

Much more than just sex

Everything goes in Hedonism III. Though at times you are required to be naked, in the Jamaican resort. ‘No lie, Don is insatiable.’
(Volkskrant; 19-02-2005)

Swift and friendly we’re checked in. *Enjoy your stay in Hedonism!* As our luggage is being taken to our hotel room, David and I take a detour, to check out the premises of Hedonism III. I’m completely blown away by the surroundings. It’s so immaculate and beautiful, white and spacious. The color blue is dominant since there’s water all around: of the matchless ocean, swimming pools and Jacuzzi’s. Someone points out the see-through waterslide; it goes right through the disco. David looks at me and grins. Go for it.

The resort is divided in a Nude and Prude section. So: you’re naked or not. Modestly attired or butt naked. Literally, because on the Nude Side no garments are allowed, not even a thong. This rather shortens our walkabout. In the hotel room we suddenly become quite a crowd. There are mirrors everywhere. Surrounding the bed. Above the bed. As soon as we lie down, it’s as though we’re having group sex. We don’t have time for this –yet! We have reservations for the Japanese restaurant. But first we want to freshen up from the journey. In the bathroom we discover a Jacuzzi. And above that: a huge mirror!

At Munahana we’re seated in the lounge and are served sake. The couple next to us raises their glasses. *Where are you from?* It’s a question we’ll hear a lot more, but never again in such a strong Spanish accent. Benito and Rosa are a Mexican couple in their mid-forties. Rosa, in a sheer lace dress, radiates the serenity of a woman who’s doted upon. ‘Isn’t she beautiful?’ Benito rejoices repeatedly, kissing her hand. We are joined by a formally dressed American couple. She wears an ankle-length dress, he a tuxedo. They don’t drink sake. The rest of us go for a refill. The whole restaurant looks up when two average guys enter, in the company of a – there is no other word for it – a bombshell of a woman. Platinum blond and breasts like melons. She’s clad in a bikini top and denim miniskirt. With this threesome the waitress considers our company complete: we can be seated. We gather round the Teppanyaki grill, where the chef is preparing fish.

‘How do you like Hedonism?’ I ask.

The blond bombshell cries out: ‘You should’ve been at the pool this afternoon! Then you could have seen me in some girl-on-girl action. Do you know that the other one never had a woman go down on her? And here she was doing it, right in front of an audience?’

The whole table is silent. Prawns hiss on the hot plate. ‘Well,’ she says, ‘I’m no prude. I’m a stripper by profession. Okay, some people were shocked and appalled, but they’re just not informed properly by their travel agent. This is Hedonism. I could tell you stories...’

Rosa rolls her eyes. I say: ‘Maybe later?’

My knowledge about Hedonism III derives from brochures and the website. There the language is somewhat shrouded; it’s ‘an oasis of pure pleasure’ where ‘you can do anything you dare’. In Jamaica everyone tells me it’s wild and wicked. That you can walk around naked, even get married in the nude, and tales of untamed sexual activities abound. But that’s all hearsay and because people snicker when they talk about it, I don’t take it too seriously. There was a television show about Hedonism II in which sex was all-pervasive, but mostly by insinuation. So I assumed that it’s all fairly innocent. Up until now.

When our roads part, we didn’t make friends for life. David and I are off to the disco, Octopussy. There it is: the transparent waterslide, high above the dance floor, where we suddenly spot the formal American couple. He has stripped down to black boxer shorts with a white front and bowtie printed on it. Tuxedo underwear. His wife’s dress has been

transformed into the skimpiest of attire. Come to think of it, practically everybody looks as though they've been rummaging in Victoria's Secret trunk. A handsome man walks around in a gold colored coat of mail and next to me at bar is a woman enwrapped in fishnet. Ready to be hauled in.

'I love dressing up,' she responds to my glance. 'It's the best part about Hedonism. Just wait till you see my costume for the Pyjama Party!'

The pumping rhythm of the Jamaican reggae and dancehall reminds us where we at. DJ Butt Naked plays Shaggy and Beenie Man: *You want a proper fix, call me!* Sweetness and Desire, girls from *your crazy entertainment crew* climb onto the bar and shake their booty.

When we return to our room a little later, the guards wish us a friendly goodnight. A peaceful air lingers over the site. Most of the guests probably are in bed by now.

Just how naïve that thought was, becomes clear the following morning, when the blond stripper can't wait to tell me about the wicked night on the Nude Beach, where things got hotter than hot till morning dawn. She'd go into details if there was time. But she's got to pack; they're leaving at eleven o'clock. She grins broadly: 'You'll see for yourself! Yeah, you can't write about Hedonism without experiencing some *action*, can you?'

Today's program on the Prude Side calls for Pool Volleyball and Latin Dance lessons. On the Nude Side it's Nude Pool Volleyball and Body Painting. But the atmosphere is on the sleepy side and most guests prefer to lazy about in the sun. With or without bathing trunks.

Separate zones notwithstanding, everyone gets together at meal times, as well as for the nightly entertainment. When the house band Extasi plays, or there's a Circus Show at the beach. Tonight Destiny is on the stage in a short dress and laced up platform shoes. We're going to play a game, she shouts. She needs couples, who's playing? The twenty candidates assembled on the dance floor, represent your average Hedonism III guest: mostly white Americans, some Afro-Americans and Latinos.

Don pulls up a chair at our table: 'Did you enjoy your meal?' Like us, he dined at the Italian restaurant Pastafari, with his wife Anne. Don is having the time of his life, he says. 'Yeah, I'm a sexual animal!' Anne arrives just in time to fully second her husband. 'No lie, Don is insatiable. He never gets enough of it!' Don beams with pleasure. 'You never guess what I do for a living... I'm a divorce attorney!'

Meanwhile on the dance floor a competition is in full swing: which couple can demonstrate the most sex positions in one minute. The contestants work up a sweat, especially the winning couple, with nine positions. An older couple comes in last, with no more than three. 'Next time, put on your glasses,' Destiny advises.

When Don and Anne hear that I'm working on an article about Hedonism, they nod their heads. 'We did think you were dressed a bit conservatively,' says Don eyeing my jeans and T-shirt. It's true, here the style is more: let it all hang out. Anne declares: 'It's Short Shorts Party in the disco tonight. You two do have shorts with you, don't you?'

'No, but we have scissors,' says David.

Nina and Gary are not a couple, they announce as soon as they join us. They're just friends, both single. Nina just turned forty and treated herself to this trip. 'Yes, I was ready for some sex again.'

Once more I'm amazed how people turn to the subject of sex after only a sentence or two. So far everybody I spoke to has managed to do it.

Destiny is waving a big black dildo in the air. The *battle of the sexes* just begun: the men versus the women. Destiny is calling for a real redhead. Out of the audience the women pull a ginger man, who shows his pubic hair. Its red all right; just like his hot flushing face. Score one point for the women. 'The smallest breast,' Destiny requests. From the back of the hall a woman comes running, while lifting up her shirt. The audience roars and cheers. 'The longest

penis,' Destiny calls. Three men rush up. I suddenly have a vivid memory of *Run like Hell* (a Dutch game show from my youth). Hedonism III is an *exotic adult playground*, it said in the brochure. Forget about *adult*, I think. But just the same I can't keep from laughing out loud when Destiny is calling for 'the most naked people' and the whole dance floor strips in no time. The men win. 'Put on your clothes again,' Destiny commands. 'You bunch of perverts!' Meanwhile Don is talking about *players* and *swingers*; festive American terminology for what others would consider infamous infidelity. According to Don there is a book called *The Lifestyle* I definitely have to read since I'm writing about sex.

'I'm not writing about sex, I'm writing about Hedonism,' I say. Don laughs, 'Isn't that the same thing?'

On the stage there is a contest in faking an orgasm. A woman moans and groans zealously. Destiny walks up to her husband. 'That probably sounds familiar?'

I'm sad to see David leave, as he drives off in his white van. He has work to do, and so do I, to trace the essence of this secluded paradise of pleasure. Is it because of the predominantly American clientele that everybody is having a *great time* not a dissonant note is struck? I suddenly realize that practically every guest I spoke to is a repeater. I already heard before that the percentage of *return guests* of Hedonism III is the highest in Jamaica.

'No, it's much more than just sex,' Joan and Jeff say, lounging at the bar in the Nude Pool. They're fat but seem to be perfectly fine with it. Jeff says: 'the most important thing is the freedom. Having a break from the conventions back home. I'm a contractor, Joan is a bank manager; a very conservative world. But here we can be ourselves. Free, nice and naked, relaxed...'

'The first time I was quite anxious,' Joan admits. 'I was afraid to come here. But eventually Jeff talked me into it. And now it's our sixth time.'

'We're hooked,' Jeff says. They have to leave for a tantra sex lesson, Joan announces, giggling like a schoolgirl.

'Sex is the bonus. We love to do it outdoors, especially with other people around,' Jeff says.

'But we never swap partners. We're strictly monogamous,' Joan adds reassuringly. I accept another drink from the bartender. I'm almost getting used to be able to drink and eat whatever I want, without having any money on me. Just as I am to the super-friendly personnel, all of whom –from the chambermaid to the plumber – keep on inquiring if we're having a *fabulous day*. All the guests agree that the Jamaican staff is simply wonderful.

The same goes for the security guard, when he acts like he's not astonished at all to see me heading towards the Nude Side on my own, in the middle of the night. There, at the bar and Jacuzzi, I spot quite a few familiar faces. The lovely couple from this morning's breakfast informs me they're real swingers. By now I no longer assume I'm asked to dance. Seth is a friend of the singles Nina and Gary. He's got a good story for me...

I don't succeed in hearing any of it; as I'm too busy taking in the scene. More and more nude people are arriving. I think it's just like a movie. Not porn, but a surrealistic film where people go on a naked pilgrimage to the holy Jacuzzi. Where it's definitely getting crowded now. Latecomers sit down on the edge, which is also filling up. There are about thirty people in and around the Jacuzzi now, and although there's drinking and laughing, the tension is palpable. Like at a high school dance, when the dance floor was empty and everybody was wondering who would make the first move. Though suddenly a couple takes the lead, kissing passionately... Their immediate neighbors follow suit... It's as though the director has called for it. There's the *action!*

What & Where

Hedonism III is an all inclusive resort in Runaway Bay, Jamaica, where everything (board, food, drinks and entertainment) is inclusive. It's part of SuperClubs, a chain that has resorts in the Bahamas, Brazil, Curacao, Cuba and Jamaica where the concept was born in 1977. SuperClubs has three sort of formula's that cater to a different clientele. The grand Lido and Breezes Resorts are luxurious resorts with an emphasis on leisure and comfort. The two Hedonism resorts are characterized as 'naughty', places where 'you can do just about anything you dare'. It's for couples and singles over 18 years. The public in Hedonism II is somewhat younger and more often single than in Hedonism III where it's mostly (for a big part American) couples between 25 and 55 years.

A nine-day trip (all inclusive seven overnights, Martin-air flights and transfers) costs € 1756 per person (from April first 2005) Hedonism III had a choice from pool view and oceanfront rooms, but there are also rooms available in the 'au natural' section.

www.traveltrend.nl

www.superclubs.com