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# ESCAPES

A high-angle photograph of a wooden boat on clear, turquoise water. The boat's hull and a set of wooden stairs leading down into the water are visible on the left side. The water is exceptionally clear, showing the sandy bottom and some rocks. The overall scene is bright and tropical.

# WILD HONEYMOON

The delights (and frights) of a just-married tour  
of Jamaica's glorious resorts

*By* TANYA GOLD



PHOTOGRAPHS: CEDRIC RINGELLES/INTERSECTION  
PHOTOS: JESSE CHEHAQ

Beachfront villas at GoldenEye, Jamaica. Opposite: a wooden deck with steps leading into the ocean at the resort

**J**amaica – my (first) honeymoon. We drive through Kingston in the rain. It is not like the Kingston I grew up in, which was Kingston upon Thames and deserves no further mention in *Harper's Bazaar*. Here, it is hot; wet. As we climb into the Blue Mountains, the rain gathers strength. The hotel is called Strawberry Hill, and it is wooden houses, painted white, on two storeys – a British man's design hotel, created in a time when the British owned Jamaica and men claimed to have no interest in design. The wind screams through the house, and my husband – my husband! – does up the blinds, turns on the electric blanket and puts me to bed, like a woman with a sleep-themed Electra complex. He stands on the balcony, staring at the lights of Kingston, smoking. I fall asleep. I am always asleep. I am pregnant with our son, but I do not know it yet. When I wake up, the sky is full of rainbows, like wrapping paper for a Hampstead birthday party. I count eight rainbows and laugh hysterically. Nature can do that to me, in its raw state. It makes me high.

My husband drives, even though tourists rarely drive in Jamaica – we are congratulated in gas stations as if we have done something amazing, simply by renting a car; luxury travel involves much infantilisation, so we are apparently to be congratulated for breathing. He takes tiny roads through the jungle; villagers look amazed and point at us to go back, to whichever luxury hotel we came from. The rain is washing the roads away, into deep gullies; Jamaica is so lush it is in a perennial state of rot, a lovely creature falling into fat. Several times we almost drop off the road, on the verge of becoming a honeymoon horror story in the tabloids; he executes a three-point turn between barbed wire and a drop to a river, and I am amazed we do not die. We stop to buy T-shirts and have the first fight of our marriage. He picks out a striped one that is too tight for him. I scream that he can have too tight, or horizontal stripes, but not both; he sulks and lunges for colour blocking, although he does not know it is called that. We are both, we realise later, living out our parents' marriages because we have not yet learnt to have our own. At a place called Bath, in an empty grand hotel, we share a bath in the nude. I feel at the edge of the world.

We cannot stay still. So we drive north, through mountains with even deeper gullies, to Geejam on the coast. This is a hotel of the coolest and most expensive kind, behind the sort of gates Jurassic Park had. We have a bright-white suite under a recording studio, with windows to the bay, a huge bath, a hot tub on the deck; and I feel inferior in all ways to the staff, who are thinner, handsomer and more charming than we are. Pop stars we have never heard of loiter, smoke and say hello. My husband is from Wiltshire and thinks Swindon is a glittering metropolis. So obviously he adores Geejam and telephones people in Wiltshire to explain that he is sitting in a hot tub recently vacated by Snoop Dogg; perhaps it still contains a microscopic piece of Snoop

Dogg. They are, he reports, amazed. We have our first married sex. It feels more desperate than unmarried sex; why, I am too recently married to say. I am already a bad wife. At our romantic dinner, I have jet-lag, so I am scowling by eight, and demanding to be allowed to go to bed because it is 1am in London; when he complains, I start a fight, so I can walk out. Did I think I would be a different woman married?

The next day, we go to the Blue Lagoon. It is a famous swimming spot, and he buys a terrible painting of it that I know will be with me until I die, like my thighs; it will outlive us both. My husband buys a joint for \$12 and a fist bump. I think you could probably get more dope than that for \$12 in Jamaica, if you did not look like my husband. He wants to smoke it in what he is calling 'Snoop Dogg's hot tub'. In the end he forgets to smoke it, it sits in the car, and the police stop and search us. But they do not find it (Kingston prison is one hotel we do not visit) and I am glad.

We move again, to the famous GoldenEye. This is fascinating to me, because its owner Ian Fleming worked for *The Sunday Times* as a foreign manager, before he wrote James Bond – although people say Fleming did not run foreign correspondents, but *spies*. I too work for *The Sunday Times* and know men like Fleming; kindly, bored fantasists with brave alter-egos who have more sex than the original. I like them, but would feel odd sleeping in their bedrooms. The villa is vast and lovely, over a perfect beach; it is \$5,000 a night and we are not staying there, for which I am grateful, because I would probably not get my husband into bed. He would pretend to be a spy in every room, like he did on the Orient-Express, when he had to

be prevented from ordering Vesper martinis until he fell down drunk.

We are staying on the lagoon below, in a wooden villa strung with fairy lights. There is a tiny pool with an eye mosaic. GoldenEye is so smooth and rich; there are no James Bonds here, the men being too married for that. I sleep. My husband goes to church and reports that he had to stand up and be welcomed by the congregation and everyone made a big fuss of him. Hurrah, I say, opening an eye. I am falling into the pit of luxury – sleep, eat, stand in water, read PD James.

We move again, to the Caves in Negril. It is a sort of lovely Hobbit village on a cliff with a sheer drop to the sea below. There is a hole in the roof of a cave and you are supposed to jump through it and swim out. I am too scared but my husband prepares to jump. There is no TV here and so, when word gets out, men gather to watch him jump through a hole in the roof of a cave, as a replacement for Sky Sports.

We are in love and accident-prone. We have a bath in a special bathroom, with a twinkling blue tub and windows overlooking the sea. As I stand, naked in the water, a boat full of tourists sails past. They wave and honk a horn. I scream. Later, we have the most romantic dinner in the world; or, at least, we try. It is in a vast cave, filled with hundreds of candles. This time, my husband is the one to disgrace us. He is sick over the side. He gets seasick in a cave; we beg forgiveness of the waiter, and run for our white Hobbit hole...

*A nine-night tour, including two nights B&B at Strawberry Hill, two nights B&B at Geejam and three nights all-inclusive at the Caves, costs from £3,195 a person, including British Airways flights and transfers, with Caribtours (020 7751 0660; [www.caribtours.co.uk](http://www.caribtours.co.uk)).*

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Left: writer Ian Fleming in his study at GoldenEye, Jamaica. Clockwise from above: the Fleming Villa at GoldenEye. Signs on the estate. The Caves Hotel. The Fleming Room at GoldenEye. Its Field Spa. GoldenEye's beach. The Rocksteady cabin at Geejam. Opposite: a tree planted by Johnny Depp on the estate

