

SUGAR BEACH A VICEROY RESORT & THE CHICEST HOTEL

SAINT LUCIA NOW OPEN TO AMERICAN TRAVELERS

BY INNA DeSILVA



When I saw photos of the pop music star Dua Lipa and her boyfriend, Anwar Hadid, on a beach with The World Heritage Site Pitons in the distance, I immediately recalled the dreamlike stay I had at the Sugar Beach resort on St. Lucia this past December.

This five-star heaven does everything right. As soon as I left customs, a Sugar Beach representative was there to greet me and offer a cold towel and cool bottle of water. The ride from the airport delighted me with beautiful scenery. On arrival, the friendly front desk offered me my choice of a cold coconut or a chilled local beer. The resort offers guestrooms, bungalows, villas, and private residences. After check-in I was driven by golf cart to my one-bedroom bungalow with a plunge pool and jaw-dropping views.

After a nap on a luxurious king-sized four-poster bed, followed by a delectable dinner from room service, I walked down to the fabulous hotel pool for a midnight dip under the stars. The next morning, after a swim in my plunge pool, I made my way to the resort's Great House for breakfast.

As an experienced world traveler, I can attest that the breakfast buffet is a thing of beauty. Only in Europe's grand hotels have I seen such bounty. The spread included everything from European-imported ham to various plant-based beverages, yogurts, freshly squeezed juices, and local honey.

If you can think of it, Sugar Beach has it, and has it from morning until late night. The hotel flies in European products, but unlike other Caribbean islands, St. Lucia can supply its resorts with vegetables and fruits grown in its rich volcanic soil as well as meat from its livestock farms and ranches. Local sources and extraordinary chefs are the reasons Sugar Beach is on a par with great European restaurants. This cannot be said about other Caribbean islands.

During cocktails with the resort's GM, Mark Sterner, along with his lovely partner, Kelly, I came to understand why everything at Sugar Beach is superb. Mark's impressive background includes managing other five-star hotels: The Carlyle in NYC and the legendary Little Dix Bay Resort in the British Virgin Islands. Managers like Mark Sterner have been molded in European hotel schools, where the approach is to do whatever is necessary to please a client. They are taught that luxury is attainable with hard work.

The island has plenty of things to do and see if you can tear yourself from the exquisite beach. From a chocolate plantation tour to hot mineral springs to zip lining to hiking, St. Lucia is an island to fall in love with and Sugar Beach is a world-class resort to return to time and again.

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