



the Daily *frontrow*



Jean-Marc Houmard On His Hotel In Nicaragua, And More.



Tell us about your chic hospitality project, Tribal Hotel.

An old friend of mine from Switzerland whom I've worked with for many years in New York decided to move to Nicaragua three years ago. It was a completely new destination to me, and I thought it was really interesting. When I was younger, I thought of it as a place going through civil war—not really the best place to spend a holiday. But it's changed so much in the past 15 years. I thought it was really a good opportunity to do something in such a new country.

What's the appeal?

Nicaragua is a big surfing destination, so this cool Montauk surfer posse goes down there on a regular basis. The hotel I have is not on the beach, though; it's in Granada, on a lake. I'm actually looking now at spots on the

beach to maybe open a second hotel. That way visitors can have a perfect trip: spend a few days in a Colonial town, and then surf for a few days at the beach.

Did you ever expect to get into hospitality?

It's sort of a dream: a small hotel in an exotic spot where you can spend some time out of New York. I love New York, I've lived in New York for almost thirty years and I love the city, but being able to town with an excuse—for business!—is kind of great. It's been going really well, we've got a lot of press. It only has seven rooms, but we were in Conde Nast

Traveler within the first three months of opening, and we were on the cover of Conde Nast Traveller [U.K.] last month. It's very encouraging to see the buzz Nicaragua's been getting and what we've done with just seven rooms.

Where might we find a Jean-Marc property open up next?

Central America would make the most sense. I hear great things about Belize, which is pretty untouched and kind of new as a destination. It's down the coast from Tulum, further south, but it's the same water. It's supposed to be really beautiful, so that's somewhere I'd look.