

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, AND WHY IN THE WORLD OF STYLE

**SEXY  
HOLIDAY  
FASHION**  
LINGERIE CHIC,  
GIFTS THAT GLITTER,  
THE NEW PINK POUT

**GEORGE  
CLOONEY**  
A FIRST PEEK AT HIS  
LATEST FILM

# Golden Girls

**DAKOTA &  
ELLE FANNING**  
SPARKLE IN THE  
SEASON'S MOST  
GLAMOROUS LOOKS

+

**BLAKE LIVELY,  
JULIANNE MOORE,  
AND THEIR SISTERS  
PLAY DRESS-UP**





From left: Jon Baker in the rain forest surrounding his Geejam Hotel; an aerial view of his next project, the Castle.

# JAMAICAN PUNCH

Jon Baker—pop-culture impresario, champagne socialist, and late-blooming hospitality mogul—is transforming a little-visited corner of Jamaica into the go-to getaway for the cool crowd. COREY SEYMOUR drops in.

**E**ven among Jamaicans, the sleepy town of Port Antonio, tucked away on the island's untouristed northeast coast, carries an air of rough-and-tumble remoteness. But for Jon Baker, the proprietor of the Geejam Hotel, in nearby San San, that is precisely the point.

In 1986, Baker was living in London and had just met Ziggi Golding, a Jamaican-German photographer's agent (Juergen Teller was an early client) who also ran a modeling agency. "For Christmas that year we flew to Jamaica and drove thousands of miles all over the country for three and a half weeks visiting her relatives," Baker, 51, says. "By the last week, I was exhausted and asked, 'Is there anywhere on the island where you have no relatives?' And she said, 'Oh, yes—Port Antonio.' So I said, 'We're going there.'"

What he found was a kind of paradise on earth—a tourist-free time capsule of rum shacks, pristine beaches, and crystalline waters, all set amid lush rain forest ("Where the green stops, the blue starts," as Baker puts it). There was no scene to speak of, and it attracted travelers looking for exactly that quality. Port A, as the locals call it, was the sort of place where Daryl Hannah stopped Golding in the supermarket to ask where she could find some champagne for her then boyfriend, John F. Kennedy Jr. Within a few years, Baker—at the time a music-industry player with his own label and a number one record (with P.M. Dawn)—decided to put down roots in Port A.

"There's a guy named Bentley who used to work at the guesthouse we stayed at," Baker says. "I rang him up one day and asked, 'Is there anything for sale?' And he said, 'There's this one place...' So I called the people and said, 'I want to buy it...No, I haven't seen it, but I'll wire you 10 percent immediately and see you in September.' And that was it." (Bentley now drives for Baker.)

Today, nine acres of lush banyan, ficus, and juniper trees conceal a luxury encampment of four private cabins and a three-bedroom villa, with a professional recording studio thrown in for good measure. From the start, Geejam attracted a steady stream of movie stars and musicians: Tom Cruise, Scarlett Johansson, Björk, Gwen Stefani, Rihanna, and Amy Winehouse among them. "Right now we don't have enough rooms, so money alone isn't going to get you through the front door," Baker says. "What will be your vibe and what you do." (A case in point is the artist Banksy, who left behind a dozen of his distinctive works when he was a guest—Baker won't say when—although all but a handful were painted over in a recent maintenance snafu.) "We want, say, a photographer, an artist, a musician—that's what I'm hoping will create the kinetic energy to keep the place thriving."

"YOU WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THE RAT PACK, *dabbling*?" asks Errol Flynn's widow. "I'll tell you about the Rat Pack." It's my second night, and I'm

sitting next to Patrice Wymore Flynn at a dinner party thrown by Baker and his business partner, fellow music-industry vet Steve Beaver. Although Flynn's promise to spill the beans on Frank and Sammy evaporates as quickly as the smoke from her skinny cigarettes, she is eager to boast about the 49,000 coconut trees she used to farm—she was once voted Champion Woman Farmer of Jamaica—along with the 500 head of Red Poll cattle she oversees today.

Flynn is living history, half of the most famous couple from the area's second wave of celebrity tourism. (The first, dating from the late 19th century, included J.P. Morgan, William Randolph Hearst, Rudyard Kipling, and jewelry heiress Annie Olivia Tiffany Mitchell.) In 1946, Errol Flynn was sailing his schooner, *Zaca*, around the Caribbean when a violent storm hit; the southern shore of Jamaica was the first land he spotted. (Or so said Flynn, who never let the truth get in the way of a good self-aggrandizing story.) Upon reaching the island's shores and hiring a car, the actor almost immediately purchased vast tracts of ranch- and farmland, along with nearby Navy Island, which he fashioned into a 64-acre private playground. (In an odd twist, Joe and Blanche Blackwell and their young son Chris—who would go on to found Island Records and launch the career of Bob Marley, among many other artists—took Flynn under their wing and played tour guide.)

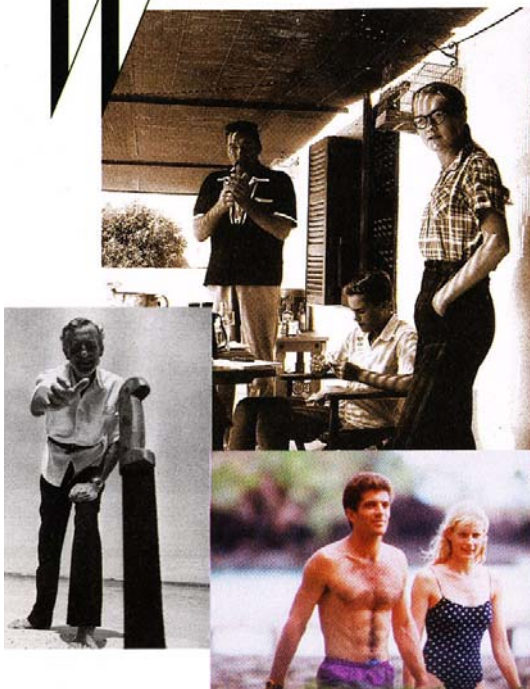
With Flynn having established a beachhead, the likes of Noël Coward, Ian Fleming, Princess Margaret, and others soon followed. Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza purchased a neighboring island for his mistress and soon to be wife, model of the moment Nina Dyer, where she kept the panther given to her by another boyfriend, Prince Rainier III of Monaco. (The baron's daughter, Francesca von Habsburg-Lothringen, still maintains the family estate on Alligator Head.)

As one might expect of a legendary Hollywood swashbuckler, Flynn threw parties that were legendary. Port Antonio native Albert Minott, 75, grew up performing at them. Minott told me about eating fire and dancing on hot coals from the age of 10. When Minott could no longer stand the heat (so to speak), he joined a group of musicians who functioned as Flynn's house band, playing *mento*, a Jamaican folk music similar to calypso. "We used to swim out to Navy Island to play," Minott says. "And Mr. Flynn would throw coins in the water for us to dive after."

"They were called the Navy Island Swamp Boys, and they'd come to the island every night to play parties," Patrice Wymore Flynn tells me with noticeably less relish. "Eventually they started staying there, and I'd say, 'Errol, can't you pay them to go away?'" (Far from it: The band, long since renamed the Jolly Boys, is still recording and performing. See Backstory on page 156.)

Geejam exudes the kind of unhassled, unhurried luxury that makes it possible to be there for a week without seeing another guest, if you (or they) so wish. Villas are tucked among trees, accessible only by narrow footpaths, and though

# WHERE



Clockwise, from top left: Errol Flynn and wife Patrice Wymore Flynn with Flynn's son, Sean, at their estate near Port Antonio in 1955; Geejam's Rocksteady cabin; Princess Margaret arriving in Jamaica in 1962; Geejam's Bushbar; Geejam fans Björk, Tom Cruise, and Gwen Stefani; Kate Moss and Johnny Depp; John F. Kennedy Jr. and Daryll Hannah; Ian Fleming on the beach, 1964.



the Bushbar—Geejam's commissary and watering hole—is open to outsiders, Baker's network of drivers, informants, and local insiders are adept at steering the wrong kind of people in the wrong direction. As for the professional prying class—paparazzi—Geejam's remoteness discourages most, and Baker, who does a quick check on prospective guests, is skilled at spotting fake names and false occupations.

However, unlike the all-inclusive resorts to the west in Negril and Montego Bay, Geejam has an open-door policy when it comes to the surrounding community. "Most of the people who work at Geejam have roots in the village of Drapers, just down the hill," Baker says. "I'm fully of the belief that you can put up as many big walls and as much barbed wire as you choose, but ultimately, it's integration that's going to make things work."

Mention Baker's name almost anywhere in Drapers, around San San, or in Port Antonio proper—to a local fruit vendor, to the purveyor of a roadside rum shack, or to your guide on a rafting trip down the Rio Grande—and you'll get a broad smile and a singsong patois tribute: "Jon Baker, *mon!*" His name itself is a kind of currency.

IN RETROSPECT, Baker's gambit to open a resort in a faded, little-traveled part of Jamaica, with no relevant experience and a massive mountain chain in the way of the region's major airport, might seem foolhardy. What Baker had, though—what he's always had—was a nose for the next thing. Upon dropping out of London's Chelsea School of Art in 1977, he followed the advice of Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood and opened a New Wave shop near their seminal punk outpost, Sex, on King's Road. When New Wave morphed into New Romantic, Baker reinvented himself as a stylist for bands like Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran; and when the cool-kid scene moved from London to New York (where Baker had relocated in 1980 with his friend Billy Idol), he found himself running with a downtown crowd that included Keith Haring, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Madonna, before returning to England to found his own record label.

Though Baker is three decades and an ocean removed from anything approaching his anarchic U.K. roots, he still lives in a mod Fred Perry uniform

## GEEJAM HAS BEEN ATTRACTING A STEADY STREAM OF STARS—TOM CRUISE, SCARLETT JOHANSSON, AND RIHANNA AMONG THEM.

and proudly refers to himself as a "card-carrying champagne socialist," an affiliation enshrined in the name of his 4-year-old son Che—"as in Ernesto 'Che' Guevara," he says.

But with his resort well established—at Christmas and Easter he fields more than 300 requests for Geejam's five accommodations—Baker's mission, as he now sees it, is to restore Port Antonio to its rightful place as a global magnet for other champagne socialists, posh punks, and aristo-artists hell-bent on having a good time.

Along with plans to open an additional eight villas in the next year or two, Baker recently reached an agreement to develop and manage several properties owned by Michael Lee-Chin, a Jamaican-Canadian billionaire with immense real estate holdings in and around Port Antonio that have been languishing in fallow, faded glory—including the Trident, a collection of seaside bungalows, and the area's erstwhile crown jewel: the Castle.

Built in the 1980s by the eccentric hotelier and architect Earl Levy and later sold to Lee-Chin, the eight-bedroom estate on seven acres served as a vacation home for the likes of Johnny Depp and Kate Moss, Hannah and John F. Kennedy Jr., and various Habsburgs before falling into disrepair in the late nineties. Baker's plan is to turn the Castle into the sort of no-expense-spared, world-class getaway that, in retrospect, it always seemed destined to be.

Equally important, in Baker's estimation, is his partnership with Lee-Chin on the Blue Lagoon, which is a mere stone's throw from the gorgeous Winnifred (aka Rasta) Beach, where locals swim, cook jerk chicken, and relax. "People have been trying to privatize this area for years," Baker says—"which is exactly the wrong thing to do." His vision for the Blue Lagoon and its nearby beach is perhaps the most ambitious of all: to keep it open to everybody and anybody, exactly as it is now, forever.

At the same time Baker is doubling down in Jamaica, he and Beaver are hatching a triumphant return to New York City, with plans to open a bar and restaurant there within a year. That might seem odd for a man who admits to originally "escaping" to Jamaica for "a kind of self-enforced chill-out." Of course, that was before he decided to build what is shaping up to be a mini resort empire. "I'm kind of full-on, to be honest," Baker says. "Now I go to New York to relax." ♦

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