

Laid-back life with Caribbean chic

CAP MAISON, ST LUCIA

This intimate hotel opened last year on a former 1,500-acre sugar plantation above Smugglers Cove on St Lucia's north-west tip, with sweeping sea views across to the neighbouring island of Martinique.

Spread across a two-storey villa, the 50 rooms and suites are decked out in a mixture of Spanish and Caribbean design with hand-painted tiles, colonial-style hardwood furniture and local artwork. The larger suites have their own kitchens, dining areas and private pools.

Head to the beach for free use of kayaks and snorkelling equipment, shop at the chic boutiques in nearby Rodney Bay and dine on French-West Indian-inspired fare at the hotel's Cliff at Cap restaurant, perched on the cliff edge. There's also a spa.

Getting there: Caribbours (0207 751 0660/www.caribbours.co.uk) offers seven nights at Cap Maison from £1,520pp (two sharing), B&B. Price includes return flights from Gatwick to St Lucia and transfers. Spa treatments from £38.

THE SANDPIPER, BARBADOS

Surrounded by orchid trees and bougainvillea, this family run, 47-room hotel is located on St James beach on Barbados's west coast. Push the boat out and go for a tree-top suite for two, complete with four-poster bed, free-standing bath and terrace with private pool.

After a pre-dinner cocktail at the informal beach bar or Ralph Lauren-inspired cocktail bar, head

Nowhere does boutique boltholes better than the West Indies. **NICOLA ISEARD** selects five of the most stylish getaways

entertainment on most nights and a spa at the Sandpiper's sister hotel Coral Reef Club.

Getting there: Seasons (01244 202002/www.seasons.co.uk) offers seven nights at The Sandpiper from £1,675pp (two sharing), B&B. Price includes return flights from Gatwick to Barbados and transfers. Spa treatments from £38.

COTTON HOUSE, MUSTIQUE

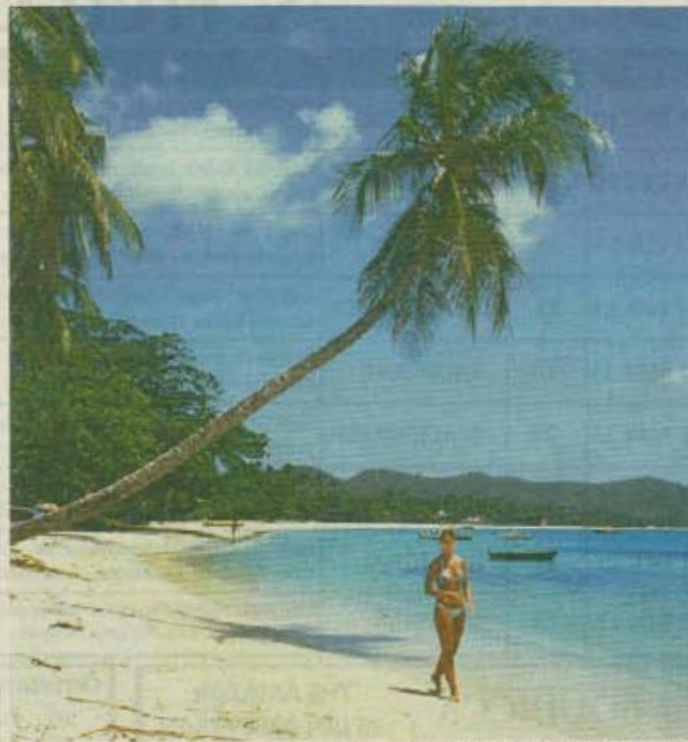
Originally an 18th-century cotton warehouse, the Cotton House is set among landscaped gardens just steps from the white sands of Endeavour Bay, on the island of Mustique.

It has 17 elegant rooms, suites

and cottages, sleeping up to four, many with their own private plunge pool.

After a morning spent horse riding, sailing or exploring the island's nature trails, head to the spa for a soothing aloe and lavender body wrap before afternoon tea in the colonial-style Great Room where the cotton was originally stored.

The fine-dining Veranda Restaurant is one of the best in the West Indies with signature dishes such as sea bass carpaccio with Venetian caviar. **Getting there:** Prestbury Travel Group (01625 855840/www.prestburytravelcaribbean.co.uk) offers seven nights at the Cotton House from £1,460pp (two



NICE 'N' EASY: Grand Anse beach is just below Grenada's Mount Cinnamon resort

sharing), B&B. Price includes return flights from Gatwick to Mustique and transfers. Spa treatments from £47. Horse riding, sailing and other activities arranged on request.

MOUNT CINNAMON, GRENADA

Located on a tranquil hillside above Grand Anse Beach in the south of the island, this laid-back resort has 21 suites and villas.

Expect bold furnishings, contemporary artwork, a large sitting room with a sofa bed, kitchen and unbeatable sea views. The terrace restaurant is just

as impressive, mixing English gastro-pub nosh with West Indian classics.

Tempting as it is to flop by the pool or in the spa, the activities on offer are endless, from sailing and hillclimbing to snorkelling and hiking.

return flights from Gatwick to Grenada and transfers. Spa treatments from £34.

MONTPELIER PLANTATION, NEVIS

This 18th-century sugar plantation, surrounded by 60 acres of tropical gardens and sugar cane fields, has been meticulously restored by its owners and transformed into an elegant boutique hideaway.

Family run and family friendly, it has 19 rooms, suites and cottages, sleeping up to four, all with sea views, bamboo flooring and rich fabrics.

Kick back by the fresh-water pool or on the private beach, go on a guided tour of the island's rainforests and sugar plantations, be pampered in the spa and dine on local seafood in the alfresco