

CARIBBEAN TRAVEL+LIFE NOVEMBER 2011 THE DEFINITION OF LUXURY · TORTOLA DISCOVERED · ST. BARTS' FRENCH CONNECTION · PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Party Like a *Rock Star* on **JAMAICA** P.16

# CARIBBEAN

TRAVEL+LIFE

# What's *your* pleasure? **20**

**UNFORGETTABLE  
PLACES TO  
INDULGE ON  
ANY BUDGET**

DON'T MISS

CT's  
**BEST OF THE  
CARIBBEAN:  
Aruba**

ON DISCOVERY  
CHANNEL™

## **ST. BARTS**

Swimming with the  
*Beautiful People* P.52

## **TORTOLA**

The *Insider's Guide*  
to the heart of *the BVI* P.42

## **THEME CRUISES**

*Elvis* spotted at the  
*midnight buffet* P.14

NOVEMBER 2011 U.S. \$4.99  
CARIBBEANTRAVELMAG.COM





• Story by **MATT PHENIX** • Photos by **JON WHITTLE** •

# FRENCH CONNECTION

A STARRY-EYED MORTAL TOUCHES DOWN ON  
THE CARIBBEAN'S MOST FABLED HAVEN FOR THE RICH,  
THE FAMOUS AND THE ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS.



**I** am not Jay-Z. I am also not a Russian oil billionaire, a Victoria's Secret model or that drunken French actor who peed in first class. I am a magazine editor. A humble magazine editor. I have a \$9 haircut and a dog of indeterminate pedigree, and I have never been asked for Grey Poupon at a red light. ¶ You can imagine my anxiety, therefore, in the days before making the acquaintance of St. Barthelemy (St. Barts to its friends), the focal point of fabulousness in the Caribbean, an island that is rich and famous simply because it is irresistible to the rich and famous. My comfort zone does not include \$25 Singapore Slings or filterless Gauloises or thong Speedos, but these things are right in St. Barts' sweet spot. I speak no French beyond the little I picked up from Inspector Clouseau; St. Barts speaks perfect French. What could we possibly have in common? ¶ But duty called, and so did the St. Barts tourist board, so I shook off my nerves and packed up my fanciest clothes (the *good* Dockers), and like Eliza Doolittle, I was off to the races.





**CITY + SAND** Gustavia is a walker's paradise. Opposite, from left: The scene at St. Jean's happening Nikki Beach; baguettes baked fresh at La Petite Colombe.

For the uninitiated, St. Barts measures a petite 8.1 square miles. The island is craggy and rugged and has no fresh water beyond imported Evian, and though it can appear quite lush in the summertime, nothing edible grows here without the most devoted and fortunate of green-thumbers, the sort of thing the Hotel le Toiny is doing with its fastidiously tended organic greenhouse. Simply put, St. Barts is a rock. Then again, the Hope Diamond is a rock, and I'd say it's done pretty well for itself.

There are 8,500 full-time residents on St. Barts, among whom there are 12 doctors, six or seven dentists, and seven cops, although the island has a sort of French Mayberry charm that leads me to believe those seven cops do a lot of croissant eating. "We have no crime here," one tourism official announced over dinner at the Wall House Restaurant, in Gustavia. Then he leaned over and added, "Well, sometimes, you know, the schoolboys will steal each other's scooters for the — *quel est le mot* — joy ride." He cracks a smile. "Of course, they never get too far."

Apart from high-end skin-care products, mixed by Ligne St. Barth in an inconspicuous storefront factory, St. Barts manufactures nothing. Hospitality is the island's *raison d'être*. There are some 20 hotels on these eight square miles and more than 1,000 rentable villas, with 70-odd restaurants to keep everybody fed. And for an island that has to import every consumable except fresh air, St. Barts does amazingly well in the dining department — miraculously well when you consider the daily challenges of being a chef here. Menus are composed and recipes are revised based on what came off the boat from Guadeloupe or Martinique, or what *fruits de mer* showed up at the government-run fish stand on Gustavia's rectangular harbor — provided everything meets the chefs' rigorous standards for quality and freshness.

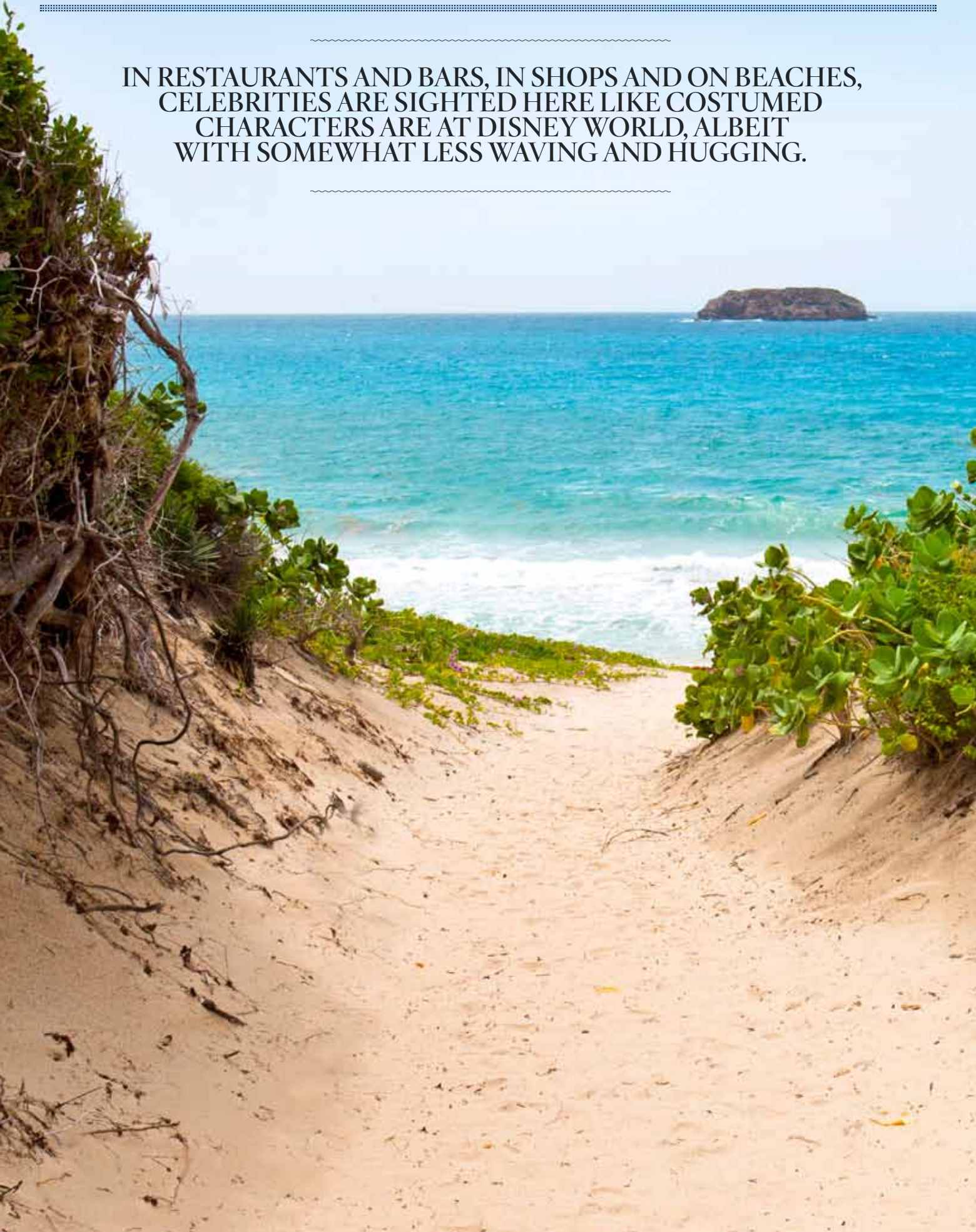
**FOR AN ISLAND THAT HAS TO IMPORT EVERY CONSUMABLE EXCEPT FRESH AIR, ST. BARTS DOES AMAZINGLY WELL IN THE DINING DEPARTMENT.**

---

~~~~~

IN RESTAURANTS AND BARS, IN SHOPS AND ON BEACHES,  
CELEBRITIES ARE SIGHTED HERE LIKE COSTUMED  
CHARACTERS ARE AT DISNEY WORLD, ALBEIT  
WITH SOMEWHAT LESS WAVING AND HUGGING.

~~~~~





**SWEET + SALTY** Anse de Grande Saline (named for the nearby salt pond) is St. Barts' clothing-optional haven: Turn right if you're gay, left if you're straight.



**CERTIFIED PLATINUM** Of the thousand or so villas on St. Barts, Eden Rock's 16,000-square-foot Rockstar, on St. Jean Beach, may be the most splendid.

Unless you frequent St. Tropez and Monte Carlo, the concentrated glam of St. Barts can be a bit head-spinning. In restaurants and bars, in shops and on beaches, celebrities are sighted here like costumed characters are at Disney World, albeit with somewhat less waving and hugging. I saw Ric Ocasek, lead singer of the band The Cars, sitting by himself on a hotel towel on glorious Anse du Gouverneur, and took it upon myself as a journalist and a fan to express my pent-up appreciation for the band's

1984 album, *Heartbeat City*. He was utterly cool about it, certainly much cooler than I would've been with me in his place. Such is St. Barts.

And yet, despite such dear-diary star encounters, a funny thing happened on my second day on St. Barts: I started

to feel at home. And I don't mean "at home" in the hey-I'm-using-my-high-school-French sense; I mean "at home" in the \$330-sounds-perfectly-reasonable-for-Vilebrequin-swim-trunks sense. Maybe it was the free drinks, or the topless beaches, or the free drinks, but I really started to believe I could live here.

Driving definitely encouraged my delusions of French citizenship, free drinks notwithstanding. Renting a car on St. Barts is money well spent, the very best way to get to know the island's many nooks and crannies, not to mention its 15 out-of-this-world beaches — every last one of which is public. The island has only 30 taxis (a figure confirmed by a proud owner of one of the few), and rates are as unreasonable as you might expect. Unless you plan to spend your entire time here in a tipsy haze (not that there's anything wrong with that), you'll be glad you have your own wheels.

Give yourself an hour, and you can loop the island in an 84-horsepower Suzuki Jimny, with time left over for a cappuccino and a *pain au*

**DESPITE SUCH  
DEAR-DIARY STAR  
ENCOUNTERS, A  
FUNNY THING  
HAPPENED ON MY  
SECOND DAY ON  
ST. BARTS: I STARTED  
TO FEEL AT HOME.**

*chocolat* at the island's rightly acclaimed *boulangerie* and patisserie, La Petite Colombe. And for the directionally challenged, know that no wrong turn here is ever all that wrong. You're on Lorient Beach when you want to be on Grande Saline? Ten minutes, tops. You wanted to lunch at DO Brazil, on Shell Beach, but you just passed Nikki Beach, on St. Jean? Ten minutes. No matter how badly you get lost on St. Barts, like a joy-riding schoolboy on a stolen scooter, you never get too far.

For an island of such tidy dimensions and huge reputation, St. Barts as a whole is remarkably undeveloped. Gustavia, which may be the best walking city in the Caribbean, has a merry bustle to it, and beachy St. Jean moves to a French Riviera-style electro-beat. But moving outward, east toward Anse de Colombier (a lovely crescent beach accessed only after a 20-minute hike) or west toward Anse de Toiny (a wave-lashed stretch that's popular with surfers), you can't help but notice how untouched the place is. The lumpy terrain is one reason, careful

management of new construction another (all those red roofs didn't happen by coincidence, you know). Hotels are strictly size-limited; most have fewer than 15 rooms, and even the largest, Hotel Guanahani, in Lorient, has only 68. And according to old French communal law, no building may be higher than a palm tree, so there are no high-rises here to blot out the sun.

St. Barts also happens to be a remarkably friendly place. Dispatch any notions of sneering French waiters or snooty poodle walkers; locals are disarmingly good-natured, clearly enamored of their island and delighted to share it. (This is the Caribbean, after all.) And although French is the mother tongue, English never comes begrudgingly. Beach goers and shopkeepers smile and chirp "*Bonjour*," and motorists are courteous and patient, even when American journalists in rental cars turn the wrong way down one-way streets, shouting "*Je suis vraiment désolé!*" over and over.

No, I'm not Jay-Z. But St. Barts set a place at the table for me anyway. And for that, *merci*.

IN THE KNOW  
 For more info  
 on St. Barts,  
 including  
 hotels, bars and  
 restaurants,  
 turn to page 80.



# CURACAO



## HILTON CURAÇAO

Located at Piscadera Bay, the beachfront Hilton Curaçao boasts two private white sand beaches, beautiful grounds, watersports, casino, health club & spa. All spacious rooms and suites feature island or stunning ocean views and private balconies. Just 4 miles from the historical city of Willemstad, our resort is ideal for honeymooners, weddings, divers, families, business traveler or those seeking relaxation.



Contact us at 1-877 GO HILTON or visit

[www.hiltoncaribbean.com/curacao](http://www.hiltoncaribbean.com/curacao)



## FLORIS SUITE HOTEL

The Floris Suite Hotel is located only minutes from the airport and the historic downtown capital of Willemstad. This 72 all-suite hotel features fully equipped kitchens, a free form swimming pool, the well-known Hook's Hut Beach Bar & Restaurant just across the street, as well as 'Sjalotte', one of the top Fine Dining Restaurants on the island. All this combined with the friendly service makes this the ultimate vacation getaway.



800-411-0170 or +5999 462-6111  
reservations@florissuitehotel.com  
[www.florissuitehotel.com](http://www.florissuitehotel.com)

# GRENADA



CONFERENCE & CONVENTION CENTRE



*As Grenada's best value  
it's the perfect  
destination for your  
Caribbean holiday!*

Located on 20 acres of lush tropical beach side paradise on the sugar white sands of Grand Anse Beach, the newly renovated Resort is centrally located amongst the shopping and restaurant district and just 8 minutes from both the Airport and Capital.

(473) 444-4371

[www.grenadagrand.com](http://www.grenadagrand.com)  
paradise@grenadagrand.com



*Soak up  
the Scene  
GRENADA W.I.*

tel: (473) 443-8783  
toll free USA: (888) 883-2482  
email: [CTL@truebluebay.com](mailto:CTL@truebluebay.com)  
visit: [www.truebluebay.com](http://www.truebluebay.com)



### WHAT TO KNOW

**Tourist Information** 011-590-590-27-87-27;  
[saintbarth-tourisme.com](http://saintbarth-tourisme.com)

**Documents** Passport required

**Getting There** Fly to neighboring St. Martin via one of several major airlines. Then catch a connecting flight to St. Barts' Gustaf III Airport, just five minutes from Gustavia. Ferry service and chartered speedboats are also available.

**Currency** Euro (U.S.\$1 = 0.72 EUR). But U.S. dollars are widely accepted.

**Dialing In** 011 + 590 + 590 + six-digit number

**Getting Around** Local taxis are expensive and can be hard to find, so it's best to rent a car (see "Driving on St. Barts," opposite).

### WHERE TO STAY

**Eden Rock** The island's most extroverted outpost, this respite is every bit as glam as you've heard. There's a pair of great restaurants and a passel of to-die-for villas, including the 16,000-square-foot Rockstar, which features a groovedelic recording studio in the basement with the Neve mixing console John Lennon used to record "Imagine." Imagine that. From \$687. 855-333-6762; [edenrockhotel.com](http://edenrockhotel.com)

**Hotel Carl Gustaf** Prime location high above Gustavia, elegant suites and villas with private plunge pools, a lovely spa, the fantastic Victoria's restaurant and a bar that may serve the very best planter's punch on the planet. From \$483. 866-297-2153; [hotelcarlgustaf.com](http://hotelcarlgustaf.com)

**Hotel Christopher** A chic retreat with 41 rooms on the water at pretty Pointe Milou, masterfully run by the former manager of Sandy Lane, in Barbados. The beach isn't suitable for swimming, but a sprawling infinity pool makes up for it. Open-air Mango restaurant serves up a mean lobster salad and fruity Caribbean ratatouille. From \$420. 800-550-1769; [hotelchristopher.com](http://hotelchristopher.com)

**Hotel le Toiny** On the island's sparsely populated eastern tip, spacious villa suites with private pools and views of the lovely Anse de Toiny. Renowned restaurant with veggies fresh from the hotel's own organic greenhouse. From \$770. 800-680-0832; [letoiny.com](http://letoiny.com)

FROM PAGE 10-11 > KRAVITZ: ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ/GETTY IMAGES; CAGE: MARK SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES; COPPERFIELD: JORDAN STRAUSS/GETTY IMAGES; CONNERY: IAN JACOBS/GETTY IMAGES; IGGY POP: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; CAMPBELL: MIKE MARSLAND/GETTY IMAGES; LEWIS: MINDY SMALL/GETTY IMAGES; LAUREN: DUFFY-MARIE ARNOULT/GETTY IMAGES; BLOOMBERG: STEPHEN LOVEKIN/GETTY IMAGES; KARAN: EUGENE GOLGURSKY/GETTY IMAGES; WILLIS: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES; DEPP: ED STOCK/ISTOCK; DOUGLAS AND ZETA-JONES: KRISTIAN DOWLING/ISTOCK; CHESNEY: CHARLES ESHELMAN/GETTY IMAGES; LETTERMAN: STATIA PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES; S. MARTIN: MARK SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES; R. MARTIN: JOHN PARRA/GETTY IMAGES; BRANSON: ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES; CLAPTON: LOBELINE COMMUNICATIONS/GETTY IMAGES; WINFREY: BRUCE GLIKAS/GETTY IMAGES; DE LA RENTA: SLAVEN VLASIC/GETTY IMAGES; JAGGER: PASCAL LE SEGRETAIR/GETTY IMAGES; HILFIGER: JOHN SCIULLI/GETTY IMAGES

JON WHITTLE

## Essentials

### WHERE TO EAT (AND DRINK)

**DO Brazil** Breakfast, lunch, dinner and \$17 cocktails at this celeb-laden hot spot right on Gustavia's charming Shell Beach. [dobrazil.com](http://dobrazil.com)

**La Creperie** Enjoy crepes for breakfast and a nice break from the high-priced gourmet options. 590-590-27-84-07

**Nikki Beach** Sure, it's a chain, but the food is terrific, and the location, right on St. Jean Beach, *magnifique!* [nikkibeach.com/stbarths](http://nikkibeach.com/stbarths)

**Wall House** Excellent location right on the harbor, at La Pointe, in Gustavia. Brilliant seafood and a rotisserie cooking spit-roasted duck and beef. Superb wine list with more than 200 varieties from all over the world. [wallbouserestaurant.com](http://wallbouserestaurant.com)



Eden Rock

### DRIVING ON ST. BARTS

**Rental Agencies** The island may be petite, but there are a good 15 rental-car counters at the Gustaf III Airport, including big names like Avis (590-590-27-71-43; [avis.com](http://avis.com)), Hertz (800-654-3001; [hertz.com](http://hertz.com)) and Budget (800-472-3325; [budget.com](http://budget.com)). Our Suzuki Jimny came from Europcar (590-590-27-73-33; [europcar.com](http://europcar.com)): \$67 a day in low season (\$94 a day high and \$125 a day between Dec. 20 and Jan. 5).

**Four-Wheel Drive** A four-wheel-drive vehicle, like our Jimny, isn't a necessity on St. Barts, but it can't hurt. Particularly if you're visiting the island during the summertime, when rainstorms can be sudden and torrential. The added security of four-wheel-drive is well worth the extra cash (generally about \$25 a day more than a subcompact car like the Kia Picanto).

**Road Rules** St. Barts has about 25 miles of roadway, all of it narrow, winding and at times rather steep. That said, most roads are in excellent condition, with more and more stretches being relaid with grooved concrete for extra traction. The speed limit across the island is 45 km/h (28 mph), which seems poky only on paper; when you're jockeying for space along the precarious road that skirts rocky Anse de Grand Fond, for instance, you'll be more than happy to take it slow. When it's time to refill the tank, some planning is required. There are two gas stations on the island — one at the airport in St. Jean and another in Lorient. Both are open only during daylight hours (until 7 and 5 p.m., respectively), and both are closed on Sundays. Oh, and they'll both lock up for a two-hour lunch break each day between noon and 2 p.m. *Bon appétit!* ★



**AMSTERDAM MANOR BEACH RESORT**  
Warm smiles, friendly staff, spacious fully-equipped studios & suites, fine dining and great amenities.  
1-800-969-2310 • [www.AmsterdamManor.com](http://www.AmsterdamManor.com)  
Reservations@AmsterdamManor.aww



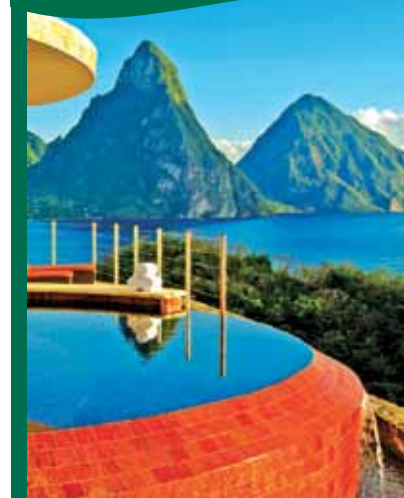
**HYATT REGENCY ARUBA RESORT & CASINO**  
Experience "Authentic Island Chic" at the island's premier retreat on Palm Beach. The resort offers five distinctive restaurants and four bars with breathtaking views. Transforming the expected to distinctly remarkable.  
297-586-1234 • 800-223-1234  
[www.aruba.hyatt.com](http://www.aruba.hyatt.com) • [salesaruba@hyatt.com](mailto:salesaruba@hyatt.com)



**THE WESTIN RESORT & CASINO, ARUBA**  
Located on the luxurious strip of Palm Beach amidst sparkling blue water, the Westin offers 8 unique restaurants, a glittering casino and endless outdoor pleasures.  
1-866-716-8108 • [www.westinaruba.com](http://www.westinaruba.com)

[www.aruba.com](http://www.aruba.com)

## Nick Troubetzkoy's JADE MOUNTAIN St. Lucia



*A cornucopia of organic architecture  
in celebration of one of nature's  
most alluring settings*

800 223 1108

PO Box 4000, Soufriere, St. Lucia  
[www.jademountainstlucia.com](http://www.jademountainstlucia.com)

## NICK TROUBETZKOY'S ANSE CHASTANET ST. LUCIA



TRANQUILITY • ROMANCE • ADVENTURE

800 223 1108

PO Box 7000, Soufriere, St. Lucia  
[www.ansechastanet.com](http://www.ansechastanet.com)