

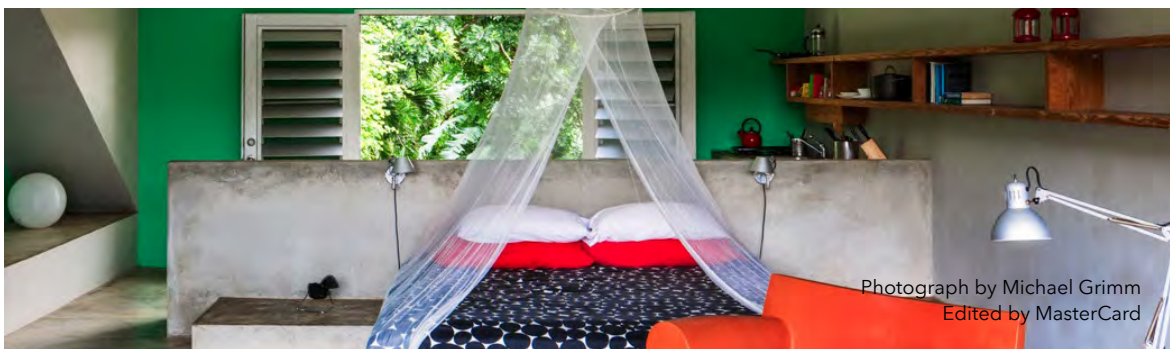


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Edited by MasterCard

Hix Island House: Romantic, Eco-friendly Lofts on Isla de Vieques

ROMANCE #HONEYMOON #LUXURY RETREAT

#ROMANTIC GETAWAYS

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Imagine waking to the song of yellow warblers and the gentle whoosh of palms swaying in the tropical breeze. Jasmine's sweet scent mingles with the faint hint of ocean salt, perfuming the air. You smile and wrap your arms around your true love. All is right with the world. You're staying at Hix Island House, a luxurious Zen-like retreat on Isla de Vieques, Puerto Rico.

Tucked within a 13-acre natural refuge, the 19 architecturally stunning eco-friendly loft apartments create a serene sanctuary that's almost an extension of nature and one of the most romantic places imaginable. Each loft unit of Hix Island House features dramatic views of your blissful surroundings. Yours is in Casa Redonda with a view of the Caribbean, and it's just steps from your retreat's hillside pool. When you checked in, the concierge told you that the architect wanted his buildings to be rustic and simple—like sculptures absorbed and concealed by the landscape, respectful of the environment. It's called Wabi-Sabi, the idea

that as things age they become more beautiful. You love that about the place, as well as the natural design elements—the concrete double vanity and tabletops, unvarnished wood chairs, the vine-draped outdoor shower. The open space allows you to relax and unwind with no distractions. There are no TVs or phones. There is, however, a fully-stocked kitchen.

As tempting as it may be to never leave your private paradise, today is perfect weather—about 79 degrees—so you have to spend it outdoors. Brew a pot of rich Puerto Rican coffee, scramble a couple of eggs, butter some homemade bread, and step out to your open-air terrace for an al fresco breakfast *à deux*. You down the last sip of java and decide on a day at the beach. While walking to the lobby to grab snorkeling gear, beach towels, and a cooler from the concierge, you do some impromptu bird-watching. You spot two great blue heron and an Adelaide's warbler, and your partner points to a white bird with what looks like a black mullet. Once you hit the sun-bleached beach, you're surprised that there's no one else there, but you like it that way. You swim and snorkel the crystal-blue waters in total peace. After a day well spent, your rumbling stomach reminds you it's time to head back.

You return your gear and ask the concierge to reserve a table at one of the island's most romantic places—El Quenepo—for a Caribbean lobster dinner. It's just a short drive, and you should be there in time to toast the sunset with a Cucumber Collins. Back at your loft, you curl up together on the netted hanging daybed on your terrace and look to the clear night sky. Words aren't necessary. You've found your paradise and

it's called Hix Island House.

EL QUENEPO

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