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Blue Parrot Hotel and Beach Club gets new owners, new look

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PlayamayaNews.com

Q. What's the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions the Blue Parrot?

A Mexican Caribbean institution on the Playa del Carmen beach; cool swings at the bar and an excellent place to party the night away.

A. All true for over 20 years. But some definite changes have been taking place. Suddenly there's a chic new Balinese-inspired beach club, imported lighting and furniture from exotic locations and...the Blue Parrot is the place to be in the Mexican Caribbean.

So, what's going on here?

For over 10 months, the Blue Parrot has been getting a major facelift and attitude adjustment. One look, and there's no doubt that the booming international party scene has hit a new level in Playa del Carmen. Who is

responsible for such a change after two decades? Enter new owners Tom Doody, and Pamela Robins.

Tom and Pamela first came to Playa del Carmen on their honeymoon in April 2002. When researching hotels, they quickly settled on the Blue Parrot, having heard about it from friends for years. Once they started to talk about their plan for a honeymoon at the Blue Parrot, there inevitably seemed to be somebody within earshot who had either heard of, or visited, the property.

A native of Chicago, Tom owned an agency that did groundbreaking brand marketing and public relations work for companies like Viacom, Polo Ralph Lauren, House of Blues, Hyatt Hotels, Diesel and many more. Prior to entering the corporate world of agency work, he'd been an innovator in the in nightclub event marketing, including a long stint in the legendary New York, Chicago and London-based club Limelight.

Pamela, growing up in New Jersey and working in Manhattan's advertising

industry, speaks with a strong sense of what she wants, and doesn't want, out of life.

Her early 20's were spent providing creative and client services in New York advertising agencies Saatchi & Saatchi, Grey Advertising and Cliff Freeman and Partners. A girl that thrives in entrepreneurial environments, Pamela founded her own Manhattan-based boutique advertising shop at 26 prior to starting her home accessories design firm Pamela Robins Designs, Ltd. Pamela's design work has been widely featured in "Glamour," "Bride," "Cosmopolitan," "Allure," "The New York Times Magazine," "Mademoiselle" and more.

Given their backgrounds in advertising and marketing, Tom and Pamela recognized a high level of consumer awareness for the Blue Parrot - a relatively remote hotel and club that didn't even advertise. Unable to foresee the adventure that awaited them, they married and set off on their Caribbean honeymoon.

After arriving in Playa del Carmen, the soon met the original founder and proprietor of the Blue Parrot and got

acquainted over a period of a few days. One thing led to another and they reached an agreement to take on the redo of the Blue Parrot as a consulting project.

So three months later, in July 2002, they liquidated most of the trappings of their urban lifestyles and moved thousands of miles out of their comfort zone to Playa del Carmen and set up shop.

Like many Playa residents, Pamela and Tom took a chance, followed a dream and embraced it with passion and enthusiasm. Their goal was to remake the Blue Parrot and put it on a par with other hip destinations they'd visited on the global boutique hotel and club circuit.

A self-professed fan of innovative American hotelier Ian Schraeger, Tom says, "Although the Blue Parrot had gotten a little rough around the edges by the time we arrived on the scene, we saw the potential. We wanted to maintain the uniqueness of the property, while building upon it." Pamela adds, "We saw a rare opportunity to take a diamond in the rough - with one of the most incredible beachfront loca-

tions in the world - and reinterpret it through our own vision." And ultimately it did become theirs. Through the natural progression and evolution of all things, they reached an agreement to acquire their former client's interest in the business and became full owners of the Blue Parrot Hotel and Beach Club in 2004.

In talking with them, it's clear that a large part of their success is due to the fact that Tom and Pam both relate strongly to their customers. They'd never consider implementing anything that they wouldn't appreciate as customers themselves and both have drawn deeply on their own experiences in recasting the Blue Parrot.

The remake has maintained the charm of the original Blue Parrot Hotel, while kicking it up a notch with the recent opening of the new Blue Parrot Suites in December. In designing the rooms for the twenty-three new units of the Blue Parrot Suites, Pamela chose personal faves

Tommy Bahama furniture and Pottery Barn kitchen and bathroom accessories. Cushy in-room amenities like 300 thread-count sheets and 29-inch flat screen Sony entertainment centers set the property apart from the pack. Says Pamela, "For me, the new Suites reflect where Playa del Carmen is going. We not only tried to keep pace, we wanted to lead the market with style and amenities."

By following their instincts and having a keen sense of what people want, Tom Doody and Pamela Robins have cultivated a hotel, club and property management business that has a lot of potential for growth. When asked about future plans and financials they politely defer from commenting, other than to say they are carefully considering a number of overtures for potential development and joint venture.

Stay tuned.

In the meantime, take a ride down to the beach and take advantage of being in Playa del Carmen, Mexico; home to one of the most stylish boutique hotel and beach club anywhere.

