

COASTAL TRAVEL

festival that blends copious amounts of Irish music with dance, food, and drink. Located in the tiny coastal village of Lisdoonvarna, the monthlong love-in was created as a means for local farmers to meet potential wives via formal match-making sessions or at nightly musical events. The festival now attracts singles (and lovers of Irish culture) from all around Europe and North America; matchmakerireland.com.

WHILE YOU'RE HERE: Take the 90-minute ferry over to the Aran Islands, and then head out to hear traditional Irish music in the waterfront pubs of Doolin.

WHERE TO STAY: Perched beside the sea, Ballinalacken combines the ruins of a 15th-century castle and an 1840 manor house into a romantic hotel. Rates start at \$89; ballinalackencastle.com.

Jamaica CALABASH INTER- NATIONAL LITERACY FESTIVAL

May 25-27

The Caribbean's top literary fest brings together authors, poets, and songwriters to recite or sing their works

in open-air tents pitched on a goat pasture that overlooks Treasure Beach on the island's secluded south shore. Among past highlights were readings by Nobel Laureates such as Wole Soyinka, and musical tributes to the lyrics of Bob Marley; calabashfestival.org.

WHILE YOU'RE HERE: Cruise the nearby Black River Lower Morass on the lookout for the rare American crocodile, and cool off by the seven cascades of YS Falls.

WHERE TO STAY: Jakes Hotel, Villas & Spa personifies laid-back Jamaica with shabby-chic seaside villas (all of them individually decorated) and jungle bungalows near

the festival. Rates start at \$95; jakeshotel.com.

Martinique VAVAL

**February 18-22, 2012;
February 9-13, 2013**

The saints may go marching in at other carnival locales, but on this island in the French West Indies, the boisterous pre-Lent event revolves around the devil. Festivities kick off with a traditional carnival parade on *Dimanche Gras* (Fat Sunday), but carnival really heats up on the Day of the Devil, when everyone wears red and dresses in demonic costumes. The climax comes



Honor literary geniuses on Treasure Beach in Jamaica.