

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

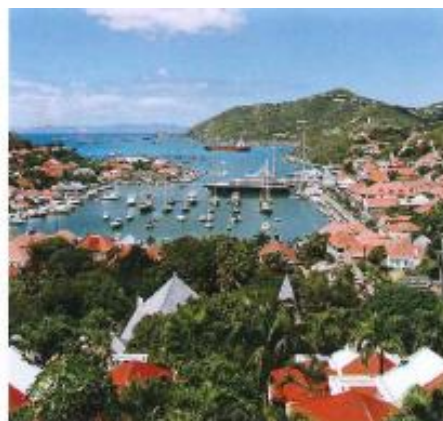
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Circ: 974,552

THE CARIBBEAN

## ST. BART'S

**WHY GO NOW** Because the island's grande dame hotels are looking younger than ever.



From top: A view of Gustavia's harbor; the Admiral Suite, one of the revamped rooms at Le Guanahani; a villa at Cheval Blanc St.-Barth Isle de France.

ice cream. + For a loftier experience, there's **L'Esprit Saline** (590-590/524-610; \$\$\$), where Eden Rock alum Jean-Claude Dufour offers a seasonal Provençal menu on a wooden deck near the sea.

■ **STAY** On gorgeous Flamands Bay, the rebranded **Cheval Blanc St.-Barth Isle de France** ([chevalblanc.com](http://chevalblanc.com); \$\$\$\$\$) has all the touches you'd expect from its owner, luxury-brand behemoth LVMH: crisp white rooms, a fitness center overlooking the sea, and the Caribbean's only Guerlain spa. + Nearby, the **Hotel Taiwana** ([hoteltaiwana.com](http://hoteltaiwana.com); \$\$\$) recently debuted 22 individually designed rooms and suites, some with private pools. + A four-year renovation has given **Le Guanahani** ([leguanahani.com](http://leguanahani.com); \$\$\$\$\$)—the island's largest hotel, with 67 rooms and two beaches—new suites, a

refreshed lobby, and beach-meets-safari design flourishes, like framed maps and custom furniture by Luis Pons.

■ **EAT** For lunch on Grand Cul de Sac Beach, grab a picnic table under the coccoloba trees at **La Gloriette** (590-590/298-571; \$\$) and dig into a plate of crisp salt-cod fritters. + At **Dô Brazil** ([dobrazil.com](http://dobrazil.com); \$\$\$), near Gustavia's harbor, the kitchen turns out everything from mahimahi kebabs to ratatouille. + **Le Grain de Sel** (590-590/524-605; \$\$\$) serves simple, well-prepared dishes, like crab-and-lentil salad and mango-lychee

■ **DO** St. Joan Beach is where you go to see and be seen. If you want a quieter setting with nothing but sun, coral sand, and turquoise water, go to Grande Saline, Anse de Gouverneur, or Colombier. + The island's first French settlement, **Lorient** (est. 1648), has a little-town-in-Brittany vibe, with a stone church, rectory, and boufangerie. + The gallery and bookstore **Clic** ([clic.com](http://clic.com)) is a slice of SoHo in the Caribbean. + The unassuming boutique **Mademoiselle Hortense** (590-590/271-329) offers unexpectedly good finds, including flirty dresses, tops, and caftans, locally sewn from Liberty of London fabric.