

# Relax in Good Hands

**TRANQUILSEAS ECO LODGE & DIVE CENTER, SANDY BAY**

**F**OR THE TRAVELER WHO WANTS more than lying about in a hammock — although they've got plenty of those too — Tranquileas Eco Lodge & Dive Center will feed your mind as well as your soul.

British-born owner Chris Benson, 29, who built this tiny, jewel-like Eden from the ground up pretty much with his own two hands, is passionate about the environment. A horticulturalist by training, he's a careful steward of resources at Tranquileas, which takes its "Eco" seriously. He's also an enthusiastic promoter of the local marine park, and readily shares his knowledge with guests who want to better understand the fragile, complex network of natural systems

## Tranquileas Eco Lodge & Dive Center

[TRANQUILSEAS.COM](http://TRANQUILSEAS.COM)

» **PADI DIVE CENTER** with PADI instruction to Divemaster  
» **BOATS** *Rufaro* and *Olenka*, max eight divers each  
» **GUIDED DIVES** By instructor and divemaster, four to six divers per guide  
» **MAX DIVE TIME** None  
» **GAS MIX** Nitrox support off site  
» **RENTALS** Dive gear, computers and cameras  
» **STORAGE** On-site overnight storage  
» **ACCOMMODATIONS** Five cabanas

with air conditioning, refrigerators and private decks; largest is a three-bedroom, two-bath unit that accommodates 10  
» **AMENITIES** Restaurant and bar on site, with cuisine specials and entertainment; freshwater pool in tropical-garden setting; resort can arrange snorkel tours, windsurfing lesson, spa treatments and horseback riding  
» **RESERVATIONS** [tranquiloatan@yahoo.com](mailto:tranquiloatan@yahoo.com)

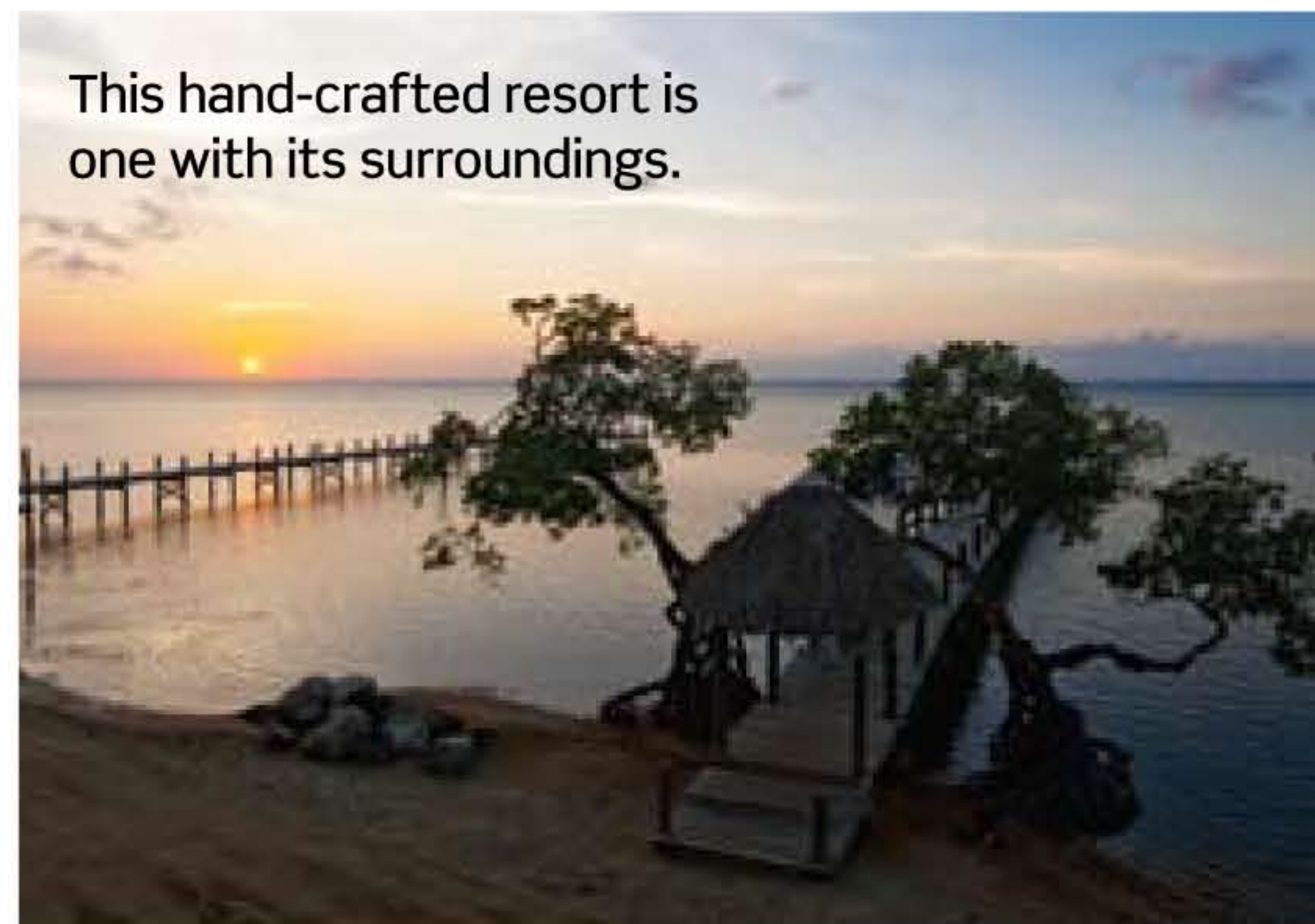
that make Roatan such a paradise.

Diving with Benson — whose on-site PADI Dive Center, Raruwa Dive Center, is as crisply organized as its owner's quick mind would suggest — is a lesson in marine biology. Unlike shops that are quick to drop you on the reef and get on with it, Benson and his team take time to teach guests about mangrove nurseries, why they're important and how their health influences the wonders of the reefs he's about to show you — and only you. "I've done the factory thing," he says. "If there's another boat on a site already, we go somewhere else." Armed with his super-fast, 26-foot 400-horsepower *Rufaro*, that's no idle promise.

But there's room for sensual pleasures here too. The wood-and-thatch resort's secluded tile pool beckons irresistibly, and the cuisine created by Benson's partner, Monica Giraldos, is among the best on Roatan — her weekly tapas night is an islandwide attraction. The resort's five cozy cabanas — Hummingbird, Eagle Ray, Tree Frog,



Big Bight Pinnacle's stone forest is minutes away in Tranquileas' *Rufaro*.



This hand-crafted resort is one with its surroundings.

Turtle and Octopus, all made from Honduran materials and decorated with local artifacts — are tucked into a hillside rich with tropical foliage nourished by a system that reuses all possible water. Each has a private deck perfect for doing nothing at all.

Benson's philosophy and his constant attention to the property make Tranquileas the relaxing haven it is today. His goal: "Keep it small and personal, and make it about their schedule, not my schedule."