

Indagare

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Indagare Matchmaker: St. Barth's



With its Caribbean warmth and chic French *l'art de vivre*, St. Barth's is the sort of place that draws travelers back year after year. The island has no shortage of luxury hotels, each one an intimate boutique property with distinct style and character, and there's something for everyone: families seeking a resort experience, couples looking for utter serenity and travelers who want to be at the epicenter of the island's see-and-be-seen scene. Here's how to choose—and what to book.

Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France



Located on the beautiful arc of Flamands Beach, this stunning LVMH-owned property is the ultra-luxe but never flashy jewel in St Barth's crown. The property has an effortless Provençal-chic appeal with light-flooded rooms, impeccable white linens and structural free-standing bathtubs. Though the hotel is personal—with only 40 rooms—you won't want for any amenities (there's a gym and Guerlain spa).

- **Best for:** Francophiles with deep pockets
- **Vibe:** Provençal, effortlessly stylish, intimate
- **Location:** Set directly on Flamands Beach, a 10-minute drive from all the action in Gustavia.
- **Room to Book:** Families and groups of friends traveling together should splurge on the three-bedroom Flamands Villa. In addition to a prime beachfront location, it comes with its own Isle de France–branded foosball table (complete with pink-jersey'ed figurines).
- **Keep in Mind:** Travelers for whom privacy is paramount should book with caution. The Junior Suites are located at pool level close to the bar, and while the Beach Suites boast an enviable location right on Flamands, they are susceptible to passing beachgoers looking into the rooms.
- **Where to Eat:** Dine with your toes in the sand at **La Cabane de L'Isle**, the hotel's waterfront restaurant serving al fresco–appropriate dishes (cruautés with dipping sauces, grilled fish). The slightly more formal—though still easy breezy—option is **La Case de L'Isle**, where reservations are a must be it for lunch or dinner.

Eden Rock



Perhaps due to its status as the island's first hotel, Eden Rock is a St. Barth's icon. It's a favorite among celebrities, fashionistas and attention-seekers of all kinds, and with its magnificent villas and protected aquamarine beach, can also be a great fit for certain families. The hotel also manages some 18 villas located all over the island, which are great options for those traveling in groups who still wish to benefit from the infrastructure of a hotel: room service, dedicated concierge, daily breakfast delivery, et. al.

- **Best for:** Those coming to St. Barth's for the express purpose of seeing and being seen
- **Vibe:** Glamorous, grande dame, central
- **Location:** Perched on a rocky promontory over Baie de St. Jean, within walking distance from St. Jean's boutiques and adjacent to Nikki Beach's day-to-night party scene.
- **Room to Book:** Divided by a craggy bluff, the resort can be split into two sections: traditional rooms on the rock that are optimal for couples, and family-friendly cottages and villas scattered on the beach. Every accommodation is different and have original artwork throughout. Especially noteworthy is the Greta Garbo Suite, which pays tribute to the eternal Hollywood glamour of the 1930s.
- **Keep in Mind:** Unless you book a room or villa with its own pool, there's no swimming pool on-property. The beach, though, is one of the finest on St. Barth's.
- **Where to Eat:** Both restaurants, by Jean-Georges Vongerichten, are sublime. With its wood-burning pizza oven and waterfront setting, **Sand Bar** is ideal for lunch or those traveling with kids. Dramatic fine-dining eatery **On the Rocks** appears to float, suspended over the azure waters, and is perfect for a big night out.

Le Guanahani



With 18 acres comprising three restaurants, two pools, two beaches, two tennis courts, an ocean-facing gym, Clarins spa, Frederic Fekkai hair salon and kids' club, [Le Guanahani](#) is the only true full-service resort on the island. These amenities make the property ideal for families, as do the spacious cottage-style suites, many of which come with pull-out sofas, multiple bedrooms and large private pools. Yet with only 67 rooms spread out over the vast property, the hotel is far from gargantuan, and will also appeal to active couples.

- **Best for:** Families and couples seeking a resort with room to spread out
- **Vibe:** Colorful, sprawling, amenity-filled
- **Location:** Nestled into its own private peninsula in Grand Cul-de-Sac, Le Guanahani is on the opposite side of the island from Gustavia but more than holds its own in terms of restaurants and activities with which to stay busy.
- **Room to Book:** Spa mavens should book the Wellness Suite, a loft-like room with direct access to the spa. It offers its guests private, after-hours use of the beautiful spa pool.
- **Keep in Mind:** Rooms facing Marigot Beach (the wavier side) feel more secluded, whereas those on the Grand Cul-de Sac side (with child-friendly ripples) are right above—and offer easy access to—the pool, fitness center and beach restaurant.
- **Where to Eat:** The hotel’s lively beach restaurant, **Indigo on the Beach**, is well worth a visit for a feet-in-the-sand lunch even if you’re not staying here. The hotel’s main restaurant, **Indigo**, overlooks the beach and pool, and serves a particularly appealing selection of ceviche. **Bartolomeo** is the most formal of the three, offering Caribbean-Mediterranean cuisine in a charming garden setting.

Le Sereno



On an island stuffed to the gills with stylish hotels, [Le Sereno](#) stands out for its austere, ultra-chic simplicity. French designer Christian Liaigre (who is also behind New York City’s [Mercer Hotel](#)) is responsible for the sanctuary’s contemporary interiors and furnishings, in which stark white textiles, natural wood and angular lines underscore the island’s stunning natural beauty. Here, luxury is about lounging by the palm-tree framed pool and getting hooked on treatments at the 2,300-square-foot spa.

- **Best for:** Design lovers seeking a minimalist-chic aesthetic
- **Vibe:** Pared-down, tranquil, understated elegance
- **Location:** Set on St Barth's northeastern side adjacent to Le Guanahani, Le Sereno is located on one of the island's best bays for kite-surfing and other water sports. Beach snobs may be underwhelmed as the water is shallow and not quite as azure or crystalline as its counterparts on the island.
- **Room to Book:** Couples will adore the exquisite Grand Suite Plage accommodation, featuring sleek four-poster beds, spacious teak bathrooms and ultra-private terraces. For groups, each of the hotel's three 7,500-square-foot homes come with four bedrooms, a full-size swimming pool and two Mini Cooper rental cars.
- **Keep in Mind:** The entry-level Bungalow Piscine rooms are on the smaller side, but offer a reasonable gateway into the hotel.
- **Where to Eat:** Formerly known as Restaurant des Pêcheurs, Le Sereno's new **eponymous eatery** serves Italian-inspired fare such as homemade linguine with lobster.

Hotel Le Toiny



Privacy-seekers coming to St. Barth's for serenity rather than a scene should look no further than Le Toiny, an immaculate oasis on the island's rugged southeastern end. Composed of just 15 stand-alone accommodations, the property underwent a full renovation and reopened in November 2015 to a brand-new look: flawless white and taupe upholstery, sun-bleached woods and pale blue pops of color. For reclusive and romantic types, there are far worse things than hiding out in one of the villas where masseuses, trainers and chefs can be brought in-house.

- **Best for:** Escapists who relish the idea of a romantic getaway without another soul in sight
- **Vibe:** Pristine, blissfully remote, refined
- **Location:** A windy 25-minute drive from Gustavia, Le Toiny is not a good fit for someone who plans to shop and eat in town regularly. It is, however, located above one of the most popular breaks for surfers.
- **Room to Book:** The property is composed of 15 villas— 14 one-bedrooms and one three-bedroom—each with a pool. You can't go wrong with any, though we're particularly fond of those located highest on the hill as they have the best views of the Caribbean sea.
- **Keep in Mind:** It's a 20-minute walk down the hill to the water, so most guests prefer to access the beach club via golf cart. Additionally, while swimmable, the waters can be rough due to the resort's leeward location on the island; the conditions are great for surfers, but swimmers may prefer to drive to expansive Saline Beach, one bay over.
- **Where to Eat:** Even non-guests brave the drive to Le Toiny to dine at their open-air restaurant, an island hot spot with great views. The restaurant is renowned for its sophisticated Sunday brunch.

- Marley Lynch on December 8, 2015