



**Not all Resorts in a Chain are Created Equal**

If you are a regular reader of the Forest City Connection, you may recall my article last year praising my amazing experience at Secrets Akumal in Mayan Riviera, Mexico. Because of this incredible experience, my husband and I were very excited to book the newly opened Secrets Cap Cana in the Dominican Republic.

Cap Cana is a gated community approximately 10 minutes from the Punta Cana airport. Upon arrival at the gates, the lobby of the Secrets is about an additional 10 minute drive. We were greeted with a “Welcome home” and offered a cold towel and a glass of sparkling wine.

There are many wonderful aspects of this resort but in comparison, it fell short in more ways than one for a 5 star luxury property.

The property is beautiful and well laid out, getting from one place to another takes no time at all. The buildings themselves vary in sizes from 2 story bungalows to 6 story buildings and beautiful pools, one for the regular rooms and one for the upgraded Preferred Club guests plus a number of swim up rooms. Our room was in the Preferred Club section which included a private lounge, restaurant and beach area for these upgraded guests only. As for the beach..it was absolutely beautiful. Some people say, the best in the Caribbean with gorgeous turquoise water and soft white powder sand but unfortunately, it was red flagged every day so we did not chance a swim. The Preferred Club included many



Jennifer Chedore



**Blowes Travel and Cruise Centres Inc**

a tradition in travel since 1949

London (Byron) 519-472-3232

London North 226-289-2821

Strathroy 519-245-2201

And offices in Stratford – Mitchell – Listowel

TICO 1890474

upgrades with bath amenities, mini bar, room service menu. We were also assigned, Steve, our butler who really did nothing but worry about where we were going to have dinner each evening. Since dinner reservations are not required, I was a bit baffled with his concern. The last 3 days of our stay, we did not see him at all.

Our room was spacious with plenty of room for storage. The bathroom held a double sink, separate toilet and the largest shower that I have ever seen! No word of a lie, I have a whole bathroom in my house not much larger than that shower. The balcony had a love seat and a Jacuzzi tub and the closet contained that wonderful lock box where you place your dirty

room service dishes and the staff can access from the outside hallway to dispose.

The restaurants are where this resort was disappointing. The breakfasts, lunches and snacks were all good but the a la carte dinners were not. Service seemed disorganized and food was fair to poor depending on the restaurant. We also found that what was ordered from the menu was not necessarily what was on your plate. The menus were quite limited and seemed to be similar in many of the restaurants. Three of the six a la carte restaurants are open air which because of the constant wind, every item on the table was falling over or blowing into our food. It became



**Not all Resorts....Equal** (Continued)  
quite frustrating.

The largest issue of this resort is that although the staff always had a smile and offered to assist in working out a problem, it was never accomplished. We did return to address an unfixed issue and were assured again, that it would be solved personally by them. Again it went unresolved. After the third attempt, we gave up. I also at one point returned to my room to find our tip left for the maid gone but our room untouched. I wanted to make the Preferred Club manager aware of this but she seemed unconcerned. We are still unsure if the maid ever received any of the tips left for her. Other minor problems like staff knocking on the door when the light for 'do not disturb' was on, the upgraded mini bar being refilled only 4 times during our 7 night stay and the fact that one light switch fell out of the wall, the light in the closet would not shut off and the shower door would not close properly are all insignificant when they are the only issue but compounded together and with the others make for much less than a 5 star rating.

Regardless of these issues and the two days of rain, we did enjoy our Dominican Republic experience. For the most part, we were able to relax and enjoy ourselves but for a Secrets property, we did expect more. An interesting note is that I did have clients stay at Secrets Royal Beach, which is an older property in Punta Cana and they very much enjoyed their stay so I am hoping that this property just needs a bit of time to make it up to the quality that we come to expect with these unlimited luxury resorts. Although, this resort did not live up to my expectations, I would not hesitate to return to another Secrets property. I have however learned that not all Secrets Resorts are created equal which is why we appreciate all the feedback that our clients give us regarding their stay.

I would love the opportunity to work with you when planning your next vacation, so feel free to contact me at 519-472-3232 or email Jennifer@blowestravel.com