

FREEPORT/LUCAYA IS A CITY OF DREAMS

By Basil Smith

This modern resort centre is a city of dreams. Twenty-five years ago an American financier named Wallace Groves dreamed that a thriving city could be made to rise and replace the virgin pine forest and barren limestone rock of the island of Grand Bahama.

Since then investors have found the business incentives in Freeport/Lucaya a dream come true. The same can be said for the vacationers who visit the city each year in the hundreds of thousands and those among them who try their luck at the casinos dream of making "the big score."

Originally, Freeport was conceived as an industrial freezone

in 1956. Groves wanted to attract international financiers who could appreciate the fact that Grand Bahama was a mere 87 miles from West Palm Beach, Florida, and only 3 hours flying time from the financial centre of New York. The package was comfortably lined with tax and duty free incentives which were almost irresistible.

The Lucaya district was born eight years later, as a resort centre along the coast. It has evolved into a comfortable blend of residential and tourist facilities. As the two communities grew, their identities became almost indistinguishable, making

Freeport/Lucaya one of the most lively and spectacular destinations in the region.

One of its major attractions is the International Bazaar. Here, visitors can take a shopping trip around the world at a leisurely stroll. The bazaar is a wonderland of streets and lanes, each created in the style of a different country. These startlingly authentic thoroughfares are lined with 70 shops which sell the goods from the 35 countries represented.

Freeport is also big on nightlife and is second only to the Bahamas' capital of Nassau in the variety of nightspots and entertainment offered. There are more



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than 50 excellent restaurants which also reflect the cosmopolitan atmosphere created by the International Bazaar and the architectural contrasts found throughout the city. El Casino is the largest and one of the most opulent gaming houses in the hemisphere. Its Moorish design dominates the downtown skyline.

Sports is the third big feature of Freeport/Lucaya. There are six championship golf courses, over 36 tennis courts, riding stables and jogging tracks. Common with all other Bahamian islands, fishing, boating and scuba diving are easily arranged. The Underwater Explorers Club and the Museum of Underwater Exploration are both located here. ABC Television has twice exploited these assets to film the Superstars series. The weather is perfect for outdoor sports activities year round.

Freeport/Lucaya is liberally supplied with top-flight hotels.

For the visitor who dreams of remaining close to the heart of the action in Freeport, while cutting corners on costs, there are several interesting options. Relatively inexpensive accommodations can be found at the Atlantic Beach Hotel; the Silver Sands Sea Lodge; the Shalimar Hotel; the Coral Beach Hotel and the Arawak Hotel, Tennis and Golf Club.

The 175-room Atlantic Beach is situated on the three-mile long Lucaya beach only four miles from Freeport International Airport, and offers guests a fresh water pool, catamarans, boats and water ski facilities. There are four good golf courses nearby and scuba diving is arranged across the road at the headquarters of the Underwater Explorers Society.

The Silver Sands is a 144-apartment hotel. Each apartment features a kitchen and bar decorated in a tropical theme. The Lodge is actually a condominium hotel. Rooms are rented

by the management on the owners' behalf on a pool system basis. On the premises is La Phoenix restaurant, one of the more popular spots in Freeport/Lucaya, featuring Bahamian and international cuisine.

Silver Sands features excellent tennis, horseback riding, scuba diving, glassbottom boats and a swimming pool. And the beach is only a few yards distant.

The Coral Beach Hotel, 10 minutes from the airport, is also located on Lucaya Beach and each of its 300 suites has a terrace or balcony from which to enjoy the panorama. Each suite has private kitchen facilities and is decorated in Mediterranean and Bahamian themes.

The Coral Beach has a shopping arcade and restaurant on the premises and the hotel's Sandpiper Lounge provides good night-time activity with live entertainment. There are private solariums on the roof, where one may get a more thorough tan than might be possible on the beach.

The Shalimar Hotel is a 10-minute walk from the Inter-

national Bazaar and offers 150 rooms, each with a private kitchen and balcony. There is a pleasant rooftop lounge which features Bahamian and American dishes and a lively bar.

The hotel has three swimming pools, tennis courts, table tennis, shuffleboard and a children's playground. Guests at the Shalimar also enjoy privileges at three nearby PGA golf courses. The central location of the hotel places it within easy reach, by foot or car, of most of the major attractions in the city. Scuba diving, sailing and fishing trips can be arranged.

The Arawak Hotel, Tennis and Golf Club is located on the outskirts of the city in order to accommodate its 10 tennis courts and 18-hole championship golfing green. This 120-room hotel features sports in a big way. Activities here also include horseback riding, cycling, boating, water skiing and scuba diving. There is, of course, a swimming pool and good docking facilities adjacent to the hotel.

These resorts, offering a combination of great sporting activi-

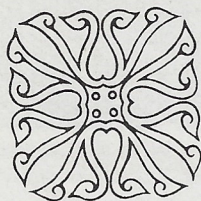


500 ROOM FREEPORT HOLIDAY INN.— With 500 rooms the Freeport Holiday Inn, is the largest hotel in the Lucaya area. Some one million dollars worth of improvement have already been completed in the resort. (Bahamas News Bureau photo by Basil Smith)



THE GARDEN OF THE GROVES has become one of Freeport's main tourist attractions. Covering 11 acres of tropical vegetation, man-made lakes and waterfalls, the gardens are located about seven miles from the International Bazaar, another of this city's landmarks. The structure in the photo is the beautiful chapel built on a hill. (Bahamas News Bureau photo by Fred Maura)

ty and bright night life, help to make Freeport/Lucaya a unique vacation experience. Out of the city, the native settlements and virgin pine forests of Grand Bahama bring an added dimension to a holiday — a chance to see what Grand Bahama was like before Wallace Groves brought his dream to reality.



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