



CARIBBEAN

HOT SPOTS

The vast Caribbean Sea lays out a mirage of crystal-blue water inundated with idyllic island chains. From the scalloped coastlines of the British Virgin Islands in the north, to the chic Leeward Islands of St Barths and Antigua, and the Windward's St Lucia and Mustique, the islands boast a melting pot of different cultural influences. But one thing they do have in common is their myriad coves and bays, making them a haven for waterborne travelers. Combine a Caribbean cruise with a stay at one of the following truly irresistible island locations.

BY MIRIAM CAIN



ST BARTHS

With a distinctly French flavor, St Barths is the Leeward Island chain's most exclusive and elegant island. The Caribbean's take on the Côte d'Azur, this is the place to go for pristine beaches, calm waters and gourmet restaurants.

WHERE TO STAY

The fashionable Eden Rock Hotel is built on the craggy Eden Rock overlooking the stylish Baie de Saint Jean. Suites are named after previous guests, such as Greta Garbo and Howard Hughes, but the über-chic Villa Rockstar is the one to book. Built over three levels, the villa has four suites, a gym, cinema and recording studio – of course. *Contact Hotel Manager Sonia Tejero, +590 590 29 79 99, info@edenrockhotel.com, www.edenrockhotel.com.*

On the other side of the island, Hotel Guanahani & Spa is one of the island's only spa retreats, located away from the bustle of Saint Jean. *Contact General Manager Mark Theze, +590 590 27 66 60, reservations@leguanahani.com, www.leguanahani.com.*

A small hotel on the surf-beaten east coast, Hotel Le Toiny prides itself on its peaceful setting. *Contact General Manager Guy Lombard, +590 590 27 88 88, www.letoiny.com.* With just 14 chic one-bedroom cottages and a three-bedroom suite, you need to book early.

On the stunning Anse de Flamandes, the Hotel Saint Barth Isle de France is the ultimate retreat. Everything here is picture-postcard perfect – from the white décor and oversized beds, to the views from the terrace over the turquoise expanse below. *Contact Hotel Manager Christelle Hilpron, +590 590 27 61 81, hotel@isle-de-france.com, www.isle-de-france.com.*

WHERE TO EAT

For a Caribbean island, St Barths majors in gastronomy to satisfy the palettes of a Parisian, with much of the ingredients flown in fresh from France. For the finest cuisine, go to Le Gaiac at Hotel Le Toiny. *Contact Restaurant Manager Phillipe Caqsadamont, +590 590 27 88 88, legaiac@letoiny.com.* The On The Rocks restaurant at the Eden Rock Hotel also serves up a gastronomic feast and boasts panoramic views over the bay. *Contact Restaurant Manager Fabien Mandigou, restaurant@edenrockhotel.com, +590 590 29 79 99.*

For fusion cuisine, L'Esprit Saline, +590 590 52 46 10, is a fashionable spot with a daily changing menu, or for a quieter evening, Le Case de L'Isle at the Isle de France hotel prepares fresh grilled fish, fusion style. *Contact Restaurant Manager Frederic Dubrevil, +590 590 27 61 81, restaurant@isle-de-france.com.* Maya's, meanwhile, serves local Creole dishes in a local beach-style setting (+590 590 27 75 73). The chic beach shack Do Brazil (+590 590 290 666) on Gustavia's Shell Beach is perfect for a sundowner and fine ceviche, and for the freshest lobster on the island, try La Langouste. *Contact Restaurant Manager Michelle Le Fevre, +590 590 27 63 61.*

WHAT TO DO

St Barths' capital, Gustavia, is still duty-free, and the waterfront is lined with boutiques, the likes of Hermès, Prada, Miu Miu, Bvlgari and Valentino, among others, including Human Steps, Kokon, and Stephane & Bernard. For more eclectic stores in Saint Jean, Mia Zia has unique beachwear while Lolita Jaca is all glamour. Here you will also find La Casa del Habano, devoted solely to

Cuban cigars. For your personal shopping guide and consultation, Floriana Borgioli can guide you around the island's boutiques. *Contact Boutique Manager Floriana Borgioli at The Rock Shop, Eden Rock Hotel, +590 590 29 79 99.*

Needless to say it is the beach scene that attracts most visitors to St Barths. Beaches don't get much livelier than the cosmopolitan St Jean – the place to see and be seen. For surfers, Anse Toiny is St Barths' wildest beach, while Anse de l'Orient has a good point break offshore for surfers, and calmer waters within the reef for swimming. Anse de Colombier and Marigot are the least accessible and so remain quiet and ideal for snorkeling. Grand Saline and Gouverneur on the south coast attract nudist sunbathers (although officially nudity is prohibited on any beach in St Barths).

WHERE TO BOARD

The charming harbour of Gustavia is well sheltered and is an ideal stopping point for superyachts right in the heart of the Caribbean's most popular cruising grounds. The port has berthing for yachts of up to 196'/60m, including 35 berths for yachts between 82'/25m and 115'/35m, and 25 berths for yachts of 98'/30m and 197'/60m. New Year's Eve is the most popular time for superyachts coming to St Barths, but as berths cannot be booked in advance, owners bring them in earlier and earlier each year. During the day there is a grand regatta and in the evening a huge fireworks display over Gustavia. *Contact Dock Master Ernest Brin, +590 590 27 6697, port.de.gustavia@wanadoo.fr.*

RECOMMENDED

Sailing enthusiasts should try and be in the area during the island's regatta season. The end of March (24th to 27th March 2011) is when the island hosts the St Barths Bucket. A great excuse for large sailboat owners and their crews to get together for some fun sailing around the island. The regatta is by invitation only. Your charter broker can organize a spectator vessel for the regatta or you could even enter your own yacht and race – preference is given to yachts with the owner on board. The government of St Barths opens the fort above the harbor for the Sunday race – a great place to watch the spectacular event. *Contact Event Manager Holly Paterson, +1 401 743 47 26, holly@bucketregattas.com.*

ANTIGUA

Antigua's white-sand beaches are the island's primary attraction (there are 365 of them), but its appeal also lies in its colonial past – combined they have placed the island in pole position on the Caribbean cruising map.



EDEN ROCK HOTEL'S SAND BAR, ST BARTHS

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THE VERANDA BAR AT THE JUMBY BAY RESORT, ANTIGUA

WHERE TO STAY

Antigua has a showcase of stunning hotels. Located in the southeast, the Carlisle Bay resort is the perfect place to acclimatize to the unhurried pace of island life. All of the split-level villas overlook the gardens and beach, where facilities are in abundance. From fine cuisine at a choice of restaurants, to a stunning beach and pool, tennis courts, a gym and a Zen-like spa, the hotel has all you need. *Contact General Manager Jonathan Reynolds, +1 268 484 0000, info@carlisle-bay.com, www.campbellgrayhotels.com.*

The neighboring Curtain Bluff is an altogether more stalwart resort with a quintessential Caribbean style throughout its villas. *Contact Managing Director Robert Sherman, +1 268 462 8400, curtainbluff@curtainbluff.com, www.curtainbluff.com.*

Close to English Harbour, Nelson's Dockyard and Shirley Heights, the St James's Club is where the yachting crowd flocks. *Contact General Manager Alex Devito, +1 268 460 5000, www.stjamesclubantigua.com.*

Almost two miles from the mainland on its own private island, Jumby Bay has been transformed into a stunning world-class resort. Set on 300-acres, the resort has two new restaurants, a new spa, 28 new suites, and refurbished guest rooms. *Contact General Manager Andrew Headley, +1 268 462 6000, jumbybay@rosewoodhotels.com, www.jumbybayresort.com.*

WHERE TO EAT

The open-air restaurant at Harmony Hall in Brown Bay is worth a visit, not only for its fresh seafood dishes, but also for its art gallery, which sees a monthly show of exhibitions from local and international artists, +1 268 460 4120. The Antigua Yacht Club Marina down in Falmouth Harbor adds a welcome addition to Antigua's culinary scene. The restaurant serves up Italian-style cuisine accompanied by stunning views of the harbor

and yachts berthed in the marina. Both Harmony Hall and Antigua Yacht Club Marina restaurants are open for the winter season from November through to May. *Contact Restaurant Manager Elouise Green, +1 268 460 1797.* The aforementioned Carlisle Bay has two world-class restaurants on site. Try East for Japanese, Thai, Indian and Vietnamese, or Indigo on the Beach for an alfresco dining experience. *Contact Restaurant and Bar Director David Candillon, +1 268 484 0000.*

WHAT TO DO

Once the home to the British Royal Navy under Nelson's command, English Harbour and Nelson's Dockyard remains a visible symbol of England's powerful navy with Colonial naval buildings remaining intact.

Visit Betty's Hope, the site of Antigua's first sugar plantation, for a glimpse of a bygone era in its heyday. It was customary for all vessels passing the northeastern corner of the island to pay 18 shillings to the fort's captain at Fort James or risk having a shot fired across its bow. Today the fort still has a full complement of cannons.

Above English Harbour, the old fortifications of Shirley Heights are where locals and tourists flock. The Lookout Bar serves a strong rum punch accompanied by reggae, steel-pans and an evening of dancing.

WHERE TO BOARD

Antigua is the perfect place to embark or disembark on a cruise of the Caribbean's Leeward Island chain. The Antigua Yacht Club Marina in Falmouth Harbour has berths for yachts of up to 110m (360'), including 45 berths for yachts between 82'/25m and 114'/35m, and 35 berths for yachts over 98'/30m. The international airport is 15 miles away. Facilities include cafés, bars, restaurants (including the aforementioned Antigua Yacht Club Marina), boutiques and a supermarket. *Contact Marina Manager Pete Simmonds, +1 268 460 1544, aycmarina@candw.ag.*

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RECOMMENDED

For guests looking for the ultimate thrill, your charter broker can organize a private nail-biting, zip-wire ride on the Rainforest Canopy Tour, whisking you through treetops over a gorge. Not something for the fainthearted. *Contact Director of Operations Neil Keeling, +1 268 562 6363, arc@candw.ag.*

MUSTIQUE

For more than 40 years, the private island of Mustique has attracted the rich and the famous, who are drawn by the island's tranquil beauty, peace and privacy. Created by Lord Glenconner in 1958, the 14,000-acre island is reminiscent of another era.

WHERE TO STAY

The Cotton House, the sole hotel on the island, is located on 13 acres between Endeavour Bay in the Caribbean and L'Ansecoy Bay in the Atlantic. Originally built around an old stone barn used for storing cotton, the intimate hotel has just 20 rooms dotted around the tropical gardens of the main house. The public area has a quintessential Caribbean style with white wooden rafters and large white sofas, while the rooms have been recently updated with contemporary chic touches alongside their traditional colonial furnishings. *Contact General Manager Andreas Pade, +1 784 456 4777, reservations@cottonhouse.net, www.cottonhouse.net.*

For an even more intimate feel, Firefly is a tiny guesthouse overlooking Britannia Bay. *Contact Hotel & Restaurant Proprietor Stan Clayton, +1 784 488 8414, enquiries@fireflymustique.com, www.firefly-mustique.com.*

For those looking for a home-from-home, Mustique has an eclectic collection of villas. Out of the 100 or so island villas, 73 can be rented through The Mustique Company. Each villa is individual in its design – some were created by Oliver Messel, the British theatrical designer, and have sweeping verandas and colonial styling, others are Asian or contemporary designs – but they all have luxurious furnishings, modern conveniences and amenities and are complete with dedicated staff. *Contact Villa Services Manager Pippa Ona Williamson, +1 784 488 8000, villarentals@mustique.vc, www.mustique-island.com.*

WHERE TO EAT

Overlooking Endeavour Bay, the Beach Café at The Cotton House is a great spot for lunch and cocktails, and on a Saturday night the barbecue is a must. The Veranda, also at The Cotton House, is perfect for candlelit dinners. The menu is a combination of local cuisine with Mediterranean influences, from West Indian curry to grilled barracuda and tagliatelle with crab. *Contact General Manager Andreas Pade, +1 784 456 4777.*

Basil's Bar is the popular island hang out. From delicious daiquiris to freshly caught lobster, the bar sits on stilts above the water and is the perfect spot for a laid back Caribbean evening. Wednesday night is Jump Up and Barbecue night with live music – a time when you might find local fishermen sharing the tiny dance floor with international celebrities. *Contact Restaurant Manager Enoch Bacchus, +1 784 488 8350.*



MUSTIQUE FROM ABOVE



THE COTTON HOUSE, MUSTIQUE

Firefly has a quaint restaurant and cocktail bar serving French and Caribbean delicacies and plenty of fresh fish, as well as the house cocktail: the Firefly Special made with rum, nutmeg, papaya and coconut cream. *Contact Hotel & Restaurant Proprietor Stan Clayton, +1 784 488 8414.*

The Sweetie Pie Bakery bakes a vast selection of rustic breads, perfect for the famous Mustique picnic prepared by your villa cook.

WHAT TO DO

Mustique has plenty of walking and hiking trails and there is an equestrian centre and horse riding tracks, a tennis centre, where you can book a lesson with the island's tennis pro Richard Shaeffer, and a watersports centre with scuba diving, sailing and windsurfing.



The island's best-known beach is at Macaroni on the Atlantic side, a great spot for surfing. For calm Caribbean waters, Lagoon Beach on the Caribbean side of the island has calm shallow waters, and further along is the sheltered bay at Gellicieux. Set on the edge of Endeavour Bay, The Spa offers E'Spa treatments. *Contact Spa Manager Rockelle Matthews, +1 784 456 4777, www.mustique-island.com/spa.*

Britannia Bay is the hub of the island where you will find most of the shops. From beachwear and casual clothing in Basil's Boutique, and chic designer clothing, jewelry and gifts in Pink House (*contact owner/designer Lotty Bunbury, +1 784 488 8000*) and Purple House (*contact owner Suzy Schaeffer, +1 784 488 8000*), to furniture and accessories in Across Forever and gourmet cuisine in Basil's Gourmet Shop (*contact owner Basil Charles*), just about anything you need can be found on Mustique.

The island's managing company can also organize off-island activities, including fishing trips, golf (neighboring islands have several courses), and sailing.

WHERE TO BOARD

As a private island, Mustique does not have its own marina per se, but Britannia Bay is sheltered from the Trade winds and the island provides mooring buoys. *Contact Moorings Manager Berris Little, +1 784 488 8000.*

RECOMMENDED

For a fun way to get around the island hire a 'mule' (a small type of golf cart with a 1000cc engine).

ST LUCIA

Drifting beneath blankets of rainforest, St Lucia is one of the most naturally beautiful islands in the Caribbean. From the rugged terrain of the south where the Piton mountains soar out of the verdant landscape, to the white-sand beaches and pretty coves of the north, the island has great appeal.

WHERE TO STAY

St Lucia is dotted with idyllic resorts offering fantastic views and numerous activities. One of the most popular is the Anse Chastanet nestled into

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the hill with views over the Pitons. The individually styled rooms reflect conventional Caribbean décor with all manner of pastel colors, and there are no 21st-century gizmos and gadgets – simply fabulous snorkeling in the secluded cove and a Jungle Spa. *Contact General Manager Nick Troubetzkoy, +1 758 459 7000, nick@candw.lc, www.ansechastanet.com.*

Nestled between the Pitons in what must be one of the most impressive hotel locations in the Caribbean is The Jalousie Plantation. Recently refurbished, the resort is scattered over more than 100 acres of rainforest sloping down to a secluded white-sand beach (imported to replace the volcanic black sand). *Contact General Manager Andre Boersma, +1 758 456 8000, info@thejalousieplantation.com, www.jalousieplantation.com.*

Set in an equally desirable location, in what has been described as the most beautiful bay in the Caribbean, the Marigot Bay Hotel includes a marina, spa, fitness centre, restaurants, shops and several suites perched on the hillside overlooking the bay. *Contact General Manager Jim Allmand, +1 758 458 5300, jim@maigotbay.com, www.discoverystlucia.com.*

WHERE TO EAT

Local delicacies of St Lucia's Creole cuisine appear in several island restaurants in some form or another. One of the island's oldest known



THE MARIGOT BAY HOTEL AND MARINA, ST LUCIA

restaurants, Charthouse, is located on the bustling marina at Rodney Bay. The menu varies from the catch of the day to spare ribs or steak – all available with a suitably hot and spicy sauce. *Contact Restaurant proprietor Indira Ashworth, +1 758 452 8115.*

Overlooking the bay of Castries, The Coal Pot is an intimate restaurant that serves a combination of French dishes adapted with local sauces. The restaurant has been in the Elliot family for over 50 years and today Michelle Elliot runs the floor. *Contact Restaurant proprietor Michelle Elliot, +1 758 452 5566.*

Piano Piano at Cotton Bay Village is one of the best restaurants on St Lucia and serves varied cuisine, from Moroccan lamb chops to the local fresh fish. *Contact Chef Frederic Mouyon, +1 758 456 5700.*

For elegant dining, The Great Room Restaurant at The Jalousie Plantation serves succulent fresh seafood dishes, while down on the hotel's waterfront is the more relaxed Bayside Restaurant, which makes the perfect place for cocktail sundowners and a light bite to eat. *Contact Restaurant Manager Alonso Bahena, +1 758 456 8000.*

WHAT TO DO

St Lucia's verdant landscape has great appeal for hikers, divers and nature lovers. The rainforest has a plethora of hiking trails, and the towering Pitons, which have become a symbol of St Lucia, provide wonderful opportunities for walking. But for those with a greater head for heights, the aerial tram over the trees provides spectacular views of the rainforest.

The island's waters are rich in marine life. Soufriere Marine Park and the coral around Anse Chastanet are perfect snorkeling and diving spots, and at Anse Cochon you can swim with turtles. There is also ample opportunity to turtle-spot at Grand Anse on the remote east coast. For pure adrenalin, the



THE JALOUSIE PLANTATION AT SUGAR BEACH ON GROS PITON, ST LUCIA

flat oceans and warm tropical winds provide the perfect playground for kite surfing, and a number of instructors have set up businesses on the island.

WHERE TO BOARD

St Lucia is a perfect gateway for superyachts embarking on a cruise of the Grenadines island chain. The island has two marina options with a host of superyacht facilities. The Marina at Marigot Bay, located in front of the Marigot Bay Hotel in the southeast corner of the bay, has 40 berths and can accommodate yachts up to 246'/75m. A popular spot for superyachts berthing throughout the year, the marina is protected from the elements in a hurricane hole and is one of the safest anchorages in the Caribbean. *Contact Marina Manager Bob Hathaway, +1 758 451 4275, marina@marigotbay.com.*

Located on the north side of St Lucia, Rodney Bay Marina is situated in a sheltered lagoon. The marina can also accommodate yachts of up to 246'/75m, and onshore there is a wide spectrum of amenities close by including a shopping centre, banks, restaurants and bars. *Contact Marina Manager Cuthbert Didier, +1 758 452 0324, rbmarina@candwlc.com.*

RECOMMENDED

Dive Master Vitus Joyeux is a St Lucian native with more than 25 years of dive experience under his belt. Vitus will accompany qualified divers to show them any of the spectacular dive sites that surround the island. The top spot is Superman's Flight at Petit Piton. The drift dive takes its name from the movie *Superman II* that was filmed in the Anse des Pitons. A gently sloping dive with an abundance of marine life starting at a depth of about 15'/4.5m and continuing to well over 100'/30m. Hawks bill and green turtles can be seen on almost every dive, along with sea horses, frog fish, jacks of every variety. Strong currents so suitable for advance divers only. *Contact Vitus Joyeux at the Jalousie Dive Centre, +1 758 456 5700.*