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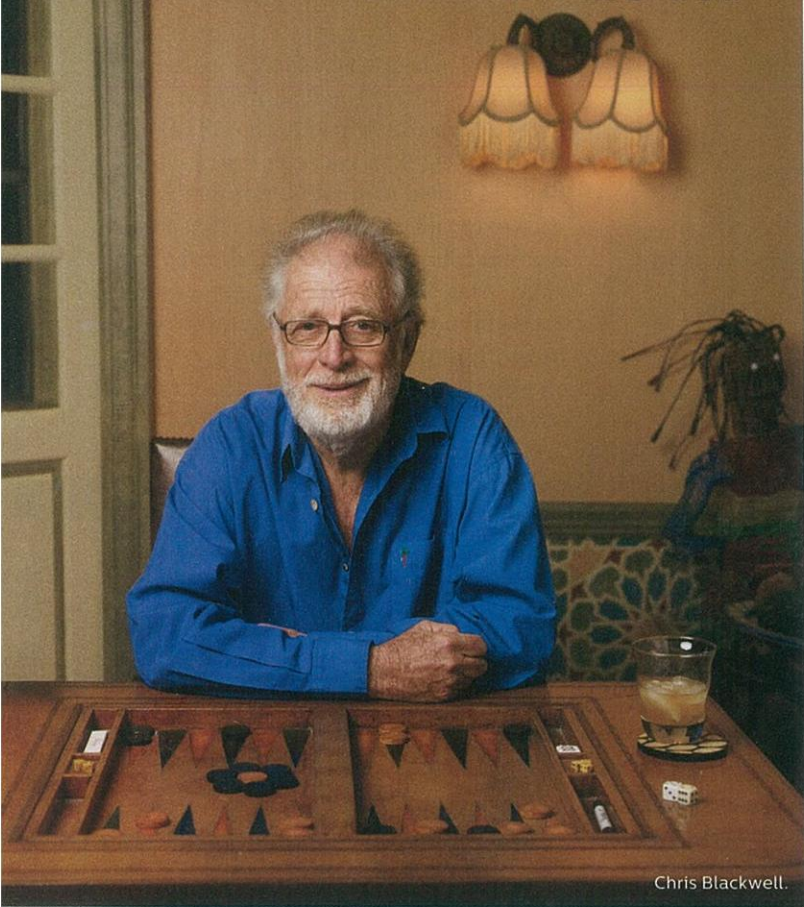
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PORTUGAL  
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& MORE





Chris Blackwell.

## BLACKWELL ON ISLAND HOSPITALITY

He is a legend in the music business, having discovered and produced records by such talents as Bob Marley, U2, and Grace Jones. But Chris Blackwell's second act as a hotelier has been equally successful. The son of an English father and a Jamaican mother, Blackwell operates several Jamaican resorts through his firm Island Outpost, including Strawberry Hill, the Caves, and GoldenEye, which is located on the grounds of the former home of Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond series of spy novels. Blackwell's intimate hotels are the antithesis of the massive resorts that have colonized the Caribbean, with simply furnished villas and huts and a funky sound track that attracts the global creative set. "Our guests come from different parts of the world," Blackwell says, "but everybody speaks the same language." **INGRID ABRAMOVITCH**

### ROCK AND REGGAE

• When I was 18 or 19, a Rasta saved my life. My boat ran out of gas just as it was getting dark. I spent the night in a mangrove swamp. I set out for help in the morning and found a hut on a deserted beach. I was dying of thirst. A Rastafarian appeared in the window. Rastas were considered dangerous then, but he was sweet and gentle, and he brought me a calabash with water in it. I asked to lie down. When I woke up, it was pitch dark and there were lots of candles and seven other Rastas reading to me from the Bible. They helped me get back to town.

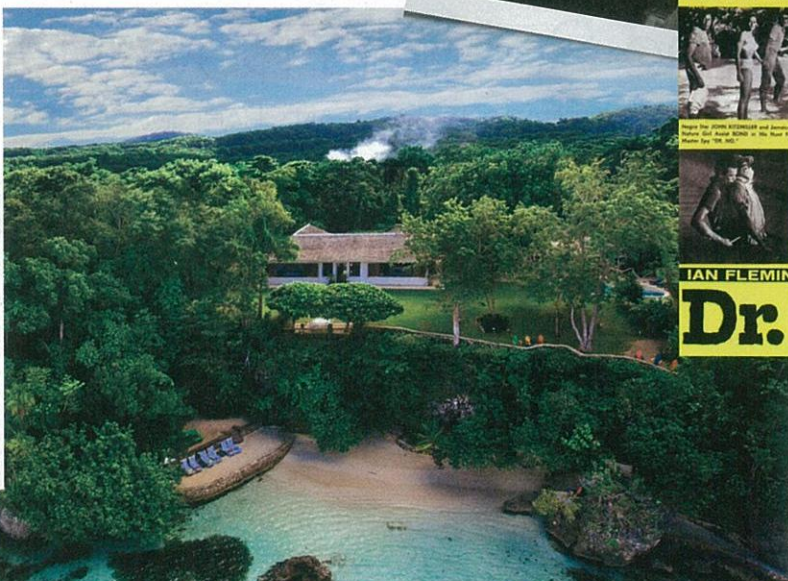
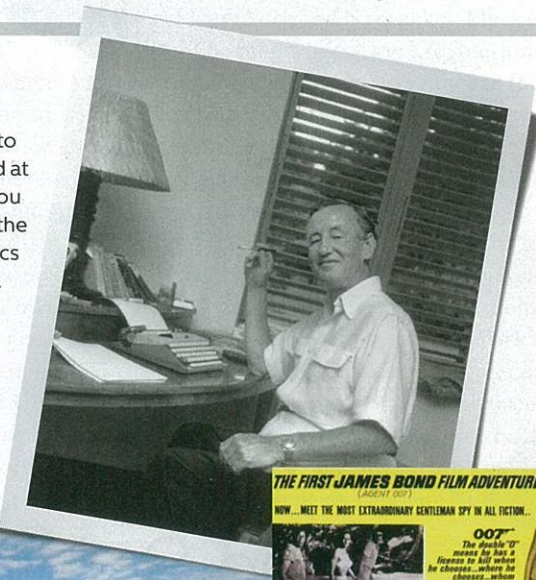
• We're working on a Bob Marley musical. Kwame Kwei-Armah, who wrote and directed it, is artistic director of Center Stage in Baltimore. We were able to try it out there last spring. It opened at the same time as the Baltimore riots. What was strange was how close those issues were to Marley's, whose lyrics refer to "burning" and "looting"—"stand up for your rights." It showed me that his music is still relevant.

• I'm no longer very involved in the music business, but somebody played me a tape of a fantastic new Jamaican artist, Chronixx. It's reggae but a bit hard to describe. I judge music on the basis of timing and phrasing—it's something that you have or you don't. He moves a song around like a jazz musician. His lyrics have a lot of social commentary. He's a young guy, but we hit it off and now we're working together.

### COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE

• I always loved travel, even before I got into the record business. I was never very good at school. Travel is the greatest education. You learn to understand how all of us are both the same and different. You learn about politics and culture. You develop self-confidence.

• Jamaica is a blessed island. It has an incredible climate and soil that delivers some of the best coffee and chocolate in the world. It's only 150 miles long and 50 miles wide, yet in that small area, it has amazing geographic variety, from rain forests to mountains as high as 7,000 feet.



FROM TOP: James Bond creator Ian Fleming at GoldenEye. A poster for the 1962 film of *Dr. No*. GoldenEye today.



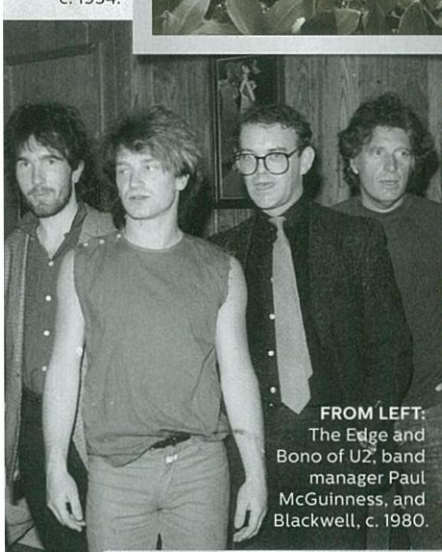
# UNCONVENTIONAL WISDOM



Rosalind Russell at Jamaica's Round Hill resort in 1953.



Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman at Round Hill in 1953.



FROM LEFT: The Edge and Bono of U2, band manager Paul McGuinness, and Blackwell, c. 1980.

• The Lindos, my mother's family, came to Jamaica in 1625. My grandfather owned a rum distillery, J. Wray & Nephew. Seven years ago, I started making rum under the Blackwell label. We use Jamaican sugarcane, water, and yeast, and we age it in American oak barrels.

## SUN IS SHINING

• My mother was a friend of Ian Fleming's. She used to swim at his home, GoldenEye. After he died, she asked me to buy it. I didn't have the money and tried to get Bob Marley to buy it, but he felt it was too posh. My finances recovered, and I bought it in 1976 for my mother.

• Fleming's house was simple but sat on 19 acres in a gorgeous spot, so in that respect it was luxurious. In 1994, I opened up the main house, along with three other little villas, for people to come and stay. I have since expanded it to 50 acres.



## POWER OF EIGHT

• I once stayed at Tensing Pen, a resort in Negril, Jamaica, in a hut shaped like an octagon. It was magical. Ever since, I've built octagonal huts on my properties. Each one has louvered windows all around, high ceilings, an outdoor shower, and a veranda. You feel the breezes coming through.

• This winter, I am adding 26 new beach huts at GoldenEye. They will not be air-conditioned. When you go to an exotic destination, a big part of the experience is the way it sounds. I love

to hear the chirps of crickets and frogs. It's nature's sound track. Air-conditioning cuts you off from that ambiance.

## HIS CROWD

• There's an aesthetic I am after in my hotels, and it's not snob appeal. I am looking for people who are at ease with one another. It doesn't matter whether you have 20 cents to your name or 20 million dollars. In the record business, a good song will be appreciated by all kinds of people.

• My friend John Pringle inspired me. In 1953 he opened Round Hill, which is still one of the top-rated hotels in Jamaica. He knew a lot of theater and fashion people and would "cast" the type of guests he wanted at his hotel. Our crowd is in music, film, fashion, and technology. If we can get them to come, and they like it, they will tell their friends about it.

• I don't like a hotel to overshadow its surroundings. Many people enjoy that kind of place, and I understand why. They work hard and want to go somewhere beautiful and lie in the sun. But Jamaica has an amazing culture. If you come here, you should get out and explore.

## LOCAL STYLE

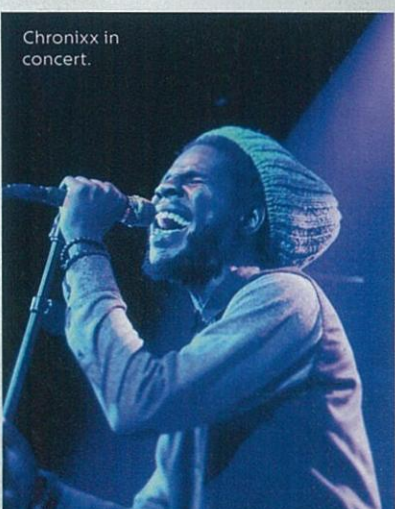
• When I travel, I don't want anything fancy. But I want to know that when I switch on the light, it will go on. It's designed utility—everything should work and not look out of place.

• My late wife Mary [Vinson, a Parsons-trained fashion and home-furnishings designer] conceived many of the textiles we use in the resorts. She sourced African fabrics from places like Zimbabwe and Nigeria, and we still do that.

• I divide my time between my farm in Jamaica and GoldenEye, where I live four days a week in a hut. I also have an apartment in Manhattan. I love the energy I get from New York, but I'm happy to be on the farm, where I can look out for quite a distance and not see a soul.



Blackwell's farm.



Chronix in concert.