

StolenTime: a Caribbean Beach Resort with a Difference



Hop over to the sunny shores of St Lucia to discover this luxurious little slice of paradise | Courtesy of StolenTime by Rendezvous



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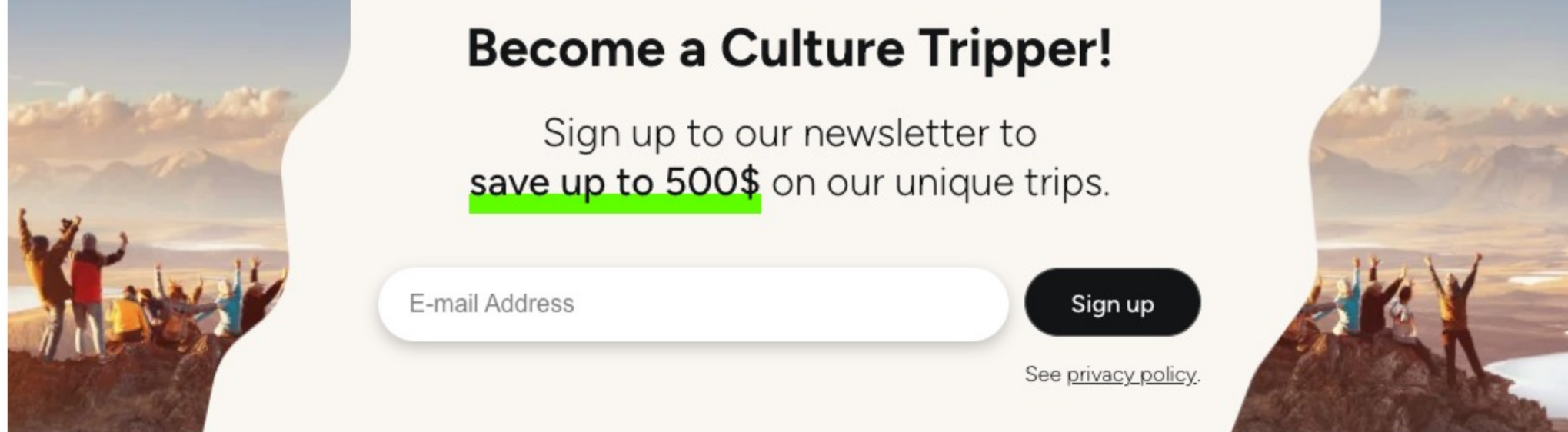


Nothing reinforces the precious nature of time quite like the act of going on holiday. A week away. An escape from the nine-to-five. Three hours to leave plenty of time for security and a further eight on the plane. Well, the mission at StolenTime in St Lucia is to help you achieve that blissful, weightless feeling where time itself loses any value or meaning whatsoever.

It doesn't take long to settle into the embracing arms of relaxation when you're kicking back on a beach in St Lucia. The island spirit soon washes over you like the gently lapping waves of the Caribbean Sea, cleansing you of any concern beyond what to eat for lunch. The beaming sunshine brightens your outlook, menial daily strife gets lost among the endless grains of sand nestling between your toes, and thoughts of normal life suddenly feel a million miles away from the luscious tropical greenery framing your horizon.

Fortunately, StolenTime by Rendezvous has a prime patch of real estate directly on Vigie Beach, one of the finest stretches of sand around the whole island. That's no coincidence, either, since the resort's history dates back to the 1950s, when Denis Barnard and wife Marguerite bought a plot of land and built their oceanfront house, Malabar.

Barnard, a bit of character by all accounts, had a natural flair for hospitality. And so began a steady and not so subtle evolution from welcoming beachgoers in for dinner, to the creation of neighboring guest cottages and eventually the opening of a hotel, formerly known as the Rendezvous.



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This charming family tale adds a tangible taste of authenticity to the place, which feels that bit more boutique than your average Caribbean beach resort. Each building feels as though it was built at a different time, with its own architectural quirks, expanding the complex like the ever-growing branches of a family tree.

The beachfront rooms at StolenTime are designed with a personal touch and placed right on the doorstep of Vigie Beach | Courtesy of StolenTime by Rendezvous



The gorgeously landscaped gardens create a sense of intimacy, sheltering guests from the outside world, much like a regular backyard – albeit on a far more luxurious scale. Yet the location on the outskirts of Castries, the St Lucian capital, and its direct access to a favorite beach among islanders, means that you feel far more attached to the local culture than you would at most of the island's more sterile resorts.

The resort embraces that relationship, too, with nightly performances by local entertainers and regular West Indian buffets that bring a taste of island life directly to your dinner table. Local craftsman Russell pops in to host basket weaving masterclasses, while a glimpse into Lucian life can be had with a spot of people watching on the beach. The concierge and activities team can help you attend Friday night street parties or embark on a Saturday morning tour of Castries' bustling market, while easy access to the marina means endless boating opportunities, from sunset cruises to snorkel adventures.

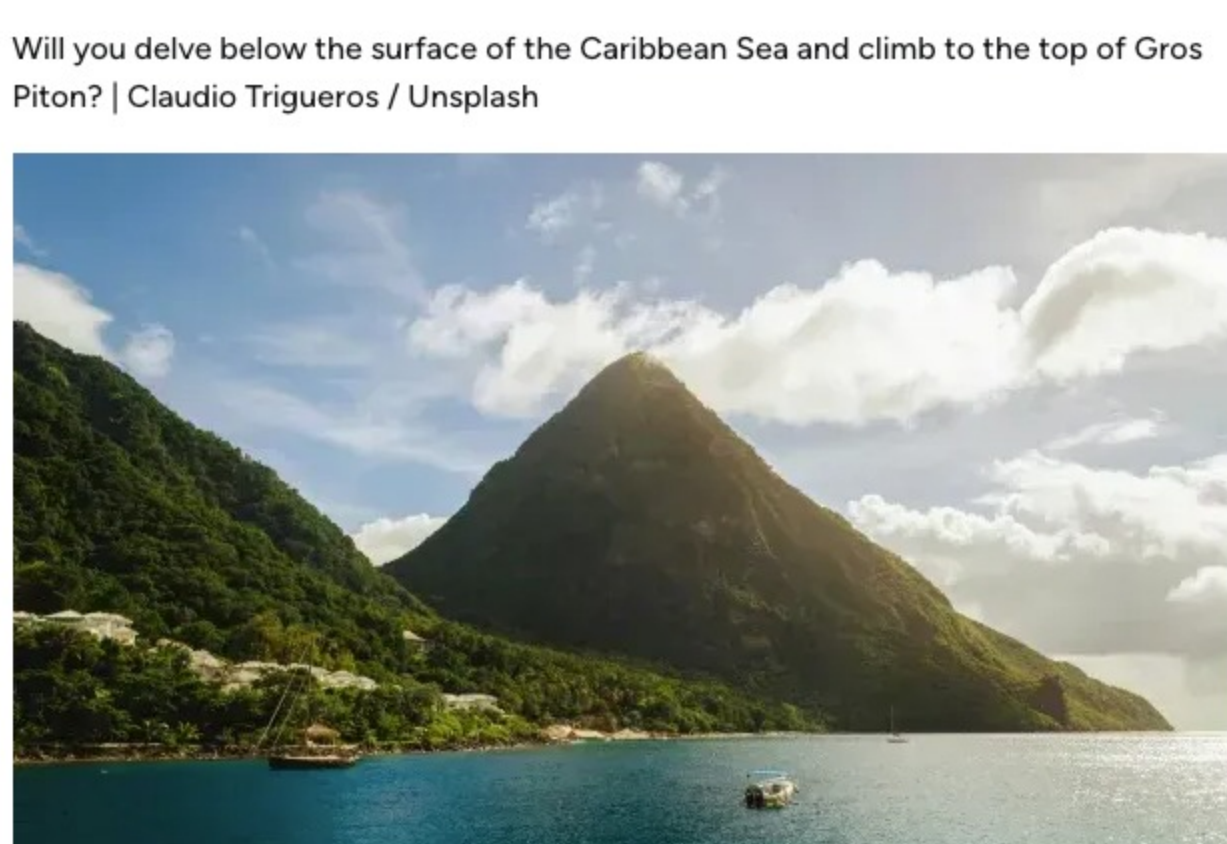
That connection to the island can also be felt from every interaction with the resort's excellent family of staff. The service is aptly excellent for a luxury stay, but each and every person here has their own distinct personality and are allowed to show it. The St Lucian outlook reveals itself with effortless charm, a wry smile, a chuckle and an unbreakably laid-back vibe.

There's Ana, who coolly patrols the beach ensuring no guest is left without a beverage, and waitress Matilda, who between courses at Thyme restaurant draws a smile from every diner's face as she reveals it's her 27th year working at the hotel. In fact, we're told that one member of staff has been working here for 51 years, with the hotel having only been open for 58. There's no wonder such a tight-knit atmosphere permeates throughout the place.

That sense of familial comfort extends to its guests, for whom in many cases it isn't a first-time visit. Perhaps it was originally a honeymoon destination, but holidayers feel compelled to return to StolenTime's peaceful surrounds, be it for an anniversary of said honeymoon, or any other half-baked excuse concocted to encourage a return. From our conversations, these repeat customers are rarely able to leave it longer than 3-4 years before coming back to their spiritual Caribbean home.

Things don't tend to get stale here due to the variety of things to do, places to eat and even spots to hang out. You're well placed to explore the many bounties of St Lucia, from volcanic mud baths to the tropical peaks of the Pitons and boundless snorkel and scuba potential across the island.

Will you delve below the surface of the Caribbean Sea and climb to the top of Gros Piton? | Claudio Trigueros / Unsplash



In-house there are daily activities like archery and yoga sessions, tennis masterclasses with a local pro and beach fun in the form of volleyball and tai-chi. The watersports crew regularly take guests out tubing, water skiing and hobie cat sailing, while kayaks and paddleboards are always available to take out onto the water.

On the foodie front, StolenTime really excels. When your hunger eventually returns having indulged at the extensive buffet breakfast, you'll be able to choose between lunch at the main Terrace restaurant, which serves up an ever-changing rotation of specialty dishes, often highlighting the island's rich culinary tradition, and the Malabar Beach Club, where you can dine with the soothing sense of sand between the toes. Fish dishes, especially the catch of the day, are always a safe bet at either eatery, while the creamy penne vongole I devoured at Malabar was a flavor highlight of the entire trip.

Creamy clam pasta with plenty of parmesan and an ice cold Piton lager – and a truly dreamy setting from which to indulge | © Gethin Morgan / Culture Trip



Both the Terrace and Malabar serve dinner, but you can also reserve a fine dining table at the indoor Thyme restaurant, where you can tick into a French-Caribbean dishes and, if you're lucky, enjoy being served by Matilda. After dinner, evening entertainment and superb Caribbean cocktails can be savored at the Terrace, while the small but sophisticated Champagne Bar remains open until the very last guest decides to call it a night.

As well as clam pasta at Malabar, the culinary highlights of our stay included the catch of the day (mahi mahi) at Thyme, seasoned roast chicken for lunch at Terrace and, perhaps taking the ultimate taste trophy, a superb curried goat serving at the West Indian buffet.

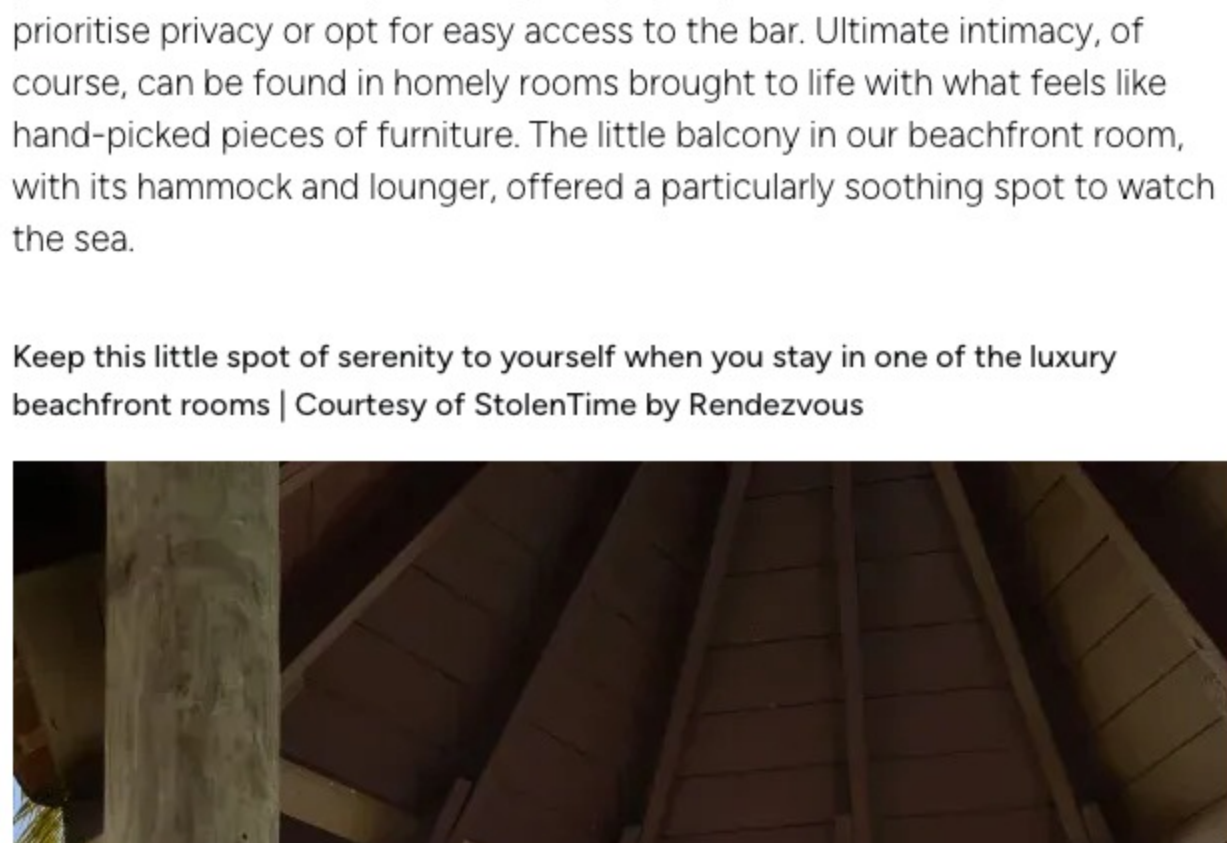
We also took advantage of the watersports facilities to go for a paddle on the Caribbean, while our stay fell conveniently during Valentine's Day, which means we were treated by the resort to a gorgeous snorkel cruise over to Marigot Bay. Other off site excursions included a snorkel trip for my partner, who spotted a turtle and a kaleidoscope of tropical fish as I sweated my way through the challenging climb up Gros Piton – fortunately the view from the top is more than worth the sweat lost along the way.

What struck us most, however, throughout our time at StolenTime, was the serene sense of intimacy that never seemed to break. Despite the resort's beach being a public one, and despite it being a full house during our stay, things bizarrely felt like we had everything to ourselves. It was only on the 120+ zanzibar snorkel cruise that we realized just how many people were enjoying the same experience as us. It was honestly difficult to comprehend that all those people came from the quaint, laid-back holiday spot we were calling home for the week.

That must be in no small part due to the design of the resort, which thanks to its bit-by-bit architectural design and clever use of tropical landscaping, nicely breaks the place up into different nooks and crannies. The lazy river, concealed by greenery, is a particularly silent spot, while one pool suits quiet readers, another – with a swim-up bar – naturally attracts a more gregarious set of guests.

The beach, meanwhile, is so big that you can always find your own personal patch of sand. A variety of sitting (or lying) options mean that you can prioritise privacy or opt for easy access to the bar. Ultimate intimacy, of course, can be found in homely rooms brought to life with what feels like hand-picked pieces of furniture. The little balcony in our beachfront room, with its hammock and lounger, offered a particularly soothing spot to watch the sea.

Keep this little spot of serenity to yourself when you stay in one of the luxury beachfront rooms | Courtesy of StolenTime by Rendezvous



It's no wonder then that this is a resort that has long been frequented by couples but, while honeymooners, anniversarians and general romantic retreaters do get exactly what they wish for, this is far more than just a couples resort. With such a broad variety of activities on and offsite, regular evening entertainment and a plenty of beach space, StolenTime would make a great home for a group of friends looking for a taste of St Lucia.

That said, our stay was as a couple, and the sense of intimacy was well appreciated. As we spent the final hours before our late-afternoon airport transfer kayaking and paddleboarding back and forth along Vigie Beach, sipping cocktails and soaking in the Caribbean sun until the very last minute, we slowly began to remember about the grand old concept that had subtly been evading us.

The hours did indeed lose their meaning for those few days and, as Old World Time reintroduced himself on the 90-minute drive to Hewanorra International Airport, we realised that our holiday had been a heist of some kind. A daylight robbery, so to speak. Though I can assure you there were no gemstones or bank notes tucked away deep in the sand-speckled bowels of my suitcase. In fact, our metaphysical booty was much more precious. We'd been staying at StolenTime, after all.

[Ready to embark on the ultimate Caribbean escape? Treat yourself to the getaway of a lifetime and book a stay at StolenTime by Rendezvous.](#)

[You can also discover StolenTime's sister resort, BodyHoliday, which introduces you to a world of wellness like no other on the island's northwestern coast.](#)