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Small Island, Big Future Roatan, Honduras, and the Infinity Bay Resort

by André Gayot



When Gene Albert, a builder from Eugene, Oregon, realized the hot weather of [Costa Rica](#) was not appropriate for the vacation of his ailing father, he heard that an island off the coast of [Honduras](#) was blessed with a cooler climate and had not truly been discovered yet. Albert liked the island so much that, rather than booking a room, he decided to build one for his dad and for himself. That's how the [Infinity Bay resort](#) project started.

With its rich soil and abundant water, the island of Roatan strategically stretches in [the Caribbean](#) Sea east to west, 50 miles off the coast of Honduras, for 32 miles of jungle and gentle hills which top out at a peak of 771 feet. Along with its smaller sister islands of Garanja and Utila, Roatan is the largest of the Islas de la Bahia and is home to a barrier reef (which is a designated UNESCO World Heritage site along with neighboring Belize's reef system), second only to Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

First a den for pirates, buccaneers and privateers of any description chasing the gold of the Spanish galleons, Roatan was the object of a perpetual dispute between the Spaniards and the British, who finally turned Roatan over to Honduras in 1868. Quite a few of their descendants have settled on the island paradise along with evaded former black slaves, the "Garifunas," who still perform their traditional African dances on select days at Yobu. Due to this history, English has remained the first language spoken here and has opened the door to visitors from the U.S.



A state-of-the-art kitchen at Infinity Bay Spa & Beach Resort



Infinity Bay Resort is a hotel and condominium property

The concept of Infinity Bay is that of a hotel and condo property respectful of the fragile environment thanks to a sophisticated septic system and a reverse osmosis filter providing abundant and safe for water for the resort. Infinity Bay functions as a hotel—and probably the top one in Roatan for the time being. Each villa provides all you need for a prolonged stay. The floor plans and equipment are perfectly suited for families who can do all their cooking on-site and relax at ease after sunset in the spacious living rooms. If you choose to skip the restaurant, it's fun to go to the grocery store at the island's West End via a water taxi ride of a few minutes. The oversized kitchens with state-of-the-art stainless steel appliances are practical, yet spectacular, with their granite counter tops, and one can comfortably watch cable TV with an eye beyond the veranda on the ever changing sea—that is, if you have a booked a premium villa facing the [beach](#) (we prefer the premium villas on the upper floors rather than those at the pool level).

The first round of the project is so successful that a second phase with additional villas is in progress along with some new condos that are for sale. When all is said and done, the property will boast 145 one-, two- and three-bedroom villas. You can indulge in the massive pool and sip cool drinks at the poolside bar, but what you don't want to miss is the incredibly beautiful white powdery sand beach, caressed by turquoise water. A few strokes will lead you above the reef where the myriad colored fish are munching on the coral. Schools of friendly small Groupers swim with you forming a gracious aquatic ballet. Indeed, the beach and the sea are the main draw here. In this symphony of light blue and green, fifty dive sites populated by 800 species of fish playing on the awesome walls and tunnels along the coral fans, while the sponges await the scuba divers. Certification for scuba diving can easily be obtained on the Island. Water temperatures remain extremely mild, ranging from 80 degrees Fahrenheit in summer to 70 degrees in the winter months.



Iguanas are an endangered species



Life on the island

Although Roatan boasts only one paved road running throughout the island, it's not a bad idea to take a ride and discover the real life in this, at least until now, remote corner of the world, beginning with the capital Coxen Hole that seems a tad overshadowed by the gigantic cruise ships moored right at its threshold.

You can also watch a dolphin show and even swim with them (at Anthony's key resort) or sail above the jungle trees with the canopy zip line and think for one second that you are Tarzan (at Canopy Zip line tours). A touching visit is the one you will take at the Iguana Farm, a sort of a tropical bric-à-brac kept by descendants of the subjects of Her Majesty who protect and preserve their favorite pets, the Iguanas, which unfortunately are also a delicacy for the locals. The "Garifunas," offspring of slaves deported here by the British as a punishment for a rebellion, dwell at Pollitily Blight and entertain shows at YOBU.

On your way, take the time for a lunch El Mirador (The View: Telephone 09680415) which, from its terrace, cooled by the breeze on the flank of the hill, offers views on the picturesque Johnson's Bight bay. A large upscale project is under construction there. The Blue Ocean Reef, powered by the Nikki group of resorts is scheduled to open in 2010. It's an indication that Roatan, once a quiet destination for sporty diving enthusiasts, is drawing the attention of the big investors and developers—all the more, this is already a free port and some see it turned into a tax haven. Rumor has it that a few Hollywood stars have already acquired condos on the island. It would not be surprising to see Roatan among the "hot" destinations in the near future.

Well, Gene Albert certainly had a vision. ♦

Infinity Bay Spa & Beach Resort

www.infinitybay.com

866-369-1977

For unique restaurants on Roatan, visit West Beach for:
The Bite on the Beach
Buffalo Steak House
Aqua Fish Restaurant

For shopping restaurants and nightlife try the West End (by water taxi):
Pura Vida

Parrillada Argentina
The Buccaneers

Other resorts on the Island:

Turquoise Bay - www.turquoisebayresort.com

Mayan Princess - www.mayanprincess.com

Parrot Tree - www.parrottreeplantation.com