

Escape from Icy New York: Sun, Sea & Slams in Barbados

By Rita Thompson

When word spread that a bridge tournament would be held in Barbados, I didn't hesitate. A week of bridge and sunshine sounded like the perfect antidote to a brutal New York winter.



A lively group of bridge players from the Eastern and Southern Sections of the American Bridge Association joined more than 250 international participants -- mostly from the USA and Canada -- for the Sun, Sea & Slams Bridge Tournament, held February 9–14, 2026, at the Barbados Beach Club.

Our host, Roglyn Hinds, Tournament Chair and President of the Barbados Bridge League, shared that this beloved event is now in its 36th year. The organization was impeccable, and the

schedule left us plenty of time to enjoy the warmth, beauty, and culture of the island between sessions.

The week opened with a seminar by Barbara Seagram, the renowned bridge teacher and author who was born and raised in Barbados and returns regularly to teach and support the local bridge community.

When we weren't at the tables, we explored the island. A highlight was Harbour Lights, a beach club and entertainment venue on Carlisle Bay -- one of the most stunning stretches of sand in Barbados. Between relaxing on beach chairs and braving the surf (some of us were tossed around in the waves like rag dolls), it was a perfect Caribbean day.

We also enjoyed a private guided tour with Cynthia, a local expert who seemed to know every inch of the island. She even pointed out Rihanna's childhood home and the luxury condominium she now owns.



Dinner at Narma Restaurant was another standout. With its Mediterranean-Caribbean fusion menu, DJ, and live entertainment, it delivered both flavor and atmosphere.

An afternoon was spent at Garrison Savannah, Barbados' historic horse racing track, in operation since 1845 and home to the Barbados Turf Club. We even managed to pick a few winners.

No trip to Barbados feels complete without joining the crowds at the famous Oistins Fish Fry, where open-air stalls dish out perfectly seasoned Bajan fried fish, mahi-mahi, and snapper while live music and entertainment fill the night air.

The week concluded with a festive Awards Dinner, where winners of multiple events were recognized. Lynda Straker and Janice McBean won the Best Ladies Pair in the two-session Pelau Pairs; and Faye Hines and Annetta Wallace placed 2nd East/West in the



Friday morning pairs. Prizes awarded included prints by Virgil Broodhagen, a well-known local artist. It was also announced that the tournament hosted 585 tables this year -- 36 more than last year.

With the perfect blend of bridge, sunshine, culture, and camaraderie, one can't help but wonder: Are destination bridge tournaments becoming the next big trend in our community?