



An aerial view of the Abaco Club



# Paradise found

The Abaco Club offers everything you could want in a tropical getaway — and more.

\* Have you noticed the way Caribbean destinations routinely (and almost uniformly) refer to themselves as paradise? They support this contention with brochures crammed full of photos depicting white-sand beaches fringed by palm trees and brilliant blue waters so clear you can spot stray doubloons five fathoms down. All too often, though, the actual experience one encounters when visiting some of the islands' better known destinations leaves something to be desired. And while even a marginal tropical resort experience may seem like nirvana after weeks of bone-chilling rain in northern climes, it does beg the question: where can paradise really be found?

The answer: The Abaco Club on Winding Bay in The Bahamas. The Abaco Club is different. So different that it doesn't even have a hotel. That's because, strictly speaking, The Abaco Club isn't a resort. It's an international, private sporting club with members from all over the world. There

are no towering beachfront condo buildings here. No noisy casinos. No buffet lines stretching out the door. Instead, the club offers a luxury villa experience to everyone who comes to escape the rigors of everyday life and kick back in a setting of unmatched privacy and beauty. But even though it's a very private place, you don't have to be a club member to visit it and enjoy The Abaco Club's unique brand of barefoot luxury as a guest.

For years a Ritz-Carlton Destination Club, The Abaco Club is now owned and operated by Southworth—one of the world's leading resort and residential real estate firms. What was a magnificent property to begin with has only become even better.

"The Abaco Club has everything money can't buy," said David Southworth, President and CEO of Southworth Development. "It's a gorgeous setting, with a well thought-out master plan and a passionate club membership. We're

very excited to be here and look forward to taking this world-class facility to an even higher level."

What makes The Abaco Club a world-class facility? For starters, its one-of-a-kind setting. The club is located on the most charming of the Bahamas' Outer Islands—Great Abaco—and is graced by a 2.5-mile powder-soft beach that stretches as far as the eye can see along pristine Winding Bay. The water is shallow and gentle here—just perfect for snorkeling amongst the sea turtles, sailing, paddleboarding or any other form of water sport.

## A cut above

The club's golf course, home of The Bahamas Great Abaco Classic (a Web.com Tour professional event) is as good as any in the Caribbean and is perennially ranked number one in The Bahamas. It's true that golf in the tropics often gets a bad rap. Golfers from all over the world dream of teeing it up and enjoying a relaxing vacation amongst the picture-postcard palms. But all too often, Caribbean courses are flat, featureless and uninspiring. Not so at The Abaco Club. The club's Scottish-style links course was designed by Britain's Donald Steel and Tom Mackenzie to be a stern test. The course offers quite a bit of elevation change, which is unusual for an island layout. There are pot bunkers

Stunning dining, boating or golfing are standard

everywhere and the green complexes will test every aspect of your short game. Many holes offer jaw-dropping views of the dazzling blue sea, making the job of concentrating on your shot-making an exercise in determination.

Darren Clarke, the bon vivant PGA Tour player from Northern Ireland who was the 2011 Open Champion and 2016 European Ryder Cup Captain, is one of the club's biggest fans—and one of the most frequent users of its expansive practice facilities.

"I've been a club member at Abaco and have kept a home here for many years," said Clarke. "My wife Alison and I were married here in a lovely ceremony right on the beach. And I usually dedicate at least a week to practising here before The Masters each year. For me, it's a refuge not just from the constant grind of life on tour but from the modern world in general.

"One of the things that I particularly like about The Abaco Club is the fact that, strictly speaking, it's not a resort. Anyone can visit the club and stay in its wonderful cabanas and cottages—and I highly recommend that they do. But in truth, it's a private, international sporting club with members from all over the world. All of them joined the club for the same reason that I did. They fell in love with the place."

As you'd expect, in addition to the outstanding golf this island sporting club also offers water sports galore—from kayaking, sailing and snorkeling to salt water fly fishing and deep-sea fishing. Some of the best bonefishing and bluewater fishing in the world can be found within



minutes of the club's dock. Darren Clarke is also an avid fly fisherman and will tell anyone who will listen about the 38-pound Permit that he caught one magical day on the Marls of Abaco—a once-in-a-lifetime catch that was just shy of a world-record.

Spending time on the tennis courts or in the fitness centre are other invigorating options at The Abaco Club, as is visiting the club's luxurious spa. And all the while, the pristine white sand beach beckons to you every day, just waiting to be explored. Cap it all off with an open-air breakfast or lunch at Flippers Beach Bar, or by sitting down and enjoying the exquisite local cuisine offered daily at The Cliff House restaurant, and you have the makings of a tropical holiday that you'll wish would never have to end.

### Owning a piece of paradise

Fortunately, for those with the means to purchase a club membership or vacation property at The Abaco Club, it doesn't have to. The residences for sale at the club are magnificent, and come in a variety of shapes and sizes ranging from charming cabanas and ocean-view cottages to grand oceanfront estates. Each home is within steps of the beach, and each is meticulously appointed with all of life's necessities. Wake to the sound of crashing waves, stroll to the golf course or spa, or just relax on your private patio and look out over the sparkling, turquoise sea while the Abaco parrots chirp their warm welcome. It's an atmosphere of quiet sophistication, where you, your family and your friends can enjoy total relaxation when you want it—and a wealth of wonderful activities when the spirit so

moves you.

"The Abaco Club is truly a world unto itself," said Kristi Hull, the club's real estate sales director. "It's an enclave that offers the perfect antidote to modern-day life. Our guests decide to become club members and buy homes here because they fall in love with Abaco and want to establish a permanent connection to this place. They want to be able to return year after year to enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the club with family and friends. And they make new friends here, too—people from all over the world who share their appreciation for the incredibly special experiences this club has to offer. It's a completely unique place—and one that sells itself at a glance."

Numerous flights depart daily for Abaco's Marsh Harbour International Airport from Nassau, Miami, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Atlanta making The Abaco Club an easy place to get to. Leaving such an amazing place, however—that's something you may find to be a bit more difficult. But in the end, that's a small price to experience a place that truly is paradise. ✨

### For further information

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



A very un-typical Caribbean golf course