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## FAMILY TRAVEL IN THE CARIBBEAN

Multi-generational travel is booming SEE PAGE 18

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# Caribbean Family Travel



The region has a host of properties with something to delight the whole family

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Family travel is back in style again, and the trend now is for trips that go beyond traditional family vacations and include more unique, more active and more meaningful travel plans. In the following pages, **Travel Agent** focuses on the Caribbean, helping agents narrow down the list of recommended family trips to this ever-popular region.

First, allow us to show exactly how big family travel is getting. A recent American Express study found that family travel is on the rise this summer, according to almost four out of five American Express Travel agents polled nationwide (79 percent), who identified it as one of this year's most significantly increasing travel trends.

This summer, family vacations are expanding beyond the traditional get-aways to include newer, broader, more active and meaningful travel plans, say

agents. Top motivators for family travel include the desire to introduce children to different cultures, customs and lifestyles, experience new things together and create lasting memories. Eighty-one percent of agents are booking family vacations consisting of multi-generational trips that include grandparents. Additionally, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of agents are seeing grandparents traveling exclusively with their grandchildren, independent of mother and father.

Other trends spotted by agents include adult children traveling with their parents (69 percent); family and family friends traveling together as one large group (67 percent); "blended" families, consisting of divorced/re-married parents with their new spouses and children all traveling together (31 percent); and extended family members including aunts, uncles and cousins taking trips as a collective group (28 percent).

Here are just a few of the best options

in the Caribbean to suggest to multi-generational vacationers:

The Westin St. Maarten Dawn Beach Resort & Spa and The Westin Grand

## Selling Family Travel

**The Situation:** Family travel is growing by the minute and the Caribbean has countless vacation opportunities for multi-generational vacationers.

**Branch Out:** Discover off-the-beaten-path family vacations. Nevis, Turks & Caicos, St. Maarten, the Cayman Islands and Anguilla are great spots for families looking to go somewhere different. Nassau, the Bahamas, is anything but unknown but continues to be a force in family travel.

**Bottom Line:** Family travel is a trend that is not going away. Agents selling the Caribbean need to stay up to speed with destinations and properties offering an abundance of amenities for the whole family.

Cayman both offer an array of amenities perfect for family travel. Representatives of the properties recently sat down with **Travel Agent** to stress how devoted the facilities are to the multigenerational clients. Both properties offer agents a 10-percent commission.

The Westin St. Maarten Dawn Beach Resort & Spa opened in December and offers something for everything, from an extensive list of spa treatments to various field trips for children.

A popular trip hosted by the Westin St. Maarten's Kids Club visits the nearby Butterfly Farm. Agents can book these prior to a client's arrival. There is an additional charge of \$25 for these trips on top of the regular \$10 to \$12 daily charge for the Kids Club.

To book any of the Kids Club trips at Westin St. Maarten, call Brenda Wathey, destinations manager for Westin St. Maarten, at (011) 599-520-7229.

At Westin Cayman, which offers mostly the same amenities as the St. Maarten property, children can go on visits to the nearby turtle farm, which is also an additional charge of about \$25.

The best rooms for families at either property are the Resort View rooms. They have 450 square feet of space; they cost \$149 a night from August to November and \$199 a night from now until August.

VIP car service from the nearby airports can also be arranged. Westin St. Maarten is located about 20 to 25 minutes from St. Maarten's new airport terminal; a car service transfer costs about \$30 a person. Service to the Grand Cayman property, which is located about 10 minutes from the airport, costs about \$15-\$20 a person.

Westin St. Maarten also offers culinary opportunities, including wine

tastings and cooking classes. Although the details are still being worked out, Marcus R. Repp, regional director of food and beverage, told **Travel Agent** that cooking classes will be offered about once a month at a charge of \$35 to \$40 a person.

The wine tastings will be incorporated into a full evening of dining and will also most likely be offered once a month. Cost will range from \$100 to \$120 a person. For more information on the cooking classes, agents should call Daniel Roselle, food and beverage director of the property, at (011) 599-543-6700, ext. 6007.

The spa at Westin St. Maarten has 15 treatment rooms. The most popular

945-3800 and Carola Sjoer, spa director at Westin St. Maarten, at (011) 599-543-6700.

### **The Four Seasons Nevis, West Indies**

Nevis, located only a 40-minute ferry ride from St. Kitts, is becoming another popular destination with a host of activities for all ages. St. Kitts (its neighbor but polar opposite) mainly consists of casinos, night clubs and bars; Nevis, however, is designed for pure relaxation—whether its enjoying the mountain, the beach or the rainforest.

Perhaps the most family-oriented property in Nevis is the Four Seasons, which has villas ideal for families and offers agents a 10-percent commission.

Four Seasons can arrange for a host of activities popular for families, including the nature trails excursion. These are very popular for children, especially since you are most likely to see an array of green vervet monkeys, butterflies and unusual trees in the rainforest and hidden ruins. Agents should call Jim Johnson of Top to Bottom at 869-469-9080, Lynell or Earla Liburd of Sunrise Tours at 869-469-2758, or Michael Herbert of Heb's Nature Tours at 869-469-3512.

Nevis also offers mountain biking, tennis, horseback riding, golf and hiking on Nevis Peak. Agents should call the same contacts provided for the nature trails to book hiking on Nevis Peak. However, tell clients this might be a bit challenging for children, as the peak is 3,232 feet high.

Four Seasons Resort Estates offer nightly villas ranging from \$975 to \$5,500, depending on the size of the

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**The Carlisle Estate Villa, Somerset on Grace Bay, Turks & Caicos**

treatment is the Dawn Beach Escape, a four-hour package that includes the works: a massage, manicure, pedicure, etc. The four-hour package costs \$350 a person. It is also the most popular treatment at Westin Grand Cayman, but there it has a different name, the Seven Mile Package. For more spa information at each property, agents should call Pat England, spa director at the Grand Cayman property, at 345-

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villa and the season. For more information on the villas, agents should call 869-469-1111 or e-mail [nevis.reservations@fourseasons.com](mailto:nevis.reservations@fourseasons.com). Agents can also call Eva Chan, sales director for Four Seasons, at 212-935-4955 or e-mail [eva.chan@fourseasons.com](mailto:eva.chan@fourseasons.com).

### Cable Beach Resorts in Nassau, Bahamas

Nassau, the Bahamas, remains one of the most popular destinations in the Caribbean for families. Some suggested properties here for families are Cable Beach Resorts' 550-room Wyndham Nassau Resort & Crystal Palace Casino and the 694-room Sheraton Cable Beach Resort, which recently underwent an \$80 million renovation.

A new spa is scheduled to open in between both properties by the end of the year; according to plans, it will be open to guests of either resort.

Both properties are home to about 3,000 feet of beach and have a Kids Clubs for children 4 to 12.

Each property offers a 10-percent commission.

Agents should call Tina Bernard, director of travel industry sales for Sheraton, at 609-636-1240, and Crystal Collins, director of revenue manager in travel industry sales for Wyndham, at 954-915-2941.

### Arawak Beach Inn in Anguilla

Another aspect of multi-generational travel that has been gaining steam is family reunion vacations.

Arawak Beach Inn is a great place for agents to book such a vacation. Clients can rent out 15 rooms, which can accommodate 30 people, for seven nights on Anguilla at a rate of \$155 per night.

Rates for Arawak's Rent the Inn program are available year-round starting at \$1,085 per person based on a seven-night stay for the 15 rooms, which



The pool at the Westin St. Maarten Dawn Beach Resort & Spa

accommodate up to 30 people (based on double occupancy).

Vacationers will enjoy the all-inclusive meal plan, an excursion to a private island, a round of welcome drinks upon arrival and all transfers. This represents a savings of 30 percent compared to regular per room, per night rates and comes out to as little as \$155 per person, per night.

Guests can lounge by the pool, take a quick boat trip over to Scilly Cay for live music and lobster, or go to nearby Shoal Bay Beach for parasailing, restaurants, bars and entertainment. It offers agents a 10-percent commission. Agents can call Maria Hawkins, Arawak Innkeeper, at 914-509-5875.

### Somerset on Grace Bay, Turks & Caicos

This family-oriented property just opened in June of 2006 on 4.6 beachfront acres along Grace Bay. The 54-suite facility offers Extreme Beach Croquet, tea parties, infinity pools with underwater sound systems and private outdoor hot tubs, all popular with families. Every room comes with an X-Box.

Rates start at \$500. The property's Estate Houses are the best rooms to book. The Penthouse Estate is the best room of them all. It offers the same amenities as the other Estate rooms, but it has two floors, as opposed to the other single-floor rooms. All rooms have wraparound terraces with outdoor hot tubs. The Penthouse Estate Room starts at \$4,000 a night, while the regular Estate Houses go for between \$3,000 and \$4,000 a night. The estate houses all have five bedrooms, making it perfect for families. It offers agents a 10-percent commission.

Agents should call General Manager Karen Whitt at 649-946-5900. ■



The Wyndham Nassau Resort at Cable Beach, the Bahamas