

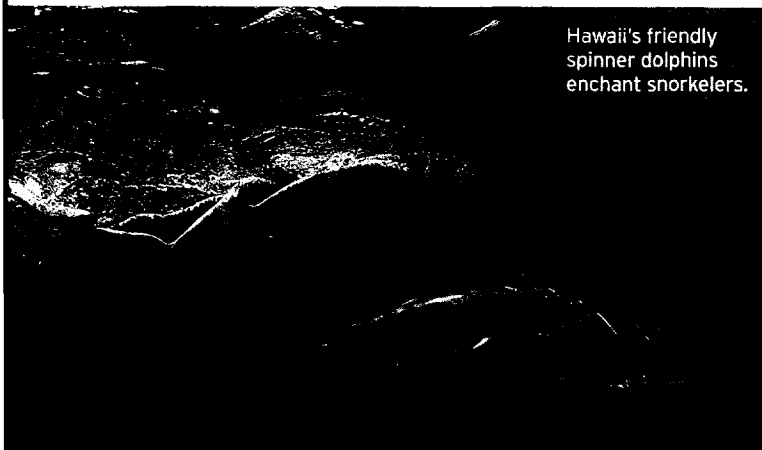
tropical ISLAND FITNESS

ventureout

From Hawaii to Belize, four balmy isles where you can swim with dolphins, surf with sea turtles, kayak aqua waters or kickbox with waves

1. Dancing with dolphins Outrigger Waikiki, Oahu, Hawaii

What's not to like about a place where you can shop Gucci, Prada and Coach out the front door and surf out the back? I'm an unapologetic Hawaii outdoor-adventure fan, so I had always steered clear of the island of Oahu because of its



Hawaii's friendly spinner dolphins enchant snorkelers.

But that turtle encounter was just a preview to the amazing experience that awaited me on the four-hour Wild Side Specialty Tours Eco-Adventure voyage (\$95; 808-306-7273, sailhawaii.com), which launches out of the Wai'anae Boat Harbor about an hour northwest of Honolulu. The 42-foot Island Spirit catamaran, captained by the knowledgeable and cordial Armin Cullins with his wife Tori assisting, sails early in the morning in search of Hawaii's native spinner dolphins. If the 100-member pod is around and receptive, the crew hands out snorkels and flippers and invites passengers to join the marine mammals in their native element. (All participants are briefed on how to interact safely with the dolphins before entering the water.)

Engrossed by the exquisite gray-and-white dolphins at my side, I wasn't even aware of the effort of keeping up with them. (To avoid startling the dolphins, you only use your legs to propel yourself, so it's the ultimate butt workout!)

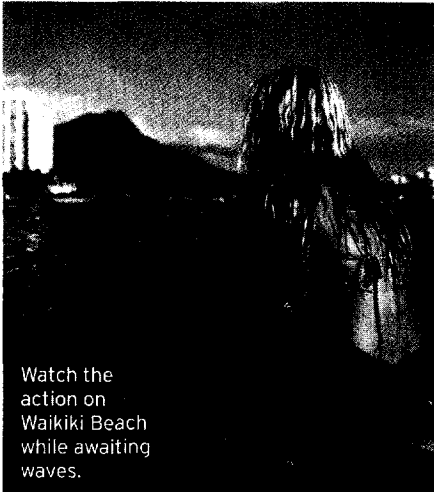
In the afternoon, I made it the perfect *Shape* beach-body day with a couple of hours of kayaking on the windward side of the island with guide Doug Sigler and a kayak from Kailua Sailboards & Kayaks (\$79; 808-262-2555, kailua-sailboards.com). From the launch point in Kailua Beach Park, it's a short paddle out to Flat Island and a good

To avoid startling the dolphins, you only use your legs to propel yourself, so it's the ultimate butt workout!

urban reputation. Still, upscale window-shopping can awaken my inner wild woman too.

And, despite its Beverly Hills-caliber boutiques, Waikiki is situated on one of the world's most gorgeous bays. My ocean-facing room on the seventh floor of the Outrigger Waikiki (from \$380; other rooms start at \$230; 800-688-7444, outrigger.com) offered a magnificent view of the crescent beach stretching all the way to Diamond Head. I couldn't resist the call of the sand and surf; I ran off to Hans Hedemann Surf School for a lesson (one-hour private lessons, \$100; group, \$50; 808-924-7778, hhsurf.com) with ex-pro surf dude and martial artist Sean Anderson.

If you're ever going to try surfing, this is the place. The waves are usually gentle and predictable; it's Oahu's less-developed North Shore (as seen in the recent movie *Blue Crush*) that produces the legendary 30-footers during the winter. As I rested on my board, a sea turtle surfaced and solemnly gave me the eye. Not too many other urban areas can boast marine life like that right off shore.



Watch the action on Waikiki Beach while awaiting waves.

opportunity to spot more sea turtles, as well as ogle the stars' homes in tony Lanikai (Michelle Pfeiffer reportedly owns two houses there).

If you're looking for tamer fun, try an informative, half-day jungle hike with one of the specialty tour companies like Oahu Nature Tours (\$37; 808-924-2473, oahunaturetours.com) or Mauka Makai Excursions (\$47; 808-593-3525, oahu-ecotours.com). You'll be surprised at how little time it takes to shuttle you from your hotel to wild rain-forest trails. Or, if you don't want to leave the shore for the steamier interior, take a long beach walk or run in the surf at dawn; Waikiki's 20- and 30-story hotel towers cast the entire beach and bay into shadow until midmorning. And then, when the sun is high, go wild in the shops on Kalākaua Avenue. — Anne M. Russell

2. Paddle-happy in Belize Island Expeditions, Glover Reef

I'm flying high in the Central American sky to Belize for a seven-day kayaking adventure with Island Expeditions (from



**3. Kickboxing with waves
Rosewood's Caneel Bay Resort,
St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands**

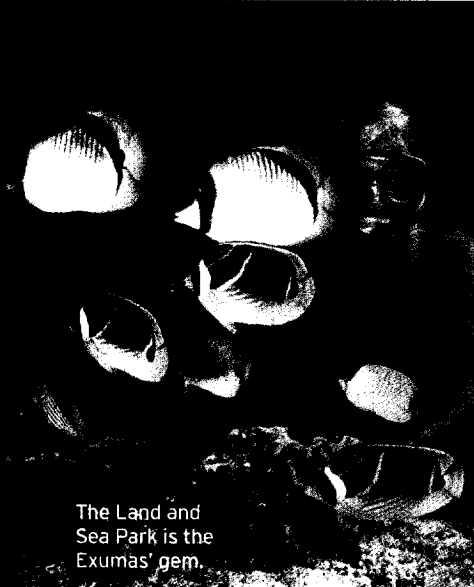
It's not hard to find a beach at this elegant, 170-acre resort located in Virgin Islands National Park. There are seven of them, and all are private, pristine and peaceful.

There's no lack of water activities either. You can kayak, windsurf, sail, snorkel or learn

to scuba with a resident marine naturalist. (All water activities are free, including beginner scuba.) At nearby Trunk Bay, underwater signs on the Snorkel Trail lead you to close-ups of colorful coral reefs and schools of tropical fish.

But what *really* makes Caneel Bay stand out is its Self Centre, a new mind-body fitness facility that offers everything from "BreathWalk," a relaxation trek on the beach, to "M'ai Chi," an hour-long

muscle-toning mix of tai chi, kickboxing and yoga done in the ocean at sunset. Or try "Deep in Motion," a 45-minute pool workout with weighted belts that's guaranteed to kick-start your heart rate into fat-burning mode (all group classes are \$25; private sessions are \$90; Rosewood's Caneel Bay Resort, from \$375 per night, double occupancy; 888-767-3966, caneelbay.com). — Valerie Latona



The Land and Sea Park is the Exumas' gem.



Safari-style tents dot the beach in Belize's Southwest Cay.

\$1,499; 800-667-1630, islandexpeditions.com.

The six-seater aircraft lands on a patch of grass in the thick of a rain forest, and the pilot,

tossing my pack out, instructs me to jump out. A dusty white van pulls up and an Island Expeditions guide waves me in for the short ride to the seashore, where we board a dinghy for the sail to Southwest Cay in Glover Reef.

Three hours later, we pull into Southwest Cay, a mile-wide isle dotted with palm trees, a dozen safari-style tents and a small bungalow that serves as a combination kitchen/dining room. I meet my 14 fellow campers and have a late dinner (fish and tropical fruit) before collapsing in my tent, where I'm lulled to sleep by the sound of the high winds.

I'm jolted awake the next morning by the trumpeting of a conch shell. After breakfast (eggs, more fruit, coffee), we kayak

You're face-to-snorkel-mask with a harmless breed of shark as the spongy skin of another tickles your leg.

in water that's as clear as glass, except for the colorful corals, seaweed and creatures such as turtles, seals and otters that pop to the surface, curious about our kayaks. An "island lunch" (conch fritters, corn bread and cold vegetables) fuels us for an afternoon of snorkeling, windsurfing and more kayaking.

The week passes in a tropical blur, with each day much the same as the last. One day I catch a fish, which the chef prepares for dinner. Another day I discover a new coral reef. As the week flows on, I marvel that things that would have seemed dire at home (tangled hair, grubby clothes, sand in my sleeping bag) have been washed away in the surf of another world. — Amy Goldhammer

**4. Snorkeling tropical grottoes
Staniel Cay Yacht Club, the Exumas, Bahamas**

You're face-to-snorkel-mask with a harmless breed of shark as the spongy skin of another tickles your leg. Later, as your boat approaches a pristine beach, its residents — pigs — emerge from the brush and swim out to greet you.

Sound like a dream? It is — a dream vacation spot for visitors to the Exumas, Bahamas. With its 365 islands and cays and countless deserted beaches, favorite (and wild) water activities rule, especially at the Exumas' gem, the Land and Sea Park (exumapark.com). This national park and marine fishery reserve enchants snorkelers and divers with abundant rainbow-colored reefs and fish like grouper, yellowtail snapper and barracuda. Try snorkeling through Thunderball Grotto, a cavern where schools of tropical fish surround you (part of the 1965 James Bond classic, *Thunderball*, was shot here). You can also kayak, motorboat or sail to and around uninhabited cays.

Located on the outskirts of the Land and Sea Park, Staniel Cay Yacht Club (from \$125; 954-467-8920, stanielcay.com) is a tropical charmer with seven brightly colored waterfront cottages and a nearby landing strip for scheduled charter flights on Flamingo Air from Nassau (\$140 round trip; 242-377-0354, thebahamasguide.com/flamingo). Boats, water-sports gear, guided tours and fishing excursions are available, and the dining room serves just-caught seafood including conch, a Bahamian favorite. — Beth Janes

(All prices are per person per night, double occupancy, unless otherwise noted.)