

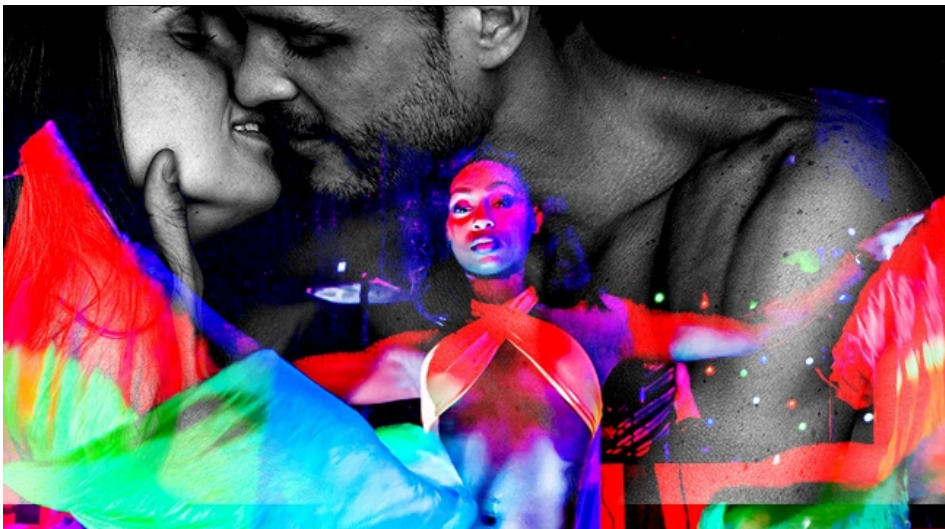
LIFE

Jamaica's Hedonism II Is For Chasing Pleasure, However You Interpret It

BY: MEGHAN O'DEA • 11.17.18

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When I arrived at Hedonism II, the infamous Jamaican resort known for wild parties, sexy floorshows, and a decidedly ambivalent attitude about clothing, I was burnt. I'd just rolled in from a long series of flights to the Caribbean and a warm, dark bus ride from Montego Bay. My throat was parched and I only wanted to sleep. But no sooner had I set down my bags in the lobby when I was greeted with cold champagne.

Things were already looking up. And it didn't stop there. Across the open-air lobby and dining room, a reggae band was wrapping up a cover of some sexy classic American rock song — the name passing out of my mind, so perfectly did it suit the background of the moment. But after stashing my bags in my room, I discovered that just on the other side of that dining room was a glow stick pool party, thumping with bass as dancers clad only in angels wings shimmied on a large concrete dais like a flock of dubstep caravats.



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shimmied on a large concrete slab like a flock of dubstep gargals.

An hour shy of midnight, things were just heating up. The reggae band has packed up and a very enthusiastic MC had turned on his mic — not to mention the audience. Metallic G-strings and glow-in-the-dark pasties gyrated against Day-Glo hot pants to the trill of Daddy Yankee singles. There was a waxed, glistening beefcake wearing a half mask like the *Phantom of the Opera* and a blonde strutting past in a light-up bikini powered by a battery pack hovering over her butt cleavage. At the far end of the pool, an older man waded into the shallows, his flaccid penis floating on top of the water — illuminated by the dim pool lights, like a strange tropical fish.

And I tell you: No one batted an eye. Not a single person. It was awesome.



HEDONISM II



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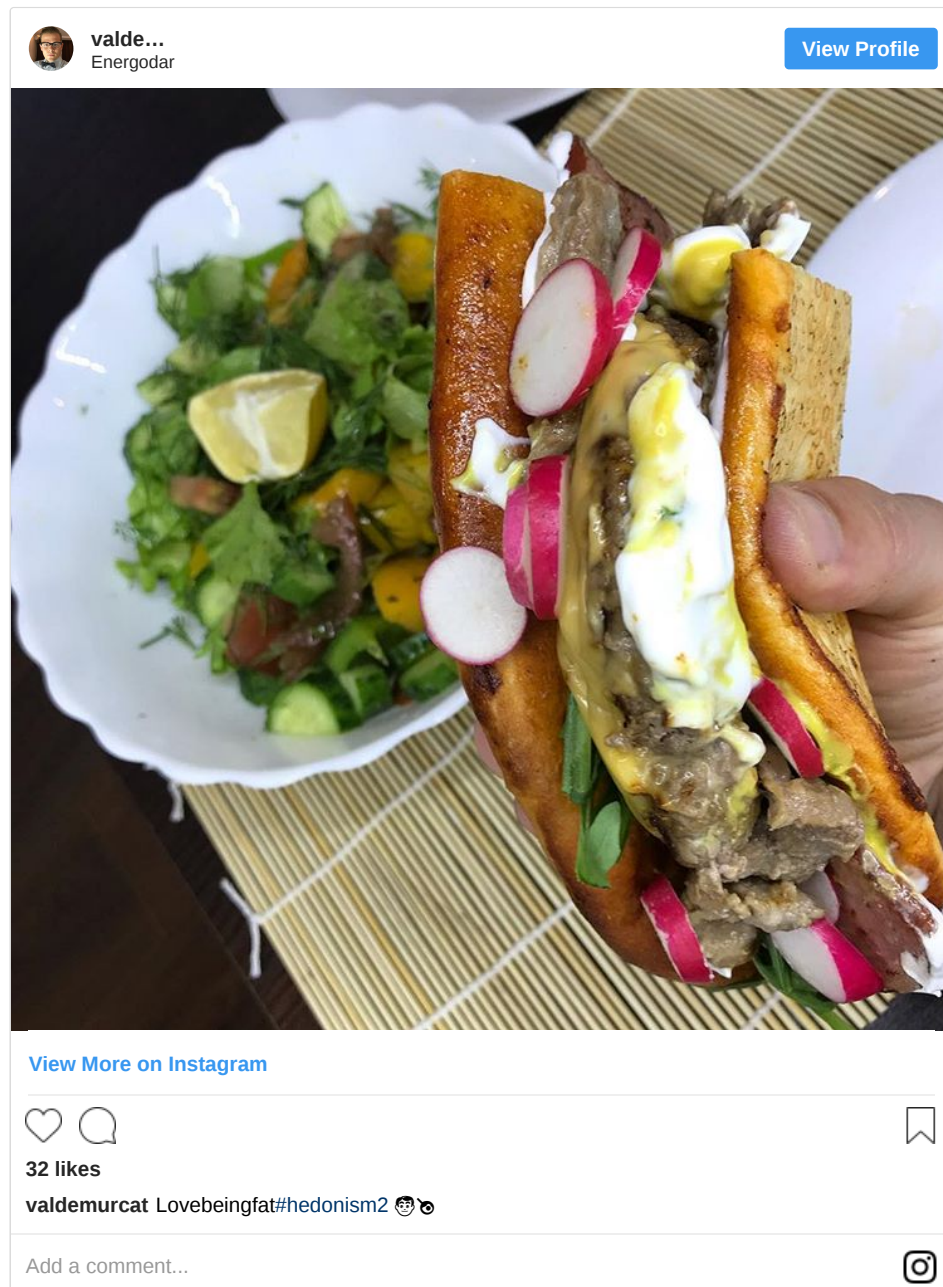
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This is all part of the nightly routine at Hedo, as it's affectionately called. On a Thursday night, when I might ordinarily be reading a book or watching reruns, a Canadian model casually caressed me in cool, chlorinated water, murmuring about the taste of my skin even as he lustily appraised other women across the pool deck. Not long earlier, I'd found myself doing a little turn on a stripper pole at Hedonism's nightclub, a plastic cup of Red Stripe beer in hand, watching the lace on my negligee glow in the black light. By the end of my trip, it was no surprise at all when I lost my toga in the pit at a foam party. I emerged like Botticelli's Venus, clad only in bubbles and spilled Rum and Ting (the mixer of choice at the resort).

Lest I give you the wrong impression, let me emphasize this: Hedonism is what you make of it. For some, a few days at the resort, toying with boundaries, is the wildest, most daring thing they'll ever do. Simply showing up is a shock to the system, the fulfillment of long-held fantasies. Others have graduated to Hedonism after years of low-key topless sunbathing in their backyards, a few titillating trips to the sex shop, or short jaunts to Florida nudie clubs.

Whatever the origin story, the resort loves to report how many couples come back year after year. They celebrate their long-term ties to the resort with painted wooden signs crudely depicting tropical sunsets, silhouetted fellatio, and rhyming slogans like “Zoo Crew 2002” and “Debra the naughty boy toy slut.” Expired license plates dangle from the swim-up bar on the Nude Side of the property, revealing certain trends, like the predilection Texans apparently have for “Caribbean thrills” — which might be a euphemism or might just mean thrills.



The first friends I made on the “Nude Side” of the resort (as opposed to the Prude Side, which is clothing optional and makes up most of the grounds but which I never hung out at because I’m not a square) were repeat visitors who vacationed at Hedo every year. Baby Boomers and fellow Southerners took me under their wings and invited me to stay in the shade with them under one of the few umbrellas. We immediately warmed to one another when I mentioned

that I grew up in Tennessee. They offered advice on the importance of avoiding sunburnt nipples and pointed out single men. Better still, they offered to shoo anyone away if I ever felt bothered or uncomfortable, a protective attitude that everyone seemed to adopt whenever I'd mention "I'm here on my own."

"At Hedonism," one man tells me, "single women are treated like *goddesses*."

The preferential treatment and protection from couples that single women enjoy doesn't seem to bother the single men at the resort. They have no trouble finding company. One young hard body at Hedo quickly fell in with the Men At Large — a group of Canadian calendar models who were staying on that week. The models treated him like one of their gang when they weren't teaming up with Hedo's lithe entertainment staff to perform nightly burlesques. (The performances the week I was there ranged from classic burlesque and cabaret to sensual aerial routines to a strip act that culminated in a woman pantomiming climax, Flash Dance-style, in a kiddie pool full of whole, white milk. It was something else.)



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Many of the couples at Hedo skew a little older. There were plenty of millennials, but especially on the Nude Side you see how the demographics at Hedo are tilted (apparently the 1990s were a very different time). This is the generation who learned the ropes after the Summer of Love, who came of age in the era of key parties like in *The Ice Storm*. This crowd sees nudity as the norm. An absence of clothing doesn't necessarily hold a sexual connotation. It's just a way to be more natural.

Whole conversations passed between my new friends and me on the Nude Side, during which I never caught someone leering at my body. This is one of the many ironies and contradictions of Hedonism: At a "sex resort" renowned for nudity and public coitus, nakedness is not exactly novel. More importantly, respect is paramount.

When I participated in a twerking contest set up by the staff as part of the day's entertainment, the compliments I received didn't feel lewd, but... *encouraging*. My friends at the property wanted me to comfortable and welcome. Any other extracurricular activities would be borne from that understanding.



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If that sounds dull, you're missing the bigger picture. It's once nudity stops being shocking that things get really interesting. That's when you get to start considering what's really turning you on — beyond peeling the Levis off that stranger you've been eying at the bar.

As a teenager, watching *Rocky Horror Picture Show* for the first time, I was struck by the film's entreaty to "give yourself over to absolute pleasure." What could be more pleasurable than discovering, for the first time, the contours of my own emerging adult body? Or, later, the possibilities of that body finding tantalizing alignment with the newly minted adult bodies of the first people I fooled around with?

What I grasp now, from the comfortable vantage point of adulthood — after a decade of modeling nude for various art classes, plenty of skinny dipping, and naked dance parties in my living room; not to mention the fact that I've now spent the better part of a week at Jamaica's thirstiest lifestyle resort — is that bodies are just one part of the equation. Hedonism is a place where the boundaries between your extraordinary fantasies and your quite ordinary human body dissolve, whether your appetites include a slightly edgier take on the typical Caribbean vacation, or the sort of sex acts that might inspire the lyrics in a Lords of Acid single.





MEGHAN O

At Hedonism, if you want to spend your days reading a book under the leaves of a sea grape tree as the waves lap across the sugary white sands while you smoke a spliff, no one will judge you. You can do it in t-shirt and shorts or in stilettos and a thong. Or naked. If you're a locavore — eager to try Jamaican staples like saltfish and ackee or savory meat patties in pastry crust or hot, vinegary Jerk chicken — just walk up to one of the several restaurants on the property. If you favor steady suburban cuisines and have wondered what Benihana would be like if it were sexier, you can try that, too. (Although, it did strike me a few times that much of the food, catering to a centrist American palate, was *heavy* and therefore not as sexy as it might have been.)

If you want to snorkel nude over a coral reef populated with octopuses and flying fish and gorgeous little lavender female sea urchins that will gently stick to your palm like Velcro, the activity is included. So are tantric workshops that encourage you to find new ways of being in your body, by yourself or with others. Speaking of which — if you want to sprawl languidly in a grotto veiled by a waterfall while multiple men compete to publicly offer you cunnilingus, a few of my new friends told me that's entirely feasible, though I didn't witness it myself.



waynefit_if...
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Whatever *your* definition of absolute pleasure — from rum-fueled hookups with fellow bodycon singles to sweet midlife spouse-swapping to quietly going to bed after the foam party to watch free porn and Bollywood movies — what I experienced at Hedonism can likely scratch your itch. If Carribean resorts have a reputation for being a kind of travel-lite that gently introduces Westerners to a broader world while offering the more outgoing a chance to delve deeper, consider Hedonism a riff on this chord that caters to sexual adventure.

Just ask my new friends from London, who spent their week lounging on the Prude Side beach chairs near the spot where a local gent sells fresh reefer out of his backpack. They started out in swimsuits, nervous as can be, wondering what they'd gotten themselves into. But every day they peeled back a layer, literally, until we were casually swapping secrets, all of us wearing nothing but spiked Ting and sunscreen.

This trip was hosted by the resort. You can learn more about Uproxx's policy on press trips/hostings [here](#).

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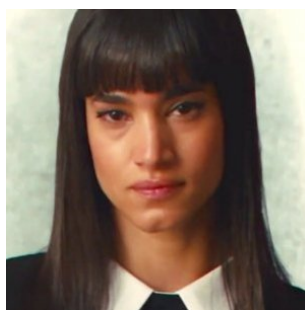
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11.20.2018 @ 3:39 PM

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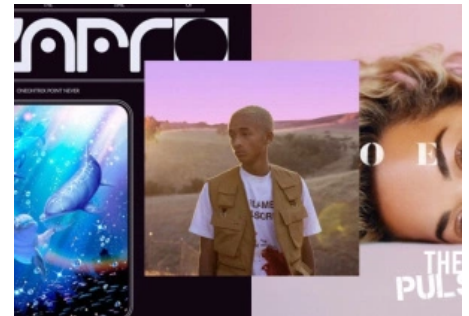
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