

Smith's Parish

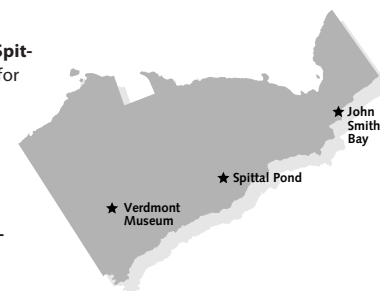


CONTENTS

Information	94
Sights	94
Activities	97
Sleeping	97
Eating	97
Getting There & Around	97

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy a leisurely hike at **Spittal Pond** (p95), a mecca for birdwatchers
- Soak up the sun on the lovely pink sands of **John Smith's Bay** (p96)
- Cross the threshold into the colonial past at **Vermont Museum** (p94)



■ POPULATION: 5658

■ AREA: 1.78 SQ MILES

Smith's may be smallest of the nine parishes but it isn't without its superlatives. Smith's Parish manages to boast Bermuda's largest nature reserve, its safest year-round swimming and its highest point. High is a relative term, of course, so don't expect to see anything towering above the clouds. The Peak, as the hilltop is amusingly called, tops out at just 259ft. To spot the Peak, also known as Town Hill, just look inland toward the middle of the parish – enjoy the sight from a distance as it's on private property and not accessible to the public.

Fret not, the most scenic views in Smith's are not found inland, but from the shoreline: the parish is not only bordered on the north and south by open ocean but also on the northeast by tranquil Harrington Sound.

Although Smith's Parish is primarily residential, it does have some topnotch sightseeing spots. Don't miss Verdmont, the best-preserved historic house in Bermuda, and for birdwatchers or for anyone seeking a peaceful walk in the woods, Spittal Pond is as good as it gets – a haven for migratory shorebirds and waterfowl with a nature trail looping across the reserve.

There are also a couple of smaller green areas in Smith's. For the perfect picnic lunch venue, head to Watch Hill Park, which is spread across seven coastal acres near Albouy's Point, just east of Spittal Pond. The park takes its name from early colonial days when the British, fearful of a Spanish attack, maintained a round-the-clock watch on the cliff here. Winterhaven Nature Reserve, a long narrow strip at the east side of the parish that stretches between the south coast and Harrington Sound, offers a variety of water views. Penhurst Park, on the north shore, encompasses 14 grassy acres with a small dock and horse trails.

The parish has more than pretty seascapes and quiet walks – when you've finished communing with nature, reward yourself with a frosty pint of ale at North Rock Brewing Co, Bermuda's only microbrewery.

Information

ATM (Collectors Hill Apothecary, South Rd; ☎ 24hr)
Collectors Hill Apothecary (☎ 236-4499; South Rd; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm Sun) A full-service pharmacy in the town center.

Sights

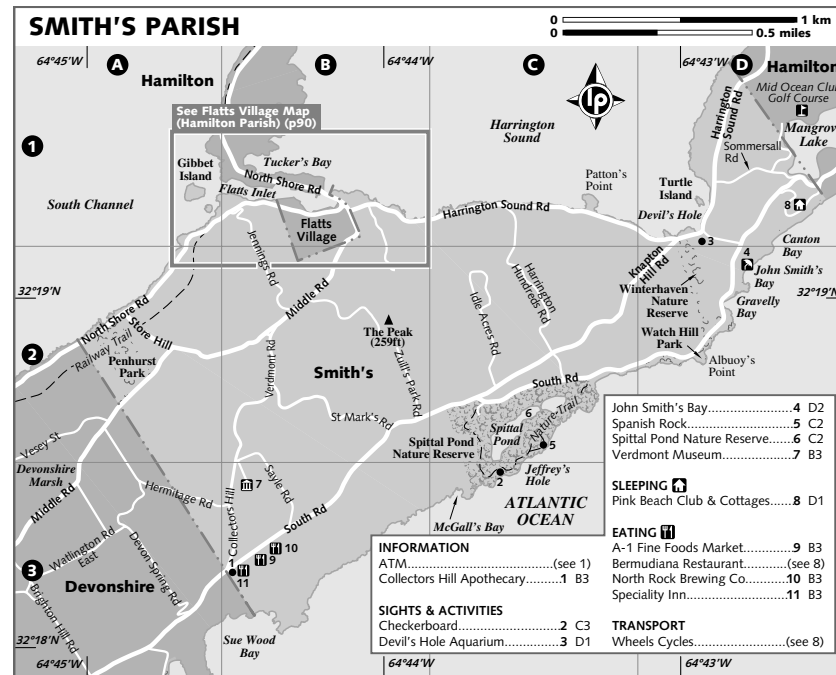
VERDMONT MUSEUM

The crown jewel of historic houses under the auspices of the Bermuda National Trust is **Verdmont Museum** (☎ 236-7369; off Collectors Hill nr cnr Sayle Rd; admission \$3; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sat), a classic plantation home. This hilltop house, built in 1710 in a four-squared early Georgian style, was once the center of a 55-acre estate.

Amazingly, the place has been virtually unaltered since its construction. The family that occupied it up until 1951, when the trust bought the property, lived at Verdmont without electricity or plumbing. Consequently,

walking through this house is like stepping back in history. It has walls made of Georgia-pine lumber captured through privateering. Portraits of former residents hang from the walls and finely crafted 17th-century furniture fills the rooms. Although some of the items, including Spode pottery and Chinese porcelain, were imported by island traders, most of the furniture was locally made. So much cedar was used within the house that the air is still rich with the scent of the fragrant wood.

You'll notice the house doesn't have a kitchen; instead, a nearby cottage once served as the cookhouse, which was a fairly common arrangement in colonial times as it provided a measure of insurance from accidental kitchen fires. The well-versed trust volunteers that staff Verdmont enjoy providing insightful tidbits on the property.



A special note for birdwatchers: the gardens surrounding the house, planted with flora known to have grown here in the 18th century, attract eastern bluebirds, a colorful native bird with a distinctive blue back and russet-colored breast.

SPITTAL POND NATURE RESERVE

This splendid coastal **nature reserve** (South Rd; admission free; ☎ sunrise-sunset), the largest in Bermuda, encompasses some 64 acres. It centers on Spittal Pond, a 9-acre brackish pond that's the island's finest **birdwatching** venue, attracting scores of migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. Once a favored duck-hunting locale, this property is now under the joint protection of the Bermuda National Trust and the government park system, which together maintain a nature trail for birders and hikers. These days the only shooting is done with a camera.

Nature Trail

The inviting mile-long nature trail that runs through the Spittal Pond reserve offers a fine variety of landscapes, with mixed

woodlands, salt marshes, ponds and ocean vistas. There are trailheads at both the east and west sides of the property, with parking areas at each side.

It's possible to walk the trail as a loop beginning from either side. As there's no real trail along the northwest side of the pond, you'll have to walk a few minutes along South Rd at the end of the 'loop,' but otherwise you'll be on a footpath the entire way.

Starting at the west-side trailhead, take the middle route when you reach the cattle fence and continue on that path, which leads through a wooded area of mixed vegetation. You'll find the only cactus native to Bermuda, the prickly pear, thriving in open areas here and elsewhere on the trail.

Within 10 minutes, you'll reach a signposted coastal area known as the **Checkerboard**, so named because weathering has worn cross joints into the limestone slab here, leaving a pattern of square-shaped impressions resembling a huge checkerboard. Just after that, a cattle gate leads through the fence as the path continues along the south

side of Spittal Pond. The trail passes through a forest of casuarina, an Australian tree that was widely planted throughout Bermuda in the 1950s to replace the groves of native cedars lost to cedar-scale infestation.

The trail then leads into a marshy area with purple sea lavender, tall salt grass and a small freshwater pond favored by mallards and teal. A right fork off the main trail makes a short detour to **Jeffrey's Hole**, a sea cave named for an escaped slave who is said to have stowed away there, and then continues to the site of **Spanish Rock**. The original rock, inscribed with the initials TF and the date 1543, is thought to have been carved by a stranded Spanish or Portuguese mariner.

From Spanish Rock, continue back to the main trail, which offers fine birding vantage points as it passes along the southeast side of Spittal Pond. After reaching the gate, you can either take a short side trail up to the east-side parking area or continue west along the northeast side of the pond until that trail leads up to South Rd.

Birdwatching

If you fancy yourself a birder, grab your binoculars before you head out. In tune with North American bird migration patterns, fall and winter offer the greatest variety of bird life at Spittal Pond.

The earliest arrivals are the shorebirds, which begin appearing in August. The lesser yellowlegs, the most abundant of the two dozen shorebird species that feed at the edge of Spittal Pond, can be recognized by its bright yellow legs, and by the square white rump it flashes when in flight. From the end of September, egrets and herons – including Louisiana herons, which have long slender necks and a wingspan of more than 3ft – can

be spotted at the pond. In October, migratory ducks and coots arrive in force.

Although many of the migrants winter in Bermuda, others merely stop en route to and from the Caribbean, so spring also brings migratory stopovers. In the quieter summer months, Spittal Pond is the domain of resident mallards.

If you want to birdwatch but not hike much, entering the park from the east side will get you to the pond and some good birding vantage points in just minutes.

JOHN SMITH'S BAY

This pretty **beach** (South Rd; admission free), with its broad swath of pink sand, faces east and offers sheltered waters good for swimming and snorkeling. Because the sand slopes gently from the water's edge, it's a popular place for families with children. During the high season there's a lifeguard; it's best to ask about water conditions before heading out into deeper waters, as there are occasional rip currents. Restroom facilities can be found at the south side of the beach, and there's a ramp offering wheelchair access.

John Smith's Bay is right along the side of South Rd. If you happen to pass by at 6am, expect to see the eternally dedicated members of Bermuda's 'Polar Bear Club' taking their daily morning dip.

DEVIL'S HOLE AQUARIUM

Devil's Hole (☎ 293-2072; 92 Harrington Sound Rd; adult/child \$10/5; ☎ 9:30am-4:30pm), at the east side of Smith's Parish, is not really an aquarium per se, but a seawater-filled grotto connected to Harrington Sound by natural tunnels. Visitors can look into the water from a wooden walkway and peer down at stocked sea turtles and tropical fish circling below. For \$3,

you can buy a basket of fish food and watch the fellas jump.

Activities

The best hiking and birdwatching in Smith's Parish is at **Spittal Pond** (p95). In addition, one section of the **Railway Trail** (p34), which runs 1.75 miles from Devonshire Parish to Flatts Village, passes through the north side of Smith's Parish. The trail crosses **Penhurst Park** (p94) and offers views of **Gibbet Island**, where in the 17th century people accused of witchcraft were taken to be burned at the stake.

Sleeping

Pink Beach Club & Cottages (☎ 293-1666, in the USA & Canada ☎ 800-355-6161; www.pinkbeach.com; 116 South Rd; units winter/summer \$355/420; ☎ ☎ ☎) Two pink-sand beaches and spacious rooms with seaside balconies make this upmarket place a fine choice. Spread across 15 quiet acres on the south shore, the 90 units are in low-rise pink buildings that blend harmoniously with the beach. If you tire of swimming and snorkeling you'll find two tennis courts and a fitness club – or just unwind with a drink in the fireside lounge. Breakfast is included in the price.

Eating

North Rock Brewing Co (☎ 236-6633; 10 South Rd; pub grub \$7-20; ☎ lunch & dinner; ☎ ☎) The island's only microbrewery sports a pleasant dark-wood interior and draws some worthy English-style ales. Chug-a-lug as you watch it brew. For \$5.25, you can try five different 4oz samples of the frothy final product. Naturally, there's a pub menu to match, with Bermuda fish chowder, steak-and-ale pie, sandwiches and the like.

Bermudiana Restaurant (☎ 293-1666; 116 South Rd; 5-course meal \$65; ☎ 7-9pm; ☎ ☎) For formal dining with a superb ocean view, this restaurant at the Pink Beach Club has few rivals. A team of European chefs prepares delicious dishes combining continental and Bermudian cuisines, with a changing menu that concentrates on seasonal delicacies. Jackets are required of men.

Speciality Inn (☎ 236-3133; 4 South Rd; mains \$5-16; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Sat; ☎ ☎) Good local food and the character of a small-town diner set the tone here. You can get all the usual breakfast offerings as well as sandwiches, salads, burgers and pizza. If you're vegetarian, don't miss the goat's cheese and portabello mushroom sandwich on thick slices of its own homemade bread.

A-1 Fine Foods Market (☎ 236-8763; 6 South Rd; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun) This is Smith's largest full-service grocery store.

Getting There & Around

Three main roads run west to east across Smith's Parish: North Shore Rd along the north coast, South Rd along the south coast and Middle Rd through the interior.

BUS

Buses (p155) that run between the City of Hamilton (\$3, 20 minutes) and the Town of St George (\$4.50, 30 minutes) cross Smith's on all three of the parish's west-east roads.

Bus No 1 takes South Rd, stopping at Collectors Hill, Verdmont Museum, Spittal Pond Nature Reserve and John Smith's Bay. It operates every 30 minutes from 6:45am to 6:15pm weekdays and from 7:45am to 5:45pm Saturday. On Sunday the service is hourly from 11am to 5pm.

Bus No 3 takes Middle Rd to Flatts Village and then takes Harrington Sound Rd, passing Devil's Hole Aquarium as it edges along Harrington Sound. It operates every 30 minutes from 7:15am to 6:15pm weekdays, once hourly from 8:15am to 6:15pm Saturday, and once hourly from 9:15am to 5:30pm Sunday.

Bus Nos 10 and 11 operate along North Shore Rd and provide service about every 15 minutes Monday to Saturday from 6:45am to 7pm and then at least once an hour until 11:45pm. Sunday service runs at least once hourly from 7:45am to 10:45pm.

MOTOR SCOOTER

Scooter rentals (p157) are available at **Wheels Cycles** (☎ 292-0388; 116 South Rd) at Pink Beach Club & Cottages.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Smith's is the smallest parish. Here's a short list of some other petite tidbits about Bermuda:

- Bermuda is a compact place – just 21 sq miles in area.
- It's also a narrow land – averaging less than a mile across.
- Even the tallest hill is small – a mere 259ft high.
- It boasts the world's smallest drawbridge, barely the width of a sailboat mast.
- How tiny are those whistling tree frogs? Just 1 inch long.
- Bermuda encourages small local businesses – no Big Macs!
- What to wear to a business meeting? Bermuda shorts, of course!

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'

Devonshire Parish

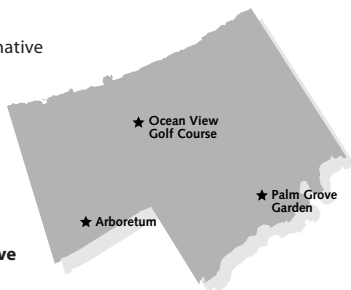


CONTENTS

Information	99
Sights	99
Activities	101
Sleeping	101
Eating	101
Entertainment	102
Getting There & Around	102

HIGHLIGHTS

- Take a peaceful walk among native and exotic trees at the **Arboretum** (opposite)
- Join the locals for a round of golf at the appropriately named **Ocean View Golf Course** (p101)
- Throw a good-luck coin into the wishing well at **Palm Grove Garden** (opposite)



POPULATION: 7307

AREA: 1.82 SQ MILES

Sitting smack in the center of Bermuda, Devonshire takes its name from an English earl who never set foot in the parish. Most tourists seem to follow suit by bypassing Devonshire. It's a shame, because what Devonshire does have to offer is the real deal – a genuine slice of untouristy Bermuda. So get off the bus or pull over your scooter and take a closer look.

Think gardens, birdwatching, lesser-known historic sights and little parks with water views. Admire the early 18th-century Palmetto House, maintained by the Bermuda National Trust and notable for its interesting architectural features. Or perhaps take a picnic and relax in the green surrounds of Palmetto Park or tiny Robinson Bay Park while admiring the sea views.

If you're feeling a little more active, explore the borders of Devonshire Marsh, keeping a sharp eye out for birdlife. Devonshire Parish also has the closest golf course to the City of Hamilton and is home to a couple of the island's main sports arenas.

Information

The **Devonshire Post Office** (☎ 296-0281; 2 Orange Valley Rd) is fairly central.

Sights

ARBORETUM

This 22-acre **park** (cnr Middle & Montpelier Rds; admission free; ☀ sunrise-sunset), managed by the Department of Agriculture, offers inviting walking paths through a delightful wooded valley.

The arboretum came about in the late 1950s after the property was turned over to the island government by the British War Department. In an attempt to establish a wide selection of trees and shrubs capable of flourishing in Bermuda, horticulturists obtained saplings from countries as far flung as Japan, New Guinea and Canada, in addition to specimens sent by Queen Elizabeth II from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. Today the trees include conifers, palms, fruit and nut trees, and such exotics as rubber trees and black ebony. If you have a fondness for all things green, a more varied place to stroll would be hard to come by.

Enter the grounds at the Montpelier Rd entrance to start off a pleasant 20-minute clockwise walk that takes you through a wildflower meadow of coreopsis, narcissus and endemic Bermudiana flowers. The walk then loops through the arboretum's conifer collection, which includes native Bermuda cedar and Norfolk Island pines; goes past a gazebo framed by large olive trees; and

finally comes to a palm collection, which includes native Bermudian palmettos and Chinese fan palms. The walk ends by looping back to your starting point across a lawn of Bermuda grass.

Bus No 3 stops on Middle Rd directly in front of the arboretum. If you arrive by scooter, there's a parking area at the south-eastern side of the arboretum, off Montpelier Rd, near the trailhead.

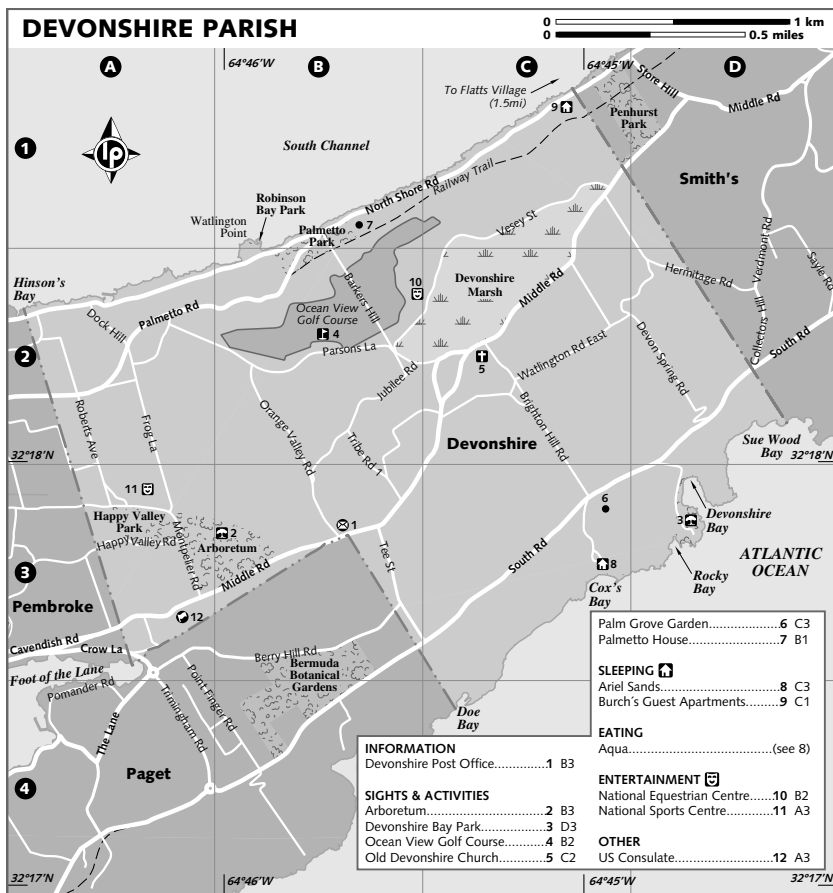
PALM GROVE GARDEN

Don't miss a stroll through the wonderful **garden** (South Rd opposite Brighton Hill Rd; admission free; ☀ 9am-5pm Mon-Thu) of this private estate. Not only does it have manicured lawns abounding with statues, flowering trees and tropical plants but there's also a handsome moongate and a wishing well. Walk up the hill, beyond the little aviary of exotic parrots and cockatoos, to find the estate's most unique sight. From the hilltop you'll be looking across an amazing reflecting pool shaped as a map of Bermuda, outlined in concrete and given an element of relief with a cover of green turf.

The property is owned by one of Bermuda's more prominent families, the Gibbons, who graciously open the garden to the public four days a week.

DEVONSHIRE BAY PARK

If you're up for a fun little detour, then keep an eye open for **Devonshire Bay Park** (Devonshire Bay Rd; admission free; ☀ sunrise-sunset). To get there, continue on South Rd 300yd east of



Palm Grove Garden and then take Devonshire Bay Rd to the end. It's just a couple of minutes' walk from there to the top of a casuarina-shaded hill that was the site of the Devonshire Bay Battery. Built in the 1860s when the US Civil War heightened tensions between the British and the Americans, you can make out the ruined walls, but the main attraction is the fine hilltop coastal view and the sound of the surf crashing in the wild Atlantic below.

The park also has a little cove that's used primarily by fishers to harbor their boats.

PALMETTO HOUSE

The Bermuda National Trust maintains the early 18th-century **Palmetto House** (☎ 236-6483;

North Shore Rd), which has a few rooms with antique furnishings but is most interesting for its architectural features: its cruciform shape and welcoming-arm stairs. However, the house is occupied by an elderly couple and therefore has very limited opening hours; call the trust for current visiting information.

PALMETTO PARK

Just west of Palmetto House rest two adjacent parks. The 17-acre **Palmetto Park** (North Shore Rd) is a relatively large green space with water views that's popular with islanders as a weekend picnicking spot. The tiny **Robinson Bay Park**, right at Robinson Bay, has a rocky shoreline but fine views.

DEVONSHIRE MARSH

South of Palmetto House is the Devonshire Marsh, part of which is under the auspices of the Bermuda Audubon Society. Although the brackish marsh doesn't have footpaths, there are good birding possibilities along the narrow roads that border the marsh, particularly along Vesey St.

OLD DEVONSHIRE CHURCH

This old **church** (Middle & Brighton Hill Rds) dates to 1716 but has been rebuilt a few times, most recently following an explosion in 1970. Still, the old church is a Devonshire landmark of sorts and has some 16th-century silver on display.

Activities

HIKING

In addition to the walk through the **Arboretum** (p99), if you're up for a hike, a section of the **Railway Trail** (p34) runs through the north side of Devonshire. It starts at the back side of Palmetto Park and continues east 1.75 miles to the village of Flatts, passing Palmetto House en route and taking in coastal and inland views.

GOLF

With enough challenges to keep things interesting, **Ocean View Golf Course** (☎ 295-9093; reservations 234-4653; Barkers Hill; greens fee \$40-65; ☀ sunrise-sunset), a par-35, 2940yd course, can be played either as nine or 18 holes. Come

after 3pm for the best rates and don't worry if you didn't bring clubs, as full sets can be rented for \$25.

Sleeping

Ariel Sands (☎ 236-1010, in the USA ☎ 800-468-6610; www.arielsands.com; 34 South Rd; r winter/summer \$180/290; ☀ ☎) It takes its name from the magical spirit in Shakespeare's *Tempest* but takes its fame from its connection to actor Michael Douglas. Douglas is a part owner, along with his mother who manages the place. Don't expect any Hollywood hype – instead, this cottage-style hotel on a private white-sand beach exudes tranquility. A spa, an ocean-view hot tub and beachside massages will make you feel like a star even if you don't see one. Breakfast is included.

Burch's Guest Apartments (☎ 292-5746, in the USA ☎ 800-637-4116; bermudatourism.com/apt_sm3.html; 110 North Shore Rd; s/d \$75/95; ☎) On the parish's north shore, this affordable 10-unit place comes fully equipped, including kitchen facilities, and sports a little garden with ocean views. It's in a residential area that's not central to restaurants or other tourist facilities, but there's a nearby bus stop.

Eating

Aqua (☎ 236-2332; Ariel Sands Beach Club, 34 South Rd; appetizers \$8-17, mains \$23-40; ☀ lunch & dinner; ☎) Sit on the patio overlooking the beach and delight in one of the most romantic settings on the island. The menu is a creative fusion

THE DOUGLAS CONNECTION

Of several celebrities that maintain ties with Bermuda, Michael Douglas is hands-down the most famous. So, what exactly is the actor's connection to the island?

Michael's mother, Diana Dill, is from an old Bermudian family that hails back to early colonial times. She took up acting when she was young and left the island to pursue her career. Diana met Michael's father, the legendary Kirk Douglas, and in 1943 they married and started a family. The couple divorced in 1951, when Michael was 6 years old, and he was raised by his mom, with most of his youth spent in Connecticut. Summers, however, were spent in Bermuda until Michael moved to California to attend college.

Diana eventually resettled in Bermuda and became the manager of the exclusive Ariel Sands resort, which the Dill clan has owned since its opening in 1954. In more recent years, Michael himself has become an investor in the resort and lends a hand with publicity.

In 2001 Michael and his superstar wife, Catherine Zeta-Jones, bought a period mansion in Warwick and now claim the island as home. They are raising their two children in Bermuda, just a few parishes away from grandma's hotel. Commonly seen shopping in Hamilton and dining out around the island, they receive a few more 'good days' than the average person, but seldom draw a crowd, as Bermudians pride themselves on respecting other people's privacy. And there are no pesky paparazzi on the island, which is one of the reasons the couple decided to settle here.

of European and Asian influences that ranges from kabuki shrimp with mango, bamboo shoots and scallions to rack of lamb in lavender sauce. French-accented desserts and well-chosen wines round it out perfectly.

Entertainment

In the summer season, **Aqua** (☎ 236-2332; Ariel Sands Beach Club, 34 South Rd; 📧 9-11pm Wed-Fri & Sun; 🍷) has after-dinner lounge music, typically a pianist and vocalist.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

The **National Sports Centre** (☎ 295-8085; 50 Frog Lane), a state-of-the-art multipurpose sports stadium, serves as a main venue for soccer, cricket and rugby matches, and occasionally sees some international action. Check the newspapers for current schedules.

The **National Equestrian Centre** (☎ 234-0485; www.bef.bm; Vesey St) is the site of periodic harness racing and dressage shows.

Getting There & Around

Devonshire Parish is crossed by three main roads that run west to east: South Rd along the south coast, North Shore Rd on the north coast and Middle Rd through the interior.

Buses (p155) that run between the City of Hamilton (\$3, 10 minutes) and the Town of St George (\$4.50, 40 minutes) cross Devonshire on all three of these west-east roads. Bus No 1 operates along South Rd past Palm Grove Garden and Devonshire Bay. Bus No 3 operates along Middle Rd past the Arboretum and Old Devonshire Church. Bus Nos 10 and 11 go along North Shore Rd past Palmetto Park and Palmetto House.