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## caribbean

### Making the Most of Curacao

By Mark Rogers

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Getting the most out of a Caribbean vacation can sometimes be a challenge. A vacation at a single resort may not deliver the variety of experiences that your clients are seeking. This problem, however, is easily resolved on Curacao, where travelers will find two distinctly different Kura Hulanda Resorts Curacao properties. The first, Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino, is located in the heart of Willemstad, Curacao's vibrant capital, while the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club is located on the west end of the island, surrounded by lush foliage and an expansive beach. Packages to stay at both properties are available, and guests have signing privileges at both resorts. A free shuttle regularly makes the 40-minute drive between the two resorts. Both are also members of The Leading Hotels of the World.

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#### Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino



The 80-room Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino is part of an eight-block complex of historic Dutch buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries, known as Project Kura Hulanda. In addition to the hotel, the complex contains a split-level, European-style boutique casino, various courtyards and gardens, two pools, a spa, a museum and restaurants. Business-oriented clients will be interested in the property's conference rooms, an executive boardroom and an auditorium that holds up to 160 people. City dwellers will enjoy the hotel's Willemstad location, which is only steps away from

exploring the capital's shops, sights and restaurants.

Each room at the hotel features handcarved mahogany and teak pieces, antiques and replicas. The best views are from the rooms looking out on the village square.

The hotel is also a property with a conscience. In my travels throughout the Caribbean, I often see references to the contributions of African culture to the Caribbean's music, cuisine and religion, but it usually stops there. Pointing out the Caribbean's legacy of slavery is frowned upon by most island hoteliers and tourist boards.

Jacob Gelt Dekker, the creative force behind Kura Hulanda Resorts Curacao and Project Kura Hulanda, chose instead to take the issue head-on by creating the Museum Kura Hulanda. The museum is comprised of 15 Dutch-colonial houses from the 18th and 19th centuries. Its

collection chronicles the origin of man, the African slave trade, West African empires, pre-Colombian gold, Mesopotamian relics and Antillean art.

### **Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club**

Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club complements a city stay in Willemstad with the natural beauty of Curacao. This resort has a white-sand beach and a swimming pool, and offers world-class diving and hiking.

Lodge Kura Hulanda has 42 guestrooms and 32 suites and its best views are those from the second-floor Ocean Front Rooms, providing a bird's-eye view of the Caribbean Sea and lush native greenery. The lodge's main restaurant is Watamula Restaurant, an open-aired, thatched-roof venue with sea views. Two other restaurants, as well as a bar, are also on-site.

Clients seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life should head to the Spa Pavilion where they can receive treatments such as an aromatherapy or hot stone massage or a Sunburn Relief Aloe Body Wrap.

As is the case with the hotel, the setting of the lodge is central to its charm. Deep inside a nearby cliff is an indigenous, prehistoric collection of grottoes better known as the Indian Caves. This site is purported to be the home of Curacao's first inhabitants, the Arawak-Taino Indians, and is thought to have healing powers.

No matter what your clients are searching for on Curacao, however, it's certain they will find it at either one or both of these unique properties.

## **The Details**

### **Kura Hulanda Resorts Curacao**

877-264-3106

[www.kurahulanda.com](http://www.kurahulanda.com)

## **Curacao Savings and Commissions**

Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino and Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club, both on Curacao, are now offering travel agents an increased commission on all direct bookings. The two properties will offer 20 percent commission, up from the previous 10 percent.

"We understand that today's recessed economy is not only hurting hotel business, but travel agents as well," said Jody DeLeon, director of sales and marketing for Kura Hulanda Resorts Curacao. "We depend on and appreciate travel agents and hope the additional 10 percent will help during these rough times."

The two properties also have new value rates, starting at \$139 per night at Hotel Kura Hulanda and \$130 per night at Lodge Kura Hulanda.

The Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino is located in the middle of Willemstad, Curacao's historic capital, while the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club is located on the west end of the island, surrounded by lush foliage and an expansive beach. Travelers can experience

the breadth of Curacao by booking a package that combines stays at both properties.

The Best of Both Worlds Package offers nights at both properties and includes accommodation for two nights in a Deluxe Room at the Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino and accommodation for three nights in an Ocean Front Studio Suite at the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club. Other added amenities include complimentary entrance to the Museum Kura Hulanda, located next to the Hotel Kura Hulanda; a complimentary bottle of champagne in-room upon arrival; a dinner for one evening at the hotel’s Jaipur Restaurant; and a dinner for one evening at the lodge. Clients also have unlimited use of both properties’ fitness facilities, including use of a sauna, steam room and Jacuzzi. Guests of both properties also enjoy complimentary, scheduled transportation between the Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino in Willemstad to the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club, located 40 minutes away in the scenic countryside of Curacao. Rates for this package are \$1,090 per person, based on double occupancy and including taxes and service charges. The package is available from Jan. 3, 2010, to April 3, 2010.

Guests at the Lodge Kura Hulanda & Beach Club also have the option of purchasing an all-inclusive plan for a four-night stay. This plan consists of three daily meals (it should be noted that some items on the a la carte menu have a surcharge); a weekly theme party; house-brand beverages, soda and juices; a daily activities program; and access to non-motorized watersports. The all-inclusive plan must be purchased for the entire stay and taxes and gratuities are not included. From Jan. 3, 2010, to April 3, 2010, rates start at \$920 per person, based on double occupancy.

Hotel Kura Hulanda Spa & Casino has scheduled complimentary transportation to Curacao’s Beach Club, located at Blue Bay, where guests can swim, and the 18-hole Rocky Roquemore Golf Course. Both the beach club and the golf course are a 20-minute drive from the hotel.

Culinary options at the hotel are also standouts. The best tables at the Hotel Kura Hulanda’s main restaurant, the Jaipur Restaurant, are the poolside tables and a secluded balcony table. The hotel’s al fresco Sculpture Garden Restaurant is notable for its African sculptures and a contemporary mural surrounding the garden. At Sculpture Garden Restaurant, the best tables are located under the two under the arches. Coveted dining tables at both eateries have to be reserved in advance.

At the hotel’s Spa Kura Hulanda, the signature treatment is the Cleopatra Body Scrub and Glow, in which mineralized salts are combined with jojoba and aloe vera to nourish the skin. The treatment is followed by a relaxing massage with essential oils. Spa appointments can be made in advance by contacting the spa manager, Jessica Gibson.

Agents are also encouraged to visit both properties.

“We have special travel agent rates for agents travelling to Curacao to inspect the properties,” said Samari Barriento, senior sales manager, Kura Hulanda Resorts Curacao. “These rates are available upon request and are subject to availability.”

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