

AILERON

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Every day during winter, after breakfast, Ian Fleming, author and creator of James Bond, would sit at his cherry oak desk looking out onto his private Garden of Eden and summon 2,000 words that he would commit to paper. He would then don his snorkelling gear and climb down the rock stairway to his private beach and explore the rainbow reef. After his mini adventure he would retreat to his humble home for lunch and edit his earlier work. Once corrections were made, he had his first cocktail of the day – a martini, no doubt, shaken not stirred. ¶ Fleming knew how to live life well and he did so at his Caribbean home, called Goldeneye after one of his missions with the British Intelligence Service. The modest three-bedroom abode, oozing with Fleming’s panache, is now part of a luxurious hotel at Island Outpost Resort, after being bought by Island Record tycoon Chris Blackwell. ¶ Located 16 miles east of Ochos Ricos, Blackwell has left Fleming’s home relatively intact. His desk, where he penned 13 of his Bond novels, remains and the windows are still without glass – Fleming didn’t employ an air-conditioning system, preferring to keep himself open to the elements. If he needed closure he would simply draw his wooden shutters. Shunning colonial luxury, he preferred basic design that allowed him to feel more in tune with nature. In fact, all of the bedrooms come with both indoor and tropical outdoor bathrooms complete with waterfall showers and bamboo foliage. ¶ While the Goldeneye villa is perhaps the least glamorous of the cottages that sprawl along the 50 acres of paradise making up Island Outpost Resort, its history and association with one of Britain’s most talented writers ensures it’s booked out year round. ¶ Fleming retired to the Caribbean in the 1950s after his career with the British Intelligence Service. Here he began to write his Bond adventures. His strict, yet rewarding writing regime meant his novels were usually finished within six weeks. With such a rapid turnaround he could afford to be a panjandrum of literature and life. “I have always smoked and drunk and loved too much,” he once bragged. “In fact I have lived not too long but too much. One day the Iron Crab will get me. Then I shall have died of living too much.” ¶ The writer first introduced his readers to the Caribbean in his second Bond novel *Live and Let Die*. When his third book, *Moonraker*, returned to a dark, drab and depressing London many of his fans complained, wishing for more fantasy, beaches and blue skies. As a result, the Caribbean became a frequent backdrop for Fleming’s



ABOVE THE POPULAR WATERFRONT ABOVE RIGHT A PICTURE OF THE FAMOUS BOND AUTHOR, IAN FLEMING



ABOVE SIMPLE, ELEGANT DESIGNS DOMINATE THE INTERIOR

ostentatious secret agent. ¶ For Bond aficionados, a meander through the mesmerising surroundings of Goldeneye will seem familiar; the reason being Fleming's vibrant imagination turned most of the area into filming locations. Trek to the bottom of the fertile hills and visit the Green Grotto Caves where *Live and Let Die* was filmed. Delve even deeper and you'll be reminded of evil Dr Kananga's lair. While Dunn's River Fall is popular with tourists who like a good soak, around the corner the vast stretch of white beach is where the bikini-clad Ursula Andress was first seen in *Dr No*. ¶ Although Goldeneye has made the Caribbean area of Oracabessa a mecca for Bond fans, it's not all about the franchise. Fleming waxed lyrical about his home abroad, boasting of his fulfilling life in the sun with "delicious and limitless food", calypso lifestyle and locals that "will surprise and charm you". ¶ It's the charisma and easy pace of life in the Caribbean that lured not only the author but many a celebrity in search of a taste of paradise. Now a haven for the rich and famous, luxury resort owners in the area, such as mogul Blackwell, are reaping the rewards. ¶ Blackwell

initially bought Goldeneye following Fleming's death. He got it for his client Bob Marley, who at the time was enjoying huge chart success. However, Marley wasn't fond of the house, believing it would give off the wrong impression if he moved into a white man's home, so he sold it back to Blackwell. ¶ While Marley may not have been a fan of Goldeneye, plenty of celebrities are. Just walk around the grounds and you'll see who's visited as many of the famous occupants plant trees in the area as part of a conservation plan and leave name plates next to their plots. Past guests include Kate Moss, Harrison Ford, Bill Clinton, Scarlett Johansson and Naomi Campbell. ¶ Laced with shimmering beaches, fruitful forests, enticing caves and secluded nooks, Goldeneye lends itself to the type of holiday adventures that wouldn't seem out of place in a Fleming novel. So, whether it's jet-skiing, deep-sea diving, socialising, movie-watching, smoking expensive cigars or romancing on the shores, your adventure starts here. Let your imagination dictate the ending. ■ *Goldeneye, Oracabessa, St Mary, Jamaica, West Indies, +1 975 3354, www.goldeneye@cwjamaica.com.*