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HERE IN BLACK AND WHITE...
AND READ ALL OVER
COLOR ISSUE

PETIT PARADIS

WE'VE UNCOVERED ONE OF THE ISLANDS' BEST-KEPT SECRETS.

If you've never heard of Petit St. Vincent, its devoted guests probably have something to do with that. While word of mouth is a primary means of marketing for the island, there's also a sense that this private paradise, which is part of the Grenadines in the Caribbean, is a secret that should be kept.

Upon first stepping onto the dock of this 113-acre swath of scalloped beaches and gentle bluffs, it's easy to see why this destination has achieved such a devoted following. After a 30-minute boat ride from nearby Union Island, where most guests arrive after a puddle-jumper hop from Barbados, staff greet you with a welcoming smile against the backdrop of crystalline turquoise water stretching in all directions. Within minutes, you're handed a frothy tropical libation and whisked off to one of 22 comfortably furnished, deliciously secluded stone cottages steps from the beach and perched along bluffs — no hassling with credit cards or room keys (isn't this how check-in should always be?).

In fact, there aren't any room keys here — nor televisions, telephones, wireless Internet or air-conditioning — so if your idea of a vacation involves flatscreens and other modern gadgetry, then PSV isn't the place for you. Instead, its appeal comes from its unique charm, privacy and proximity to some of the most stunning beaches in the Caribbean — not to mention a super-chill, unplugged vibe impossible not to succumb to.

If solitude is your main objective, it's entirely feasible to have no direct contact with another human being throughout the course of your stay. That doesn't mean you'll be forced to subsist on the offerings of the mini-bar, though. Just about anything you want — whether it's tomorrow's breakfast or a bottle of Veuve — can be brought to you. Simply write your request on preprinted stationery, pop the note into your "mailbox" on the bamboo flagpole outside your cottage and hoist the yellow flag. Almost as magically as it happens in any Disney movie, your wish is granted — usually within minutes. (If you want complete privacy, raise the red flag.)

When you're ready for a little more activity than flipping over in the lounge chair or nudging your hammock, there are

plenty of choices: windsurfing, kayaking (some boats have glass bottoms), snorkeling or sailing lessons on the Sunfish or Hobie Cat, all of which are included in the room rate. A short hike up 275-foot Marni Hill, PSV's highest point, offers fantastic views of neighboring islands. And, for the true sun worshippers, the beach on the western (Caribbean) side of the drumstick-shaped island offers private sunbathing areas, where you can have a tasty lunch — lobster salad and fresh fruits and vegetables grown on island are mainstay items — delivered.

To get an unparalleled taste of the splendor of your surroundings, though, hop aboard a sailing charter with Captain Jeff Stevens, a British native who has been on a boat most of his life. Stevens takes guests on his 43-foot sloop, *Beauty of Petite Martinique*, which he built with environmentally friendly functionality, to the nearby Tobago Cays. Here, in perhaps the clearest water in the Caribbean, you'll snorkel among colorful coral, a rainbow of tropical fish and even sea turtles. Afterward, you'll feast on a gourmet onboard lunch of grilled lobster and tuna, curried chicken and fresh vegetables, along with wine, beer and the requisite island libation: rum punch.

Other don't-miss activities are offered weekly: a hearty barbecue dinner on the beach magically lit with strands of white lights and lanterns on the tables, and cocktails in the stunning home of property owner Lynn Richardson. Along with that of her late husband Haze, Richardson's presence — and with her five yellow Labs — has infused the property with personal character. She sees opening up her home to strangers not as an obligation but as a necessity in getting to know people who will probably be coming back for years.

"How else do I get a chance to meet guests?" Richardson asks. "I see people on the beach, but when I see them in my home with a drink, it's a whole different experience. They can see I'm not some big glamour queen — I'm just me." A statement that could just as easily describe this unforgettable island itself. Just make sure you don't spread the word *too* much. PSVResort.com
BLANE BACHEL



