



Escape

Fantasy

Island

Even seasoned travelers have never heard of Petit St. Vincent. The southernmost island of St. Vincent and the Grenadines may be small, but it makes a big impression. No wonder it has remained a well-kept secret among the travel elite for more than half a century.

This 115-acre slice of Caribbean paradise made its official debut in the mid-1960s, when sailor Haze Richardson transformed the lush, uninhabited island into one of the world's first private island escapes. Individual stone cottages, erected on the hilltops, granted postcard-perfect views of the Grenadines' emerald isles. Two miles of freshly polished, white-sand beaches provided a blank canvas for sun-drenched bliss. Finally, one of the Caribbean's most iconic amenities emerged: a driftwood flagpole system for service, where a yellow flag indicates a request and a red one reads as "do not disturb."

Timeless tropical elegance, thy name is Petit St. Vincent

BY PAUL RUBIO

JEFF STEVENS

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Escape



MATTHEW SEMARK



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ISLAND TRANSPORTATION COMES IN THE FORM OF BRITISH MINI MOKES, WHICH WILL DELIVER FOOD, DRINK, AND OTHER COMFORTS TO YOUR PRIVATE STONE COTTAGE, OUTFITTED WITH ALFRESCO SEATING AREAS AND INVITING HAMMOCKS.



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Little has changed on Petit St. Vincent over the last 50 years, and therein lies its charm. Opposed to newer, state-of-the-art, often homogeneous incarnations of private island luxury, Petit St. Vincent maintains an off-the-grid, lost-in-time, rustic-chic appeal. Even in 2017, the island has evaded most technology and still relies on the flagpole for room and beach service. Scenes of crystalline waters, cactus-speckled landscapes, and yacht-strewn seas trump televisions and WiFi. There are no sleek swimming or plunge pools, but rather generously distanced, private *palapas* and hammocks dotting the sparkling West End beach. In lieu of golf carts, visitors zip around on pastel blue, 1960s British Mini Mokes that serve as the island's official beach buggies.

Petit St. Vincent feels timeless, not tired. Great effort has been made to keep history in style. The hand-quarried, native stone ex-

teriors of the 22 open-plan bluff cottages and beachfront villas were restored to their original grandeur in 2011, during the island's biggest overhaul. Simple teakwood furnishings and accents in tropical shades of green and blue now complement the oceanic panoramas. And while the destination dodged the most egregious elements of globalization, it did give into a few modern essentials, such as upgraded air conditioning, Nespresso machines, and iPod docking stations.

Perhaps 2011's greatest addition came in the form of a newly constructed Balinese treetop spa. Not only does the minimalist fusion of indoors and outdoors recall Indonesia's most exalted wellness sanctuaries, but the skilled therapists actually hail from Bali, commingling ancient Asian techniques with Caribbean-imbued aromatherapy oils and body scrubs.

With fewer than 57 guests on the island at all times, it often feels like your very own. Anticipate private moments hiking to the top of Marni Hill, the island's highest point, to revel in 360-degree vistas of the lower Grenadines. Stroll along the turquoise shoreline and later lose yourself in a good read on a beachfront hammock only to be interrupted by drink or food—if you raise the flagpole, that is. Start the day with a lavish breakfast on your ter-



BOOK AHEAD FOR PRIVATE DINING ON THE DOCK OR ENJOY EPICUREAN DELIGHTS IN THE MAIN PAVILION RESTAURANT (RIGHT) WITH FELLOW GUESTS. MENUS CHANGE DAILY AND INCORPORATE ORGANIC PRODUCE FROM AN ON-SITE GARDEN AS WELL AS LOCAL, FRESHLY CAUGHT FISH.



MIKE TOY PHOTOGRAPHY

race, then lunch on just-caught mahimahi and thin-crust seafood pizza with your feet in the sand. For dinner, consider joining your fellow guests at the Main Pavilion Restaurant, returning for a nightcap at the Main Pavilion Bar. After all, feasting on the most succulent 3.5-pound lobster you've ever tasted lends to great discussion.

For many, doing nothing is simply everything on Petit St. Vincent. However, its magic spans beyond the island itself. St. Vincent and the Grenadines happens to be the Holy Grail of the yachting world, and the resort's sloop, *Beauty*, weaves through the jewels of this island nation, spending most of its time circumnavigating the Tobago Cays. These five isles and their surrounding coral reefs brim with marine life and picturesque beauty. It's no wonder one was chosen as the quintessential palm-laced paradise on which to film scenes for the first *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie.

If you miss your chance to swim with wild sea turtles during your Tobago Cays sail, don't panic. Petit St. Vincent houses the sole Jean-Michel Cousteau Dive Center in the Caribbean, where underwater enthusiasts are handsomely rewarded on daily dives and snorkels into surrounding submarine splendor.



JEFF STEVENS



JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU DIVING

PETIT ST. VINCENT OFFERS MORE THAN SUNBATHING. ADVENTURE BECKONS ABOVE AND BELOW THE WATER WHEN VISITING THE TOBAGO CAYS ON THE RESORT'S SLOOP AND DIVING WITH THE TEAM FROM THE JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU DIVE CENTER.

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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: VIEW OF PETITE MARTINIQUE (GRENADA) FROM THE HILLTOPS OF PETIT ST. VINCENT; ARRIVAL JETTY; DUSK ON A PRIVATE TERRACE.

Like the land above, Petit St. Vincent's surrounding waters foster a state of complete escapism. Indeed, this secluded Eden touches those who venture to its remote reaches—but it's not for everyone. Even with posh accommodations and gourmet eats, Petit St. Vincent requires a love of the outdoors and a desire for castaway fantasies. Only dreamers and the truly adventurous need apply. (petitstvincent.com) ◀◀

How to Get to Paradise

TO REACH PETIT ST. VINCENT, YOU'LL NEED TO FLY INTO BARBADOS' GRANTLEY ADAMS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (BGI) AND THEN CONNECT TO UNION ISLAND, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, BY A ONE-HOUR CESSNA PLANE RIDE. UPON ARRIVAL, RESORT REPRESENTATIVES WILL ESCORT YOU TO THE NEARBY DOCK FOR A 15-MINUTE SPEEDBOAT TRANSFER TO PETIT ST. VINCENT. IF THIS SOUNDS COMPLICATED, DON'T FRET: THE ISLAND ARRANGES EVERYTHING BETWEEN YOUR TOUCHDOWN AND TAKEOFF IN BARBADOS.

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