Taste of France

long the Rue Victor Hugo and the Rue de la Republique. shops are shuttered during lunch but the chefs are busy at Chez Gerard and La Bourgeoise. In nearby cafes, taxi drivers pause for

a Biere Lorraine and a Gauloise. Outside of town, Renaults and Peugeots spin past a modern airport or climb: coastal roads, passing through villages bedecked with fishing nets hung out to dry.

Is this the French Riviera? It could be, but the temperature is 80°, and you're only about four Caribbean Riviera, those tropical departements of France called Martinique and Guadeloupe, or. collectively, the French West/

were sleeping beauties, oblivious to their few visitors. Cruise passengers stopped by, but mostly to pick up French-perfumes at duty free prices. or perhaps to see the birthplace of Josephine, local girl made good, or volcano called Soufriere, or a

Pompeii closer to home.

Today the sleepers are awake and dressing for one of the biggest coming-out parties vet. Hotels are rising above the blue waters; the islands' first casino has opned: Riviera-style marinas are being built; white sails fill the harbors. New facilities abound for fine hours from New York: This is the swimming, gournnet dining, expanded sightseeing and shopping. Besides perfume, modern shops stock French crystal, china, silks, local art, rum and liquors.

For the true island-lover it is Until the mid 1960s, these islands just as well that these debutantes have not kept up with the Joneses. They have learned from others; tourism is taking shape here with-, out the all-too-common loss of what inspired it in the first place;

> Within three years, more than 1,000 new rooms are anticipated

for Martinique, Guadeloupe ail French St. Martin, many to L. ready this season.

On Martinique, two big project are making debuts: the 600-capa city Club Mediterranee at Ste Anne, one of the Caribbean loveliest beaches, and the long awaited Hilton, with 154 rooms, on the a bluff overlooking the sea a milefrom Fort-de-France.

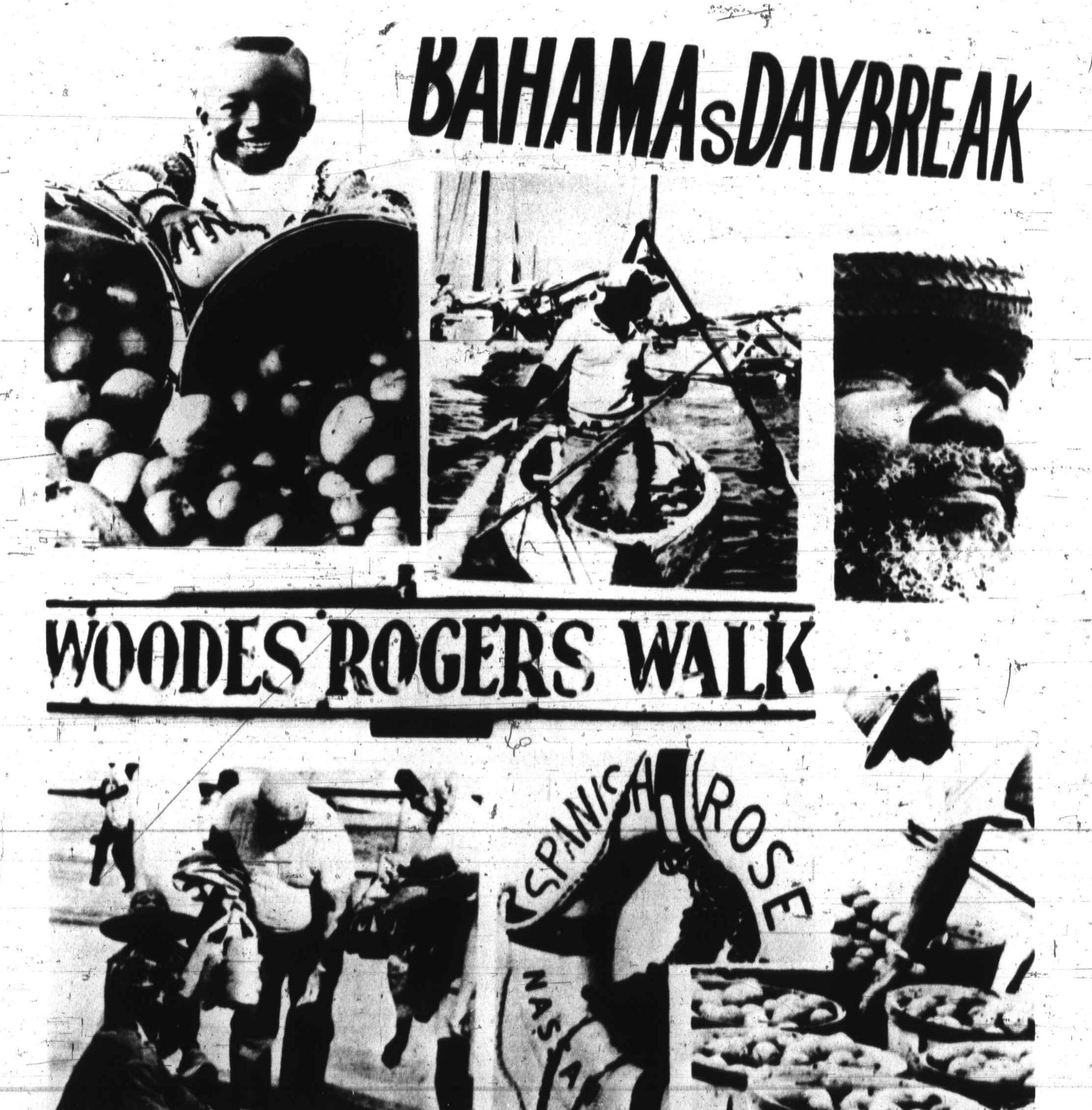
Across the bay from the capital. Le Bakoua, the island's first luxury hotel, is enlarging to 99 rooms.

n entirely French ambiance permeates this resort—delicious food served with finesse: bikinis at beachside, the babble of French from children splashing in the pool. Sitting on the terrace looking out to Fort-de-France and the misty green Pitons-du Carbet beyond, one has a sense of vacaioning on the Cote d'Azur—and then some. For the true perfumes of these islands are not those on sale in the shops but the heady scents of rum, pineapple and sugar cane. And the islanders' Créole patois has lilt and easy-going charm that makes pure French seem almost

This feeling follows one everyisland's original tourist hotel; at the Anse Mitan, a relaxed, familystyle retreat, or at the Hotel Cap Est, on a promontory fading the Atlantic. It even trails you to the fairways Martinique's first golf course is a 9-hole green at the deluxe Diamond Roc, opened last year.

special kind of atmosphere. awaits visitors to Martinique's chic but inexpensive little "inns," formplantation houses that now take guests. Two of the most appealing are Le Manoir de Beauregard and La Valle Heureuse, whose rooms are a decorator's dream-toilecovered walls, exquisité antique furnishings and 18th-century prints.

On Guadeloupe, the room count is also up for this winter. The posh Caravelle at Ste-Anne has expanded to 175 rooms and increased beach. Biggest news here is the opening of the French Caribbean's first casino, an élegant room featuring American roulette, blackjack, dice, baccarat chemin-de-fer -and no slot machines. Nearer the main city of Pointe-a-Pitre, the friendly and comfortable Auberge de la Vieille Tour has doubled itssize. Perennial favorites such as Au Grand Large and Au Grand Corsaire have spruced up for the season, as has Les Alizes at Moule, a recent hotel with all kinds of tourist amenities, including golf.



In the Bahamas the sun rises to cast a halo of light over the bustling activity of Nassau, capital of the resort archipelago. Among early morning scenes awaiting the tourists' cameras are shown here. A smiling boy handles some of the ffesh tropical fruit brought in daily from the Out Islands. A fisherman negotiates through rows of picturesque native sloops. A weathered Mariner gazes pensively at the sky. And on Woodes Rogers Walk, the market range of Nassau, cruiseship passengers select from a vendor's array of exquisitely colored conch shells.

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