

AVENTURA

CELEBRATING
15 YEARS

Giuliana & Bill Rancic

A dynamic duo indeed

Together Forever
Couples with stick-to-itiveness

Valentine's Day
Gift Guide

Glam getaway:
Le Sereno, St. Barth's

PLUS:
Louis Vuitton Maison
opens in Aventura Mall

The Love
& Romance
Issue

Good Things, SMALL PACKAGES

Head to Le Sereno in St. Barth's,
where luxury and hospitality come
together for a vacation to remember.

Photography by Xavier Marañón



For Correspondence



Post Card
For address only



DON'T LET THE LOCATION FOOL YOU: ST. BARTH'S isn't just for rich people. Of course, it's not a budget vacation, either—after all, it's known as the French Riviera in the Caribbean for a reason. But it is definitely one of those fabled, fabulous locales that everyone should visit at least once (and preferably, more than once).

Saint Barthélemy, known universally as St. Barth's, is a diminutive volcanic island with a population to match (less than 10,000) that is surrounded by shallow reefs. Once there, you will find things to be predominantly French—food, language, culture, and in particular, a distinct sense of *joie de vivre*.

And why not? This laid-back little (8 square miles, approximately) gem in the French West Indies is warm, sultry and casual (though chic at the same time) everything

one looks for in a Caribbean vacation. You can take advantage of 22 public beaches, some of which are suitable for swimming; others are better for windsurfing and other water sports. Float through the capital of Gustavia to shop donning a fabulous caftan, sandals and your best beach bling (costume's fine), taking in the sights. And though you might not expect it, you can even get out and enjoy some seriously rocking nightlife in one of the fabulous clubs.

There are plenty of choices when it comes to places to stay here; which you choose depends what you're looking for in a sojourn. One we can recommend based on personal experience is Le Sereno, a stylish, intimate retreat on the east end of the island that opens onto Grand Cul-de-Sac Beach. Designed by Parisian designer Christian Liaigre, the 37 suites and villas here are chic, clean-lined, and tranquil,

A view toward Anse Toiny from the beautiful
Anse Grand Fond in St. Barth's.





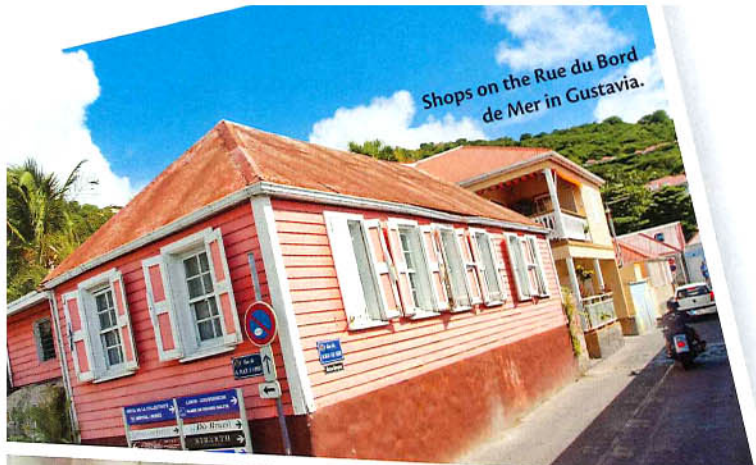
At Le Sereno, take a treatment at the spa (above) before lounging poolside in the afternoon.

“FLOAT THROUGH THE CAPITAL OF GUSTAVIA TO SHOP DONNING A FABULOUS CAFTAN, SANDALS AND YOUR BEST BEACH BLING [COSTUME'S FINE], TAKING IN THE SIGHTS.”

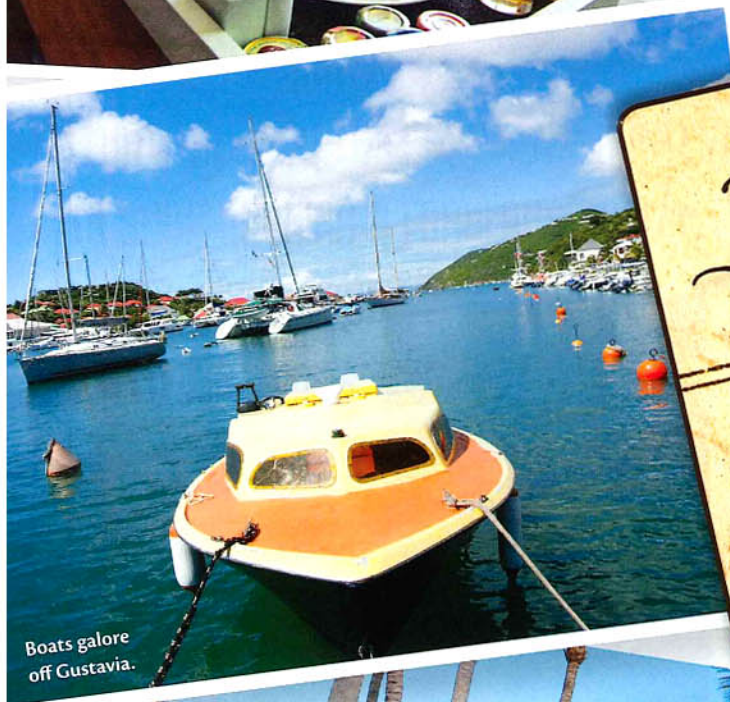
and pleasingly up-to-date with the modern traveler's needs and desires. Before you even unpack, peel off those traveling togs and shower in the luxurious bathroom, then slip into one of the signature Porthault robes and click on your plasma television or chill to some music on the personal iPod provided in the docking station. If you score a three-bedroom villa up top of the hotel, you can sit outside by your pool and drink in the views—along with a cocktail provided by your own personal butler (there's 24-hour room service in all the rooms, though, so don't fret if you take a gorgeous Garden Room instead). Yes, there's WiFi available, but forget those chumps back home—you're here to decompress, and there's no point immersing yourself in this kind of nirvana if you're going to muck it up with emails and aggravation. In fact, put your phone down and head to the Le Sereno Spa for an al fresco massage with the famed Ligne St. Barth aromatherapy oils. Buy some to take home; you'll be sorry later if you don't—they're kind of the “official” skin care products of St. Barth's, manufactured on the island and made with plants, fruits and flowers of the Caribbean rather than chemicals on an assembly line. The smell alone will send you afloat in an out-of-body experience.



Shops on the Rue du Bord de Mer in Gustavia.



Room service breakfast at Le Sereno.



Boats galore off Gustavia.



On the deck at Le Sereno.

Although this is an island full of willowy frames, food—fresh food, at a high level of quality and skillfully prepared and presented—is enormously important here. Restaurants are part of the entertainment experience, as are fine wine and good cocktails (lots of rum here, in every flavor you can imagine). Not surprisingly, fresh fish rules. You can spot the local fishermen delivering their catches daily to The Restaurant des Pêcheurs (French for “fishermen”) at Le Sereno (beef is flown in from France); at the dinner hour, you’ll face the perplexing choice of dining on that fresh fish grilled, seared, or *en crouste de sel* (crusted in sea salt, then baked to seal in the delicious juices). During the day, you can nosh on brochettes, salads or sandwiches while you loll poolside or at the beach, nursing a cocktail or not—it’s your call.

Like so many of the most amazing hotel experiences you’ll ever have, the glory of a visit at Le Sereno is orchestrated masterfully by the husband-and-wife team of Christian and Sandrine Langlade. Christian is the general manager and Sandrine is the rooms division manager; both have traveled the world working at, and in some cases totally renovating, various hotels. Christian, who holds a degree in hotel management from the Paris Hotel School, is the former general manager of the Hotel Christopher in St. Barth’s and before that was at Sandy Lane in Barbados, Kempinski in Istanbul and La Reserve in Geneva, among others. He and Sandrine know well what guests want and expect, and they are not about to give them anything less. ■

If You Go

RESERVE AT LE SERENO

You can do this on the hotel website at lesereno.com or by calling the hotel at +59 (05) 90 29 83 00. Choose from the Suite Terrasse, Grand Suite Plage (beachfront), Villa Vue Mer (1-bedroom villas) or the Villa du Pêcheur (beachfront villas). For more information, email info@lesereno.com.

FLY OUT

To get to St. Barth’s from Florida, you’ll need to fly into St. Maarten from Miami, then take a second, 10-minute flight on a puddle jumper to St. Barth’s or you can choose to take the high-speed ferry, which is a 45-minute ride and goes back and forth several times per day. Windward Airlines, Air Caraïbes and St. Barth Commuter provide continuous shuttle service between St. Maarten and St. Barth’s. Contact Le Sereno if you prefer to arrange a charter flight or private charter speed boat from St. Maarten.