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Feb. 2012 :: Vol. IX No.02

# A Perfect *Valentine* Getaway

HÔTEL LE TOINY, SAINT-BARTHÉLEMY  
- FRENCH WEST INDIES

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> Privacy and exclusivity have remained the defining characteristics of Hôtel Le Toiny since its 1992 opening on St. Barts' hushed and underdeveloped southeastern coast. The property's recently renovated 15 pastel bungalows, called Villa Suites, are set on a gentle slope overlooking an island lagoon and the Caribbean Sea. Surrounded by lush vegetation, each accommodation is accessed via its own-gated entrance, with a red mailbox flag serving as a "Do Not Disturb" sign. It is this emphasis on seclusion that makes Le Toiny the ultimate destination for romance, attracting the rich and famous seeking the utmost privacy on the Caribbean's most high profile retreat.

As the most secluded retreat in St. Barts, Le Toiny offers several romantic experiences designed with couples in mind. Each Villa Suite acts as a private cottage, fully equipped with every item one could require (plus a few extras) for days and nights in complete seclusion. However, a host of unforgettable experiences also await beyond the hotel's pastel-hued suites.

The French first settled St. Barts in the 1600s, and their mark remains on the island. But the eight-square-mile oasis maintains its

sense of place through Creole influences, bright colors and breezy architecture. This distinctive style is apparent at Hôtel Le Toiny, from its plantation-style villas, to its famed Le Gaïac restaurant, which earned the hotel the Caribbean's first Relais & Châteaux Grand Chef distinction.

Complete with a roofed open-air terrace overlooking the ocean and an infinity pool, Le Gaïac is easily the best dining venue on the island. French-born Executive Chef Stéphane Mazières creates delectable and inspired dishes, including Smoked Marinated Gamberronies, Maki-Style Angus beef and the freshest grilled Caribbean lobster, plucked directly from Le Gaïac's own aquarium. On Tuesdays, a variety of freshly caught local fish are served to diners' exact specifications. Unusual surprises abound, such as delectable pasta dishes created in a 35-kg cheese wheel and, of course, Crêpes Suzette, flambéed tableside. Freshly baked bread infuses each morning on the Island with a bit of French baking finesse.

Just beyond the restaurant are Hôtel Le Toiny's 15 private Villa Suites, reminiscent of small plantation houses. Each suite features its own private terrace and heated pools,

allowing guests to remain within the cocoon of their villa, if so desired. Each pastel-hued Villa Suite exudes a distinct French Caribbean flair, with vibrant striped toile du soleil, elegant dark hardwood floors, taupe walls and teak and mahogany furnishings.

Bedrooms are outfitted with a perfectly replicated French Colonial four-poster mahogany bed, crafted in Martinique and draped in gauzy white with crisp textiles and Egyptian cotton sheets. An Italian tiled bathroom, with open air shower, separate bathtub and dual sinks, is bathed in natural light filtered through large windows. Each suite's in-room kitchenette is equipped with a microwave, Nespresso machine, ice machine, mini bar, dishwasher and fully stocked utensils, well equipped for quiet nights in.

While there are no movie theatres on St. Barts, Le Toiny offers a well-stocked DVD library with more than one hundred titles. In-room features include satellite flat screen televisions, DVD and CD players, iPod docking stations, music library and Wi-Fi.

Given Hôtel Le Toiny's secluded nature, the hotel continues to draw couples from across

the globe looking to recharge, restore and re-spark. In addition to its breathtaking setting, the hotel offers exclusive activities virtually guaranteed to ignite romance to last a lifetime, ideal for anniversaries, honeymoons and romantic holidays, or even quick escapes.

Embark on a private sunset yacht tour complete with Champagne from St. Barts' famed Gustavia Harbor, a favorite haunt for seafaring power players and celebrities during the holiday season. Sailboat tours are also offered during the day for a view of neighboring islands.

Back on land, Hôtel Le Toiny's attentive staff can arrange for relaxing couples' massages (try the St. Barth Sundowner to retain a bronze glow longer, or the St. Barth Chill Out treatment, featuring clamshells filled with a naturally-warming mixture for a decidedly "island" take on the traditional hot stone massage) or a range of personally tailored pursuits.

The hotel's recently added Serenity Spa Cottage readily pampers with luxurious treatments featuring exquisite products by Ligne de St. Barth, a local product line

inspired by the Caribbean. Coconut and papaya body polishes, fresh fruit facials, relaxing leg slimming treatments and coconut oil and avocado massages are just a handful of services offered, all available both at the Spa Cottage and within the privacy of one's own Villa Suite.

Gourmand guests can partake in intimate gourmet picnics for two with wine and delectable cuisine, or enjoy an uber romantic three-course candlelit dinner at Restaurant Le Gaïac's open air terrace overlooking an infinity pool and the Caribbean Sea. The hotel can also supply convertible Mini Coopers by request, allowing couples to sneak away and explore St. Barts' numerous restaurants, shops and natural sights on their own terms.

For naturalists, outdoor pursuits abound. A nature path running from the hotel to the beach provides panoramic views of Le Toiny Bay. For a lengthier trek, an additional hotel path follows the ocean's edge for a 40-minute hike around breathtaking Pointe du Toiny.

St. Barts' most coveted surf spot, Le Toiny Bay, faces southward offering ideal waves

year-round. The hotel stocks a wide range of surfboards in varying sizes, as well as SUP boards. Beginners can arrange for surfing lessons, available at any time by the hotel's experienced staff. Windsurfing, kite surfing and big game fishing are also on the hotel's long roster of available offsite activities.

Snorkeling and other underwater adventures are a popular choice at Le Toiny, so much that each Villa Suite comes equipped with masks, fins and snorkels at guests' disposal. A quick trek to Le Toiny Bay and nearby beaches offers unparalleled views of coral, brightly colored tropical fish and meandering sea turtles, just inches below the turquoise waters.

A perfect stretch of paradise awaits the romantic, the daring, and the spirited...

"Love Life & Laugh Often" <

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