Ian Fleming created James Bond. Blackwell's mother was a close friend of Fleming, so Blackwell wanted to make sure she could swim at the property where she spent many happy times.

Blackwell, now 73, has reaped much of his good fortune not just from his familial connections but also through an unconventional life: he discovered Bob Marley, brought Jamaican reggae to the world, and has been one of the most influential record producers of the past half-century.

Now he is raising eyebrows again with the latest project of Island Outpost, the portfolio of five-star resorts he has compiled since stepping back from the music industry. To the disbelief of some friends, Blackwell tells me, he sculpted a scruffy area of shore here into an exclusive retreat with 21 cottages and suites, two pools, a watersports centre and lagoon-side spa.

In the beach bar and the more formal restaurant, many of the Jamaican-inspired dishes are made from produce sourced from Blackwell's organic farm, Pantrepant.

Like Fleming's former residence, Blackwell's new lodgings have been designed to capture the tropical setting. The one and two-storey, one to two-bedroom beach cottages face the ocean, while the one-storey lagoon suites overlook the piece of water at the centre of the property. All have verandahs, set with comfortable loungers. The open-plan interiors focus on the shore, too.

GoldenEye, once the Jamaican home of Ian Fleming, has long attracted the rich and famous. Now beach cottages worthy of James Bond himself have been added to the property, as **Kate Simon** reports

Walls are painted white, floors made from polished white concrete, and jalousies and furnishings styled in white and light wood.

In the beach cottages, the bed-size sofa is an acknowledgement that visitors will want to cosy up on the colourful batik cushions with a good book or to watch the huge flat-screen television while keeping half an eye trained on the shorefront.

The bedroom is set slightly higher so that the ocean view is uninterrupted.

A kitchen, a bathroom with roll-top tub (the rain-shower is in the back garden), and a wardrobe are set to the side to keep the view clear. The lagoon suites are smaller and the facilities scaled down, with bathing hidden behind a dividing wall to allow the bed to be a viewing platform for the natural surroundings.

This is barefoot luxury to rival the very best the Caribbean has to offer. Any mother would be proud.

DETAILS: GOLDENEYE

Seven nights at GoldenEye with Virgin Holidays + Hip Hotels costs £1,949pp B&B, in a one-bedroom cottage, with \$200 resort credit, Virgin Atlantic return flights and private transfers
vhiphotels.co.uk

Time to relax: beach cottages at the GoldenEye have uninterrupted views of the ocean, as well as facilities such as swimming pool, garden shower and elevated beds (inset) for better views

