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The Ledgelets

SOMERSET BRIDGE BERMUDA

ALUMNI PROFILE **JOHN YOUNG III '89**

by Phil Riegel '87



JOHN YOUNG III '89 REMINDS ME OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE DOS EQUIS "MOST INTERESTING MAN IN THE WORLD" AD CAMPAIGN. HE HAS LONG HAIR, A FULL BEARD, EARRINGS, AND TATTOOS—THINK PIRATE...HE IS ALWAYS STYLISHLY DRESSED, WILL HAPPILY DISCUSS SUBJECTS AS DIVERSE AS POLITICS, SPORTS, OR ECONOMICS. HE PLAYS (AND WINS) IN INTERNATIONAL CROQUET TOURNAMENTS (YES, CROQUET!). HE WAS BORN IN JAMAICA TO A BERMUDIAN FATHER AND A GERMAN MOTHER, BUT GREW UP MOSTLY IN VERMONT. HE ATTENDED ELITE, INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN NEW ENGLAND, NAMELY EAGLEBROOK SCHOOL AND SUFFIELD ACADEMY. HE SKI-BUMMED IN COLORADO FOR YEARS, GOT A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, AND MOST RECENTLY STARTED A TRENDY BOUTIQUE GUEST EXPERIENCE IN BERMUDA.

“TAKE A STEP BACK IN TIME FOR A REFRESHINGLY SOPHISTICATED ISLAND HOLIDAY AT SOOTHING, RESTFUL STATE OF RELAXATION. WAKE TO THE CHIRPING BIRDS, AND TERRACE HAVE BEEN CREATED WITH A MODERN VINTAGE, BOHO-LUXE VIBE.



John admits he found his way to Suffield Academy by chance. He was given the option of attending public or private middle school and chose to participate in a one-day tour as a visitor to the Harwood Union School in Vermont. After that one day he knew it was not for him and followed a cousin to Eaglebrook. For 10th grade, he and his father looked at many schools but Bill DeSalvo, then Suffield’s director of admissions, made a great impression on them. John recalls, “I fell in love with the school. The tuition was a great deal of money for my dad, but he knew what a tremendous opportunity it was for me. I had amazing teachers and coaches. I particularly remember Joe Connors, Mason Nye, and Bill Butcher. They were ‘arm over the shoulder’ kind of guys who kept me in line. I was also remarkably fortunate to have Andy Lowe, Bill Berghoff, and Tom Slear as coaches, and swimming became a big part of my life.”

Upon graduation, John matriculated at the University of Vermont in Burlington. He remembers being unprepared for the newfound freedom and large auditorium style classes he found as a freshman at UVM, and eventually decided to ski and work for a couple of years in Vail, Colorado. This is where he first started to hone his skills in the hospitality industry, working for Vail Village Inn and Vail Racquet Club. He ultimately returned to Vermont, finished his degree, and remained in the hospitality industry working for Sugarbush Ski Resort and Top Notch Resort at Stowe. In 2002, after more than 15 years away, John returned home to Bermuda to continue his hospitality career. John was last Director of Residence Club Operations of the exclusive Rosewood Tucker’s Point in St. George’s and resigned in 2013 to

do what he loves best on the property his grandparents loved so much and left to him. The Ledgelets Cottage Colony is located in Sandys Parish in Bermuda. It is the westernmost parish of nine on the island and contains Dockyard, where all the action will be this June in the 35th America’s Cup. The very first race of the America’s Cup was held off the coast of England in 1851, making it the oldest and most sought after trophy in international sport. This is the first time it will be contested in Bermuda—on the Great Sound, a natural amphitheater for viewing the race on land or by boat.

John’s family has been in Sandys for 275 years. His grandfather, also John Young, settled into The Ledgelets property in the late 1930s, and a unique cottage colony was born as he began to host paying guests on a whim. The Ledgelets Cottage Colony officially opened to guests in 1948. In fact, John began our interview by describing his grandfather with great reverence. He recalled, “My grandfather was a remarkable man and had a huge impact on my life. He always encouraged me to be who I was, and do what I thought was right without too much outside influence. He had an exceptional life story but always remained a humble and generous person who made people feel great about themselves. At 13, he left school to work and support his four sisters. By 1936, he made the Bermudian Olympic Swimming team and headed to the games in Berlin. He would also make the 1946 team for the games in London following the end of World War II. The amazing story that has been told hundreds of times is that he would swim from Somerset to Hamilton and back each day for training.”

THE LEDGELETS COTTAGE COLONY. THE SERENE ATMOSPHERE INSTANTLY LULLS YOU INTO A FALL ASLEEP TO THE CHORAL TREE FROGS. THE REFURBISHED COTTAGE INTERIORS AND POOL TO US, NOSTALGIA IS A VERY COOL THING.” [FROM THELEDGELETS.COM/THE-STORY]

John and I were sitting in the main salon of his grandparent's former home as we spoke, and I could see and feel the history of his family. John continued, "My wife, Alie, and I want this room to exist as a tribute to my grandparents. We want it to be a place where our guests can congregate, have an evening cocktail, arrange a family dinner, or just relax and play pool or watch a game." The feel of the salon is chic 1960s. I had a hard time focusing on just one thing as it is all so interesting and unique. Porcelain figures, paintings, croquet trophies, antique furniture, and original Bermuda Cedar liquor lockers for the guests all combine with soothing Brazilian bossa nova in the background to make the space extremely inviting.

The Ledgelets is a "step back in time," retro, unique, all at once a private and communal vacation experience. It pays homage to the way people used to spend time in Bermuda (and to John's grandparents), while making available opportunities on the island in a way that few other hospitality outlets choose to. John and Alie serve as personal concierges with the knowledge and ability to steer people in the right direction. John commented, "Bridge and afternoon tea just don't cut it anymore. If tourism in Bermuda is going to thrive, we must offer unique vacation opportunities. The difference between the Ledgelets and the large hotels on the island is that we are encouraging our guests to get out and experience the island with our expert guidance, while one of the main goals of the big hotels is to try and keep their guests on the property to increase revenues for themselves. It's not a bad model if you are looking for the all-inclusive, but there is an untapped market of people who want adventure. There

are so many things to do for all age groups. We have some of the best golf courses with amazing views. Bermuda also has a unique history that can be found in our museums, and there is always shopping, food, and the beaches! But what is really interesting is that we are seeing a peaked interest in rock climbing, cliff diving, mountain biking, spear fishing, deep sea fishing, and scuba diving. These are just a few of many examples of activities that we can arrange for our guests. We know many of the purveyors, and we truly believe this is what people are looking for. They need to get out and experience the real Bermuda."

I was privileged to experience the "new" Ledgelets first hand as a guest of John, Alie, and their beautiful daughter Hinson (Suffield Class of 2033), on my most recent visit to the island for our annual Suffield Academy reception, graciously hosted by Peter and Ann Durhager, parents of Hannah '17 and Meg '18.

My abode was "The Pool House," and I was greeted by a handwritten welcome card and a pitcher of rum swizzle. The Pool House is a tastefully decorated one-bedroom home with everything you need for a couples get-away. The covered porch overlooks the pool and gardens and is as private as you would want, but with John and Alie just next door if you should need anything.

John and Alie hope to ultimately have three guest cottages open by the end of next year. If you love Bermuda and are looking for a new way to experience the island, or if you have never been, I guarantee a unique and enjoyable stay. John's enthusiasm for

his home island is infectious, and his knowledge of Bermuda and tourism is vast. I hope to head back very soon! 🍷

