



Mint Offers Boutique Hotel Options in Dominican Republic

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PHOTO: Rooftop view of Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge (photo courtesy Mint Hotels and Residences)

If you think of the [Dominican Republic](#) as a destination for all-inclusive beach vacations, it's time to think again. A newly branded group called Mint Hotels & Residences has emerged with five small boutique hotels scattered around the Caribbean country, as well as a collection of condo residences available for rental. More, the properties pay a full 20 percent commission from the first booking, as

well as the same compensation on any added activities that are sold as part of the Mint Experience.

Miguelina Butron, vice president–sales and marketing and a partner in the company, told TravelPulse that Mint was launched earlier this year, bringing together existing independent owned hotels. Mint is part of a hospitality management company called HMS (Hospitality Management Solutions) operating in the Dominican Republic and Panama.

Using the criteria of location, surroundings, cultural opportunities and experiences, the company was formed to promote unique destinations in the country. All of the properties are small – ranging from 12 to 30 rooms. They are located in mountains, beaches, rain forests and marinas from the mountains of Barahona to the beaches of Punta Rucia to the Samaná Peninsula. The hotels were chosen for their cuisine (each has at least one restaurant), design and service.

Mint works through J. MAK Hospitality, a representation firm in the U.S. Butron said about half of the business comes from travel advisors and she is working to establish preferred relationships with agency networks.

Unique about Mint, aside from the quality of its lodgings, said Butron, is that it operates as a sort of destination management company. If a travel agent calls – and there should always be a conversation, said Butron – Mint will put together a trip based on client desires. That might include trekking, climbing (the Dominican Republic boasts the highest peak in the Caribbean), diving, culinary activities, cultural experiences, etc.

Butron said the company offers “Mint Tips” – advice on where to go and what to do with high specificity. For instance, a climber will be told what kind of training

they need for a certain mountain. She said it has been a lifelong passion of hers to explore every corner of the world to discover special places and activities.

Many guests will stay at more than one Mint property so they can experience multiple locations on the island. There is even the option to fly by helicopter, plane or car from one property to another. Some hotels are located within large condo residence developments, in which case the entire complex is managed by HMS. Since Mint manages all the hotels, there is a consistency of standards and quality. Mint places its own general managers in each property.

All Mint guests enjoy VIP airport arrival and departure which means facilitated movement through security and customs, use of a comfortable lounge and airport transfers.

Rates in low season average about \$250 per room per night, including breakfast; in high season it's \$350-\$400 with larger condo residences going higher. Because of the company's connections, said Butron, it is able to put together well-priced Mint Experience packages.

Mint hotels are Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge (Barahona), El Portillo Residences (Samaná), Los Altos residences (Casa de Campo), Punta Rucia Lodge and The Bannister (Samaná).

Aside from the five hotels (with several in the pipeline) and multiple condo residences in the Dominican Republic, HMS manages 15 condo residences in Panama. Butron said the company is open to expansion of both products elsewhere in the Dominican Republic and South America.