*Ambergris Caye: Of Perfume and Paradise*

***A Brief History***

The largest of Belize’s 200+ islands is the inconspicuous, Ambergris Caye. While describing the island with those adjectives must seem dichotomous it is nonetheless factual. An aerial view of the atoll reminds one of a spiny backbone separated by disc-shaped lagoons of gray mangroves. The 25-mile beach runs parallel to the Barrier reef, and some portions become invisible during the low tide. Hence, it is quite easy to miss. In fact, Ambergris Caye is so unobtrusive that a Mexican expedition during the late 1800’s searched several days before catching a glimpse of the island.

*Ambergris Caye* is a quite unusual name for an exotic tourist destination, yes? The island was named such due the plentiful ambergris found behind the reef. Used in perfumes and fragrances such as musk, this grayish-black substance is digestive matter produced by sperm whales either by regurgitation or secretion. Ancient Egyptians burned it as incense while today in Egypt ambergris is used to flavor cigarettes. During the Black Plague era in Europe people believed that ambergris’ aroma would ward off the disease as the fragrance masked the smell of the air, which was rumored to carry the plague. Today ambergris is still used as an ingredient in some perfumes, but since the sperm whale is on the “Vulnerable Specie” list only ambergris that has naturally washed ashore is suitable.

***A Delightful Destination***

From snorkeling and diving among the coral reef to exploring the Mayan ruins and limestone caves, Ambergris Caye has it all. Let us not forget the fabulous fishing, kayaking, parasailing and hiking opportunities that await the visitor! Incidentally, there is a luxury **resort on Ambergris Caye** called Las Terrazas―a simply enchanting island retreat. This island retreat is located on one of the most striking private beaches Belize has to offer. Snorkel, dive or fish in the shimmering turquoise waters or visit the resplendent Serenity Spa and Wellness Center for a bit of pampering. If the aforementioned activities don’t strike your fancy, opt for zip lining, cave tubing, and a stroll through the Mayan Ruins instead. As well, you are always invited to build a sand castle or simply nap on the beach!

Another fabulous **resort on Ambergris Caye** is the Coco Beach resort located just over three miles from San Pedro Town. This popular island resort offers day trips sailing, guided eco-tours both on the mainland and Ambergris Caye. In addition, golf carts, bicycles and boat rides are available to take you to San Pedro Town should you get the urge to shop and explore the town center.

Ambergris Caye doubles as an island rich in history and a pristine tropical playground. No matter which **resort on Ambergris Caye** you choose, you are sure to appreciate the tranquility and activities that Belize and Ambergris Caye have to offer.