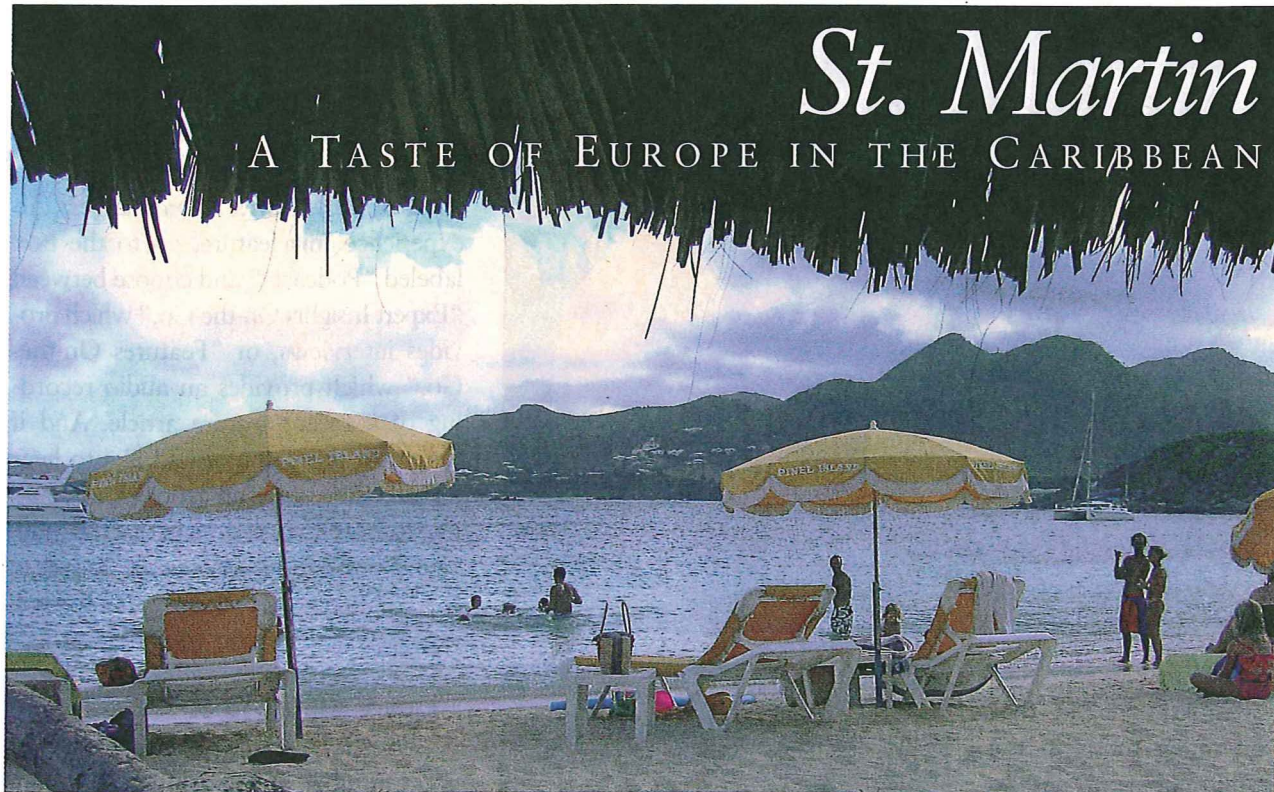


Physician's LifeStyle

BY ERIC G. ANDERSON, MD.

PHYSICIAN'S MONEY DIGEST



St. Martin

A TASTE OF EUROPE IN THE CARIBBEAN

Just a Stone's Throw Away—the Grand Case Beach Club

Close by with English-speaking residents and stores that accept the dollar, the Caribbean islands are a convenient paradise. St. Martin in particular, less than an hour by plane from San Juan, has the additional charm of offering three cultures: the native one, the Dutch commercial aspects of the south side of the island—Sint Maarten, and the more languid French lifestyle of the north side. Although the French capital of Marigot can be busy at times, Grand Case is only 20 minutes by cab. This quaint vacation spot still clings to the relaxed ambiance of what is essentially a French village inhabited by Caribbean islanders.

In the midst of this village sits arguably the Caribbean's best family resort, Grand Case Beach Club (800-344-3016 or 011-590-590-87-51-87; www.grandcasebeachclub.com), which lies right on the water's edge. Its 72 rooms all have kitchens and easy beach access, and many of the resort's water sports activities are included. "We benefit from the French

influence," says Stephen Wright, general manager at the Grand Case Beach Club. "Many Caribbean towns offer one good restaurant in one good hotel, but within a 10-minute walk of my resort, you can find 50 great restaurants—all equal to the best you might find in a major American city."

The chef owner of Le Montmartre also runs the little Sunset Café (011-590-590-66-1001; www.sunset-cafe.com) at the Grand Case Beach Club, so guests don't have to drift farther than the beach.

Restaurant Hopping

A leisurely walk easily proves Wright's point. Chef Thierry Delaunay is readying his tables at the Hibiscus restaurant (011-590-590-29-17-91; www.hibiscusrestaurant.com) as visitors stroll by, and farther down the street Chez Martine (011-590-590-87-51-59; www.chezmartine.com), a small inn with a great restaurant, is opening its doors with other flavors of France with similarly reasonable prices.