



THE SOMERSET
ON GRACE BAY

Allyson Nick, Resort Developer and Director

Allyson Nick, Director of The Somerset on Grace Bay, is only one of the few women who have developed, owned and run a five star resort in the Caribbean. She has strong opinions about why being a woman may well be an asset in a world traditionally overseen by men.

“There are strengths to being a woman in this business,” Nick says. “We’re more detail-oriented. I try to think outside the box as often as possible and I try to implement. I’m not a person who thinks this should be a typical resort experience.”

Nick has real estate in her blood. She grew up in working in her father’s residential real estate business in Manhattan and her mother learned resort development first-hand by buying a 4,000 acre Rocky Mountain ranch and transforming it into the exclusive Keyah Grande Resort in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. Yet Nick, a busy mother of five children, has used The Somerset on the island of Providenciales in the Turks and Caicos Islands to put her own theories into action.

“I support other women in business,” she says, noting that her general manager, Karen Whitt, is the new president of the Turks & Caicos Hotel Association and the first woman to ever hold that position, as well as an appointed member of the TCI Tourist Board. The Executive Chef, the position that is traditionally dominated by men, is also a woman. Lauren Callighen is in a leadership position not only at The Somerset, but is established as one of the top chefs in the Turks & Caicos, highly praised for her culinary skill and creativity.

This unique energy that Nick and her team generate is what distinguishes this Mediterranean-style resort with its 54 stylish suites, some with private floors, panoramic ocean views, private outdoor Jacuzzis and marble baths. The centerpiece of the resort is the multi-million dollar pool, which ends in a cascading waterfall overlooking miles of white sandy beach, abetted by an underwater sound system and water currents for simulating lap swimming.

“The Somerset is about understated elegance,” Nick says. “I think the word ‘luxury’ is totally overused. At The Somerset, trying to do less is more. This is not an over-the-top place. It’s upscale elegance and we have a very friendly staff.”

“We try very hard at The Somerset,” she says. “It’s the Caribbean and tropical, so service is not as white-gloved as you’d find in Europe or in Asia. And it is not second nature to do this type of service here. So the service level at The Somerset is something that I’m most proud of.”

Guests are enthralled with the service level at The Somerset and for that, Nick is eager to give credit to her general manager Karen Whitt, who brings her special skills to bear. The fact is that The Somerset staff is loyal to a fault, with the least turn-over of any resort on the island.

“I have to give 99 percent of the credit to Karen,” says Nick. “She has great flair and understanding and she’s been the manager since the opening in 2006. She’s the one who pulls it off.”

Despite the “juggling act” that she must perform with her five children, who range in age from 11 to 20, Nick is at The Somerset at least once a month. “What I wanted to have at The Somerset was this welcome familiarity, so when you arrived, it was like you were going home,” she says. “There’s always a staff awaiting you, people who dotted the “i’s” and crossed the “t’s” and were waiting for you to come home.”

That high level of warmth and service is precisely what continues to make The Somerset the most desirable resort in the Turks & Caicos Islands.

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The Somerset is located on the pristine beach at scenic Grace Bay, in the Providenciales of Turks & Caicos Islands, a brief hour and twenty minute flight from Miami and an easy three hour, non-stop flight from New York, with service from most other major U.S. and Canadian gateways. The resort's [O'Soleil](#) restaurant is one of the top tables in the Caribbean, serving the inspired, contemporary fare of Executive Chef Lauren, and a more casual menu at the LunAsea poolside restaurant. Open since June 2006, the 54 exceptionally large suites ranging from 1,353 to 5,327 square feet feature marble baths, gourmet kitchens and whimsically designed interiors by Keith Baltimore. Rates for The Somerset, start at \$600 in peak winter season and at \$350 during summer value season. The resort is a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World and has been providing guests with a five-star luxury experiences since its inception. For reservations and more information, visit www.thesomerset.com or call toll free 877.887.5722, or the local hotel number at 1-649-946-5900.

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