

Time Travel

ER Member **David Axelrod** bridges past and present with milestone memories.

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY **DAVID AXELROD**

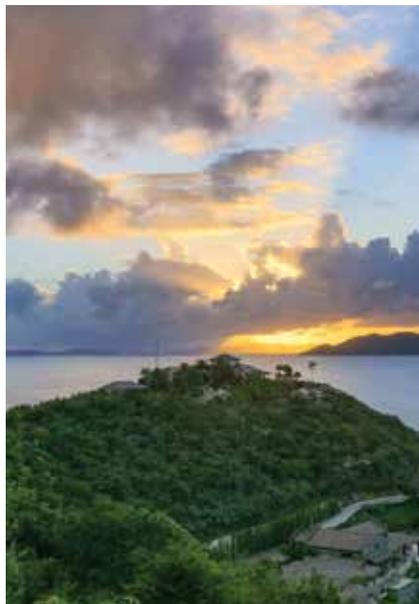
I WAS A TEENAGER WHEN my family joined Exclusive Resorts. Over the years, our vacations became signposts marking phases and eras. Trips that once seemed isolated in time now trigger stories defining the dynamics of my family. Every turning point, celebration, or new beginning we've shared has an Exclusive stay attached to it. Here are three stand-out locations, not only for their beauty, but as backdrops to the memories we collect and recollect.



This page: David Axelrod in Cote d'Azur.
Opposite (Clockwise from top): Observatory atop Hawaii's Mauna Kea; Virgin Gorda is a favorite for Axelrod family gatherings; sunsets on Virgin Gorda inspired Axelrod's photography.

CÔTE D'AZUR, FRANCE

La Retraite—a villa on the Côte d'Azur—is the highlight of our France trip and the dreamiest residence on my ER resume. Hidden in the hills above Le Rouret, the elegant stone château sits perched amid the lush countryside. Flanked with roses, the pool couldn't be more inviting. I expected my workaholic mom to park herself at the desk with the best view and reemerge at mealtime, as is customary on all of her "vacations." Imagine my surprise and delight to find her nonchalantly paddling around in the pool. Even she could not resist relaxing. My dad followed her in, and I would have been next, but I didn't dare spoil the scene of the two of them, floating on their backs, reveling in the magnificence of the moment.



KOHALA COAST, HAWAII

The Kohala Coast is the closest thing I have to a second home. I've spent so many Thanksgivings there, I now eat Mahi Mahi instead of turkey. I've circumnavigated the island, traversed volcano craters, trekked to black sand beaches, swam with dolphins, spiraled through botanical gardens, and watched the moonrise from the frigid summit of Mauna Kea. Ukulele jam sessions and bocce on the lawn have become family-favorite pastimes. Of all these memories we've shared on the Big Island, none compares to the moment my wife and I spilled the news of our engagement. After island-hopping from Kaua'i, we met up with the rest of my family at our Kohala residence. We walked into the kitchen, grabbed local chips and guac from the pre-stocked fridge, and waited for the inevitable. My sister noticed the ring and burst into tears. So much aloha.

VIRGIN GORDA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

I got my first professional camera just before our British Virgin Islands holiday. The explosive Caribbean sunsets gilded every photograph I took and our leisurely routine left me plenty of time to test my new gear. Every day started with a revitalizing yoga session by the infinity pool, leaving afternoons free for panoramic views from the top of Gorda Peak or a boat ride to The Baths. No matter what adventures the day delivered, I made it a habit to drive our golf cart to the bluff overlooking Spanish Town at golden hour. Without fail, the sky would ignite in a fiery cocktail of clouds. I couldn't take my finger off the shutter (and barely have since). I did put my camera down once before leaving Little Dix Bay, to sip a Planter's Punch and plan my return to the Lesser Antilles.



Stay

With these ocean-inspired retreats, long lazy days are sun-kissed and carefree.

CÔTE D'AZUR, FRANCE

2 RESIDENCES • 4 BEDROOMS
Spectacular homes are partner residences with The Hideaways Club.

KOHALA COAST, HAWAII

11 RESIDENCES • 4 BEDROOMS
This distinctive island is one of the few places on Earth where one can find every climate zone.

VIRGIN GORDA, BVI

9 RESIDENCES • 4-5 BEDROOMS
Swim in Devil's Bay or take an early morning boat ride to The Baths.