

TOURISM file

Compiled by the Barbados Tourism Authority



BARBADOS
Tourism Authority

DR GEORGE AND MICHELLE NAUMBURG, two of the most loyal devotees imaginable of the Barbados product, were recently inducted by the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA) into the island's Over 25 Visits Club.

The induction took place at The Sandpiper and was organised by BTA marketing executive Maria Bovell under the watchful eye of Russell Croney, general manager of the hotel.

Hailing from New York, in the United States, the Naumburgs were, in fact, on their 50th visit to the island and on their 40th stay at The Sandpiper. Birthday and wedding anniversaries joined in the mix to make this four-month stay a truly memorable one for the retired psychoanalyst and his wife, a former Broadway and television actress originally from Philadelphia.

Barbados was recommended to them for a visit by a Barbadian friend Barbara Alleyne, and the Naumburgs decided to check it out while on a cruise of the Caribbean. In those days, the ship overnights in Barbados so the Naumburgs had plenty of time to look around. Michelle told her husband: "I think this is the one."

The Naumburgs still have the clipping from that first visit when the *Advocate* newspaper interviewed them, an exuberant couple. "I think I must have shown my love for the island from the very first time," said Michelle, smiling.

Although the Naumburgs loved the Caribbean in general, they loved Barbados in particular. Asked what appealed to them most, they pointed to the Bajans, "the nicest and most interesting" people that they had encountered, and to the island itself – "its tranquility and size; its topography". "I felt something instinctively about the island that was wonderful," said Michelle.

For many of the early years, the Naumburgs would come to Barbados on cruises and either remain on the boat or stay at the Sandy Lane Hotel. Eventually, however, they decided that they wanted to stay longer in Barbados and were "looking for something smaller and more intimate".

Michelle's mother-in-law had visited Barbados in 1972, stayed at the newly opened Sandpiper Inn and recommended it highly. The Naumburgs came in 1974. Michelle is grateful to her mother-in-law for two things in particular – that recommendation and her husband.

At The Sandpiper, Michelle praised the O'Haras, the Capaldis and the Croneys to the heights. "They do a wonderful job," she said. She remembered patriarch "Budge" O'Hara fondly and commented favourably on the "incredible" repeat clientele of the hotel.

The Naumburgs considered that their most delightful memory of Barbados took place when the then manager of The Sandpiper, Michael Ramsay, came to say "Hello" to them the morning after they arrived the first time.

"He was so charming and so lovely," said Michelle, who is now godmother to Ramsay's son. Since Ramsay is nephew of popular comedian, the late Alfred Pragnell, the Naumburgs became friendly with this well known Barbadian as well.

Recounting a humorous incident involving Pragnell, Michelle said he was staying at their house in New York while they vacationed in Barbados. She recalled that one day at six o'clock in the morning, they received a call at their Sandpiper apartment.

"It was Alfred!" said Michelle gleefully. "He phoned to say that there was snow on Park Avenue!" She went on to admit that she



THE NAUMBURGS (seated front) celebrating their Barbados milestone with friends at The Sandpiper. (GP)

Naumburgs vacation lifestyle in Barbados

exclaimed sleepily to him: "But surely you've seen snow before!" "Yes," he answered, "but I've never seen it falling!" Michelle said that Pragnell was a "wonderful" guide to her and her husband when they were in Barbados.

Sightseeing is a major pastime of the Naumburgs, along with eating "a lot". They are always looking for "the perfect Bajan dinner". Michelle is also always searching for another cottage industry. "I love to roam," she said. She delights in talking about the artwork from Barbados that she has hanging on her walls in New York.

Questioned about their favourite places of interest in Barbados, the Naumburgs selected the museum in Speightstown, **Arlington House**. They also enjoyed the dining experience at the Fish Pot and Brown Sugar restaurants.

The fish fries in the north and the south of the island were also special in their eyes, as places "where you really see the Bajans". The **Holetown Festival** has a unique place in their hearts as they were involved in the original planning and supported Pragnell, the festival's founder.

Invited to share words of wisdom with the tourism principals, the Naumburgs expressed their belief that more public relations was



THE NAUMBURGS in their favourite location: The Sandpiper in Barbados. (GP)

definitely the way to ensure that Barbados remained visible in the marketplace. They also made their admiration known for the abundance of talent there was on the island and saw it as a massive opportunity for the country.

To the query: "Why would you recommend Barbados?", the Naumburgs replied: "You have to experience it yourself; it means so many different things to different people." They added: "It's not a vacation, it's a lifestyle."