

THE LATEST: HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, SPAS, POOLS, GOLF & MORE!

CARIBBEAN

TRAVEL+LIFE

16 PERFECT HIDEAWAYS TO ...

Rekindle romance

Surrender to the spa

Dive into adventure

Relax on the beach P.44

**MEXICO'S
SECRET RIVER**

**AFFORDABLE
GRAND CAYMAN**

**ST. LUCIA:
MORE TO LOVE**

**GRENADA'S
TIMELESS
ISLAND CHARM**

NOV 2009 US \$4.99
CARIBBEANTRAVELMAG.COM



CARIBBEAN

ISLAND HOPPING

St. Lucia's Jalousie Plantation, nestled below the Pitons, will become the Tides Sugar Beach early next year.

JUST BACK: ST. LUCIA

GLAMMING IT UP

LUCKY ST. LUCIA. EVEN IN THE MIDST OF A GLOBAL SLOWDOWN, THIS mountainous beauty remains poised for stardom. Four resorts and a luxury marina opened in the past 12 months; in the next few years, projects include the kind of marquee names (Ritz-Carlton, the Tides, Starwood, Canyon Ranch) and designer golf courses (Greg Norman, »

ISLAND HOPPING

Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus) that attract big spenders and executive powwows. Meantime, the island's existing resorts have been notching up their services to the next level: **Sandals** has just added four Millionaire Suites (private plunge pools, 42-inch plasma TVs) to their **Regency la Toc** and are currently adding a Greek Village to their **Grande St. Lucian**. At the charming **Fond Doux Estate**, an authentic working cocoa and banana plantation, the Lamontagne family has just restored three more 100-year-old guest cottages. Changes are indeed afoot on this alluring Windward isle, and the

upshot is a steadily evolving range of good choices for travelers of various tastes and requirements.

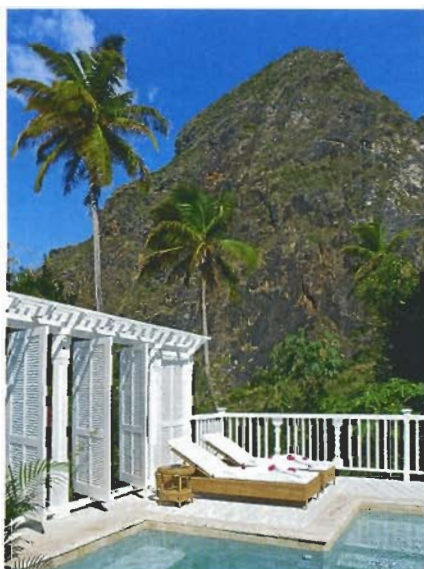
LUXURY TAKES A HOLIDAY Fifty suites, 19 pools — that's the impressively lopsided tally at **Cap Maison**, an enclave of Mediterranean-styled villas and flower-decked courtyards just north of Rodney Bay. Bathrooms are embellished with hand-painted Mexican tiles, the kitchens with Mexican hammered-copper trim. Triplex suites are crowned with expansive terraces, private plunge pools, and private dining beneath bamboo pergolas.

In Rodney Bay itself, the 72-room **Bay Gardens Beach Resort** packs in lots of today's luxury perks (full kitchens, Wi-Fi, data ports) but charges refreshingly affordable rates. The lagoon-style pool is handy to massage cabanas and a kids club; the island's best beach is on one side, the bars and bistros of Rodney Bay Village on the other.

Stepping into the imposing entryway at **Calabash Cove** is a bit like making a grand entrance into the first-class dining room on an ocean queen. The resort's beachside setting, just south of Rodney Bay, snuggles 26 suites around a half-million-gallon infinity pool and a water-view restaurant, **Windsong**. The prime digs are high-ceilinged, teak-and-mahogany stand-alone cottages with patio plunge pools, hammocks and outdoor rain showers.

The 192-acre **Jalousie Plantation**, near Soufriere in the south, has been around for 20 years, but it will re-emerge early in 2010 as virtually new after a \$100-million upgrade and under new management (the Kor Hotel Group) and a new name, **The Tides Sugar Beach**. Huddled between the iconic Pitons, the Tides will feature 150 brand-new villas with airy interiors, white-on-white four-poster beds, DeLonghi espresso machines — and private plunge pools. Many of the villas are already hosting guests.

KNEADED RELIEF Spas are essential accoutrements of hospitality stardom, so St. Lucia has opened several in recent months — among them **Calabash Cove's Ti Spa**, **Cap Maison's Spa Maison** and the 7,000-square-foot **RockResorts Spa** at the Landings. Though many spas find their inspiration in far-off lands, both **RockResorts** and **Ti spas** have treatments utilizing mud from the extinct volcano at Soufriere. The charming new **Kai Koko Spa** at **Ti Kaye Village** draws its inspiration from the garden out back and the cove out front. Its oils are handcrafted from local ylang-ylang and papaya; the walls are built of local coconut wood; and floor-to-ceiling sliders open wide so guests can hear the sloshing of the surf.



EATING WELL New resorts are bringing enhanced sophistication to St. Lucia's dining scene. Some recent menu highlights at **The Cliff at Cap**, where the menu changes daily to take advantage of the freshest ingredients, include cappuccino of summer peas and white truffle, and seared scallops with caramelized crepes; the "nouveau French-West Indian" cuisine is presented in a breezy beachside pavilion at **Cap Maison**. Two-year-old **Piano Piano** at Cotton Bay Village features a champagne bar and eclectic Mediterranean-Caribbean fare, with influences from Morocco, Spain, Greece and

Italy; the signature appetizer, a tomato tart with arugula, feta and a drizzle of pesto, draws consistent raves. And at Calabash Cove's **Windsong**, chef **Didier Le Berre** has conjured up pan-roasted kingfish with artichoke-vanilla foam velouté and basil risotto.

GETTING THERE While many Caribbean destinations are suffering from canceled or suspended air services, St. Lucia is an exception. **JetBlue** has just inaugurated nonstops three times a week to the island's Hewanorra airport from its spacious and efficient terminal at New York's JFK. — *Ian Keown*



The view from Ti Kaye Village resort. Opposite, clockwise from above left: Outside and in at one of the new villas at Jalousie Plantation (soon to be the Tides at Sugar Beach); the new Cap Maison boutique hotel near Rodney Bay.

St. Lucia THE AGENDA

STAY

Bay Gardens Beach Resort
877-620-3200
baygardensresorts.com
From \$157 in low season (\$200 high)

Calabash Cove
758-456-3500
calabashcove.com
From \$330 in low season (\$405 high)

Cap Maison
888-765-4985
capmaison.com
From \$405 in low season (\$565 high)

Fond Doux Estate
758-459-7545
fonddouxestate.com
From \$100 in low season (\$150 high)

Jalousie Plantation
758-456-8000
thejalousieplantation.com
From \$290 in low season (\$470 high)

Sandals Grande St. Lucian
888-726-3257
sandals.com
From \$908 all-inclusive in low season (\$986 high)

Sandals Regency La Toc
888-726-3257
sandals.com
From \$884 all-inclusive in low season (\$966 high)

EAT

The Cliff at Cap
758-457-8681
theciffatcap.com
Entrées from \$33

Windsong Restaurant
758-456-3500
calabashcove.com
Entrées from \$24

Piano Piano
758-456-5700
cottonbayvillage.com
Entrées from \$28