

ATLANTA HOMES & LIFESTYLES
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ATLANTA HOMES

LIFESTYLES

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*Atlanta Style's
bold new look*

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130 Harbour Island is one of the
oldest settlements in the Bahamas.



PAST MEETS PRESENT

The quiet charms of the Bahamas' Harbour Island beckon Written by CATHY WHITLOCK



from top Eleven Experience's Bahama House, located on Harbour Island in the Bahamas, feels more like a stylish friend's private beach retreat with just 11 rooms. Harbour Island's pink-sand beaches are best traveled by horseback.

TAKE THE CHARM OF BERMUDA, the sophistication of St. Barths, and add a touch of the old-school aesthetic of a '60s James Bond film—and you have the Bahamas' crown jewel known as Harbour Island.

Located just a few miles from Eleuthera, "Briland," as it's often called by the locals, is an undiscovered gem for many. Void of the over-the-water bungalows and mega resorts, visitors are drawn to its easy-going vibe and the incomparable pink sandy beaches not seen anywhere else. What it lacks in size (a mere 3.5 miles long), the oldest settlement in the Bahamas makes up for it in spades with a smattering of high-end hotels, chic dinner spots, funky nightclubs and charming, pastel-colored cottages with white picket fences that give Nantucket a run for its money.

Harbour Island is also known as the home of celebrated designer India Hicks, who is perhaps one of the island's most prominent ambassadors. A proponent of living the "island style life" and the goddaughter of Prince Charles (she was a bridesmaid in his wedding to Princess Diana), Hicks' shop, Sugar Mill Trading Company in Dunmore Town (the main hub of the island), is the go-to place for all things chic.

The charm of Harbour Island is best on display at Eleven Experience's **Bahama House**, an 11-suite compound complete with a

Southern-style courtyard, an open-air Tiki Bar and freshwater pool that is located in the heart of town. The luxury hideaway has seen a few reincarnations as a mercantile shop in the 1800s, Muriel's department store in the early 1900s, an inn in the '40s and, today, a popular spot on the island.

Designed by Blake Pike of London's No. 12 Interiors, rooms in both the main building (a 19th-century villa known as 1800) and the cottages reflect a British colonial style. "We wanted a natural but comfortably chic feeling to the property," notes Pike. "Each room is unique, and the 1800 rooms reflect the British colonial tradition while the annex and cottages have a laid-back '70s vibe."

Past meets present as four-poster mahogany beds, tented wardrobes and campaign chests nod to the past while Lutron lighting and Crestron sound systems lend a modern touch. The designer used locally sourced furniture, custom hand-blocked fabrics and muted colors and natural materials to "create a casual elegance." This translates into vintage rattan pieces and sunburst mirrors, caning on the closet doors and custom-designed rattan beds with upholstered headboards. "We also used an eclectic mix of '70s rattan furniture, and grasscloth walls with hand-blocked pineapples," says Pike.

The design touches are indeed Instagram-worthy, such as the bamboo bibliotheque filled with a collection of curiosities. "We love the unusual and quirky pieces, like our Mario Lopez Torres woven monkey floor lamp and overscaled mahogany skull. We used local artisans for overscaled shell mirrors and locally woven braids to embellish a bookcase," he continues.

Tailor-made activities are provided on request. Professional guides will take you on a tour of neighboring Eleuthera, where coves and caves abound, or spend the day fishing, scuba diving or snorkeling on a 35-foot Scorpion boat. You might just catch your own dinner—or ask chef Nikoya Lightbourne to prepare a French-Bahamian feast.

The hotel's credo says it best: "You shouldn't have to sacrifice the comforts of home to experience some of the world's most beautiful landscapes and incredible adventures" The result? You'll never want to leave. elevenexperience.com/bahama-house-harbour-island



clockwise from top Located northwest of Eleuthera, Harbour Island is home to breathtaking coastlines. The Goombay Smash cocktail. The open-air Tiki Bar is one of the more popular spots at Bahama House. British Colonial style abounds in the villas of Bahama House.

