

AVENTURA

CELEBRATING
15 YEARS

Jenny McCarthy Lets Loose

(So what's new?)

Fab 5
South Floridians Who
Reign in their Industries

Come Inside
Campion Platt's
Palm Beach Home

Plus:

- Mother's Day Gift Guide
- Travel: Strawberry Hill, Jamaica
- Happy Earth Day

Spring Warm-Up

Save the Earth &
Soak Up the Sun



One LOVE

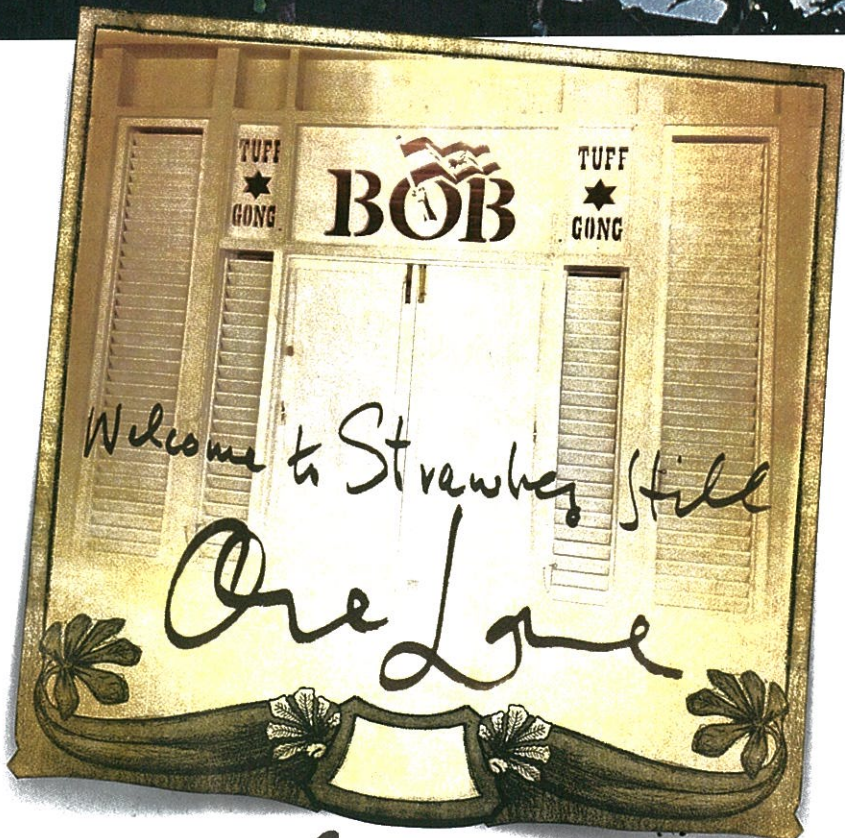
Atop Strawberry Hill in Jamaica, you'll find far more than that will capture your heart.

FOR DECADES, THE COMMERCIALS TOUTING Jamaica as the place to be for sun, sand and native adoration have become part of our consciousness. Substituting the lyrics "Let's get together and feel all right" with "Come to Jamaica and feel all right," the campaigns were meant to lure travelers to tourist hubs such as Negril, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios. Even if you have never been to this gem of an island in the British West Indies, you know the names of those cities. They're the stuff of honeymoon brochures and Beach Boys ditties.

OPPOSITE: A view from the pool of the building that houses the bar and restaurant. THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: Balcony view of clouds floating above Kingston; the doors that lead to the private balcony in the Tuff Gong cottage; words of welcome handwritten by Chris Blackwell in the guest book inside Tuff Gong.



But chances are you haven't ever seen on a television commercial or heard in a jingle the name Strawberry Hill. At 3,000 feet above sea level, the property, owned by music mogul Chris Blackwell—who on our recent visit was on the premises supervising some tree replanting following Hurricane Sandy—is a pristine oasis in the Blue Mountains with a view of the capital city of Kingston that's to kill or die for and Georgian-style accommodations that are cozy and impeccable. It's comprised of 12 cottages designed in the 19th-century Caribbean style by Ann Hodges, all of which hold their own charms. But we were particularly partial to our room, known as Tuff Gong—which, for those of you oblivious to reggae history, was a record label formed by The Wailers in 1965 and named for Bob Marley's nickname; the room was dubbed this because it is where Marley convalesced while recovering from a gunshot wound in 1976, before Strawberry Hill was a hotel. Some are on stilts, in the steeper areas, and all have French doors, four-poster beds, and gingerbread trim. All sport detailed fretwork; Tuff Gong has carved images of a lion in homage to Marley. Then there are villas in varying sizes, from 1,500 square feet for Birdshill to the 3,200-square-foot Mountain View, which is really a two-story house with two bedrooms; deluxe 400-square-foot rooms (still with the private balconies) and studio suites that sit at the tippy top of the mountain. All come complete with peace, quiet, tranquility and bliss.



Chris Blackwell

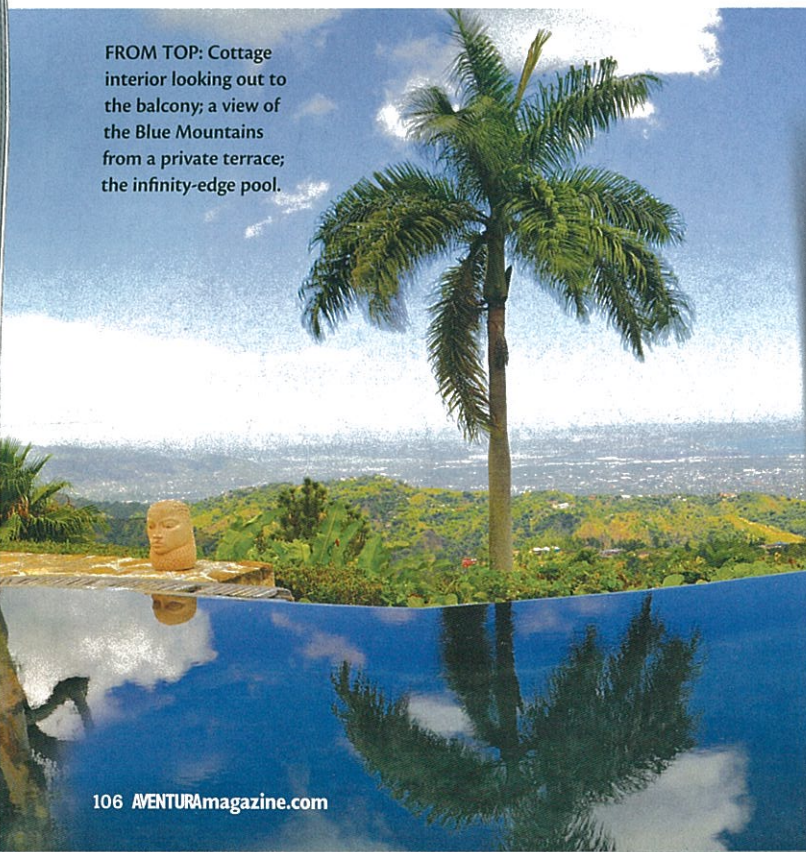
You'll wake to birds chirping happily (and why wouldn't they?), which is a far more preferable greeting to the day than the alarm clock. Open the doors to the balcony, where

you can sip your Blue Mountain coffee (the coffee maker and accoutrements are all there in the cottage) while you take in your reality: the stuff dreams are made of. At least one morning, enjoy the chef's typical Jamaican breakfast of ackee and saltfish, callaloo, bammy (an amazing Jamaican flatbread made from grated cassava that's fried in butter and served crisp on the outside, chewy and eye-rolling good on the inside), and fried plantains, either delivered to your room or on the terrace of the lovely open-air restaurant. By day, you may want to indulge in a massage or body wrap at the Strawberry Hill Living Spa (reserve ahead in season, as there are five treatment rooms) before flopping down in a chaise beside the glorious infinity-edge pool overlooking the city. There, your all-too-accommodating staffer will be happy to issue rum punch, or any other cocktail you fancy. This includes those made with Blackwell's own rum label (his mother's family, which was Jamaican, made part of their fortune in Appleton rum).

Wander the property and you'll find yourself lingering room by room, waxing nostalgic (depending on your age, of course) at the gold records, awards, and photos of the numerous recording artists Blackwell has worked with over the decades—Grace Jones, Melissa Etheridge and U2 among them—until it's time for a before-dinner drink in the lovely little bar, perhaps in front of the fireplace (it does get slightly chilly up here in the late afternoons and evenings, even on warm days). Later, after a bottle of wine (or two) over an epic meal, while watching the lights twinkle over Kingston, you will feel as if you're as close to heaven as you can possibly get. Until you lay your head down on the fluffy pillow in your room, shrouded in white muslim netting, and drift off to slumber. **■**



FROM TOP: Cottage interior looking out to the balcony; a view of the Blue Mountains from a private terrace; the infinity-edge pool.



If You Go:

- Fly out of Fort Lauderdale for a hassle-free experience. Nonstop flights from FLL to Kingston via Jet Blue and Caribbean airlines generally run in the \$300-400 range and run 1 hour and 40 minutes.
- Rent a car if you want to go off-property to explore Kingston or any other part of the island, but make sure to rent a GPS as well. Be warned: Jamaicans drive on the left side of the road. Also, the journey up and down Strawberry Hill can be slightly nerve-racking and, at night, disorienting.
- The property provides guests with a pre-programmed cell phone with the numbers to the front desk, restaurant, and spa that you can take off property with you, so you don't have to traipse from spot to spot by foot (the hills can be challenging).