

TRAVEL AGENT CENTRAL

Meet Mint Hotels & Residences: A New Hospitality Brand in the DR

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Earlier this year, **Mint Hotels & Residences** debuted in the **Dominican Republic** with a selection of independent boutique properties. **Miguelina Butron**, the vice president of marketing and one of the brand's three partners, stopped by **Travel Agent's** office this week to talk about what guests can expect.

While a couple of the properties are located on the beach, kicking back and relaxing isn't what Mint wants from its guests. Rather, they want to inspire travelers to explore the various locations in the Dominican Republic by hiking, mountain biking, scuba diving or snorkeling. Butron also

tells us she thought there was a need to inform travelers that the Dominican Republic offers more than just the big-name all-inclusives.

Mint Hotels & Residences currently comprises the following hotels:

- **The Bannister Hotel & Yacht Club (Samaná):** The hotel's 32 rooms face **Samaná Bay** and each has its own private balcony and fully equipped kitchen. Guests can spend their days at the pools, waterfront restaurants and bars or they can take the complimentary water shuttle to nearby **Cayo Levantado**, where the hotel has its own private VIP area. For those feeling more adventurous, guests can hire a boat and spend the day at **Playa Rincon, Los Haitises National Park** or other unspoiled locales, such as **Playa del Valle, La Playita, Hermitaño, Playa Fronton, Playa Galeras, Playa Bonita** or **Playa Coson**.
- **Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge (Barahona):** Set between the rain forest and the **Caribbean Sea**, Casa Bonita has just 18 rooms, including four new **River Suites** tucked away in the rain forest. Guests can enjoy the riverside **Tanama Spa**, a zip line trail and guided hikes in the forest, or head to local beaches to chill or surf.
- **Punta Rucia Lodge (Punta Rucia):** Located on a white sand beach on the north coast, this simple yet stylish resort has 12 individual A-frame bungalows. Punta Rucia Lodge also has an infinity pool, restaurant, terrace, bar, beachside spa, private dock and a helipad.
- **El Portillo Residences (Las Terrenas in Samaná):** These one- to three-bedroom luxury apartments on the northeast coast are located around one of the area's top beaches. The fully equipped kitchens can be stocked with provisions prior to guests' arrival or they can head to the thatched-roof **Club House Restaurant** for local cuisine. A pool with sea views and swim-up bar complete this residential-style resort.
- **Los Altos Residences (Casa de Campo):** These chic one- to three-bedroom accommodations combine luxury hotel services with residential ease and comfort. Set at the summit of Casa de Campo, views are framed by the cliffs over the **Chavón River** and the **Dye Fore Golf Course's** 17th fairway. Offerings include golf, beaches, swimming pools, gardens and more.

Prior to joining Mint, each of the hotels had to go through several upgrades to the hardware of the property (think: new furniture and decorations). They also had to go through service training to make sure the staff was up to the standard that Mint expected; it also brought in new general managers for each of the properties.

The Mint Experience

With a varied collection of accommodations set across the country, the brand wants its guests to take in multiple properties and locales with **The Mint Experience**, providing connections via private helicopter, seaplane or private car. All options can be tailored to include cultural and nature excursions in each destination or along the way.

Regarding arrivals and departures: Upon landing at any one of the three major international airports (**Santo Domingo's Las Americas International Airport, Santiago International Airport** and **Punta Cana International Airport**), guests are met at the jetway and whisked away to a VIP lounge to clear customs and connect with their private transportation. When departing the

DR, this experience happens in reverse: Guests are met upon arrival at the airport, escorted through customs and security, and delivered to the VIP lounge.

Butron tells us that Mint is looking to add two more properties in the Dominican Republic, but can't confirm where they will be. She also tells Travel Agent that Mint Hotels & Residences is looking to expand into other Caribbean islands, and even destinations further abroad.

Visit www.minthotelsresidences.com or call 1-809-540-5304. Travel advisors can also book through **J.MAK Hospitality**, where they will receive 20 percent commission.