

The Hot List 2011

W Retreat & Spa, Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

This new W hotel opened last year on the tiny islet of Vieques, eight miles off the coast of Puerto Rico. Set on a secluded stretch of powdery white sand, what was the ho-hum resort of Wyndham Martineau Bay has been given a dramatic head-to-toe refurbishment by Spanish design star Patricia Urquiola. Her whimsical, colourful handiwork is everywhere, from the polished cement floors and geometric-patterned, laser-cut screens, to her own furniture designs for Moroso and B&B Italia. The 157 bedrooms (in sizes from 'Standard' to 'Wow') are in a series of low-slung buildings set in 30 acres. They all have balconies, painted steel baths, Tom Dixon lighting and brightly coloured, Mondrian-style carpets. Central to the resort is a pair of infinity pools edged with sun-loungers and cabanas. Up above is miX, the alfresco restaurant by Alain Ducasse. The menu is a winner: simple, hot-weather fare, from a tabouleh salad with mango and fresh-water crab to traditional Puerto Rican spit-roast pig and curry-spiced lobster. There are daily yoga classes and a sleek, 10 treatment-room spa. All are mere additions, however, to the glories of Vieques itself, with its herds of wild horses and eerie bio-luminescent bays.

When to go Off-season (June to September) may be hot, but the resort is actually rather compact and better enjoyed crowd-free.

Room to book Second-floor Fabulous Oceanview Rooms in the 100-300 unit series have panoramic beach views.

W Retreat & Spa, Vieques Island: 00 787 741 4100; www.wvieques.com. Doubles from US\$379





