

# Pembroke Parish



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Appearing like a sturdy thumb extending upward from the center of Bermuda, Pembroke has much to attract visitors. It abounds with water views, overlooking colorful Hamilton Harbour to the south, scenic Great Sound to the west and the open Atlantic to the north. It's short on sandy beaches, but that's never been enough to keep visitors at bay. Indeed, the very first resort ever built in Bermuda, the venerable Princess Hotel, wasn't erected on one of those glorious Warwick beaches but went up right here on stony Hamilton Harbour. And it became such a magnet for visitors that several of the elegant mansions lining the nearby waterfront opened as genteel inns. A testimony to the solid Bermudian hospitality that has been their cornerstone, many of these places still draw visitors who prefer traditional charm to a day at the beach.

That's not to say Pembroke is caught in some sort of time warp. To the contrary – this is the most vibrant and expanding parish in Bermuda. The same waterfront that's home to period inns bustles with new office buildings, and if you walk through the Princess Hotel you'll likely see more businesspeople than tourists. Almost all of the growing number of international companies that have flocked to Bermuda have set up in Pembroke.

Not surprisingly, the parish offers superb dining options; the quieter north shore has scenic coastal parks to explore; and the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute, at the southeast side of the parish, shouldn't be missed by anyone interested in the mysteries of the ocean.

The rest of the parish's many attractions, eateries and amenities – those within the City of Hamilton – are detailed in the previous chapter (p46).

## Information

There's a **Bank of Butterfield** (☎ 294-2070; 90 Pitts Bay Rd) branch at the Waterfront building. Extensive services and amenities are nearby in the City of Hamilton.

## Sights

### BERMUDA UNDERWATER EXPLORATION INSTITUTE

The **Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute** (BUEI; ☎ 292-7314; www.buei.org; 40 Crow Lane; adult/child \$10.50/5.50, under 7 yrs free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) unravels the mysteries of the underwater world via an amazing array of exhibits and interactive displays.

A real eye-opener, the first hall reveals the history of diving. Take a look at the wooden dive bell invented by comet-finder Sir Edmund Halley in 1690; it resembles an inverted whiskey barrel with a peephole! Then there's a cool 19th-century hard-hat diving suit attached to a primitive air pump that looks like it was torn from the pages of a Jules Verne novel. And don't miss the full-scale model of the original bathysphere, the submersible

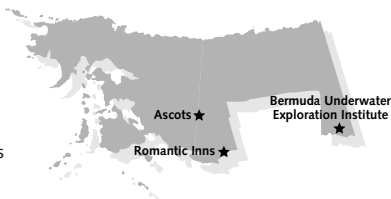
chamber that William Beebe and Otis Barton used for their record-setting (3028ft) underwater descent off Bermuda in 1934.

Want to try things on for size? There's a cut-away of the bathysphere that you can jump into and a simulated dive that creates the sense of dropping some 12,000ft to the ocean floor. The latter is really a submarine-shaped elevator with a surround theater that shows giant squid passing by the portholes and pretends you've hit a time warp in the Bermuda Triangle. It jiggles and thumps for about seven minutes before 'landing' safely on the lower floor of the center, where there are, quite apropos, displays on deepwater creatures and shipwrecks.

A highlight here is the incredible gold coin and jewelry collection that has been recovered from Spanish galleons that wrecked upon Bermuda's hazardous reefs. Another curious exhibit, complete with morphine-filled glass ampoules, focuses on the *Constellation*, a four-masted schooner that went down during WWII. The ship became the subject of Peter Benchley's book *The Deep*,

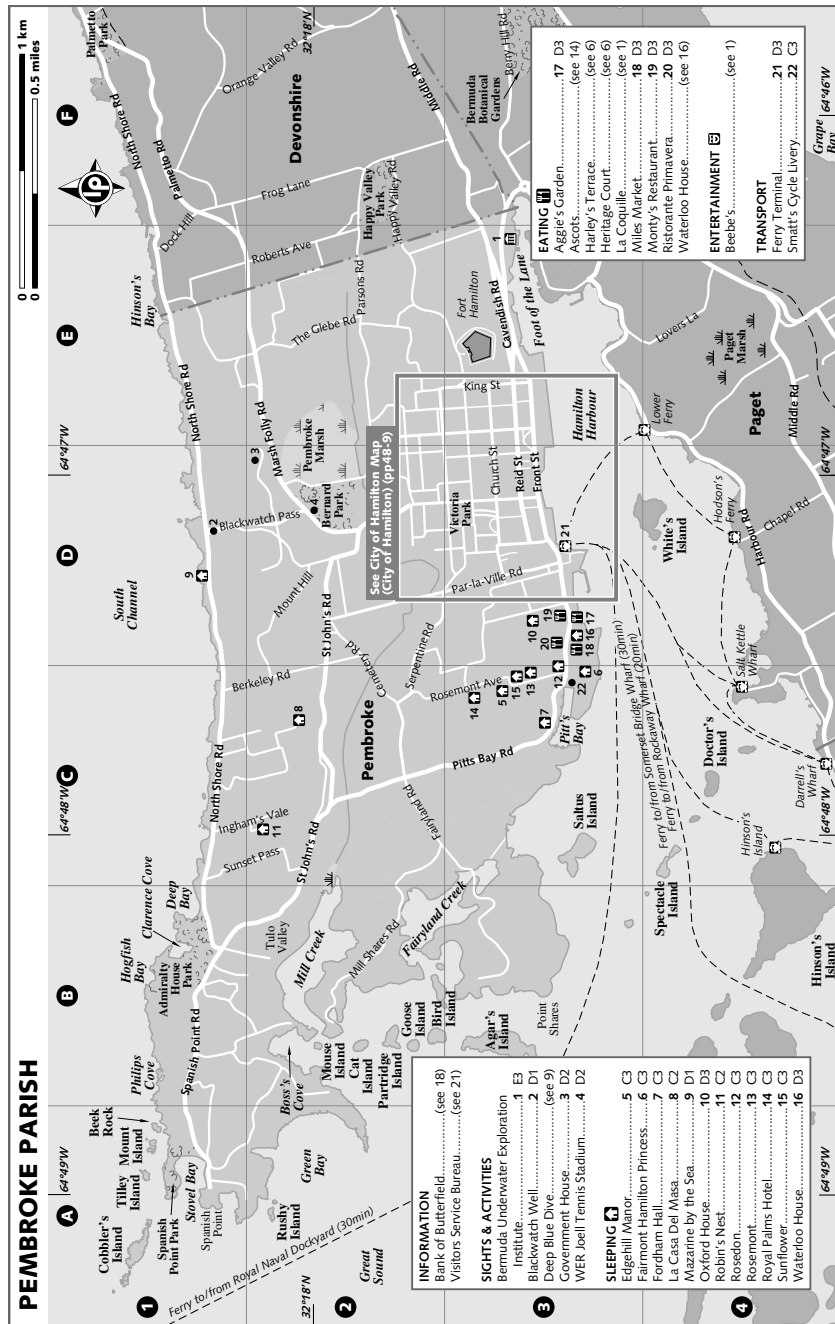
## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy a delicious gourmet meal at the atmospheric **Ascots** (p68) restaurant
- Discover wonders of the marine world at the **Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute** (opposite)
- Stay at one of the parish's smolderingly romantic **Victorian-era inns** (p66)



■ POPULATION: 11,306

■ AREA: 1.98 SQ MILES



whose plot developed around recovering the wreck's cargo of opiates. But the *Constellation* was just one of scores of ships that sank to watery graves just off Bermuda's shores and there are so many recovered items – ranging from 16th-century guns to diamond-studded jewels – that only a fraction is on display. Amazingly, most of the items found here were recovered by just one islander, Teddy Tucker, during his 40-year diving career. Tucker and Benchley, incidentally, were two of the leading forces behind the development of the nonprofit Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute.

BUEI is just a 10-minute walk east from the City of Hamilton. You could catch the gist of everything here in an hour, but it's better to give yourself at least double that to really absorb it all.

**SPANISH POINT PARK**

This very pleasant coastal park (Spanish Point Rd; ☒ sunrise-sunset) has fine views and a curious history. It served as a camp for Spanish sailors six years before the English ever set eyes on Bermuda. Both arrived the same accidental way. In 1603 a Spanish galleon passing Bermuda struck a rock on a nearby reef, forcing its captain, Diego Ramirez, to come ashore at Stovel Bay, where the crew stayed for three weeks to repair the ship to a seaworthy condition. It was the English who later discovered remnants of the camp and dubbed this northwestern tip of Pembroke Parish 'Spanish Point.'

Today, the north side of Stovel Bay has been turned into the 7-acre Spanish Point Park. The bay is a mooring area for small boats, and the park consists of manicured grassy lawns dotted with casuarina trees. A short, paved footpath leads from the bay to the tip of the point, where there's a clear view of the Royal Naval Dockyard's twin towers, which sit 2 miles across the Great Sound to the northwest.

You'll also see what looks like a shipwreck off the west side of the point; actually, it's an old dry dock that sank here in 1902. When the wind picks up, windsurfers launch from the park, but at other times the park is an ideal spot for picnicking.

**ADMIRALTY HOUSE PARK**

Once home to the admiral who served as the regional commander-in-chief of the British

naval forces, **Admiralty House Park** (Spanish Point Rd; ☒ sunrise-sunset) is a 16-acre recreational area. A network of short trails leads through shaded woods filled with birdsong and along low cliffs with coastal views.

Admiralty House, built in 1812 as a naval hospital, was turned into the admiral's residence in 1816 and served that function until the late 1950s, when the navy withdrew and turned over the property to the island government. In 1974 the grounds were converted into Pembroke Parish's largest park. Some of the buildings previously used by the navy now house the offices of community groups.

The highlight of the coastal park is **Clarence Cove**, whose shallow waters and lovely little sandy beach make it a popular destination for families on weekend outings. The cove is just a five-minute walk along the winding path that leads north from the parking lot.

On the south side of the road, **Tulo Valley**, currently a parks department nursery, was originally the vegetable garden for Admiralty House. A tunnel, now blocked off, once connected the two areas.

**BLACKWATCH PASS**

Seems every hilly island has a road whose very construction taxes the imagination. In Bermuda the most impressive road engineering feat is unquestionably **Blackwatch Pass**, a tunnel-like pass cut more than 50ft deep into the limestone cliffs separating the north shore of Pembroke from the City of Hamilton. The pass is so steep that people turn their headlights on while driving through it during the day!

Along the north side of Blackwatch Pass, near the intersection with the Langton Hill road, you'll spot the site of **Blackwatch Well**, which is marked by a small enclosure. The well, now capped, was dug by British troops during a severe drought in 1849 to provide the area with a more reliable source of water.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

The official residence of Bermuda's governor, **Government House** is generally not open to the public, but with its hillside location it can readily be seen from North Shore Rd. Built in 1892 on the 112ft Langton Hill, this stately stone house rimmed with verandas

has more than 30 rooms. It was on the 33-acre estate grounds that governor Sir Richard Sharples, along with his bodyguard and the Great Dane that Sharples was walking, were gunned down by an assassin on March 10, 1973.

For more than a century, dignitaries visiting Government House have traditionally been invited to plant a tree ceremonially. More than 100 of these commemorative plantings dot the grounds, including a mango tree planted in 1880 by the future King George V, a princess palm planted by Ethiopian King Haile Selassie in 1963, and a queen palm planted by Queen Elizabeth in 1994.

## Activities

### TENNIS

**WER Joell Tennis Stadium** (☎ 292-0105; Bernard Park, Marsh Folly Rd; court per hr adult/child \$8/4; 🕒 8am-10pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun), a government-run facility, has three clay and five plexicushion courts. Racquet rentals cost \$5 an hour, a ball machine can be rented for \$45 an hour, and lessons are available at \$60 an hour. At night, there's an additional \$8 fee to light the courts.

### DIVING

**Deep Blue Dive** (☎ 292-0080; deepbluedive@ibl.bm; 91 North Shore Rd; dive \$65; 🕒 9am-5pm) operates out of Mazarine by the Sea guesthouse. This dive shop specializes in offering diving courses, with everything from a two-day crash course (\$200) that gives you the basics of diving to an open-water certification course (\$375) that takes four days and covers everything necessary to make you a registered diver.

### UNDERCOVER AT THE PRINCESS

Tourism ground to a halt in Bermuda during WWII, but that didn't mean the island's hotels were shuttered. On the contrary, they were brimming with activity as Bermuda, with its strategic mid-Atlantic location, became a center for Allied military intelligence operations.

The brain center of it all was the Princess Hotel, which was taken over by British intelligence agents, who turned the hotel's basement into their operations center. There, tucked out of view, scores of codebreakers interpreted correspondence passing between the USA and Europe in an effort to uncover Axis espionage operations and decode secret messages. At its height the operation employed more than 1000 people – many of them single English women who quietly left their towns in the UK and worked clandestinely at the Princess without any contact with friends and family back home.

Today, as you wander through the posh resort, you can imagine the hundreds of workers set up in their below-ground digs, painstakingly opening suspected mail without damaging the seal, examining the letter and then quickly getting it back into circulation.

## Sleeping

Most of the places to stay in Pembroke are at the south side of the parish. Because this is also the closest accommodation to the City of Hamilton's business district, these places, particularly those with kitchen facilities, are often booked heavily by foreign business-people who sometimes reserve a unit for months at a time. The accommodations at the north side of the parish are a bit further afield and hence tend to be easier to book.

### WEST OF HAMILTON

The western outskirts of the City of Hamilton has a waterfront dominated by the Fairmont Hamilton Princess hotel. Inland from the Princess is a quiet neighborhood of wealthy homes that includes several small hotels and guesthouses. Collectively, these hostleries offer a fine variety of accommodations, ranging from moderate to upscale. All are within a 10-minute walk of the city center.

**Royal Palms Hotel** (☎ 292-1854, in the USA ☎ 800-678-0783, in Canada ☎ 800-799-0824; www.royalpalms.bm; 24 Rosemont Ave; r winter/summer from \$185/195; 🍷 🍷 🍷) A real jewel, this intimate family-run hotel brims with pleasant personal touches and breakfast is included. The main house, a lovingly restored c 1903 mansion, has 13 guestrooms decorated with tasteful Victorian furnishings. A newer section, constructed in a similar period architectural style, has suites and cottages with kitchen facilities. The superb Ascots restaurant is located on site, so if you're around at lunch or dinner you're in for a treat.

**Fairmont Hamilton Princess** (☎ 295-3000, in the USA & Canada ☎ 800-441-1414; www.fairmont.com/ham

ilton; 76 Pitts Bay Rd; r winter/summer from \$259/349; 🍷 🍷 🍷) As Bermuda's oldest luxury hotel, opened in 1884, this venerated place has hosted presidents, princes and such luminary travelers as Mark Twain. But don't expect cobwebs – this grand ole dame hasn't been sitting on its laurels. Now a favorite among high-end business travelers, the Princess does a fine job at combining period charm with modern conveniences, offering everything from voice mail to fitness facilities. The harborside locale is not suited for swimming, but free transportation is provided to its sister hotel, the Fairmont Southampton, where there's a splendid beach.

**Sunflower** (☎ 296-0523; inkdrops@northrock.bm; 31 Rosemont Ave; s/d \$125/140; 🍷) This cozy studio in the home of Tricia Thompson-Browne is compact but has full amenities including a 'micro-kitchen' suitable for preparing simple meals, and a shaded patio. The hospitality and decor are on par with pricier places in this exclusive neighborhood. All in all, if you don't need extra elbow room, Sunflower is a cheery affordable choice and there are no additional taxes or gratuities added to the bill.

**Rosedon** (☎ 295-1640, in the USA ☎ 800-742-5008; www.rosedonbermuda.com; 61 Pitts Bay Rd; r winter/summer from \$150/210; 🍷 🍷 🍷) This romantic hotel offers the inviting character of a genteel guesthouse. The grand main house, built in 1906, has a cozy living room with fireplace, where complimentary afternoon tea is served, and a couple of delightful 2nd-floor guestrooms with Victorian furnishings and four-poster beds. Equally comfortable but less atmospheric are the rooms in the modern two-story wings that flank the pool and gardens behind the house. Breakfast is included.

**Oxford House** (☎ 295-0503, in the USA ☎ 800-548-7758, in Canada ☎ 800-272-2306; www.oxfordhouse.bm; Woodbourne Ave; s/d winter \$145/170, summer \$165/190; 🍷) Yep, another lovely mansion glowing with old-fashioned charm. This classic family-run B&B inn has lovely Victorian decor and attentive service that matches the setting. As a matter of fact, things are so nice here that the place consistently wins tourism awards. Breakfast is included.

**Edgehill Manor** (☎ 295-7124; www.bermuda.com/edgehill; 36 Rosemont Ave; s/d winter \$140/160, summer \$156/180; 🍷 🍷 🍷) An agreeably down-to-earth atmosphere and comfortable rooms characterize this small guesthouse. The nine rooms vary, but each is pleasant and sports

full amenities including a refrigerator; a couple of rooms even have kitchens. Breakfast is provided. The upstairs rooms have balconies with fine hilltop views. Discounts are available for longer stays.

**Waterloo House** (☎ 295-4480, in the USA ☎ 800-468-4100; www.waterloohouse.com; 100 Pitts Bay Rd; r winter/summer from \$210/265; 🍷 🍷) Period decor and pampering service set the tone at this quiet harborside hotel just a few minutes west of central Hamilton. Part of the up-market Relais et Chateaux chain, Waterloo House encompasses a restored 19th-century manor house and has 32 cushy rooms. For an extra \$75 you can add on a stunning water view.

**Fordham Hall** (☎ 295-1551; fordham@northrock.bm; 53 Pitts Bay Rd; r winter/summer \$140/150; 🍷 🍷) This informal guesthouse occupies a 19th-century manor house just beyond the Princess hotel. The guest rooms are simple but the common areas include a spacious guest lounge and a breakfast room overlooking Hamilton Harbour. Breakfast is included in the price. One caveat – the guesthouse is on a stretch of busy Pitts Bay Rd that doesn't have a sidewalk, so the walk to town will be partly in the street. Breakfast is included.

**Rosemont** (☎ 292-1055, in the USA ☎ 800-367-0040; www.rosemont.bm; 41 Rosemont Ave; studio/apt \$170/200; 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷) Popular with return visitors, the 47 units in this family-run apartment complex have all the conveniences of home, including full-size kitchens. Little extras include complimentary coffee and newspapers, and free local phone calls. The roomy apartments are spiffier than the studios and well worth the extra \$30.

### NORTH PEMBROKE

The following places are in residential neighborhoods north of the City of Hamilton. They are about 10 minutes from town by bus or scooter or 20 minutes on foot.

**Mazarine by the Sea** (☎ 292-1690; mazarinebythesea@ibl.bm; 91 North Shore Rd; r winter/summer from \$90/125; 🍷) If you like water views, this comfy guesthouse, perched above the water's edge, has it all. You can literally walk down cliffside steps in the backyard and start snorkeling. There's no sandy beach but even the pool boasts an ocean view. And, oh yes, despite the affordable price the units have everything you'll need from kitchens to phones. Mazarine by the Sea

shuts down for a month each year from mid-October through mid-November.

**La Casa Del Masa** (☎ 292-8726; fax 295-4447; 7 Eves Hill Lane; unit #130; 🍷 🍴) Set atop a small but steep hill, La Casa Del Masa will give you legs a little exercise and reward your eyes with a panoramic view of the north shore and the azure waters of the Great Sound. Spacious and modern, each of the three units has a bedroom with two double beds, a separate kitchen and full amenities. Guests share a patio and can enjoy a cook-out at the barbecue grill by the pool.

**Robin's Nest** (☎ 292-4347, in the USA ☎ 800-637-4116; robinsnest@cwbd.com; 10 Vale Close; 1-1/2-bedroom unit #125/175; 🍷 🍴 🍷) In a quiet neighborhood on a little side road, this place has four apartments that are neat as a pin and it's a good option if you want to be a bit off the beaten path. Lots of nice touches, such as ceiling fans (if you don't want to use the air-con) and cable TV.

## Eating

All of the places listed in this section are just west of the City of Hamilton, with the exception of La Coquille, which is on the eastern outskirts of the city. In addition, visitors can take advantage of the full array of restaurants in Hamilton, which is within walking distance of most Pembroke accommodations.

## RESTAURANTS

**Ascots** (☎ 295-9644; 24 Rosemont Ave; lunch \$15-25, dinner \$35-55; 🍷 lunch & dinner; 🍷 🍴) If you're looking for a splurge, this stylish restaurant in the Royal Palms Hotel is the place to head. The cuisine is award-winning, the service is unsurpassed and the wine list is among the island's best. The menu includes continental fare such as tarragon-grilled lamb, as well as local favorites, including a delicious pan-fried rockfish topped with bananas and rum. There are also a few vegetarian items on the menu and there's always a fresh fish-of-the-day special at lunch.

**Aggie's Garden** (☎ 296-7346; 108 Pitts Bay Rd; dishes \$10-14; 🍷 10am-3pm Mon-Fri; 🍷) Café tables on the waterfront lawn and homemade organic dishes await the lucky diners who find their way to this delightful little spot. So incredible is the food here that heavyweights like *Food & Wine* magazine discovered owner/chef Judith Wadson's restaurant shortly after it opened. The ingredients change

seasonally with whatever's fresh, but such things as pumpkin-ginger soup and lemon-roasted chicken spice up a menu that also includes crispy fresh salads.

**Monty's Restaurant** (☎ 295-5759; 75 Pitts Bay Rd; breakfast & lunch \$7-12, dinner \$20-26; 🍷 breakfast, lunch & dinner; 🍷 🍴) A cheery lime-green interior and local food with a creative twist are the hallmarks of this island favorite. Breakfast features just about anything that can be done with an egg, and at lunch you'll find juicy burgers and tasty wrap sandwiches. There are lots of fun choices at dinner, including a delicious mango Caribbean chicken served with rice and peas.

**La Coquille** (☎ 292-6122; 40 Crow Lane; appetizers \$15-20, mains \$22-40; 🍷 dinner; 🍷 🍴) A quiet harborfront location and good French Provençaise cuisine make a winning combination for a romantic night out. Seafood is the pièce de résistance. If asparagus and lavender-marinated salmon or grilled tuna truffle in a merlot sauce sound good, then you're in for a treat. Ask about the four-course menu (\$65). The restaurant is at the east side of the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute.

**Waterloo House** (☎ 295-4480; 100 Pitts Bay Rd; lunch \$12-20, dinner \$28-40; 🍷 lunch & dinner; 🍷 🍴) The formal English-style dining room at the Waterloo House hotel has a harbor view and a solid international menu. Dishes such as herb-crusted lamb and pan-seared tandoori sea bass are just a couple of the award-winning dinner options. Men are required to wear jackets and ties at dinner. Lunch, served on the harborside terrace, is a less fastidious affair.

**Ristorante Primavera** (☎ 295-2167; 69 Pitts Bay Rd; lunch \$12-20, dinner \$18-30; 🍷 lunch Mon-Fri, dinner nightly; 🍷 🍴) Traditional Italian fare, from cheese-laden lasagna to fresh seafood marinara dishes, is the specialty in this reputable restaurant. It has jumped on the sushi trend too, but stick with the Italian options and you won't go wrong.

**Fairmont Hamilton Princess** (☎ 295-3000; 76 Pitts Bay Rd; 🍷 lunch & dinner; 🍷) This elegant hotel has several restaurants, including the waterside Harley's Terrace for alfresco dinner dining and the lobby-side Heritage Court for light eats, cocktails and afternoon tea.

## GROCERIES

**Miles Market** (☎ 295-1234; 90 Pitts Bay Rd; 🍷 7:30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun) Around the back of the

'Waterfront' building, this is hands-down the island's best grocery store, with an impressive selection of imported items ranging from Indian nan to free-range chicken. It's also a splendid place for take-out fare, with a deli making sandwiches and gourmet-quality grilled salmon, a superb salad bar and luscious bakery pastries and breads.

## Entertainment

**Fairmont Hamilton Princess** (☎ 295-3000; 76 Pitts Bay Rd; 🍷) Join the crowd of businesspeople that flocks to Friday happy hour (5pm to 9pm) at Harley's Terrace for half-priced drinks, free hors d'oeuvres and reggae music. Nice harbor view too. The hotel's Heritage Court, overlooking the posh lobby, has piano music and a vocalist on the weekends.

**Beebe's** (☎ 292-6122; 40 Crow Lane) This sophisticated lounge at La Coquille restaurant is a great place to watch the yachts sail in and out of the harbor as you linger over a rum swizzle. On Friday and Saturday nights, there's a DJ and dancing.

For other entertainment in the nearby area, see p59.

## Getting There & Around BUS

Several buses (p155) run through Pembroke Parish, all departing from the bus terminal

in the City of Hamilton. Distances are short, with the longest bus ride – between the City of Hamilton and Spanish Point – taking just 12 minutes.

Bus No 4 runs west from the City of Hamilton along St John's Rd to Spanish Point Park and returns to Hamilton along North Shore Rd. Monday to Saturday the bus runs at least hourly from 8am to 6pm, but on Sunday there are only half a dozen runs.

Bus No 11, which terminates in the Town of St George, connects the City of Hamilton with the northeast coast of Pembroke via Blackwatch Pass. Monday to Saturday the bus runs from 6:45am to 11:45pm, with departures every 15 minutes at the height of the day, but as infrequently as once an hour in the early morning and during the evening. On Sunday bus No 11 runs once an hour from 7:45am to 10:45pm.

## MOTOR SCOOTER

Scoter rentals (p157) are available from **Smatt's Cycle Livery** (☎ 295-1180; Pitts Bay Rd), next to the Fairmont Hamilton Princess.

## TAXI

Taxis (p157) line up at the Fairmont Hamilton Princess and can be waved down along Pitts Bay Rd.

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