



From left: An arrow crab at Bloody Bay Wall, Little Cayman; a pristine beach, Little Cayman.

# Cayman Islands

IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

**O**NE WAY TO ENSURE that the environment is not overlooked at a destination is to make it the centerpiece and focus of what you do. A dedicated dive resort does just that — it casts the underwater world as the star of the show.

PADI Five-Star IDC Sunset House, on Grand Cayman's southwestern tip, is where the idea of a dedicated dive resort all began. In the autumn of 1958, Ms. Hebe Connors Briggs first began welcoming divers into what was then her West End home; today, from the thatched roof of My Bar to the statue of mermaid Amphitrite on the Sunset Reef, this place has become a legend in the annals of dive travel.

And now, new Cayman operators have joined in on playing powerful — and environmentally sound — harmonies alongside Sunset House's melody.

One, on the island's East End, is Cayman Diving Lodge (CDL), owned by Stephen Broadbelt, a cofounder of PADI Five-Star IDC Ocean Frontiers. CDL has upscaled the eco-resort concept and taken it into the 21st century. Green innovations include a living

MODI Green Roof System and a drive-on-vegetation green-driveways system, extensive use of recycled and local building materials, solar-power generation, biofuel dive boats and vehicles, water-reuse technologies, and a management philosophy that uses local items on the menu wherever possible and employs local people. CDL, slated to open by the fall 2009, combines the best aspects of a luxury resort and tropical Eden. The Lodge is also a participant in the Cayman Islands Environmental Project Tourism Sector — a joint collaboration between the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, Department of Environment and private sector — to address environmental issues facing the region. The fact that CDL is cutting-edge green and carbon neutral is just icing on the cake.

Opening February 2009 is Lighthouse Point, a luxury, oceanfront condominium project that already has an operational PADI Divetech shop on premises. The project is working to attain U.S.-standard Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified

standards, with features that run the gamut from solar-powered and low-wattage lighting to on-demand water heating, state-of-the-art sewage treatment and on-site recycling bins. And the project's reach extends underwater — the location will help protect a documented archaeological site just offshore that includes ballast stones and an anchor dating from 1815-1850.

These new resorts join PADI Dive Resort Southern Cross Club, on Little Cayman, which is already recognized for using Earth-friendly technologies that range from solar-powered water heating for its new bungalows to making extensive use of recycled materials.

It's all part of a pro-environment attitude that permeates the Cayman Islands. Can you think, for instance, of any facility on Earth that raises and releases more green sea turtles than the Cayman Turtle Farm at Boatswain's Beach? That's business as usual in today's Cayman Islands: literally giving back to the sea.

## Quick Guide DESTINATION PRIMER

average water temp: 80°F average viz: 100-plus feet what to wear: Shorty to 3 mm fullsuit when to go: Year-round **FOR MORE INFORMATION** on scuba diving in the Cayman Islands, visit [Dive Cayman \(divecayman.ky\)](http://DiveCayman.com). More information on the islands can be found on [Cayman's official tourism site \(caymanislands.ky\)](http://Cayman's official tourism site).

### More on the Web

[sportdiver.com/caymanislands](http://sportdiver.com/caymanislands)