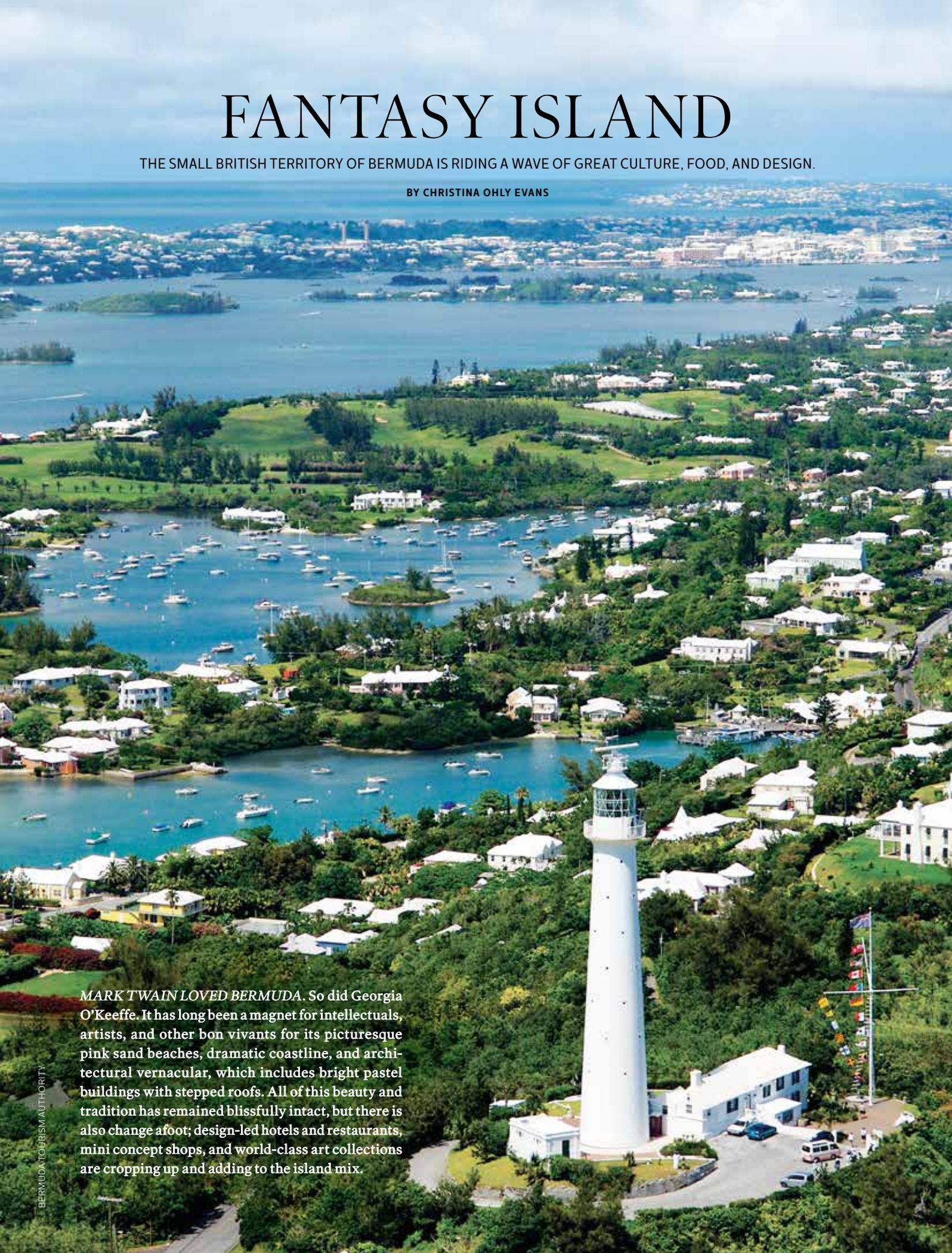


# FANTASY ISLAND

THE SMALL BRITISH TERRITORY OF BERMUDA IS RIDING A WAVE OF GREAT CULTURE, FOOD, AND DESIGN.

BY CHRISTINA OHLY EVANS

*MARK TWAIN LOVED BERMUDA.* So did Georgia O'Keeffe. It has long been a magnet for intellectuals, artists, and other bon vivants for its picturesque pink sand beaches, dramatic coastline, and architectural vernacular, which includes bright pastel buildings with stepped roofs. All of this beauty and tradition has remained blissfully intact, but there is also change afoot; design-led hotels and restaurants, mini concept shops, and world-class art collections are cropping up and adding to the island mix.





## SUMMER PURSUITS

Natural beauty and plein air parties abound throughout the season. Here are just a few of the cultural, culinary, and sporting highlights.

### Wednesdays, May through August HARBOUR NIGHTS

Bermuda's famous Gombey dancers come out in full regalia—colorful costumes with elaborate masks—and fill the streets of Hamilton with spirited drumming. Perfect for sunset watching and sampling the local hopping John or codfish cakes.

### May 25 BERMUDA DAY

Celebrate the official start of summer with a street party that includes an enormous, brightly colored parade. For locals, this marks the first day of the year for both swimming and wearing shorts as business attire.

### June 15 NEWPORT BERMUDA RACE

Hundreds of sailboats race from Newport, Rhode Island, to the finish line at St. David's Lighthouse on Bermuda's eastern end in this adventure through the Gulf Stream. The 635-mile biennial journey is considered one of the world's premier ocean races.

### June 15–18 BERMUDA HEROES WEEKEND

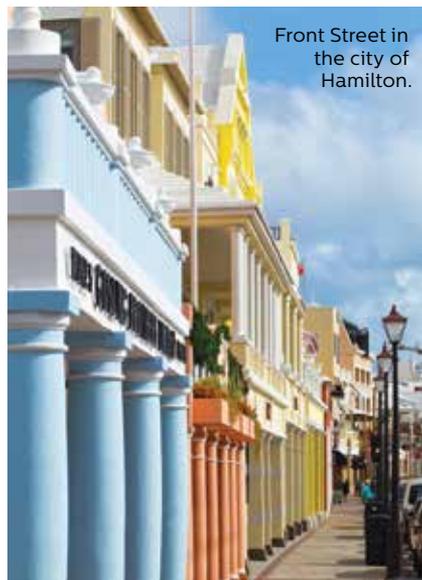
This four-day fest includes floating concert barges, dancing, international DJs, and carnival costumes galore.

### August 2–3 CUP MATCH

An east-versus-west island cricket rivalry is played out over a two-day match. Think reggae, tailgates, and bowlers in crisp white kit.

One of the things that sets this British territorial paradise apart—besides the fact that it is literally 600 miles from the nearest point of land, Cape Hatteras, North Carolina—is the warmth, pride, and diversity of Bermudians. The population of 65,000 is a welcoming, eclectic mélange—many of African, Caribbean, Portuguese, Native American, and English descent—and their influences can be felt in everything from the customs (politesse pervades) to the food, which is a delectable fusion of culinary styles including freshly caught seafood, Creole spices, and proper English puddings. Bermuda is set apart geographically, but it offers a pan-world cultural swirl that belies its 21-square-mile size.

The Latin phrase *quo fata ferunt*—meaning “whither the fates carry us”—



Front Street in the city of Hamilton.

is Bermuda's motto, and you'll hear residents use it frequently in daily life: in line at the grocery store, when discussing the weather, or in challenging political times. The Bermudian way is to roll with it and to persevere in the face of adversity, and this can-do attitude is contagious.

Last year's America's Cup revived Bermuda as a travel destination, and a crop of fresh new hotels has continued to thrive. The **Loren**, a sleek, minimalist 45-room hotel and spa, is among the standouts, with floor-to-ceiling cerulean ocean views and an equally stunning infinity pool. Downstairs, **Marée** doesn't adhere to stuffy hotel-dining norms, but rather offers new American

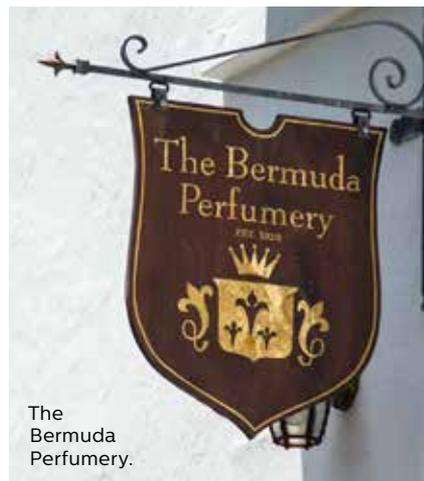


Shopping on Front Street in Hamilton.

cuisine guided by the Bermuda fishing seasons, with a poached lobster tail-and-fish chowder, elevated here with rockfish confit and microgreens.

The 92 rooms and public areas of the **Rosewood Bermuda** resort have recently gotten a refresh that pays homage to the territory's British colonial roots, but in a contemporized neutral palette with azure blue swatches that highlight the vistas of Castle Harbour and Harrington Sound.

When one thinks of old-school Bermuda, gourmet food isn't typically the first thing that comes to mind (ginger beer aside), but the culinary scene has seen its own drastic evolution. Start any day in Hamilton, the island's center, with excellent coffee and homemade Nutella cake at the hip **Devil's Isle**, a place with so much atmosphere, you'd think you were in San Francisco. It's worth a whirl through nearby **Miles Market**, Bermuda's answer to Dean & DeLuca, to peruse everything from hydroponically grown local produce



The Bermuda Perfumery.

to an array of internationally sourced chocolates, cheeses, and wine.

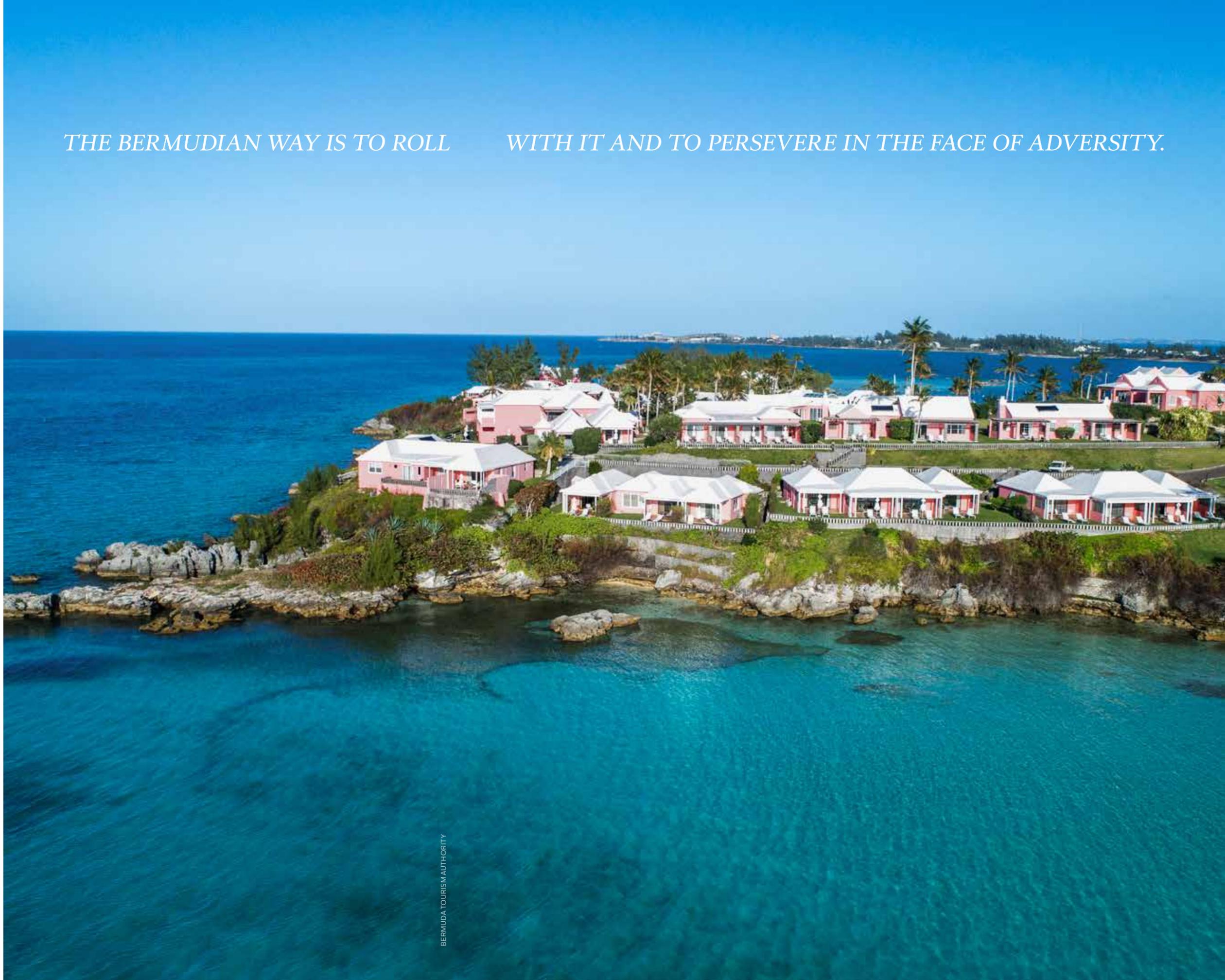
Once fueled, explore the island by taxi—knowledgeable drivers double as tour guides—or in one of the two-seater electric Twizys that are Bermuda's safe answer to mopeds and smart cars. Ask anyone about their favorite beaches, and you'll get a multitude of answers, but the sands of Cooper's Island, Elbow Beach, and Horseshoe Bay are among the most spectacular. For a relaxed island lunch, there's no better spot than the **Village Pantry**—a hub for local billionaires and beachgoers alike, who come for the excellent mango-infused poke bowls and open-faced goat cheese-and-pulled chicken sandwiches on freshly baked rustic bread. Another serious contender in the sandwich game is **Art Mel's Spicy Dicy**—an institution where those in the know queue for fried fish served on toasted raisin bread and topped with the owner's proprietary tartar sauce and coleslaw.

Contemporary-art aficionados will be amazed by the collection on view at the **Hamilton Princess**, which includes hundreds of works by the likes of Ai Weiwei, Andy Warhol, and Jeff Koons. The art rotates constantly, so every visit provides a new perspective. Equally enticing is the hotel's open-kitchen restaurant, **Marcus'** by chef Marcus Samuelsson, which offers locally inspired dishes like the Bermuda Triangle (charred octopus, scallops, and fresh fish with roasted potatoes and fennel) in an airy space with a Red Rooster vibe.

On the east end of the island sits the town of St. George, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is perhaps the finest example of Bermuda's old-meets-new ethos. Settled in 1612 by shipwrecked Englishmen, it features pristine buildings in shades of hot pink, lemon, and sky blue that are impeccably preserved. But shops with a clean, modern aesthetic have emerged as well. From **Gregory Nelmes's** eponymous interior-design shop, which stocks decorative objects

*THE BERMUDIAN WAY IS TO ROLL*

*WITH IT AND TO PERSEVERE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.*



BERMUDA TOURISM AUTHORITY



and furniture with a Caribbean slant made from nautical materials, to the tightly edited **Merch**, with its tea towels and statement-making South African jewelry that's set on central King's Square, there is no shortage of treasures.

Past the village's exquisitely simple limestone-and-cedar St. Peter's church is the **Bermuda Perfumery**, a house-cum-chemistry lab where indigenous scents like freesia and morning glory are captured in glass bottles. Don't be surprised if the owner offers you a cup of tea and a just-baked scone. After passing through a maze of pristine streets

and quaint gardens, water-sports enthusiasts will delight at the loftlike **Ocean Sails**, where sails of all sizes are still hand-sewn by husband-and-wife duo Steven and Suzanne Hollis, and where bags made of discarded scraps become chic, utilitarian mementos.

There's a reason why Bermuda's brio, balmy breezes, and idyllic coves have long beckoned important figures from Woodrow Wilson and Michael Bloomberg to Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones. As Mark Twain allegedly put it, "You go to heaven if you want to, I'd rather stay right here in Bermuda." ■

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:**  
The pool at the Rosewood Bermuda. Sense spa at the Rosewood. A room at the Loren. A statue by the artist KAWS outside the Hamilton Princess.

