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Dan Klores Communications 386 Park Avenue South, 10th Fl. • New York, NY 10016 • Tel. (212) 685-4300 • Fax (212) 685-9024

Town & Country TRAVEL

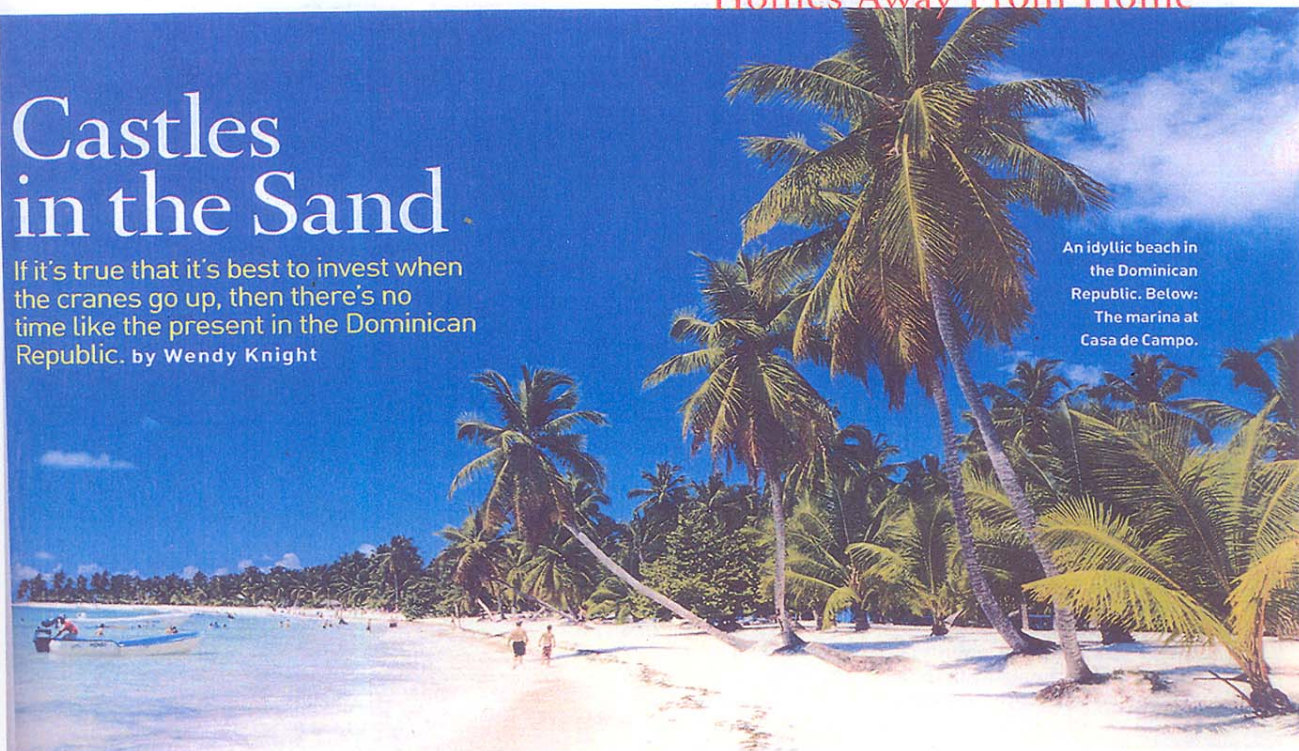
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Homes Away From Home

Castles in the Sand

If it's true that it's best to invest when the cranes go up, then there's no time like the present in the Dominican Republic. by Wendy Knight

An idyllic beach in the Dominican Republic. Below: The marina at Casa de Campo.



Powder white beaches and turquoise waters are a dime a dozen in the Caribbean—but how many places offer direct flights from New York, Paris and Buenos Aires *and* title to property? The easy access and flurry of development in the Dominican Republic are attracting a dazzling mix of investors, who are snatching up oceanfront and golf course properties before they're even built. These buyers aren't looking for a strong sense of place: holiday homes are predominantly within gated resorts that function much like mini municipalities. But as the government constructs highways to link the major resorts—Cap Cana, Casa de Campo and Punta Cana—with the capital, Santo Domingo, real estate values across the country are heading north.

Besides the established resorts, where high-end developments are constantly being



built, a few new players have entered the game. The luxury Westin Roco Ki Beach & Golf Resort is scheduled to debut by May, and Playa Grande, a private colony dreamed up by New York money manager Boykin Curry, is set to break ground soon. But unless you're one of the latter's thirty founding members, you won't be able to stay the night until a hoped-for Amanresorts boutique hotel opens in 2009. Until then, here are the best places to own a piece of paradise.