

By AUSTIN CONSIDINE

THIS has not been a great year so far for the Caribbean tourism industry. Seven named hurricanes have hit the region this fall, with Gustav and Omar wreaking the most damage. An earthquake registering 6.1 rocked parts of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands. And, of course, the global financial meltdown has made Americans increasingly skittish about taking a vacation this winter. What's next, locusts?

Well, things haven't gotten that bad, and in fact, with new hotels continuing to open, high-end resorts raising the bar on amenities, family-oriented getaways expanding their offerings and talented chefs starting restaurants that are transforming the region's culinary scene, there are plenty of reasons for vacationers to seek some solace in the sand and surf of the Caribbean this winter.

Thirty-nine of them, in fact.

20 Also, on Grenada, an old favorite is back. **LASOURCE** (888-527-0044; www.theamazingholiday.com) has reopened this year after years of reconstruction following the wreckage caused by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. Set on Pink Gin Beach on the island's southwestern tip, the resort offers a relaxing atmosphere (no children under 16 are admitted most of the year), with room rates starting at \$315 per person, including daily spa treatments and a host of outdoor activities.