



Condé Nast Traveller

GREEK ISLANDS
FOR FAMILIES

OCTOBER 2014 £4.10

READERS' TRAVEL AWARDS 2014

THE WORLD'S BEST

ISLANDS ★ AIRLINES ★ CITIES ★ SPAS ★ VILLAS

WHERE
TO STAY
RIGHT NOW

MORE THAN 40
HOTEL REVIEWS
INSIDE

GREAT
WEEKENDS

ITALY
BURGUNDY
LONG ISLAND
BRUGES

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

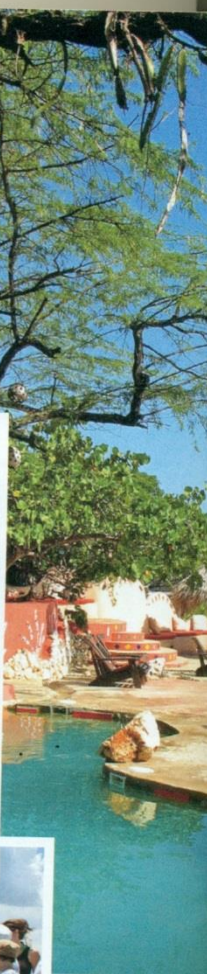
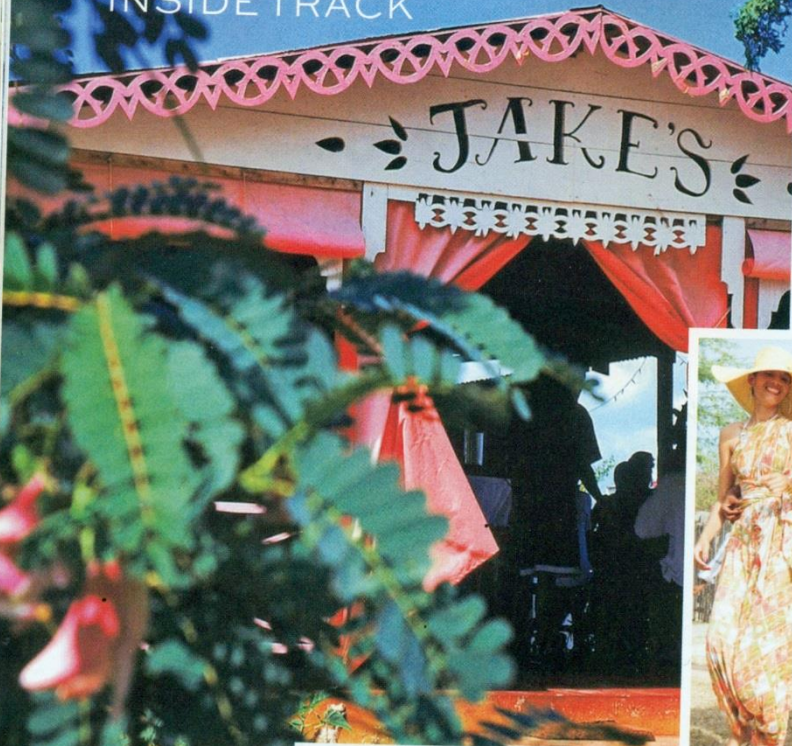
THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL LODGE
IN AFRICA

ON HOLIDAY
WITH

EDDIE REDMAYNE
SOPHIE DAHL
STANLEY TUCCI



INSIDETRACK



Pizza
• Cheese •
• Pepperoni •
• Tomato •

Enjoying sun and sea at Jake's hotel at Treasure beach is an important part of Calabash, where writers sharing their work include novelist Zadie Smith, above





HOPE YOU LIKE JAMMIN' TOO

Why go to Hay-on-Wye and get your feet wet when you can head to Jamaica for rum punch and reggae at the world's most frisky literary festival? By Emma Love. Photographs by Philip Volkers



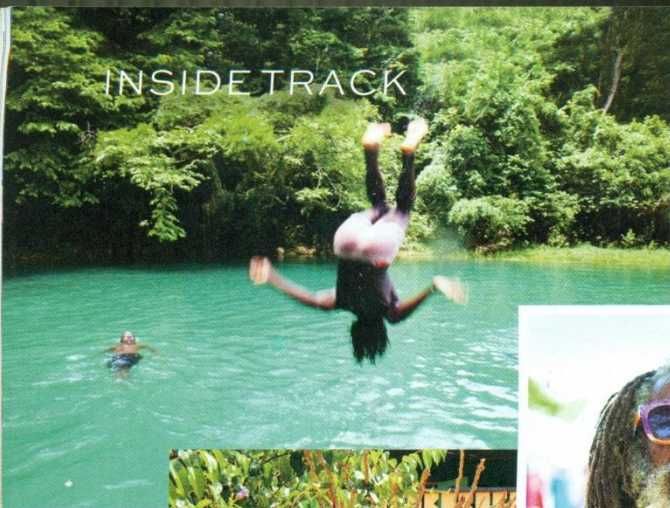
THE OLD RASTA'S BEARD looks as soft as sheep's wool. His bright apple-green shirt, which he's paired with orange linen trousers, a knitted hat and a thin matching scarf draped around his neck, shimmers in the fierce Sunday afternoon sun as he picks up his knees and twirls around in circles in time to the seven-piece band playing on the stage. Two women join in, shaking their hips in African-print maxi dresses, with wide-brimmed floppy straw hats and colour co-ordinated beads in their braided hair. Against a backdrop of sandy beach where a single fishing boat is pulling away from the bay and a few palm trees sway in the tiniest of breezes, the trio form the beginning of a conga line, weaving in and out of the 2,000-strong crowd who have all stood up

from their chairs to spill out of the packed, open-air marquee and groove along to the gospel voice of Judy Mowatt, once one of Bob Marley's backing singers, now a reggae legend in her own right. This is the finale of Calabash, a biannual, three-day literary event with serious clout held in the most unlikely of places: Jakes hotel in Treasure Beach on the rugged south coast of Jamaica.

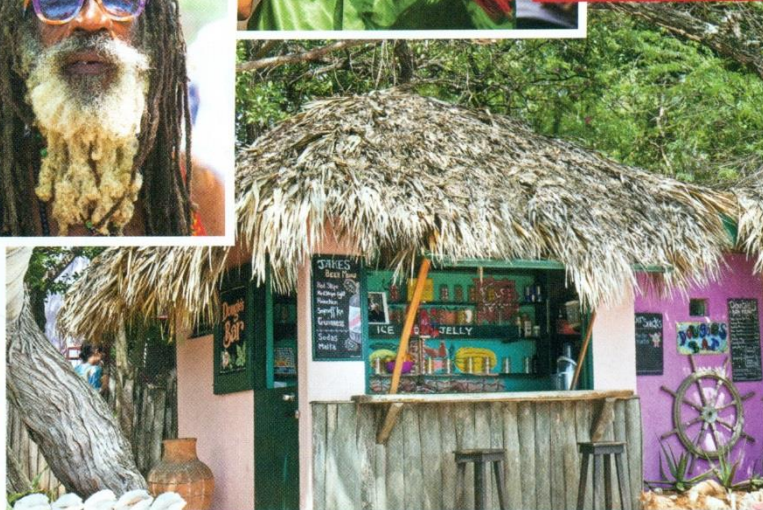
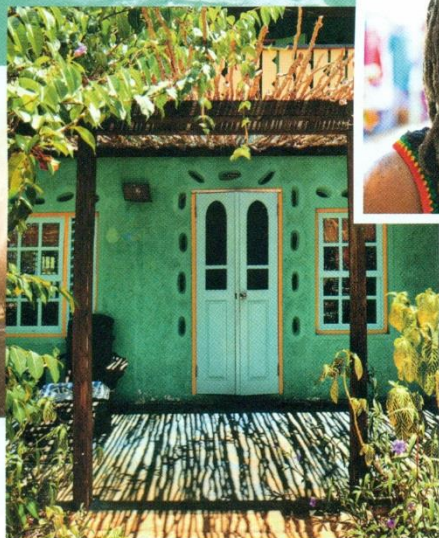
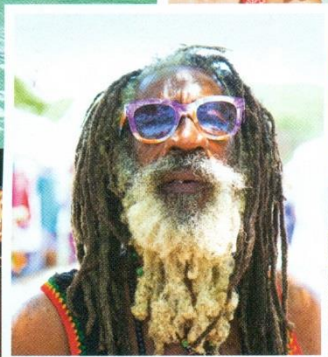
Calabash is the original and biggest of the Caribbean literary festivals and also the only one to pull in heavyweight poets, novelists and writers from across the globe (others, such as the NGC Bocas Lit Fest in Trinidad and Tobago or the Bim Literary Festival in Barbados have a much more local bent). Over the course of the weekend I listen, rapt, as Zadie Smith, a red shawl tying back her hair, stands at the bamboo ➤



INSIDE TRACK



Calabash draws not just the literati, but a broad cross-section of Jamaican society; Dougie's Bar, below, mixes up fresh fruit smoothies and rum punch for thirsty writers



► lectern to read from her most recent book, *The Embassy of Cambodia*. I laugh as Irish-born, New York-based author Colum McCann, a midday bottle of cold Red Stripe beer in his hand – 'I like to call it the rosiner, like the resin that you put on a violin before you play,' he says jokingly before taking a long sip – describes a character called Tillie, a 38-year-old prostitute from his novel

A DOG AND ITS PLAYMATE START ROLLING AROUND THE STAGE MID-TALK, WHICH THE SPEAKER SOMEHOW MANAGES TO IGNORE

Let the Great World Spin, in an amusing encounter with a toupee-wearing television weatherman. And I join in with the crowd as they give Mervyn Morris, Jamaica's Poet Laureate, two standing ovations.

Everyone knows that in Jamaica time is elastic, but curiously Calabash runs like clockwork. All the readings start bang on time, even if the odd latecomer does drift in carrying a paper plate piled high with jerk chicken and fried cornbread rolls or drinking from a fresh coconut through a straw. At one point

Butter, a brown mongrel dog belonging to Sally Henzell, the founder of Jakes, finds a playmate and they both start rolling around the stage mid-talk, which the speaker somehow, magnificently, manages to ignore.

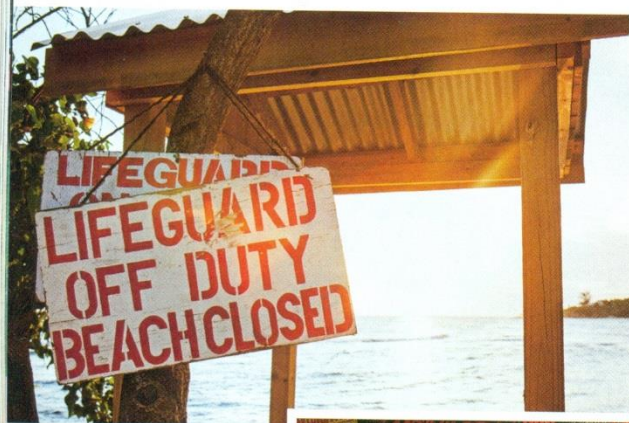
Between events a group of high-school children, who have won a poetry competition to be here, gather to gossip loudly on the beach next to a Jamaican

flag that someone has flung over the wire fence. A woman with long grey hair scraped back into a ponytail sits cross-legged in the sea in her swimming costume taking huge bites out of a mango, the juice dripping down her arms. And a toddler wiggles her hips as she gathers shells in the sand. There are book signings at the pop-up Novelty Trading Company bookshop there are book signings, next to the tent where the flame-red flowers of a poinciana tree look as if they're going to burst through the tarpaulin. And clusters of people sit around wooden

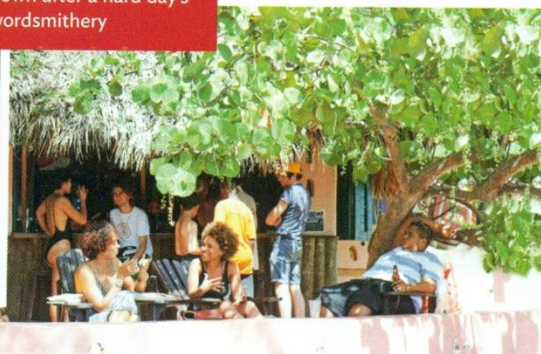
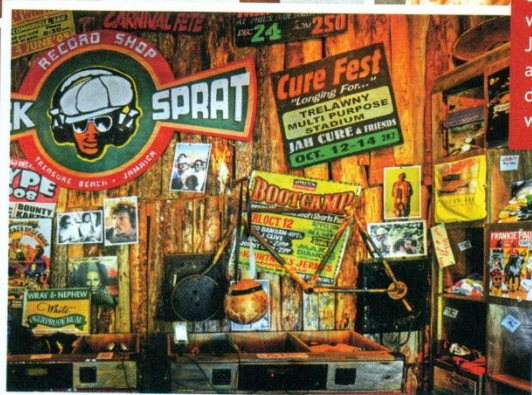
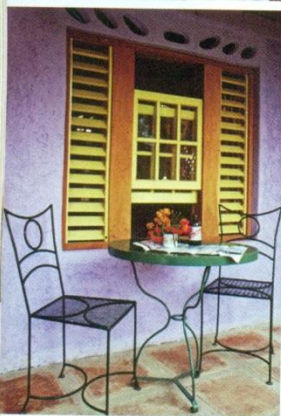
tables in the shade outside the Jack Sprat pizza and seafood restaurant, the hub of all the festival action, or potter around the craft stands buying incense and trinkets.

Books might come first on the order of play, but music is the backbone of the festival. Reggae blasts out over the sound system. American poet Major Jackson recites lines about Tupac and the Fugees. Chris John Farley, ex-music critic of *Time* magazine, reads a passage from his book on Bob Marley, and banters with the crowd: 'Marley used to joke that he drove a BMW because it stood for...?' 'Bob Marley and the Wailers,' they shout straight back. When Salman Rushdie is interviewed, he discusses the first record he ever bought (Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel*), his favourite band when he was growing up (The Velvet Underground) and the lyrics he wrote for his tome *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, which became a U2 song of the same name.

ON THE LAST NIGHT, there's a drinks party for the authors at one of the Jakes villas down the road (the hotel has four houses which can be rented and ►



Write on: speakers at the festival enjoy a drink at Dougie's, below, which is rivalled only by Jack Sprat bar, centre, as the place to wind down after a hard day's wordsmithery



➤ a just-opened hostel, Jack Sprat Shack), where Rushdie tells stories about Chuck Berry and Keith Richards before playing ping-pong by the pool. Everyone then wanders back to the hotel bar, where white fairy lights are strung up in the trees, to drink paint-stripper strength Dark 'n' Stormys and to listen to live bands playing on the music stage until 2am. The sweet smell of ganja fills the air and a driftwood fire glows on the beach.

The story of the festival, which began after Jamaican authors Colin Channer and Kwame Dawes were on a book tour together in the UK and got talking about the struggles facing Caribbean writers, is intrinsically linked to Jakes hotel. 'It was a hare-brained idea we came up with on a train, probably somewhere between Leeds and London,' recalls Dawes, who acts as compère and makes the crowd chuckle every time he comes on stage. Channer (who is no longer involved) was friends with Justine Henzell, a film producer and Sally's daughter, who asked her brother Jason, who now manages Jakes, if they could hold it there.

'Getting authors to come to Jakes is not a hard sell,' says Justine. 'All the little

touches you see, the art hanging from the trees, the mosaics in the pillars of the stage: it's all down to my mum.' Sally, now 73, is a former set designer whose family moved to Calabash Bay from the UK in the 1920s. As a child she would come to Treasure Beach to play. Later, in 1991, she bought the land where Jakes is now together with her late husband Perry (a director best known

just German backpackers coming to Treasure Beach. Then one day we got a call from a guy in New York asking if he could land a helicopter here. We threw out the cheap mattresses we'd bought from the local hardware store and I went to Kingston to buy the best.'

Since then, Jakes has become something of a low-fi, secret institution where Kate Moss, Jude Law and others come to

RUSHDIE TELLS STORIES ABOUT CHUCK BERRY AND KEITH RICHARDS BEFORE PLAYING PING-PONG BY THE POOL

for making the first Jamaican feature film, *The Harder They Come*). After building a restaurant and then a two-bedroom cottage, Jakes, which is named after Sally's parrot, was born.

'The hotel evolved organically. It started on a shoestring and every year we would add one or two rooms in the summer to make a little money in the winter,' remembers Jason, who also runs a non-profit foundation called Breds (local patois for 'brethren'), which has so far raised around £600,000 for community projects. 'At that time, it was

disappear. And you can see why: it's quite possibly the prettiest hotel I've ever stayed at. The look is boho, beautifully rustic (lanterns, shells, striped hammocks tied between gnarled trees) and inspired by Gaudí, with shards of coloured glass decorating the pathways. There's Dougie's pool bar, a thatch hut where fresh fruit smoothies and rum punch are the order of the day and, during the festival, authors stand around chatting and swapping signed books of poetry, the spa where early morning yoga classes are held on the roof, and cute cottages ➤

LIT FESTIVAL PASSNOTES

	JAMAICA	WALES	INDIA	AUSTRALIA
	CALABASH	HAY FESTIVAL	JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL	THE SYDNEY WRITERS FESTIVAL
THE PLACE	 <p>Jake's hotel, Treasure Beach</p>	 <p>A bunch of marquees in a field just outside Hay-on-Wye</p>	 <p>The Hotel Duggi Palace in Jaipur</p>	 <p>Theatres, town halls and the Sydney Opera House</p>
WHO GOES	 <p>Schoolkids and cool kids from Kingston, local fishermen, Andrea Levy, Zadie Smith</p>	 <p>The Chipping Norton set, Bill Clinton, anyone interested in politics, history or climate</p>	 <p>Julia Roberts, Jonathan Franzen, the Dalai Lama</p>	 <p>Serious Sydneysiders, authors Eleanor Catton and Emma Donoghue</p>
MEMORABLE MOMENT	 <p>Colum McCann: 'My mum used to give us Jamaican gingerbread when we were kids. "Ja make it yourself?", we asked her'</p>	 <p>When Nobel laureate V S Naipaul shook hands with Paul Theroux on stage and ended their 15-year-long feud</p>	 <p>Barnett Rubin rapping about his time as Obama's senior Af-Pak adviser</p>	 <p>Colin McDowell on fashion: 'Whether you're straight or gay, a pair of pecs is going to beat any shirt'</p>
WHAT TO WEAR	 <p>Sundress from Callaloo, just down the road, necklaces by the Girl and the Magpie</p>	 <p>Layers: a Vanessa Bruno cardigan, Acne jeans and wellies</p>	 <p>Bespoke Nehru collared jackets by tailor Madhav Agasti and cashmere shawls from chic boutique Andraab</p>	 <p>Luxe basics by Aussie fashion duo Bassike</p>
WHAT TO SAY	 <p>Nothing. You're too choked by the opening reading of Maya Angelou's <i>Still I Rise</i></p>	 <p>'Who wants a sheep's milk ice cream from Shepherds?'</p>	 <p>'Tinariwen's tunes totally blew me away'</p>	 <p>'I snapped up the last pair of tickets to Irvine Welsh's talk on <i>The Sex Lives of Siamese Twins</i>'</p>
WHAT NOT TO SAY	 <p>'Surprise! I've just signed you up for the next open-mic spoken word session'</p>	 <p>'I can't wait for my Amazon order to arrive'</p>	 <p>'Remember Salman Rushdie's forced no-show in 2012?'</p>	 <p>'I just can't get into <i>Breaking Bad</i> [the show's creator Vince Gilligan spoke here last year]'</p>
DATE FOR YOUR DIARY	 <p>May 2016 www.calabashfestival.org</p>	 <p>21-31 May 2015 www.hayfestival.com</p>	 <p>21-25 January 2015 www.jaipuriliteraturefestival.org</p>	 <p>18-24 May 2015 www.swf.org.au</p>

➤ are painted in the kind of shades most often found in an Italian ice-cream parlour: pale lilac; a lick of the lightest lemon; powdery, baby blue.

By the squiggle-shaped pool which overlooks a small sandy beach, Sam, a 12-year-old boy from Brooklyn, practices card tricks, his legs dangling in the shallows, while his younger brother Oliver borrows a camera and captures the scene. Other children jump off a brightly tiled wall and splash about while grown-ups laze on deckchairs reading in the sun.

Conversation flows from fracking to football in a blink. In 2001, it was around this pool that the first Calabash took place. Three hundred people turned up. Word soon spread and the speakers (who in the past have included authors Michael Ondaatje and Andrea Levy, historian Patrick French, ANC activist Ronnie Kasrils and poet Derek Walcott) had to be moved to a specially constructed stage on the far side of the property where it is still held today. Although the festival is far bigger now, and held every other year rather than annually, the vibe is still the same. Authors, who are flown out and put up at Jakes but forgo their usual speaking fees, are always asked to recommend three other writers who they can introduce to the festival.

Everyone eats together at Jack Sprat: local farmers find might themselves tucking into their ackee and salt-fish breakfast alongside a politician, then waiting in one of the well-organised queues with their raffle ticket to collect their lunch next to a rapper. On the last day, I stumble across a tiny, tucked-away stall with a snaking line of people waiting patiently to buy delicious, just-cooked corn on the cob steaming in a big silver bowl. Middle-aged men behind me wear tropical shirts and a smartly dressed couple from Kingston in front tell me that they call themselves Calabashians because they've been coming for so many years. How many times do you need to attend before you can do that, I ask the woman. 'From the very first time!' she says. 'It's in your heart.'

+1 877 526 2428; www.jakeshotel.com. Doubles from about £60. The next Calabash takes place in May 2016, www.calabashfestival.org. Virgin Holidays + Hip Hotels (+844 573 2460; www.vhiphotels.co.uk) offers five nights at Jakes hotel from £1,069 per person, based on two sharing, including flights and transfers