

ZOOMER

DIANA • KATE • MEGHAN
SECRETS
of ROYAL STYLE

I'M ONE!

*Happy New Year
Ma'am*
CELEBRATING
HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH II
AHEAD OF HER
95TH BIRTHDAY

**FORWARD
LOOKING**
50 WAYS
TO MAKE
THE BEST OF
EVERYTHING...
INCLUDING
YOU!

**MOSES'
LAST WORD**
THE WINTER
WORKOUT
TO KEEP ON
KEEPING ON
PG. 114

**A *Royally*
GOOD SEASON**
STAYING THE COURSE AND FINDING MEANING

**GREAT
GIFT IDEAS**
THAT GIVE
YOU MORE

{ NEW YEAR, BETTER YOU: ADVENTURE }

THE NATURAL

On a long weekend in Tobago, Vivian Vassos revels in the wonder of an island escape



Bird's-Eye Views: (clockwise from top right) the motmot, native to Trinidad and Tobago; Adventure Park's Ean Mackay; signs at a beachside food court at Plantation Boardwalk; giant brain coral at the underwater Coral Garden; Jewan, the author's driver. Opposite page: Overlooking Charlotteville and Man O War Bay from Flagstaff Hill at the northern end of Tobago

I'VE SOUNDED THE vintage ship's bell, striking it 10 times, then 10 again. Suddenly, I'm surrounded. Reverberation, a low drumming; a flash of light and feathers. It's the thrumming of hummingbird wings as they flirt and fly and buzz past my ears at breakneck speeds. They've zeroed in on the dozen or so hummingbird feeders hanging from the rafters, careening in to get a sip of nectar, somehow knowing that there's a reward if they follow the sound of the old bell. Yet I have no fear, just joy. They're like winged jewels, little angels paint-

ing the sky with their colours. When you get this close, you can see the glowing emerald and shining sapphire in their feathers, with hints of white and yellow. And I've managed to call a rare ruby gem as well, just fresh from migration from more northerly islands. The hummingbirds are joined by more winged types, from mourning doves to blue motmots, one of the most beautiful birds I have ever seen. In this sudden and intense immersion in nature, it was almost too much to bear. I was overwhelmed just for a moment and nearly brought to tears.

It's a year ago, before the pandem-

ic. I'm on the Caribbean island of Tobago, about 160 kilometres off the northeast coast of Venezuela, visiting the Adventure Farm and Nature Reserve, where birds such as the native motmot are the main attraction, but where there are also two little rustic cottages for rent. Perched high in the trees for the best vantage point, the observatory is enveloped in the leafy canopy of some of the oldest protected rainforest on the planet, with a view of the colourful gardens and the sea, to boot. The estate is the passion project and home of Ean Mackay, so wonderfully hippy-dippy in his pink shorts ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: STICKNEY DESIGN/GETTY IMAGES (LANDSCAPE); JAD DAVENPORT (CORAL); ALEXA FERNANDO (EAN); BOTH COURTESY OF TOBAGO TOURISM; VIVIAN VASSOS (BIRDS, SIGNS, JEWAN)

