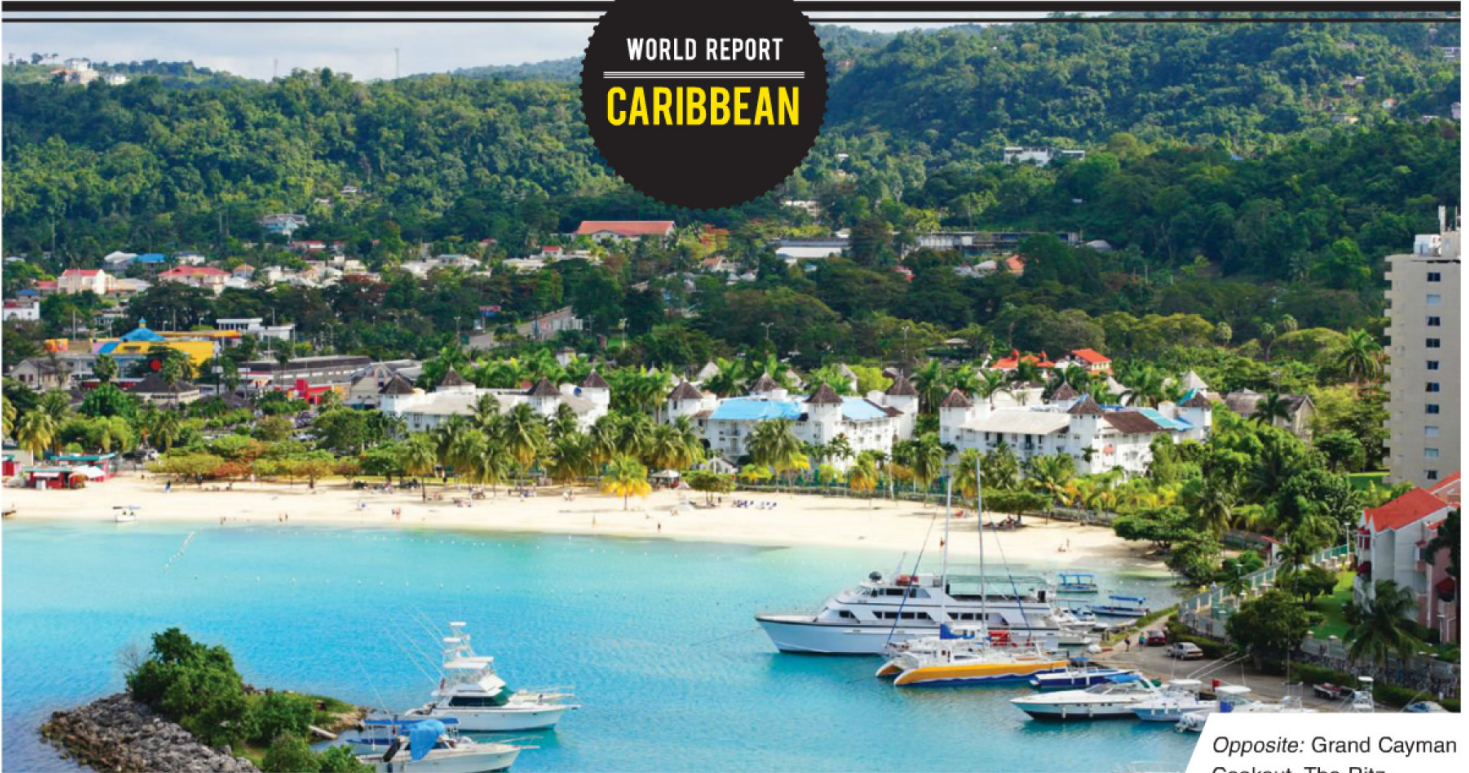


WORLD REPORT  
**CARIBBEAN**



*Opposite: Grand Cayman Cookout, The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman; above: Ocho Rios, Jamaica*

**N**orth America's aquatic playground is diversifying.

In December, the Caribbean went mainstream Americana when Popeyes Bahamas Bowl took place at Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium in Nassau. The NCAA football game between Eastern Michigan University and Old Dominion University was televised internationally by ESPN and brought players, coaches and thousands of fans to town.

Lea Miller, executive for the bowl game, says the event resulted in "unprecedented exposure" for the Bahamas. "No other country in the Caribbean can touch this," she says.

The annual Grand Cayman Cookout, which took place Jan. 12–15, featured some of the top culinary savants in the world—including Emeril Lagasse, Jose Andres and Anthony Bourdain (see profile, pp. 48–49)—delivering presentations and preparing sumptuous dishes for attendees. They also joined attendees for parties and other activities, including a wine fair and auction.

The cookout was sponsored by Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, *Food & Wine* magazine and The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman, the host hotel.

Over on Grand Bahama Island, **Grand Lucayan** resort has just reopened after a brief closure due to Hurricane Matthew. The 740-room campus is bursting with more than 90,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor space, including a 14,850-square-foot ballroom. Best of all, this truly breathtaking setting is infused with a dose of sophisticated Bahamian style, from movie nights under the stars to post-meeting rum tastings, to cozy evenings with a local storyteller.

On tranquil Eleuthera Island, **French Leave Eleuthera** is a Marriott Autograph Collection property that opened in December with 12 one- and two-bedroom beachfront villas. The 270-acre resort offers extraordinary outdoor event space, including a 1,470-square-foot event lawn that overlooks the marina. Resort guests will experience the unspoiled beauty of an iconic pink-sand beach and dazzling views.