



Together - A Retreat for Gay Couples

Thatch Caye, Belize

April 24, 2010 to May 01, 2010

This Retreat is for Gay Male Couples

Cost: \$1695.00

Register by November 1, 2009 & pay as little as \$1595 - Save \$100



Our first retreat dedicated to couples! We take over an entire island off the coast of Belize for eight days of celebrating our togetherness. There is only room for ten couples on this very special retreat filled with activities to help us grow even closer together as couples. Whether your time together has been two months or twenty years, this is a chance to connect deeper with the man you love.

Our days are designed at a very leisurely pace and will offer abundant free time to just to be together on this secluded island. After breakfast, we come together as a group to explore such things as:

- Keeping the "fire" alive in our relationship.
- Does a relationship really require "work"?
- Trust.
- What it means to be a couple.

The afternoons are free to do whatever you like: go snorkeling or scuba diving; take a kayak out to explore the surrounding cayes; lay on the beach; go fishing or swimming; take a nap in the hammock on your cabana's deck; go to the mainland or just find your own way of "igniting your fire".



After dinner, we come together again to continue exploring ourselves as individuals and ourselves as a couple. There will be opportunities to learn new ways to deepen our levels of mental, spiritual and sexual intimacy.

Our group sessions are NOT lectures or filled with the latest trend in psychology or "psychobabble". Our time together as a group will be explorational and experiential. Through discerning exercises and questions and Heart Circles, you will be challenged to look deeply at yourself and to uncover your "stories". It is your belief in these "stories" that keep you from living a free and joyous life. The freer we are as individual men, the stronger we are as couples.

YOUR GUIDE

Your guide is Howie Holben (pictured right). Since early childhood, he has been drawn to indigenous peoples and their spiritual teachings, traditions and practices. This attraction has taken him on many adventures, exploring the countless ways of "being in the world". His personal journey through addiction and recovery has spawned in him a need to assist others on their own spiritual path and he takes great pleasure in introducing others to practices, sacred ways and cultures to help them "step outside their box". He is a Reiki and Karuna Ki Master and also a Quantum Touch and Breathwork Practitioner. His goal is to help others uncover their potential by setting their hearts and minds free. He currently lives in northern New Jersey with his husband of twenty years, Chris Caramelli.



WHY BELIZE?

Here's what Lonely Planet has to say:

"With one foot planted in the Central American jungles and the other dipped in the Caribbean Sea, Belize blends the best of both worlds. Offshore, kayakers glide from one sandy, palm-dotted islet to another, while snorkelers swim through translucent seas, gazing at a kaleidoscope of coral, fish, dolphins and turtles. Inland, explorers investigate ruins of ancient civilizations, and birders aim their binoculars at some 570 species. Between national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and marine reserves, more than 40% of the country's area is protected in one form or another, creating a haven for countless creatures of land, sea

and sky."

Here's what we have to say: The hospitality and warmth of the Belizean people may be even more important than natural beauty that Belize has to offer. As a country, Belize has always welcomed the disenfranchised of the world. The Amish, the Mennonites, refugees from other Latin American countries, whether they were refugees due to war or natural disaster, all have been welcomed and even given land to live on. The Belizean people are very easy going and are very accepting of others. It's very easy to quickly "feel at home" in Belize.



WHY APRIL?

It is no accident that we have scheduled this retreat during the April full moon phase. During the full moon phases of March, April and May, millions of fish spawn off the coast Belize. This abundance of spawn attracts the largest fish in the sea, the Whale Shark. Even though they reach lengths of 40 feet or more, whale sharks are filter feeders and only eat plankton, spawn and small fish.

We will take at least two snorkeling trips during our stay on Thatch Caye to try to see these gentle giants. We can swim with them, but for conservation reasons we are not allowed to chase or swim after them. However, that doesn't prevent them from swimming near us! What an opportunity...



PLAY DAY

We also will be taking one full day as a "Play Day". Our entire group, at least those that want to come along, will go to the mainland for a cave tubing and zip-line adventure. For the cave tubing, we take a bus to the edge of the rainforest and then an easy 30 minute walk to where we enter the river. Here we each get our own tube and begin our float underground, through stalactite filled caverns, with only our headlamps lighting the way most of the time. Occasionally we pass under an opening to the outside and sunlight filters down or out into verdant tropical ravines, where sunlit butterflies fill the air.



At the end of our tubing trip we have picnic lunch and then take a short bus ride to the zip line location. Once at the zip line location, our guides will help you with your gear, your harness, helmet and hand gear in preparation for your aerial adventure. A short 5 minute walk in this amazing natural rainforest will bring you to the start of the excursion where you will once again be instructed on the zip line method.



Your zip line adventure begins from the first platform where you will zip to the next platform found 150ft away. Flying through the air surrounded by nature is a most exhilarating feeling! The birds and Howler Monkeys found onsite will be at eye level making you one with the prolific nature Belize is famous for. The zip line consists of 8 zip line platforms each strategically located within the Rainforest canopy. Double cables (each capable of withstanding 2,000 pounds of weight) are used for the ultimate safety. All landing Platforms are equipped with safety gear, handrails and guides to meet your next landing as well as to ensure your personal safety throughout your adventure. The platforms are as high as 85ft into the Canopy and as far apart as 250ft. So get ready for a fantastic ride!



THATCH CAYE

Thatch Caye (pronounced key) is an eco-island complex that forms a 12 acre marine park just 9 miles from Dangriga in south-central Belize and only two miles from the second largest reef in the western world. It is inside the northern boundary of the protected South Water Marine Reserve, in the Coco Plum Range of islands.



If you love nature paths, soft white sand, gentle ocean breezes, and sparkling azure waters, then this island will indulge all of your senses. Visitors to Thatch Caye will enjoy interacting with rabbits, coatimundi, Belizean raccoons, gibnuts, exotic birds, and sea iguanas. The island is also an easy kayak ride to a nearby world renowned bird sanctuary where hundreds of frigates, boobies and pelicans make their home.

Rest assured Thatch Caye will not only provide you a relaxing slice of paradise, but also a top notch agenda of activities sure to tantalize even the most adventuresome taste buds:

- Snorkeling**
- Kayaking**
- Scuba Diving**
- Deep Sea Fishing**
- Fly Fishing**
- Hand Fishing**

Mainland adventures, from caving to visiting Mayan ruins.



THATCH CAYE ACCOMODATIONS



Thatch Casitas - Five Casitas (little homes, photos above) are elevated single story units with rooftop decks complete with hammocks so that you can catch the island breezes and savor the spectacular views. Ventilation fans are all that is needed to experience the great natural comforts of the Caribbean on Thatch Caye. Air conditioning is available (daily surcharge applies). The Casitas are designed for privacy and comfort and have hot water showers, king size beds, a mini fridge, and full size window seats overlooking the sea.



Thatch Cabanas - Five over water Cabanas (photos above) with native thatch roofing and cool tile floors are perfectly positioned to take advantage of the sea breezes and views of nearby islands and the Great Barrier Reef. Relax with private sun decks, spacious baths with hot showers, and queen size beds. Ceiling fans cool these cabanas by increasing the wind chill factor from the constant tradewinds.

Extras on this Retreat that are not included in a typical Thatch Caye Package:

Snorkeling trips are available everyday at no charge.
Special Whale Shark snorkeling trips.
Cave tubing and Zip Line adventure.

Where is Thatch Caye and how do I get there?

Thatch Caye is just 9 miles off shore from Dangriga in south-central Belize. Getting there is really quite easy. First you fly into the Philip Goldson International Airport (BZE) in Belize City. Then you take a short (20 minutes) commuter flight to Dangriga.

International flights to the Philip Goldson International Airport (BZE) are provided by American Airlines, Continental Airlines, U.S. Airways, Delta, TACA and United. To get to Dangriga you will use either **Maya Island Air** or **Tropic Air**. The roundtrip airfare between Belize City and Dangriga is about \$120.



You will be met at the Dangriga Airport and taken Thatch Caye's mainland dock. From there, it's about a 30 minute boat ride to Thatch Caye.

Additional photos from around Thatch Caye:

