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SAINT LUCIA

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ILLUSTRATION BY OLEG PORTNOY



Rajan Nazran

THE INSIDER GUIDE

AS REQUESTED BY YOU, AN OFFICIAL GUIDE TO ST LUCIA OVERVIEW ON THE NATION - GUIDELINES TO INVESTMENTS, PARTNERSHIPS, TOURISM AND OUR GUIDE TO TRAVEL



Alena Hakansson

WELCOME TO OUR AUTHENTIC GUIDE TO ST LUCIA, it is a deep honor to be producing this series once more especially on the run up to our 50th destination. As requested by our core readership of investors, HNWI and leaders in the travel market worldwide, we took the plunge once more and voyaged out. At the start of this year at our extravagant “coffee summit”, our participants requested information on key markets that were of direct interest to them for a variety of reasons. From wealth protection, through to international residency programs and unique tourism destinations and, as promised, we packed our bags and voyaged out once more. This time we took our team to St Lucia which featured on our top 5 destinations list, to understand the very fabric of what makes this market tick. From exploring the potential of its offshore sector, the validity of its Citizenship Investment Program through to exploring its genuine tourism proposition and understanding the key movers and shakers that you need to know and what to avoid, including our personal thoughts on the new administration. The team spent over 10 weeks and conducted over 100+ personal interviews and as you would expect, the report pulls no punches; we tackled the good, the bad and the damn right strange!

On the notion of clarity, our team prior to travelling had approached to interview PM Hon Allen Chastanet to get his answers on some of the most important issues facing the country and to discuss the investment climate and key issues being faced, from the hotly contested DHS project, the controversial Dolphin Park through to possible solutions for the correspondent banking crisis and how he was tackling the issues surrounding due diligence for his citizenship program - something that has made both the US and Canadian administrations increasingly uneasy. On the tourism front we planned to talk about his ambitious plans of

increasing the tourism proposition of the country and the introduction of new rooms in an already highly undersubscribed sector. Unfortunately, even though the interview was arranged, it was cancelled at the last minute with little explanation and at every point we were denied access for over the 10 weeks we were there and the 4 weeks prior. We also struggled to find satisfactory answers through his aides and even though his very own High Commissioner to London had sent him a personal letter explaining the importance of the piece and to ensure absolute transparency, he still seemed to be unavailable to our continuous request. We had also approached his advisor Hon Minister Guy Joseph - (incidentally is being called into question over an “airport corruption investigation”) in addition to the statutory body Invest St Lucia, who again would not answer questions on the record about issues that would raise concerns to genuine foreign investors. It was highly unfortunate. However all was not doom and gloom as the private sector rallied together and we received tremendous support from key business owners and reputable agencies like TEPA.

So, a word of warning to the brave, read this report at your own peril and make sure you speak to our team if you are considering the region as an investment destination or a location for your tourists. If you are an independent tourist, make sure you read the Authentic Tourism Guide, a collection of the leading places to go and key hotels to stay with, that offer much more than the usual sun, sea and sand.

Alena and I would also like to thank our sponsors, who assisted in creating this valuable piece and for every echelon of the society in St Lucia that took us in and adopted us as one of their own.

Happy reading, investing, travelling and exploring ●

FACT BOX

INTERVIEW DECLINED

The questions we had set forth covered aspects on U.S. investor confidence, will the new administration look to strengthen ties with the U.S., the level of due diligence on applications for the new citizenship by investment program, environmental protection through to the impact of IMPACS report.

FAST TRAVEL FACTS

Best time to go: November through June is peak season. December may require bookings up to 6 months in advance. Hurricane season is June through November and visitors should be cautious but not deterred from visiting.

Transportation: There are many rental car companies on the island, there are also vans/buses which travel around the entire island for 1EC. Hotels may also provide shuttles too and from larger centres.

Weather: consistent all year between 79 F and 85 F. Rainy season is July - November.

Know before you go: If you rent a car, you will drive on the left hand side of the road! The international airport takes 1.5 hours drive to the north of the island and can cost around 80USD.

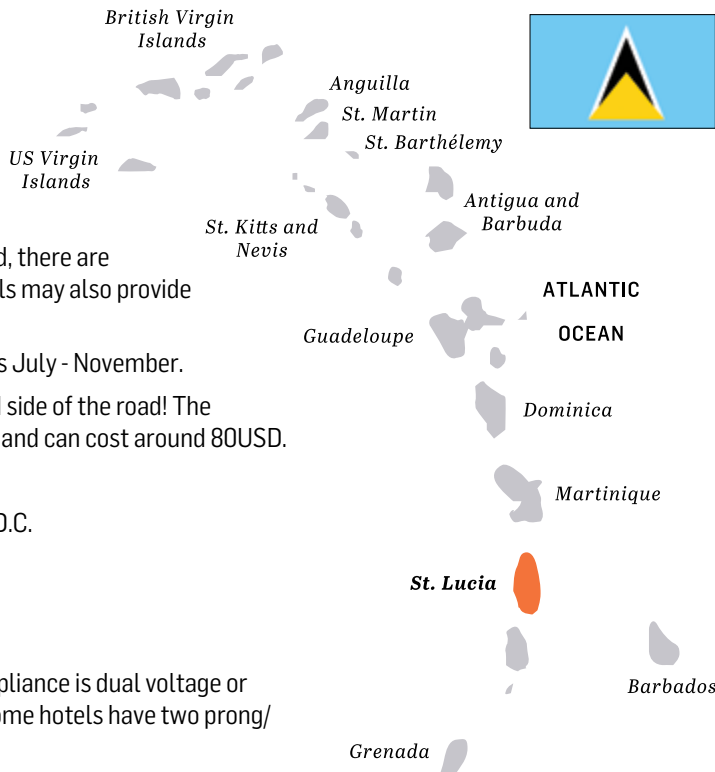
Population: 173 966

Area: 238 sq miles/ 616.4 sq km - 3.5 times the size of Washington D.C.
Official/ Local Language: English/ French Creole

Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar (US \$1 = EC \$2.70)

Time Zone: EST +1, GMT-4

Electrical Outlets: 220 volt electricity, unless your computer or appliance is dual voltage or designed for 220 volts, you will need a converter or transformer. Some hotels have two prong/ North American plugs available.



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**AVERAGE
PROCESSING TIME:
3 MONTHS**

COSTS TO APPLY:

US\$ 100,000APPLICANT APPLYING
ALONE**US\$ 165,000**APPLICANT APPLYING WITH
SPOUSE**US\$ 190,000**APPLICANT APPLYING WITH SPOUSE AND UP
TO TWO (2) OTHER QUALIFYING DEPENDANTS**US\$ 25,000**EACH ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING
DEPENDANT, OF ANY AGE

CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT

IS THE PROGRAMME AN ECONOMIC LIFELINE OR ANOTHER BLOOD CLOT?



Rajan Nazran

43 countries and counting. Worked worldwide on political campaigns, business intelligence gathering, nation positioning and practical soft skills training, author, entrepreneur and human rights activist.

the program secure; by making sure those that are issued citizenship are of good character and have a clear criminal record. The scheme has been dubbed as cash-for-passports which lacks the necessary regulation. Alfred confesses: "When people think about CIP they think about selling passports, and selling your birthrights, and sometimes there isn't sufficient information going out, whether it is to the citizenry or the general populous outside of solution." So it's not just about passports being effectively sold, the CIU hasn't been able to promote and represent the scheme appropriately.

For the system to have a "meaningful contribution, not just in revenue, that is must have a structure that is robust and strong; and I speak specifically of the due diligence system. So when we give those citizenships they are not going to rogues." The key question is what is this process and how is it executed and monitored? There is a lack of detail from the Chief Executive.

Minimum investment starts at \$100,000, although the man at the helm doesn't have the figures for the bottom line cost, once the promoters, marketing team, and lawyers have all taken their fees and commissions. Therefore, it is difficult to be accurate about how much the program contributes in dollars. This minimum investment weighs in at a reasonable figure, but for similar investment any business person could set up an IBC; a system which has been proved to work throughout the region. Alfred talks up the idea of an investor looking to expand their business, and becoming part of the socio-economic fabric of the island. It's romantic, but ultimately unconvincing, particularly noting the previous administration's threat to remove citizenship should they return to power, having been ousted in 2016. By contrast, IBC status remains protected under CARI-CON treaties. Alfred doesn't wish to speak on behalf of politicians, but acknowledges that those threats may not be the most appropriate.

THE CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (CIP) is St Lucia's lifeline to bringing foreign capital into the country, while simultaneously funding development projects and providing tax-free status through citizenship for the investor. With the island-nation unable to borrow anymore money through rights issues, all eyes fall upon the CIP; a program marred with accusations of controversy, impotence and perhaps illegality. Newly-appointed CEO of the Citizenship by Investment Unit, Mr. Nestor Alfred, has brought with him the mantra of due diligence but acknowledges a battle to assert investor confidence.

With an effectively worthless bond system, and the egg-on-face situation of the 60 minute documentary that made a mockery of the regions CIP system, it is down to the newly-appointed chief to reposition the image of St. Lucia's model of Citizenship by Investment and hammer home its socio-economic importance. The man in the hot seat cites the IMF's fourth consultation, which certifies the contributions to GDP and to the reduction of debt that similar CIPs have had across the region. Similarly, the island has fared well compared to the regional counterparts in the eyes of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force's assessment. The pressure remains to make sure this model is secure and sustainable and can be utilized as a genuine economic driver for St. Lucia.

Topping the list of priorities for the incumbent is to make

"The success on the scheme rests on the ability for the management to place security at the fore, which can generate investor confidence."

The flagship project that the CIP has been partly funding is the mixed-development "Pearl of the Caribbean" project, which will include a racecourse as part of a bid to draw tourists to the country. The 840-acre project will be lead by Hong Kong-based investment firm Desert Star Holdings (DSH), but will be fortified with money accrued by the CIP. The development has already received international criticism ranging from the environmental, to socio-economic as local farmers will be forced to relocate. It is not clear how much capital will come from the private sector, and how much will go be funded through CIP.

The government has confirmed that it will lease lands to DSH at a measly \$1 an acre, costing them a grand total of \$840. The purchase price of these lands is valued between \$60-90,000. It begs the question whether the project is financially viable, given the temporary foregoing of at least \$50.4m of revenue. St. Lucia's GDP in 2015 was \$1.4bn, making this \$2.6bn project is a true behemoth, but the government is focused on job creation and mobilising resources so that they can have a long-term economic benefit. It primarily looks like the outright profit making is a focus for the private investment. It isn't clear whether this could leave return-seeking CIP investors in limbo, as their investment in private capital is driven through the government scheme.

There is a cocktail of issues still surrounding the program; the integrity, longevity, and whether it is actually the best way for investors to gain access to the caribbean market. The success on the scheme rests on the ability for the management to place security at the fore, which can generate investor confidence. Should this uphill struggle be traversed, then CIP can truly function as its intended purpose; as perhaps the last lifeline of FDI to St. Lucia that can deliver socio-economic development ●

CIP FACT

TO APPLY FOR CITIZENSHIP

Amongst other things, an applicant must be at least eighteen years old, have no criminal record, be in good health, and be willing to make the required contribution. A person who fulfils these requirements may then begin the application process. The agents on the following page have been chosen and vetted by our team as Authorized Local Agents and on island representation.

IS DUAL CITIZENSHIP ALLOWED IN YOUR COUNTRY?

ALLOWED

Albania, Angola, Australia, Barbados, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kosovo, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, U.K., United States

NOT ALLOWED

Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, China (though enforcement is weak), Djibouti, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Montenegro, Netherlands (by birth only), Nepal, Poland, Saudi Arabia (only with permission from PM), Singapore, Slovakia (only through birth or marriage), Tanzania, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (allowed until 25 yrs old)



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St. Lucia (1996)
Limited

Corporate Services St. Lucia (1996) Limited is a Licensed Registered Agent under the Registered Agent and Trustee Licencing Act, providing a full range of services to International Business Companies:

- Company formations and corporate advisory
- Share registrations and transfers
- Company secretarial services
- Corporate mobility
- Registered Agent and registered office services
- Dissolutions and liquidations

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JOINT VENTURE

Flag of St Lucia



CIP THOUGHT LEADERS

TRUSTED AGENTS IN ST LUCIA

Brenda Floissac On Real Estate Development Approvals for CIP

SENIOR PARTNER AND HEAD OF CHAMBERS. FLOISSAC FLEMING & ASSOCIATES

ST. LUCIA IS WITHOUT A DOUBT ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL islands within the Caribbean, attracting repeated awards for excellence within the tourism sector. As such, it has consistently attracted millions in Foreign Direct Investment despite the economic challenges presented by the global financial crisis. The implementation of the Citizenship by Investment Programme (CIP Programme) in 2015 has only served to further fertilize an already conducive breeding ground for successful investments on the island.

As with all investments within the tourism industry, securing initial capital can create real challenges for investors. One of the ways in which an applicant may qualify for a St. Lucian passport is to invest in any pre-approved real estate development valued at a minimum of US\$300,000 for no less than five years. By attracting credible high net worth individuals seeking citizenship opportunities that suit their desired lifestyle, the CIP Programme in St. Lucia is an attractive proposition for investors with innovative real estate development options.

While there is no doubt St. Lucia is an ideal venue for real estate development, success is highly dependent on the effective management of the inherent risks involved in property development. One of the key requirements under the CIP guidelines is that the development must be a high end branded hotel, resort or boutique property. There are, however, several other conditions that must be satisfied to become an approved real estate project under the CIP Programme. To meet these requirements, Investors must consider how they structure the investment so as to ensure it is financially viable.

Steps to ensure Real Estate Development Approvals for CIP

1. Engaging suitable technical consultants and construction companies to ensure the project is technically and financially sound;
2. Securing the necessary planning permissions and meeting all regulatory requirements;
3. Applying for all applicable tax concessions available under the



Tourism Stimulus & Incentives Act, including a 25 year income tax relief for the duration of the development period being a period of not more than 25 years ;

4. Implementing the most tax efficient corporate structure for the investment including capitalizing on the use of offshore companies where applicable;
5. Negotiating with relevant financiers and drafting, preparing and registering any agreements and/or security documents;
6. Managing the various risks involved in property development with suitable contracts that avoid costly litigation;
7. Securing the necessary trade licences and work permits for the operation of the resort and managing all issues relating to employment of staff;
8. Utilizing the necessary dispute resolution mechanism available to minimize the impact of disputes arising whether during the construction phase or operations of the development.

The firm, Floissac Fleming & Associates established as Floissac & Giraudy in 1960, is one of Saint Lucia's oldest and most reputable law firms in Saint Lucia. Our lawyers offer a broad range of legal services and our team has accordingly acquired, individually and collectively, significant experience in diverse areas of civil and commercial practice, civil and commercial litigation, offshore investment, construction law and arbitration in Saint Lucia. Together with our affiliate companies Abacus Financial Services Limited and Polaris Citizenship & Investment Consultancy Services Limited which are duly registered agents under the

International Business Companies Act and Citizenship by Investment Act respectively, we are well equipped to advise investors in several areas relating to property investment both within and outside of the CIP Programme ●

"To meet these requirements, Investors must consider how they structure the investment so as to ensure it is financially viable."



For more information on how we may assist you, please feel free to contact us at info@floissaclawyers.com or visit us at floissaclawyers.com

Peter Foster On Business Confidentiality

HEAD OF CHAMBERS AND PARTNER. PETER I. FOSTER & ASSOCIATES

CITIZENSHIP OF A COUNTRY IS PRECIOUS; it is considered the defining and recognizing quality of any person. It confirms the place one identifies as his, with such deep pride. The people of any country have a right to know the extent to which they are safeguarded in the interest of the state they call home and its people. The focus and purpose of the Citizenship by Investment Program (CIP) is for a government to raise funds to finance its economic and social development, all in the interest and benefit of the people. Saint Lucia has turned to CIP out of necessity; to endeavour to cut its national debt and fund its capital projects. Our sources of finance, our resources are scarce and it is our hope that CIP will assist with international contact especially in the hunt for development in a country where economic diversity is not prevalent. IMF data shows the CIP program in St. Kitts and Nevis, accounted for 12% of national GDP in 2015 and assisted in bringing down the national debt to 68% of GDP from a huge 159% in 2010.

The Citizenship by Investment Program (CIP) is operated around the globe, it isn't new, nor is it localized to the Caribbean. Many countries offer similar programs including Spain, Malta, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States itself. Tied with our neighbors in Dominica, Saint Lucia's passport is the most affordable in the market.

When looking for a passport, one needs to take into consideration the following:

- A) Freedom of movement - how many countries and business hubs are now accessible to you.
- B) Mandatory travel or residence - minimum stay requirements.
- C) Standard of living - when an applicant considers a move to a new country, the protection of values and rights are still necessary factors.
- D) Ease of processing - are you required to know the language and history of the country?
- E) Minimum investment - there are huge differences across the world in associated costs.
- F) Timeline from application to the possession of the passport.
- G) Due Diligence - maintenance of the integrity of your passport knowing everyone is thoroughly vetted.

Saint Lucia's program offers an applicant tremendous opportunity despite being late to the game. Our country has come to the table in the knowledge that the integrity of its program depends on the proper processing of due diligence to ensure that those who may wish to utilize a second passport for illicit purposes are unsuccessful. This is not a program where the highest bidders or those with the financial means can collect passports like postcards. National pride is not something that can be granted with a wave of a wand or a stamp on a document.



IS YOUR BUSINESS CONFIDENTIALITY AT RISK?

One of the latest developments in the offshore industry has made it even more difficult for clients to maintain their confidentiality. As of 30th June 2017, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) government has implemented the Beneficial Owners Secure Search System Act. This Act now requires all BVI Registered Agents to establish and maintain a dedicated database for all their BVI companies, identifying the beneficial owners and registrable legal entities.

Under section 9(6) of the BOSS Act, the obligation to provide updated beneficial ownership information rests on the BVI company. A BVI company that fails to comply with this section commits an offence and maybe subject to a fine up to US\$250,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years, or both. This database can be accessed from a single designated "secure" location within the BVI and information will "only" be shared upon certified lawful request of specified BVI or UK enforcement authorities.

What is disturbing is, can we be sure of this? There is most likely no way in which anyone can confirm that their information is being kept secure according to this Act. As most know, information is only as confidential as the person who is privy to it. Do you know who oversees your sensitive information?

To alleviate this risk Foster certain that your information confidential. Foster Capital in Saint Lucia prides itself confidentiality and efficiency, such requirement and is the your international business of reasons, such as minimal to no tax liability, global access and no restrictions on foreign exchange. With a high level of communication and efficient employees, you can rest assured that you will always be informed and your sensitive information will be kept confidential.

Saint Lucia is the place to become a citizen. Living in Saint Lucia with arguably the friendliest people on this planet, a stable and democratic government, and lots of investment opportunities, there is no other place like it. With a laid back but efficient work environment, we welcome you to simply beautiful Saint Lucia where your dreams become your reality ●



For more information visit piflaw.com or contact us at contact@piflaw.com

Diana M Thomas On Broadening Opportunities

MANAGING DIRECTOR. ARMORED GLOBAL INC.

SAINT LUCIA IS WELL PLACED IN THE CARIBBEAN, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OUR LOCATION, THE FINANCIAL PROSPECTS AND OUR EFFICIENCY. We aim to bring people together and provide them a means to get a return on their investment. Armored Global Inc. are authorized agents under the Saint Lucia citizenship by investment program. The process is one that can be dejected and drawn-out or it can be frictionless. The deciding factor is choosing representatives who are candid, diligent and most importantly professional. We, at Armored Global, let our actions speak for itself given our history of satisfying clients within the

while steadily brand as pioneers Our team works the quality of embark on through the program. We aim and to develop to provide high

"There is no doubt that it is common ground that the industry is in flux. However, among other advantages our country is welcoming"

legal industry, improving our in the industry. assiduously to improve experience, when families broadening their opportunities citizenship by investment to utilize all available resources new systems that enable us end services that are second to none, to our diversified clientele. By doing so, we want to make sure the best industry practices are observed and that the integrity of the industry is well kept. For us here at Armored Global, citizenship begins with service.

After the passport is issued, as a citizen you are entitled to all the rights of a Saint Lucian citizen, including the right to live in a peaceful environment. We welcome Saint Lucians to



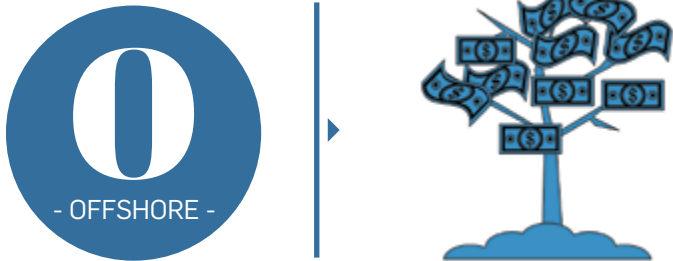
live in Saint Lucia, visit whenever they please and represent Saint Lucia and support each other in locations throughout the world. Our business is well equipped to provide support after the passport is granted, to allow Saint Lucian nationals to do business in Saint Lucia. Having processed some applications we find that even if new citizens do not visit immediately, they find Saint Lucia an attractive place to do business or to facilitate doing business in other parts of the world. We can arrange the setting up of companies, bank accounts, government licenses and if available to your particular business, government incentives. Please do ask directly about this service.

The Saint Lucian passport will require renewal every five years. We also facilitate this service. On this occasion, you will require your Certificate of Citizenship, Birth Certificate, two passport sized photographs (one certified), and the National Insurance details. If a married woman or are divorced you will be required to produce the marriage and/or divorce documents.

There is no doubt that it is common ground that the industry is in flux. However, among other advantages our country is welcoming, our infrastructure is comparably well developed, airlift is available through major world cities including New York, Miami and London. The due diligence done both through private firms and law enforcement means that your passport is solid as we can continue to maintain the relationships with G20 countries - which made Saint Lucia attractive to you in the first place. Welcome!



Please find us at armoredglobal.com or get in touch with us at diana@armoredglobal.com



1.38 USD BILLION <small>(down from 2015)</small> GDP	60 POINTS <small>(down from 2015)</small> CORRUPTION INDEX	86 EASE OF DOING BUSINESS
10703 USD GDP PER CAPITA	35 CORRUPTION RANK	15% SALES TAX RATE

OFFSHORE

FROM THE PANAMA PAPERS TO THE PARADISE PAPERS, “OFFSHORE” HAS HIT THE HEADLINES WORLDWIDE. THE FACT REMAINS IT IS STILL A TIME TESTED AND IMPORTANTLY, LEGAL PRACTICE.

OFFSHORE INVESTING IS LEGAL AND CAPITALIZES ON THE ADVANTAGES OFFERED OUTSIDE OF AN INVESTOR'S HOME COUNTRY. Typically, this refers to a wide range of investment strategies that focus on both wealth protection and creation and there is no shortage of money market, bond and equity assets offered by reputable offshore companies in a range of jurisdictions. Unfortunately, there is also no shortage of horror stories and with international ignorance on the development of the sector, many are still not aware of its benefit and how certain jurisdictions have been working diligently to ensure that they comply with all international requirements.

St Lucia, being a small-scale economy with very few natural resources, has benefitted from growing its offshore business practice. It has done so in a purposeful fashion and it has positioned itself to provide favorable tax rates that are strategically designed to promote a healthy environment that attracts outside wealth. Having learned from its Caribbean neighbors, it has ensured that it has built its offshore sector on a position of trust, reliability and credibility. As such, its new resource of attracting legible investors has the power to dramatically increase its economic activity and strategically diversify its economy. Impressively, despite strong international pressure being placed upon its neighbors, including white paper reports on St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia has quietly positioned itself to capitalize on the growing need by many looking for a legal shield for asset protection. Whilst ensuring that the existing laws for its jurisdiction allows that it distinguishes itself with legal credibility. It has also provided an opportunity to enable international entities to capitalize on little to no tax on corporation, with the proviso that the foreign company do not engage in local operations.

However, many may argue that the secrecy surrounding offshore jurisdictions like St Lucia, means it could be a gateway for criminal activity. With the recent US white paper implicating St Kitts and Nevis as a potential route for illicit activities and further restrictions being placed by FATCA, this has brought into question the longevity of new jurisdictions and current investors have been concerned with eroding reputations of offshore centers, especially those whose international voices have not been heard. But with stringent laws in place and a common reporting standard, this could not be further from the truth for St Lucia. Admittedly no jurisdiction is perfect and the country still has room to grow and develop its sector, which allows for full disclosure in clear instances of drug trafficking, money laundering or other illegal activities.

FACT BOX

COMING OFF EU BLACKLIST

In early December the European Union published it's first blacklist of tax havens. 17 territories were named including Saint Lucia.

► Minister of Finance Ubaldo Raymond explained through local media that new tax rules will be unveiled in the upcoming budget. He added the government is working to improve the main issue which he states is a harmonization of taxes. He added he hopes to be off the European Union Tax Haven Blacklist very soon.

IMPACT ON US RESIDENCE:
In recent years the US Government has become increasingly predatory on lost tax revenue from US citizens and have created many restrictive laws that close tax loopholes. US citizens are now taxed on worldwide income and as a result, US citizens who use offshore entities to evade US federal tax on capital gains can be prosecuted for tax evasion. Therefore bad news for the bad guys but great news for US companies and individuals looking to legally and meaningfully utilize the security, confidentiality and prestige of St Lucia's offshore sector ●

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Or contact us at:
registrar@saintluciaifc.com

Unsured about Offshore, A Saint Has Arrived

FINANCIAL SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, THE CHANNEL ISLANDS, AND MAURITIUS are all commonly tied together with one business; offshore banking and finance. As the sector evolves and with the proliferation of Special Economic Zones, (or free zones as they are more commonly referred to) offshore doesn't even have to embody its literal definition – making investor options plentiful. This sector has been marred with the Panama Papers scandal casting a shadow over the offshore finance industry. Consequently, the offshore business is perceived as a mucky business facilitating the accumulation of wealth through the dark arts. That said, it doesn't mean there aren't safe, secure, and ethical options out there for investors and HNWI's.

Experienced practitioners in the sector are cognizant of the significant impact of regulation; too much and it becomes a quagmire of red tape, too little and it becomes open to abuse. St. Lucia is navigating this fine line through the Financial Service Regulatory Authority (FSRA) which became fully operational in 2014. The vision is to become a world class financial services regulator with a mission to maintain the integrity of the Financial Sector through efficient and effective administration of the financial sector laws and regulations and the application of best international practice and standards. The important factor is that the FSRA does not fall into the trap of simply paying lip service to the notion of being ethical and having a dynamic regulatory environment. Those moving money, international regulators and indeed journalists want to see tangible evidence that this is being enforced, even Joe Public wants reassurance in the wake of the Mossack Fonseca's debacle.

Regional cooperation has been at the forefront of the agenda for the FSRA, work has been carried out with the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, and the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre among others. As far back as November 2015 St. Lucia signed an Inter- Governmental Agreement with the United States of America, which solidified Saint Lucia's commitment in complying with global standards in the exchange of tax information. Additionally, Saint Lucia has cooperated fully with the Global Forum in the quest for transparency and Exchange of Information for tax purposes. This was complemented by a raft of training on Risk Based Supervision, Basel II Capital Adequacy, and Anti-Money Laundering Risk Assessment. Up to the year-end of March 2016 the FSRA's staff were involved in 13 programs or courses which ranged from online, to being held in the Caribbean, the US, and the UK. What this signifies is an understanding that to reach its goal of becoming truly world class, a global, holistic, approach is necessary to shine a light on the shadowy corners and close those much-abused loopholes.

As of March 2016 the FSRA has licensed 22 Registered Agents (RAs) and Registered Trustees (RTs) who provide clients with international representation regarding financial services. They also act as facilitators for those wishing to set up their business, providing registered offices, directors, officers, and nominee shareholders. This work includes determining the identity of clients through diligent background checks to avoid money laundering and money being diverted for illegal use. The 22 registered companies function as working as intermediaries between the FSRA and the International Business Companies (IBCs) to observe integrity, legality, and ethical conduct of business through monitoring the financial transactions carried out once registered.

Again, this is all checking out; the triumvirate of stakeholders, investors, and journalists all want to see systematic controls and supervision to ensure the possibility for misconduct is removed. In 2014 the FSRA redesigned its on-site inspection program to hone in on evaluating whether the procedures in place are sufficient for identifying the person(s) that a transaction is being undertaken for. This culminated in inspections for 89% of all IBCs registered. It really is a case of deeds, not words.

St. Lucia now has 3,122 registered IBCs which may seem modest, but that equates to roughly 1 IBC per 60 citizens; showing the scale of the offshore sector for the island nation. In the FSRA's bid to become a world class finance regulator there is still work to do, particularly given the nature of an ever-evolving global finance industry. The three years of operations have been fruitful in implementing the groundwork and fundamentals that will allow the FSRA to achieve true transparency and confidence in order to let capital flow ●

For more information: fsrastlucia.org fsra@govt.lc

65 SCORE ECONOMIC FREEDOM	22.5% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	42% YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
62 ECONOMIC FREEDOM RANK	39.6 GOVERNMENT INTEGRITY RANK	3.1% INFLATION RATE

St Lucia has an overall score of 65 on the 2017 index of economic freedom and a world rank of 62.

St Lucia is one of the top 3 countries in the world where women are most likely to be your boss. Over 52 percent of management on the island is female.

Arguing for Arbitration

EXPERT OPINION ON ALL THINGS ARBITRARY

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN HAS EXPONENTIALLY INCREASED OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS with both the United States and China appearing at the top of the list in almost all jurisdictions within the region. Given the complexities and increased risks involved in international commercial transactions, disputes arising under these contracts are frequently resolved by arbitration. Arbitration is one of the various methods available to parties who wish to resolve their disputes by an independent third party outside of the court process. Since the National Court is not directly involved in the decision-making or administration of the dispute, the parties have more control over the dispute resolution process, making it more efficient and cost effective. From an international investor's perspective, arbitration is an attractive proposition as it gives them an opportunity to avoid the local court system and tailor the dispute resolution procedure to meet the needs of the specific transaction.

Historically, arbitration has not enjoyed a particularly good reputation within the Caribbean. In addition to lacking modernized arbitration acts, some countries have failed to become a party to the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Arbitral Awards. This Convention is one of the key instruments in international arbitration that facilitates enforcement of arbitration awards across jurisdictions. Further, until relatively recently, the region lacked suitably qualified arbitrators, which further restricted the use of arbitration as a method of dispute resolution. These challenges have been recognized by several national, regional and international organisations, most notably the World Bank. In its Doing Business Report, published annually, the World Bank has repeatedly identified the time and cost for resolving commercial disputes in the Caribbean as a barrier to the ease of doing business.

Recognising the importance of facilitating trade between investors within and outside of the Caribbean region, over the past ten years, various public and private sector organisations have worked diligently towards creating an environment that promotes the effective resolution of international disputes by arbitration. A key part of the process of change includes modernizing arbitration legislation and establishing arbitration

centres with the capacity to handle complex, multinational disputes. In this regard, islands such as the British Virgin Islands, Jamaica and Barbados are blazing the trail for the remainder of the Caribbean, with Trinidad, St. Lucia and Bahamas following steadily behind.

Having created the necessary infrastructure to facilitate arbitration, the Caribbean region has now turned its attention to building capacity amongst its citizens. Together with various international, regional and local organisations, Shan Greer has worked towards providing the necessary training to qualify regional professionals as international arbitrators. Ms. Greer is a Caribbean arbitrator, mediator and lawyer with over 17 years experience in disputes involving construction, banking, insurance, intellectual property, energy, and employment. Ms. Greer possesses international arbitration credentials including qualification as a Fellow with the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and a Masters degree in Construction Law and Dispute Resolution from Kings College London.

One of Ms. Greer's most recent initiatives, in her capacity as Chair of the Dispute Resolution Association, has been the creation of a Fast Track Arbitration Panel in the island of Saint Lucia. This panel has been specifically designed for contractual disputes that are relatively simple in nature and is administered with a simplified set of rules, which make the process fast, efficient and simple. Under this programme, Ms. Greer has assisted in training a cadre of local professionals including lawyers, accountants, engineers, architects, contractors and businesspersons. It is hoped that this initiative will serve to build the private sector's confidence in doing business on the island by providing a cost effective and timely method of resolving disputes. It will also act as an example to other countries in the region as to how arbitration can play a role, not only in attracting investment into the country, but as a means of creating local employment ●

For more information on the use of arbitration within the Caribbean or training options that may be available, please feel free to contact Ms. Shan Greer at shan@smgreer.com.

E - EDUCATION -	97 PRE-SCHOOLS	39 DAY-CARE CENTERS	7 PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS	3 PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS
	74 PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS	23 PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS	4 SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS	1 COMMUNITY COLLEGE



EDUCATION

THE POTENTIAL FOR PROGRESS IN A COUNTRY READY FOR OPPORTUNITY

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN ST LUCIA HAVE REACHED A STAGGERING 45.3% AMONGST THE YOUTH. The government has allocated 14% of its annual budget to education and has received millions over the years including a US\$24.1 million investment from Barbados-based Caribbean Development Bank to strengthen the education system and support the Education Sector Development Plan 2015-2020. Despite the abysmal statistics and an overly general 5 year education plan, opportunities in the sector are as ripe as the mangos. Employment needs in St Lucia are for those with tertiary and secondary level education, however the majority of local job seekers fall short. Private sector participation in curriculum development could address current skill mismatches though softer skills namely in communication and work ethic would also need to be addressed to meet demands. There is a need for quality education in the north of the island for all ages. A growing number of both local and expat families are looking outside of the island for education for their children showing a **real opportunity for a quality private school to thrive in St Lucia**. Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset on the island is imperative for the government to bolster economic stability, and the blatant favoritism of foreign investment over

local support provides ample opportunity from abroad. Specialty schools in St Lucia are concentrated within the medical field, a cost-effective way for North American students to obtain degrees abroad. In April 2017, medical schools and students received notification that consideration for ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates) would not be considered for students who graduated from schools without accreditation. The Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education and Medicine gives accreditation to dental, veterinary and medical educational institutions within Caricom. The United States accepts these standards as equal to their own medical institutions allowing students to seek employment in North America. Action towards obtaining accreditation has been slow and currently only one school on island, Spartan Health Sciences University has received the green light. Another has even chosen to relocate to Antigua and Barbuda in order to gain time to obtain the necessary endorsement ●



Spartan Health Sciences University School Of Medicine

THE SPARTAN HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE OLDEST UNIVERSITY IN THE REGION with 37 years of excellence in education. The Spartan University was established in January 1980. The Spartan is operating in 5.5 acre of land in Vieux Fort with all modern facilities in multimillion dollar complex. The University holds its **legal authority** via its **charter and license** received under seal by the Government of St. Lucia. Spartan is listed under WHO (World Health Directory) and the International Medical Education Directory (IMED). The **St. Lucia Medical Schools Monitoring and Accreditation Committee** appointed by the Government of St. Lucia **granted full accreditation** to the University. Spartan Health Sciences University has come to the forefront of the St. Lucia higher education sector through beating competitors for the much sought after accreditation. The institution started putting in the groundwork for this moment as far back as 2009, laying the foundations for accreditation to be granted; opening up the United States and Canada, which will pave the way for the University to recapture its once-held market share. The Government of St. Lucia through Ministry of Education



has introduced a policy whereby all medical schools operating in St. Lucia must have CAAM-HP accreditation. Spartan Health Sciences University, School of Medicine in May 2013 undertook the Accreditation process offered by CAAM-HP. As a result of this process, CAAM-HP granted the University **Provisional Accreditation for two (2) years, 2013 –2015 and then with their second visit in 2015 extended the same till 2018**. Dean, Dr. Gurumurthy outlines; We have a fantastic representation from all over the world markets at this point in time. Being the first to have this accreditation in St Lucia, we open up the opportunities

for students to have a phenomenal education at a fraction of the cost within the United States and elsewhere. While the University has managed to bridge the gap with an influx of students from other areas, America and Canada remains a priority because of the ease students can apply and attend to Spartan. Not only has the University been verified, but it offers a value-for-money product, charging students a modest \$6,250 per trimester for basic medical sciences and \$10,500 per trimester for clinical sciences; the lowest in the region. Through astute management, the institution is able to operate a comfortable profit line and even reinvest, in the form of new buildings and site development. All this is being achieved against a challenging backdrop of the island nation struggling to access US capital with the country unable to borrow any more money.

The government has supported the education sector's development through incentivizing higher education institutes with tax breaks. Any investments the universities undertake within the university zone, in terms of accommodation and facilities are not tax-deductible, as are the materials that are required to build. In emerging markets, it is always pivotal for the education sector to have government backing, with Dr. Gurumurthy noting that they work hand in hand with the authorities. The Spartan Health Sciences University is committed to provide quality medical education with affordable tuition fee. We provide one to one faculty assistance to students. The Spartan Health Sciences University has over 2300 graduates practicing in over 25 countries and more than 44 states in USA ●

For more information: www.spartanmed.org admissions@spartanmed.org



FISCAL INCENTIVES OFFERED:

- ▶ TAX HOLIDAY UP TO A MAXIMUM OF FIFTEEN (15) YEARS.
- ▶ WAIVER OF IMPORT DUTY AND CONSUMPTION TAX ON IMPORTED PLANT, MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT.
- ▶ WAIVER OF IMPORT DUTY AND CONSUMPTION TAX ON IMPORTED RAW AND PACKAGING MATERIALS.
- ▶ EXPORT ALLOWANCE - TAX RELIEF ON EXPORT EARNINGS.
- ▶ CARRY FORWARD OF LOSSES.
- ▶ UNRESTRICTED REPATRIATION OF PROFITS AND CAPITAL.

DEVELOPMENT & BUILDERS

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

WITH AN AFFORDABLE REAL ESTATE OPTION WITH THE CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT PROGRAM and a mandate to add 2000 hotel rooms over the next 4 years, St Lucia is poised for developmental (and a surge of) construction. Major brands are forging ahead after an unforgiving hurricane season of 2017 to which St Lucia remained relatively unscathed. The Ritz Carlton, Sandals, Fairmont and a 5 star dual-branded hotel dubbed Curio by Hilton, are breaking ground and are hoped to be seen as a catalyst for further development and foreign direct investment. The projects reach from the north of the island to the south and include luxury villas, golf courses, restaurants and spas.

It's no doubt the 28 Caribbean countries withstand an unfair burden of global warming whilst contributing minimally to climate change. Though St Lucia suffered only minimal coastal damage, it remains a fact that investors, whether international or local, need to be cognisant of the needs driven purely by the geographical location of these idyllic islands.

The region warrants a particular set of expertise when it comes to building and development due to the topography, winds, rains, landslides, temperatures, logistics and even government cycles. The hurricanes Maria, Jose and Irma should not be a deterrent for development in the region, but seen as a reminder for investing in vetted and seasoned local or regional talent for this climate.

The major developments on the island are skewed towards tourism, though higher profile infrastructure projects were initiated in 2016. A north-south link road has been a point of discussion for years which would ease logistical issues on the island and provide a far shorter route from the international airport in the south to the more populous region in the north. The Hewanorra airport itself is in dire need of a facelift though the government is in planning phase and assures travelers that finances have been secured for the project, though no dates have been set.

St Lucia is still in need of a sustainable long-term development strategy in order to combat not only the surprisingly underdeveloped roads and infrastructure, but also ease the high unemployment rates and increase resilience to climate change.

There is unprecedented global focus on creating climate resilient nations. Our team was incredibly eager to understand the preservation efforts of this stunning island and its surrounding waters whilst undergoing pressure to expedite development and economical growth. Though the National Conservation Authority of St Lucia was requested for an interview, they declined stating "Our mandate does not deal directly with conservation".

The next 5 years will showcase a more maturely developed island. There are opportunities ripe for investment, not only in tourism, but across the board. The country has an opportunity to take note of neighbors and be a leader in responsible, educated and green sustainability if it has the foresight to do so ●



Building St. Lucia's Future

KAREN FONTENELLE-PETER



SAINT LUCIA'S ECONOMY IS SHOWING GREAT SIGNS OF PROMISE as the country positions itself for significant new investment opportunities. Tourism, one of the main motors that propel the development of this magnificent Caribbean island, is also the spark to light the fuse to untap that economic potential. "This is like a domino effect: if tourists continue to visit our shores, the tourism industry will flourish and by extension the construction industry," Karen Fontenelle-Peter puts it simply, General Manager of Caribbean Metals Limited, the leading manufacturer of roofing and metal products on the island.

With a very sharp and direct approach, Karen analyzes the different layers which make up the country's economy and the main factors impacting her business performance. During a conversation with the team from OWM she pointed out the increase in arrivals in the tourism sector is one of the most important elements in boosting the development of this nation, which at the same time enables the construction industry to grow resulting in increased business for Caribbean Metals Limited. "In recent times, construction of The Royalton St. Lucia fueled an increase in the number of jobs enabling a level of disposable income for the period.

"Tourism to this breathtaking paradise in the Caribbean Sea has grown exponentially in recent years, and so has its economy. The number of tourist arrivals to Saint Lucia has advanced at an average 2% YoY between 2001 and 2014, according to the World Bank, while its GDP has risen 30% in the last decade. As a result, the country's GDP per capita has soared dramatically, earning every Saint Lucian \$7,700 yearly on average in 2016, almost twice than in 2001.

"Tourism is KEY for the construction industry, the sector in which we participate largely. An increase in foreign visitors arriving to Saint Lucia mean more jobs for the locals, attracting further investment to build hotel resorts," said Karen. New hotel developments have been announced some of which have commenced to bring over 1,000 new rooms. These new construction projects will require many of the roofing and metal products and services that Caribbean Metals Limited supplies.

This company commenced in 1990 and has grown to become the leading manufacturer of roofing, steel and other metal products in St Lucia through the hard work and dedication of its team members. The company replicated its business operations of three of its sister companies located in Barbados. The Parent company being Williams Industries Inc in Barbados, boasts more than 20 subsidiaries in the group. Caribbean Metals Limited manufactures various steel and metal products for the construction industry while providing services such as fabrication of steel frame buildings to name a few. The manufacture and supply of roofing material and reinforcing steel is at the heart of the company's operations. For any investor planning to erect structures on the island, the expertise and extensive knowledge that Caribbean Metals Limited has to offer is of paramount importance to the investor whilst taking advantage of the highest quality products and services available on the island.

The Saint Lucian government has a very welcoming policy toward new hotels, as tourism is the main economic pillar accounting for more than 60% of jobs in the workforce. Policymakers are especially keen on tourism projects which highlight both the heritage and natural environment of St. Lucia. Working with a local partner such as Caribbean Metals Limited allows the developer to add a true Caribbean touch and appeal ensuring the hotel merges within the local environment.

In the World Bank Doing Business Report, St Lucia is ranked as the 50th easiest country in the world. This is the second-best position recorded by a small Caribbean state. Karen alluded to the fact that other sectors such as agriculture need to be further developed, offering St. Lucians the opportunity of becoming entrepreneurs in their own right. Karen is very passionate about her country and is a true believer that St. Lucia and its economy will continue to grow and prosper. We need to invest in our young people by providing opportunities for them to excel whilst focusing on other areas across sectors that will help grow the economy. Tourism industry figures and is on an upward trend, which will impact positively on the construction industry. In order to maintain this healthy growth, Karen believes the design and construction of hotels should evoke a true Saint Lucian experience offering something unparalleled to set St Lucia apart. "In marketing our destination through our many agencies as being one of most spectacular islands, 'a must see', we must ensure that the new designs and structures lend itself to blending into our magnificent landscape preserving the uniqueness of the island," Karen concluded ●



For more information: www.caribbeanmetalslimited.com
customerservice@caribbeanmetalslimited.com cmetals@candw.lc

PHOTO CREDIT CHRISTOPHER KESSELL



Feature Pool
A project at East Winds by Tropic Builders

Designing Saint Lucia

CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

THE HARBOR CLUB BUILDING IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE WORKS currently under construction in Saint Lucia. Located in Rodney Bay next to the IGY Marina, Harbor Club hotel is a state of the art 115 room resort with a wide range of luxury amenities that will delight its future guests with several restaurants and a spa when it opens in 2018. For the business travelers, meeting rooms are designed to the highest standards, and are built to accommodate large conferences.

The architect of record for this brand-new hotel which promises to reinvigorize Rodney Bay is Interisland Architects and Planners Ltd (IAPL) and... "the work of our Firm reflects the emergence of a distinctive Architectural Style born out of a response to our Tropical Marine climate and an awakening awareness of our region's rich historical and cultural heritage in an era of post-Colonial Independence" said Mark Hennecart, the Director of Design with the company.

Given the pluralistic cultural background of the Caribbean, it is inevitable that the firm's architectural expressions appear to be eclectic. However, the challenge now is to develop a style which can be embraced by all of us here in the Caribbean as our own, since that would reflect to the world that we have become a cohesive, independent and unified Society. We must therefore distill from the wide variety of Cultural influences an Architecture, which has popular meaning.

The fact that Saint Lucia is one of the smallest islands in the Caribbean has driven IAPL to take somewhat of a "generalist" architecture approach, as he put it in his own words. "Unlike Puerto Rico, where there are architecture companies specialized in designing specifically schools or hotels for example; we have learned how to develop different sorts of projects because this is a smaller market," the director of Interisland Architects and Planners.

This company has maneuvered the islands influence on its business model into an advantageous offering. Having a very large portfolio of eye catching and high-quality developments in many different areas, has turned them into the most competitive firm in this field on the island. However, as tourism is the main driver of the Saint Lucian economy, hotels and resorts stand as some of the most regular customers for Mark, and these are clients that come back to request its services when they need to update their interior design. "We have just finished rebranding several hotels, and we are one of the most experienced firms in the island in this field," he claimed. In addition to being the leading firm in its home country, Interisland Architects and Planners has also seized Saint Lucia's central location amid Martinique, St. Kitts and Nevis; and Barbados to expand their operations and eventually have become one of the most competitive companies in this small region of islands. "We are in a location that makes us very competitive. We are the hub of the development that it is taking place in the nearby islands, so we are able to also expand," said the architect.

"We see ourselves at the vanguard of an evolving profession in an emerging economic structure of inter-dependent post-colonial island nations of the Eastern Caribbean. With the combined 75 years of experience in the practice of Architecture in Saint Lucia and the Eastern Caribbean of Mr Neville Skeete and the late Mr Claude Guillaume, we offer our enterprise as being ready, willing and able to contribute to the planning and development of our built environment – embracing contemporary methods and vision always with a deep respect for our history and our environment." Explains Mark.

When any sort of foreign direct investment lands in Saint Lucia, Mark Hennecart's firm is one



1. Harbor Club Progress
Work from the firm on record Interisland Architects
2. Aerial Views
Northern St Lucia views of Rodney Bay Marina, Harbor Club and Dive School

of the first spots where the investors tend to make a stop. They will likely need to construct or design the interior of the offices that will open on the island, thus regularly they get in touch with the most competitive and experience studio in the country. "An architect office like this is a barometer of the economy, and since 2007 onwards we have been very busy", he puts it as a fact that evidences the steady growth that the island has experienced.

The firm offers full architectural and interior design services from project formulation and inception, design, design development, construction documentation and construction contract administration through to final completion and post-construction support services. "Pursuing state of the art professional management and leadership techniques are key for clients growing needs," Mark adds.

Even though there has been a huge development in the country, Mark believes more can be done at the planning stage. Through years of experience, Mark has a special touch when it comes to timing, allowing developers to find themselves navigating things like hurricane season, and election schedules avoiding delays and managing costs. The team also provides the option of recycling buildings for incoming companies taking advantage of the incentives for head office domicile. As Mark has had his hand in projects across the island, any business looking to repurpose a structure has the comfort knowing the original builders can expedite their transition. "Some businesses don't have the luxury of waiting for a new building, we can get involved by identifying a suitable building, in a good location that can satisfy their needs and get off the ground quicker," said Mark.

Interisland Architects and Planners Limited (IAPL) – (formerly NLBA(WJ)Ltd. in association with Interisland Architects and Planners and NLBA Architects Ltd. Trinidad) has been providing a complete range of architectural services in the East Caribbean since 1946.



For more information: www.iapl.lc (758) 452-9300 or (758) 452-0430
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DOWN FROM 486.8MILLION
IN 2016

IMPORTS:
1,637.5MILLION
UP FROM 1,539MILLION
IN 2015



Enhancing Economic Growth One Dish at a Time

TEPA. **TRADE EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY PUTS ST LUCIA ON THE GLOBAL STAGE**



THE TRADE EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY (TEPA) is leading the charge in the empowerment of local entities penetrating new markets. This government agency has a mandate to pilot the strategic direction of the island's national export development effort. In an age where access is growing, barriers are shrinking and the island is ready for economic diversification, TEPA is making strides, putting the island back on the map. A mammoth undertaking after the Green Gold rush diminished and gave way to tourism as the economic mainstay of the "Helen of the West", Saint Lucia.

In a not so distant past, bananas accounted for the lion's share of exports for the nation and contributed massively to the GDP. With fierce competition increasing and the loss of preferred access to the UK market, the Green Gold plunged since its peak in 1992, to less than 5% of the current GDP. Regional exports to the Caribbean increased by 18.9% in 2016 for the yellow fruit and if current production trends continue with the efforts to expand the export market, Saint Lucia's bananas could see an increase of over 300%. Crops such as bananas, mangos, and avocados continue to be grown for export, and local entrepreneurs are seeing the opportunity to add their own flavor to the mix.

On October 17th and 18th, TEPA displayed 6 Saint Lucian brands at the Florida International Trade and Cultural Expo in Broward County Miami. All of South Florida welcomed TEPA for a unique opportunity to engage key leaders, experts and attendees from around the world. TEPA discussed issues relating to international trade, foreign direct investment and culture with the intentions of growing the export portfolio and improving business to business relationships between the US and Saint Lucia. Jacqueline Emmanuel Flood, CEO of TEPA is headstrong in her vision to assist local companies in growing their market share and increasing two-way trade within the U.S. and throughout the Americas.

"We're here to bring our brands to the international stage and to add that Saint Lucian flavour" Jacqueline says in her quest to discover new markets, products, ideas and innovations. "By positioning ourselves in front of these buyers, agents, distributors et al our manufacturers are afforded opportunities to reach markets and potential consumers that they may not have had the wherewithal to reach on their own. The chance to meet with decision makers from hotels, the cruise lines, supermarkets and even other retailers is invaluable to us as small manufacturers." This is a first for TEPA, and from here the TEPA delegation will assess the potential for more brands to participate in subsequent years.

TEPA continues to work on the development of individuals and brands within the island while working on improving the legislative and regulatory framework towards the facilitation of export. The Caribbean flavor is being bottled on the beautiful island of Saint Lucia and with the efforts of TEPA becoming the resource for local exporters and foreign importers, soon it won't take a vacation for the world to taste the Lucian heat •

"All of South Florida welcomed TEPA for a unique opportunity to engage key leaders, experts and attendees from around the world."



1. A view over the Pitons
Locally made products from St Lucia
2. Ripe for the picking
Plenty of produce grown across the island

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ST LUCIA

Economy Must Meet Ecology

DR ERNEST HILAIRE. **CURRENT CASTRIES SOUTH MP, FORMER HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE UNITED KINGDOM**

THIS HAS BEEN A YEAR OF CLIMATIC UNCERTAINTY; FROM THE TORRENTIAL FLOODING AND FIRES IN THE US, earthquakes around the globe and the devastating series of hurricanes that have damaged the region. We are fearful that what was once an anomaly could become an unsettling norm. At times like this we need to draw the line with short term profits resulting in long term environmental

damage. The fact remains that small scale economies like ours cannot survive extreme weather change. When economies like ours, which are so dependent on the natural beauty in order to attract the world's attention, it begs the question; have we done enough to preserve it?

My concern is that my country to date, is seeing internationally questionable developments being toyed with on our island. From large scale race courses looking to be built in local farming communities to the tune of \$2billion USD of our government money (and potentially damaging our chances of food security), through to a potential marine circus (dolphin park) being built on one of our historic natural sanctuaries that has drawn international condemnation including that from the Catholic Church. Each project promising a potential economic uplift but with little to no meaningful economic independent research being conducted. The reality is, we are heading to a critical stage in our country's evolution and rushed development, for development

"Take a step back and measure the economic soundness of investing in environmental protection"

sake, has never been a good idea. What we risk losing to short term and high costs projects is far more dangerous to both the economic and environmental welfare of our country than most have realized, which will result in long term consequences.

St Lucia is known as a paradise for both adventure seekers and travelers alike. But if we lose our places of natural beauty to seasonal escapades which put our environment at risk, we also lose our ability to provide visitors the opportunity to see the natural wonder of our island, an industry worth over \$226 billion USD worldwide. The economic costs of preserving our environment and the blue ocean economy has more positive externalities than building trophy projects that can quickly become an everlasting and expensive white elephant. Another reality is that our ability to attract tourists and the necessary dollar income is not based upon themed projects that appear in season. It is squarely based upon the narrative of our island and the opportunities we present to both tourists and the citizens of our country to grow.

My country should be a leading example of where economy meets ecology. If we were to take a step back and measure the economic soundness of investing in environmental protection and diversifying our tourism product by meaningful engagement, employment and international image building, then we will not be at the whims and fancies of potentially detrimental projects that could harm our future. We may have survived the natural hurricane, but the financial one of not heeding its warning may be far more severe.

To be taken seriously, our current Government needs to think through its policies and take into consideration that our country is small enough to make monumental changes •

Legalization of Marijuana - Economic Stability to Social Security

ANDRE DE CAIRES. **CHAIRMAN OF THE CANNABIS MOVEMENT OF SAINT LUCIA**

LIKE EVERY LEADING GLOBAL ECONOMY, DIVERSITY IS A NATURAL EVOLUTION. This is only compounded when we consider that St Lucia is now in deep need to revitalize its economy in both a meaningful and community impactful way.

For far too long, many Governments have shied away from utilizing the asset of legalizing Marijuana and industrial

hemp growing. However increasingly shrewd economies around the world, including the USA and Canada, have embraced change and this change has brought deep advantages in regards to gainful employment and economic empowerment. A growing number of leading minds believe that this crop can have tremendous impact upon our economy and its derivative can have long term positive impact on both our social development and a stable economic rise.

From the 70s through to the 90s, the island's main GDP earner was other agricultural produce, namely bananas and for over 3 decades our economy thrived with agricultural exports. We took advantage of our top grade quality soil and natural environment, but with the advent of the WTO and the new trade regime, we as the Caribbean lost our preferential trading status enjoyed under the Lome convention and that signalled the end of the Caribbean banana industry. An industry that played a pivotal part in the country's economy as a major employment provider and thus a devastating blow to many of our labor force.

In 1998 however, the Industrial Hemp initiative submitted a proposal requesting permission to the then Government to conduct research trials on Hemp in order to develop a cultivar or cultivars that could be introduced into the country's agricultural diversification program, therefore maximizing

"For far too long, many Governments have shied away from utilizing the asset of legalizing Marijuana and industrial hemp growing"

on our high-skilled farming labor force. The intention is to use raw material traditionally exported with home cultivated value added therefore starting up a high-end body care industry. Agriculturally we have coconut oil, the cocoa and other raw ingredients necessary to create the products. With the addition of hemp oil, the value of the end product increases dramatically. This would help reestablish both the coconut and cocoa industries that have been in decline for years and give the country's vast amount of farmers the ability to earn a meaningful salary from these crops once more.

Apart from the multitude of high quality hemp products that can be produced, the marijuana produced organically can provide for the already lucrative local recreational market. The estimation of which is earmarked to be EC \$50,000,000.00 per year. With strict regulation we also ensure that we provide less opportunities for criminals and the international illegal drug trade that has brought sorrow to many communities. We provide gainful legal opportunities for communities to produce legal and medically approved products.

There is also the opportunity to cater for the tourism market with cruise ships visiting the island daily and the ability to provide for the vibrant hotel industry with its hundreds of thousands stay-over visitors per

year. A similar proposition that Amsterdam has successfully implemented.

I believe that St Lucia should be moving swiftly into the present and with forward thinking, we can capitalize on our traditional farming communities and traditions in order to unleash a magnitude of national economic empowerment and meaningful employment by legalizing industrial production of Hemp and Marijuana. The current administration has been far too slow in producing vibrant economic change and by doing so, we have in essence created a restrictive and deteriorating future for our nations young labor force •

THE OFFICIAL AND AUTHENTIC GUIDE TO ST LUCIA. THROUGH OUR EYES AND PERSONAL EXPERIENCES



Alena Hakansson.

Authentic Guide to ST. LUCIA

1 Wild and tamed horses at Donkey Beach with local kite instructor Simon McIntosh.

2 Rajan at the mud baths in the south of the island.

3 Local Fisherman line their boats on the Gros Islet beach after the morning catch.

4 Local boys pose for the shot and try to hitch a ride to a hidden beach.

5 Soufriere Seafront with a hint of the famous Pitons - captured by local photographer Dani Devaux

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT ST LUCIA, A PARTICULAR EASTERN CARIBBEAN CHARM. The island has terrible roads, it's missing signs and directions, yet no matter where you're heading it's lush and beautiful. The capital city isn't overly enticing though during carnival it feels as though all the energy in the world is stemming from Castries. The drive from the airport to the north of the island takes an unnecessary hour and a half, but then again, we have all waited longer in traffic with far less of a view.

When our lives are on autopilot or moving at a pace of extremes we tend to expect a vacation will whisk us away to a dreamlike state with rainbows cascading every mountain, champagne at the snap of fingers, and consistently perfect weather. If you walk into St Lucia with these notions you'll remain unimpressed. On the other hand, if you allow yourself the pleasure of letting St Lucia get under your skin, it will in the most incredible way.

They say this is the only country in the world named after a woman, it was fought over by the French and English 14 times and considered the Helen of the West Indies. The French influence in Lucian Creole language is thick though curiously you'll hear the locals blaring country and western classics just about anywhere. Coconut water straight from the fruit is handed to you on the highway leading into Rodney Bay, there are surprises at every turn.

We danced with those who were considered the upper echelon business owners alongside Rastafarians, tourists, and fishermen at the Friday night Gros Islet street party. We drove jeeps through mango plantations to secret beaches with locals who had us eat from trees along the way. We sang

karaoke with foreign bankers, investors, and Lucians following a game of pool with some of the most beautiful Caribbean women we've ever seen. I had a romantic night watching the sunset and sinking naked into the sulphur springs under nothing but moonlight. We learned how to wine to Soca music, kite surf, wakeboard, paddleboard, and sail. We dove towards the base of a volcanic eruption, rode horses in the ocean, had bottles of stunning wine with hoteliers and drank bush tea curing our hangovers the following mornings.

There are scandalous and sexy stories, pure untouched landscapes, fabulous parties, incredible hotels, and warm wonderful people. We left no stone unturned, no event unattended in order to bring the authentic experiences and hotels to you. Take time to dismiss your preconceived notions, take away your expectations, let St Lucia be what it is, simply beautiful •



Infinity Pool
For relaxation by the main clubhouse and water/fitness classes.



Penthouse
Just one example of rooms for your luxury stay.



Piano Bar
Indulge without having to leave the resort at the sexy piano bar.



!
ESCAPE TO
A WORLD
DESIGNED
FOR YOU

The Self Indulgence Body Holiday Saint Lucia

FOR THE PERSON WHO WANTS THE MOST OUT OF LIFE, WHO'S CALENDAR READS MORE LIKE A DAILY NOVEL THAN A SCHEDULE, who's body feels more like a wind-up toy than a temple. The Body Holiday is the closest thing to the fountain of youth you will ever encounter. Andrew Barnard and his family legacy resort take health and wellness travel to a whole new level, the epicenter, the mecca for all things good for you.

The furthest thing from fat camp and not even close to a "roll your eyes and make your partner happy" kind of wellness retreat. BodyHoliday Saint Lucia takes the ultimate destination, adds in 5-star restaurants, includes every style of work out, adventure, spa treatment, and therapy you could imagine and then backs it all by science. I admit, I was a kid in a candy store.

In a perfect life, we would look like the cast of 300, perform like the Miami Heat, live on the beach, have a daily spa treatment, and an expert providing us with a specialized diet on demand. Evidently BodyHoliday received this memo and made it a reality. "We understand what kind of



Tree house fitness
Whether you want group classes, private training or learn how to scuba dive, sail, fence, or cycle around the coastline - Body Holiday has the option for you.

person you are and your objectives. Next, we customize the experience for you," said Andrew, Deputy Manager of Sunswapt Resorts.

The luxury wellness vacation begins down the rabbit hole of health before you arrive. Your goals, history, and desires are all taken into consideration and you are given a plan to suit you specifically. The plan can be as simple and as surface as enjoying spectacular food, a few workouts, laying on the beach and sipping kombucha. Alternatively, the plan can go as deep as genetic testing, Ayurvedic treatments, rehabilitation from surgery or cancer, or a desired life change.

"We wanted to be part of this wellness revolution when yoga lessons were not so popular," Andrew acknowledged. As a result, this resort is likely to have the most advanced team of specialists, therapists, nutritionists, and trainers fully dedicated to help each guest to achieve his own goals. "Depending on the visitor, we adjust the program and schedule activities that are recommended for them specifically," he said on these experiences that range from loss weight and holistic experience, to fitness and adventure tourism.

In 2012, the hotel carried out a 30-million-dollar investment to upgrade its facilities. The Body Holiday has 47 treatment rooms, a yoga center, and a state of the art spa. In addition to suites, villas, and an absolute luxe 4-bedroom retreat for groups or family, there are 29 rooms dedicated to those traveling alone. Though the rooms are stunning, guests will likely be out playing golf, tennis, on a coastal bike tour, riding horses or participating in watersports amongst a wealth of other activities offered. "The variety in scope of the program is broad enough to allow us to cater in a very personalized manner to each person's requirements," says Andrew.

People from all walks of life, in all states of health, ages, history, ability and desires are turning BodyHoliday into their revival grounds. The incredible scenic views from the property and healing energies from the local plants are enough to draw a loyal following, but the lengths the staff go at this incredible destination are paramount to the results the guests feel. Programs can begin and end after a week, continue for months or years, or be the jumping point for an entire life shift.

In addition to the regular staff at the resort, Olympic athletes from around the world interact with guests as coaches, participants, or like me, a slightly unfair game of beach volleyball. Travelers will not only have a customized plan that will suit their own needs, but their progress will be followed by some of the most recognized faces in Olympic sports. Recently, a client at BodyHoliday had cancer detected through the resorts thorough screening and testing protocols before it was even a blip on his radar. Success stories are the norm at this Caribbean wellness retreat where balance is the ultimate goal. You can align your chakras, balance your dosha, or have warm oil pour over your third eye. If you prefer something more intense like me, you can always be yelled at to squat deeper by a man twice your size who's hands would frighten a bear. Whatever you're looking for, you'll find it •

i For more information on your personalized experience visit www.thebodyholiday.com Give us your body for a week and we'll give you back your mind.



THE ADVENTURE FOND DOUX PLANTATION AND RESORT

- 1**

A sanctuary deep in the rainforest
A 19th century eco-friendly colonial resort in southern St. Lucia. Known for romantic, intimate, and private luxury cottages with outdoor pools scattered throughout the property.
- 2**

Luxury and authenticity
Amidst a 250 year old working plantation find yourself in one of 15 uniquely crafted cottages and dine in one of the two on-site restaurants.

i For more information on your island adventure deep in the rainforest, visit www.fonddouxestate.com - Experience tranquility - authentic, natural St Lucia.

The Memento HARRY EDWARDS JEWELERS

I WAS LATE AS USUAL ON A DAY OFF, HEADING TO THE MARINA TO MEET FRIENDS BEFORE THEY JUMPED BACK ON TO THEIR CRUISE. We pulled up to Pointe Seraphine and Rajan ran ahead to meet them. I on the other hand, parked the car and took an "accidental detour", ending up in Harry Edwards Jewelers.

I refuse to leave a country without a new piece wrapped around a toe, ankle, wrist, or finger. When my luggage is filled to the brim, it's the singular memory I indulge in... reminding me of a moment I'd happily tell, or one that will remain a smirk on my lips.

Usually this piece finds me. I don't spend my days shopping; I'm not running from mall to mall, when there is a world of fun to discover. For me, it usually happens like it did today: running late being halted dead in my tracks in front of the display; or waiting in the airport covered in sand and dripping salt water onto the glass case, and there is it, staring back at me.

Rajan keeps insisting I get a watch and I knew I was in the best kind of trouble when I found out that Harry Edwards are the only authorized Rolex dealer in St Lucia. I stood, taking it all in, from stainless steel to solid gold, probably drooling without even noticing. Although I wasn't exactly in the market for an exorbitant timepiece I couldn't help myself and tried on an elegant rose gold and steel ladies watch, with a mother of pearl dial.

After reluctantly handing the Rolex back, I explored. I found earrings made with St Lucian sand, pendants inspired by the Pitons, bangles and anklets, and sunglasses I needed to replace after I dropped mine at the Mercury Beach boat party.

I was introduced to Tom Ladner, the owner of Harry Edwards Jewelers. He looked like Bruce Willis, had a voice like Joe Rogan and seriously good taste. He chatted with me, and I made note that I wanted something special; something classy but a bit badass. Something that could stand the salt and sand when I'm kite surfing in Cas En Bas, but still looks great with heels. I could see the wheels turning. It was obvious how rushed I was and he handed me a card "Call this number when you're back at the hotel, we'll sort you out," he said. I did just that, and had a great conversation with a Harry Edwards Jewelers personal shopper, who seemed to know exactly what I wanted by the time we hung up.

The thought of putting on shoes unnecessarily during a vacation makes me want to cringe. The Harry Edwards personal shopper that I had spoken to came to the hotel the next day, assured me that I had no reason to leave poolside, even though I offered plenty more private alternatives, from meeting me in my room or the lobby, to even setting up a conference room at the hotel. It was entirely up to me and I chose to stay put.

To my delight, two ladies from Harry Edwards walked up with dozens of duty-free jewelry and tax-free watches: some of the pieces I was ogling the day before, some I hadn't noticed. A few guests leaned over to help me with the final decision. This was personal shopping on another level: a glass of rum punch in my hand, jewelry to fawn over, and perfect VIP treatment – the indulgent way to shop while on vacation.

The right piece is simple to me, something that signifies the memory. Maybe for you, it's something you indulged in for yourself, or it's a little box you put under their pillow instead of your



resigned itself to the past. Hidden amongst the resort's quaint cottages are solar panels, which are used to generate electricity and heat the water. The Fond Doux Resort is an organic and eco-friendly estate, much of the food available in the two boutique restaurants is harvested right on the property. The Fond Doux Resort has been certified both as an Organic Plantation and as a member of Green Globe, two distinctions few Caribbean resorts can boast.

Everyone seemed to have a story of this plantation, national pride in a piece of land which had become home to some and a slice of paradise to others. A risk, a dream, grit and passion has preserved history in a way that can be touched, smelled, taste, and felt. From a life in transit where jet lag is the norm and sleep is a luxury, this sanctuary and simplistic beauty was under my skin in a matter of minutes and relaxed my mind by the end of the day. A rainforest that encouraged flip flops but rose to the occasion of stilettos reminded me of the necessity to relax and yet the pleasure to experience a life lived differently. The light wind, crickets, thousands of blowing leaves and light raindrops were a melodic gesture from the plantation accompanied by the laughter of locals that will end up a story to grandchildren in hopes they have the same pleasure one day ●



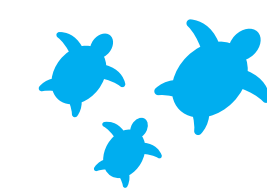
Pointe Seraphine
This premier duty free retailer has 3 locations to serve you: Pointe Seraphine, La Place Caranage, and Hewanorra Airport.

own. It encapsulates the adventure, and it is the tangible experience of the adventure; hundreds of words laying silent on your skin.

My body is covered with little pieces of the world. Toe rings from Southeast Asia, a necklace from Toronto, earrings from the Middle East, an anklet from Mexico, rings from Europe and Africa, and now, a John Hardy bracelet from St Lucia. They are the reminders of places that left an impression on me, the trips that have shaped me into who I am.

For those people who want to surprise their partner, bring a gift home for their children, or a friend, these tiny pieces are more than jewelry, they are moments. Harry Edwards Jewelers understands that, and their personal shopping experience really gets it right. ●

i To take home your piece of the island, visit www.harryedwardsjewelers.com or call (758) 458 6000 for your personal shopping experience.



The Sanctuary EAST WINDS LUXURY BOUTIQUE RESORT

This hotel is a true sanctuary in this paradise island, and those who have stayed there know it, which is why many tend to repeat the experience at East Winds more than once.

"Our business approach can be translated into a family style authentic Caribbean experience", explained Judith Milne, the hotel manager, in a deep conversation with Alena Hakansson from OWM. Located in the northwestern part of the island, and just a 20-minute drive from Castries, its capital, East Winds is an incredible authentic oasis where nature, wildlife and the culture of the local communities' merge to create a majestic atmosphere that feels as if you've traveled into a novel, or as Judith charmingly describes it, "it's a luxurious home away from home, but with far more romance in the air."

And like any good host, Judith Milne speaks from personal experience. In 2015, she and her husband Andy Milne took a relaxing vacation in Saint Lucia, and stayed for a few days in East Winds, escaping from their busy lives in London. A year later, she ended up moving to Saint Lucia and in a remarkable turn of events and with a tint of admiral love for the island, she became the General Manager at the hotel that her and her husband fell in love with.

But truth be told, it's not hard to see why. The hotel with its astonishingly beautiful botanical tropical gardens is the perfect destination of choice for couples who want to get married on the island or honeymooners who want to create an unforgettable memory together in paradise. There is no other way to put it: everything is draped with the vibrancy of pure nature in East Winds. You can hear the multitude of exotic wildlife providing an orchestra of emotional serenity with the fresh breeze of the warm winds flickering past your face as you realize that this private getaway is not just exclusive to the scenes that capture the exotic James Bond hide outs. It truly is a magical garden spa.

For those wildlife lovers, this is the place that is comparable to the



ULTIMATE LOCATION
East Winds is very likely the best kept secret in St Lucia, situated directly on a pristine beach yet nestled in privacy, lending itself to both romance and retreat.



Luxury of local
Escape to a world where ancient tropical gardens grow medicinal plants and herbs for use in the garden spa and for your meals.

great love novels with the atmospherics providing the perfect getaway. To a certain degree, even I as a traditional sceptic of all things remotely romantic, find myself intoxicated by this modern day Narnia.

With a variety of birds flying freely in the meandering gardens with active nests attached to the most delicate of botanical plants, through to the warm clear white sand beach which hosts the famous St. Lucian turtles and the guests standing on the shore whale and dolphin watching, you can't help but be drawn in. The fact is that this sanctuary offers an all encompassing experience for the nature inclined and Judith and her husband Andy are cognoscente that their offering has a unique appeal that many other larger all inclusive hotels struggle to emulate.

What this hotel lacks in international exposure, it makes up in an authentic experience and in my mind, that is far more important. With over 80 staff looking after a maximum of 60 guests, you can immediately see that more emphasis is placed on guest experience and this is positively reinforced by the simple fact that East Winds has the luxury of being local.

From the stunning piece of carved culture known by the locals as a guardian of the heavenly sanctuary, (or to some the dark angel), through to the organically and locally sourced vegetables, fruits and fish, everything apart from the imported beef is as local as it gets and judging by the smiles of the guests we have passed along our tour with Judith Milne, you can see that it strikes a deep chord with many.

For any tourist visiting Castries or St. Lucia for that matter, it is worth having a rejuvenating stay at the East Winds hotel, if not for the sacred blessings from the angel statue or the pure relaxation of their signature home-grown (and judging by Judith's looks, age defying tea. I would say East Winds is definitely a place that will strike an emotional chord to ones heart ●

i For more information on your sanctuary vacation visit www.eastwinds.com - where the spirit of St Lucia comes alive

The Seduction Ladera Resort

DRIVING THROUGH WINDING FORESTS, COAST LINES, AND VILLAGES EN ROUTE TO AN ICONIC RESORT on bucket lists across the globe, our hearts were beating faster the further south we ventured. From the international airport, the resort isn't far, but coming from the north of the island, the trek seemed like the perfect journey to a lost secluded world full of mystery and romance. We had yet to experience the meandering southwest drive along the island and we were nearing the revered Ladera Resort, the original "three walled hotel".

Impossible to miss along the miles of beauty we had now driven, we pulled into the security gate and planted our feet onto new heights. Though technically the front of the resort, the entrance was modest with a winding footpath to different levels of rooms which curved along the natural outline of the ridge covered in lush green trees and birds perched ornately.

Ms. Daly Mariatte, the General Manager of Ladera greeted us with a warm hello and tour of the property. We realized quickly the modesty of the entrance was entirely intentional. There are no lineups, no que's, no waiting around to be checked in. A guest is brought directly to their room to begin and complete the check in process.

Each guest is treated as VIP royalty. Daly recalled multiple stories of guests with tears in their eyes conveying their gratitude for the staff who made them feel as though they were family. For these employees this may be a job they hold for their entire life and their commitment and enjoyment resonates throughout the property. In fact Caroline, the very first person hired at Ladera is still



THE RETREAT CALABASH COVE RESORT AND SPA

THE HOT HUMID AIR SEEPED INTO THE COTTAGE THROUGH THE DETAILED GINGER-BREADING running along the length of each outside wall. The smell of morning glory which had permeated the air upon their opening only hours ago, had given way to the scent of millions of raindrops cascading off every surface finding their way through tiny rivers meandering to the beach. On this Tropical Night, the dark ocean was starry by the lights of shipping containers anchored near shore preparing for the anticipated fury and ravenous engulfment of Tropical Storm Harvey. Waves crashed on the shore in a melodic gesture, a reminder of everything we should both love and fear on a Caribbean island.

Only hours ago, the still tropical night air at dinner was the calm before the storm. The generous open lobby with towering pregnant urns opened to a stage of dinner tables overlooking the Calabash Cove property leading into the Caribbean Sea. Owner Konrad Wagner and his Sigourney Weaver-esque wife Kris Wagner had invited Rajan and I to dinner providing us comfort this tropical storm was just another caution this season, no different than every year prior since their 2009 opening.

Sitting alone, early for our engagement to absorb the ambiance, I listened to the conversations at the tables around me. I heard travelers deep in their romantic dinners complimenting the stunning meals, a couple reminiscing of their honeymoon here at the resort years before. Another young and beautiful couple hand in hand, privileged and powerful elites discussing politics in a far away land, further to them an elderly couple laughing without a care in the world.

Live jazz began at the exact moment Konrad and his wife joined the table. A beautiful bottle of Cabernet circled, and slight German and Austrian accents regaled us in stories as mouth-watering plate after plate landed on our table. Laughter, secrets, stories from around the world enthralled the four of us for hours, the perfectly still air combined with aged grapes offering ominous comfort from the approaching storm.

We retired earlier than usual due to the warnings, walking down the tree lined staircases with a couple visiting from Texas. We stopped alongside the infinity pool debating whether a quick dip just as we had the night prior was a good idea before the sky crashed down on us. The last song from the piano player and the caramel Lucian voice slowed to a deep molasses finale just in time

working at the resort nearly every single day.

The property couldn't be more spectacular, the moment the doors opened to our room was the moment I lost my breath. A large heated pool in the middle of the villa with a swing hanging from the ceiling opened to one of the most incredible views I have ever seen. Silence filled the air where even the birds seemed to acknowledge the moment we were having. The Pitons in all their glory stared back towards us, an energy from the water down below was palpable and the slight breeze made the room come alive.

Ladera, meaning hillside in Spanish, is by far the most romantic hotel I've had the pleasure to experience, though the true concept of the resort is to coexist with the environment. Through conversations with guests and locals who have either stayed at Ladera or came to dine at the exquisite restaurant on premise Dasheene, people have been so bold to describe it as a spiritual awakening.

Each of the 37 rooms on the property have their own special configurations, shapes and sizes setting one apart from another. The common thread of sustainability and support for the local economy is evident by more than the on-site carpenter and wood workshop which created the hand carved tables and chairs. Everything in the room other than the coffee maker and glassware is local. The trees, plants, and flowers on property creates the largest collection and variation of species on the island despite the botanical garden in St. Lucia.

Pictures do no justice to Ladera. No drone, specialized camera, or video encapsulates the feeling and natural beauty of the area. It is impossible not to acknowledge the power of this natural stage where Ladera effortlessly performs.

The resort was designed to take advantage of the incredible location not specifically designed for honeymoons, weddings, anniversaries, or proposals. I have to say, the sensuality of the open concept rooms and obviously sexy swing would suggest otherwise. The natural beauty and complete privacy subtly suggest for you to remove your clothes, the open shower and heated pool ensure you stay that way.

A pity my visit was with my dear friend and colleague Rajan, and I'm sure he felt the same about me wishing he could swap me out for his wife. Ladera is not the place one goes to find a partner, it is the place one goes to envelope themselves in another, in the beauty of nature and the power of surrender ●

i For more information on your breathtaking retreat at the only resort on a UNESCO World Heritage site in St Lucia, visit www.Ladera.com



5 Star Luxury
The original 3 walled hotel in harmony with nature.

for the first raindrops to rush us down the final set of stairs to our own cottages.

My cottage, number 3, was directly below my view just moments ago from the dinner table. A hammock begging to be sunken into, a private pool overlooking the ocean and the candles in my outdoor veranda welcomed me home. I snuck into my Caribbean retreat almost sad to put pen to paper knowing the ending to both this Tropical night and my St Lucia experience was coming sooner than I wanted.

Sinking into the sheets of my four-post bed, I was surrounded by soft white netting lit by moonlight piercing through the thick oncoming clouds through my windows. The consistent raindrops rolled off on rhythm while I couldn't hold back a deeply satisfied smile. The forced pause in our day to day routines, our busy minds, and hopeful planning gave me a brief understanding of "island time", a carefree and jovial way of lessening our self-imposed duties. And for this little while my world seemed closer to perfect than it ever had, cleansed by the hearts and smiles of St Lucia just as the raindrops beading off the morning glories surrounding Calabash Cove cleansed the day from its leavess.

It is always bitter sweet to leave a country. The friends, experiences, and moments are such that photo's can only be a reminder to the intoxicating life we briefly lived. I can honestly say of all the countries I've lived, all the cities, coasts, islands, and climates I have visited, St. Lucia will get under your skin in the most incredible way if you let it. Konrad and Kris are perfect examples of those who came and have never left. So take it from us, pack the extra bag in advance, extend your stay, let yourself become immersed in a world full of opportunity and beauty and enjoy as many tropical nights as possible ●

i For more information on the ultimate tropical nights and to fall in love with the Caribbean visit www.CalabashCove.com



Feel the energy
A central pool at the resort surrounded by restaurants and just seconds from the beach.



Dine around meal plan
Indulge in the best restaurants in Rodney Bay on the property and off!



VIEWS
Experience the most incredible ocean sunsets from the balcony of your room.



Home away from home
Suites available with kitchens and attached rooms for travel companions.

THE LOCAL HEARTBEAT

BAY GARDENS RESORTS

IN OUR FIRST MONTH IN ST LUCIA WE RENT-ED THE SAME VILLA IN WHICH AMY WINE-HOUSE was kicked out of when she was taking a break from real life. We continued to move, discovering the island and after a 3 week stint in a romantic hideaway alone with myself and my tear-salted eggs set for one, I desperately needed a revival of energy, and frankly some entertainment. Rajan was leaving me for another island, so I would be in St Lucia on my lonesome.

Finding a beach front property on an island isn't necessarily a challenge. What can be difficult is finding the perfect blend of atmosphere, Caribbean authenticity, cuisine, connectivity, and extra generous cocktails. Rodney Bay is the heartbeat of St Lucia and the locally owned Bay Gardens quietly, and kindly dominates with 3 properties within walking distance from one another. Restaurants, gym, beach, water sports, pools... I was sold.

On my arrival to my new home The Bay Gardens Resort... I was taken in hand by the concierge who announced "YOU'RE the new family member!". There was a small chance it was my attempt at a Lucian accent that tricked her, but I had a feeling it was the General Manager Waltrude Patrick who sent the memo. I was handed a rum punch, given a well needed ice cold towel for the aggressive "glowing" aka sweat from the 2 meters of walking in blazing heat from our jeep, and taken to Tami at the front desk.

I admit I'm not one to use pet names until we're past the third date, but when the General Manager Ms. P (as she's so affectionately called by her staff) told everyone in advance of my arrival that I'm her new daughter, I was elated. Everyone who walked through the door was treated exceptionally well, though I felt special, as if I were walking into an incredibly warm, non-dysfunctional family.

I had the pleasure of meeting the St Lucian owners Joyce and Desmond Destang within my first week on the property. They took me in hand at the Governor General's 20th Anniversary party on property and ensured I had a cocktail in my hand, food in my belly and knew everyone at the party. I could see how the family had created a warm and welcoming environment that stemmed from the top. Their vision for this Caribbean brand was to ensure there is a property for every budget, for every traveller and they continue to enhance their offerings in order to go above and beyond expectations.

The son of the owners is notable in his own right. Mr. Sanovnik Destang is not only at the helm of the largest family owned hospitality company on the island as the Executive Director, but also President of the St. Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association. His influence on the hotel is evident and the ripple effect of his leadership with SLHTA is felt across the island. Sanovnik's humble charm wouldn't suggest his immense influence in St Lucia, though his passion and goals are almost palpable in conversation, which always come with warm intensity and wonderfully disarming smile.



Aside from the fact that I discovered I had a Lucian mother, I was thrilled that as a solo business traveler I had the ultimate atmosphere. I met a couple who's 34 year old daughter was en-route to meet them for a family vacation, countless couples and their rightfully unapologetic displays of PDA, a glamorous Caribbean vixen with a cocktail in hand and her sex and the city entourage in tow, a family with 4 generations sitting down to breakfast, AND there was the eye candy! A television show full of hard bodies was being filmed on the beachfront.

For the adventurous souls, Bay Gardens is the only resort in the Caribbean with its own obstacle style water park. If you've ever wanted to be a contestant on wipe out, this is your chance in St Lucia at the Splash Island Water

Park, the brainchild of Mr. Sanovnik Destang's wife Mrs. Julianna Ward-Destang. This inflatable madness is just off the beach behind the flagship Bay Gardens Resort. I watched and families, kids, gorgeous men and women all take a chance on this adventure and it was hysterical. Raj debated going in his work suit but I reminded him we were in a rental car and I didn't want to pay extra for the lesser known charge of "seat drying".

There was never a shortage of conversation at this Caribbean beach resort, and yet I felt I had all the privacy in the world in my hotel room when I kicked up my feet on my balcony overlooking the ocean, only a running leap or two from my suite (guestimate of course... I didn't attempt).

I could go on about the postcard sunsets from my room, the quiet donation Ms. P hand delivered on behalf of Bay Gardens to a young and promising student at a public school to obtain more than just his bare necessities, or the simple things like remembering the way I like my coffee in the morning. It's no wonder the timeshare program at Bay Gardens is thriving, guests continue to come back to their own home away from home.

The mantra of "3 properties 1 heart", is perfectly fitting for Bay Gardens Resort, Hotel, and Inn. The dozens of staff I met and the countless others who made it seamless with love injected into everything from the food, cocktails, entertainment, room service, and security are blatantly evident. Even during the hurricane, Mishka delivered candles and offered to clean my room, Junior followed, armed with his yellow rain jacket and giant rubber boots to mop my floor and tell me jokes. I think the hundred something hearts which have come together on the three properties have created the brand of Bay Gardens. The family has extended from the Destangs and I'm lucky to say I felt a part of it along with my Lucian mom, and my hundred wonderful illegitimate siblings ●

i For more information on 3 properties with 1 heart visit www.BayGardensResorts.com Experience the Island

The Island Journey.

TI KAYE RESORT AND SPA

Award winning
Adult-only luxury resort inspired by nature with a wine list and cuisine to dream about.

YEARS BEFORE BUILDING HIS OWN HOTEL TI KAYE REORT, NICK PINNOCK READ A BOOK CALLED "DON'T STOP THE CARNIVAL", A NOVEL BY HERMAN WOUK. This was in the nineties... 30 years after it was published, yet 20 years prior to knowing his life would rival that of Norman Paperman, a New Yorker attempting to flee the rat race to the Caribbean breeze and idealistic life of rum punch, sunsets, and island time.

Unlike Norman, Nick actually grew up in the Caribbean. He was raised in a rural St Lucia with one channel on the television, a phone reserved for emergencies, and two siblings and a neighbor with 10 kids as his entertainment. A superb raconteur in his own right, Nick chuckled at my curiosity and excitement to his upbringing while he delved into story after story which he dubbed prosaic at best. Evidently 10 children in one home paled in comparison to his recent cab ride to the airport with a man who was one of 27 born to the same mother.

He deemed himself an unlikely hotelier, his fascination with history and incredible collection of old maps seemed to hint at a previous life as a pirate or very least a nomad. Paying homage to his parents who ensured he garnered worldly experience in his youth, he admitted travel was vital to not only the birth of Ti Kaye, but the enduring success of the Caribbean resort.

Sitting in Nicks epic underground wine cellar "Ti Kave", he seemed relatively unfazed at his recount as a young 23 year old he took every penny he had, and then some, and invested in a piece of land in the middle of nowhere covered in thick rainforest. His original intention was to build a road to the plot and sell the land after a few years for a profit. 10 years later armed with a machete, 5 bushmen, and a design on the back of a piece of paper he found himself knee deep in a project he never saw coming.

The parallels between Paperman and Pinnock began to surface as more wine was poured and our tour of the property paused. Nick recounts a story of a water shortage in the novel, his own experience, never fail, stranger than fiction had me in stitches. Discovering his shower was bone-dry the morning after a late night working in his hotel, he immediately ventured out to rectify the problem for his guests. He discovers an overflowing brown pool, a security guard who assumed Nick had requested this treatment, two empty water tanks, and a pool-boy pointing to the waitress he requested to "watch the hose" the evening prior.

His humility prevailed as more stories unearthed themselves and his mischievous smirk grew to a full grin while I timed my sips of cabernet to avoid choking on a punchline. Admitting an eventual blatant over compensation for clean water on the property, he offered another story of a rogue employee failing to admit they broke the water valve choosing quitting over telling. Nick built his dock 6 times after 6 years of swells, he's calmed a naked honeymooner domestic dispute, rebuilt retaining walls on Christmas, and even answered a 2am war cry from a chef who over indulged in party favors whilst simultaneously deciding to rearrange his room with fists of fury.

Nick's romanticized idea of a beautiful rainforest resort has undoubtedly been tested. His smiling eyes and guttural laughs provide no glimpse into the trials he's endured to have one of the most sought after properties on the island. A lesser man would have likely done more than throw in the towel after the property opened just in time for the 2001 recession, but



Nick continues to roll with the punches. The odds were against him in the beginning, bets against him prevailing were huge, even mother nature herself tossed in a few humorous attacks on the Caribbean dream.

"Ti Kaye is now in its 17th year of operation and in my mind, it's still a work in progress. I somehow thought that building would cease when we opened our doors, nothing was further from the truth. Since opening our doors in 2001, we've added a second restaurant, a dive shop, a dock, a spa and the largest underground wine cellar in the windward islands and perhaps the southern Caribbean." A rare and still modest boast from Nick.

Nick is seeing an upturn in health and wellness tourism and the rural nature of the island augers well for that. They have added a waterfront yoga sharla, more vegetarian choices, organic herb gardens and many more positive environmental practices which Nick admits saves him money and promotes sustainability on the property rather than attempting to receive a green badge to be trendy.

At a glance, this accidental entrepreneur looks like the All-American runaway dream success story; a sunrise kite surfing, rum punch perfecting, sailing extraordinaire. Nick, despite his best efforts to assure me it did not come easy, does prove its possible despite the odds.

We finish our tour of the property; the massive open cliff-side yoga deck on the water, the spa, the rooms playfully named in creole. I know there are scars from the wounds he's endured which held zero humor at the time, but the most interesting people I've met around the world are more battered than they are pristine. This real-life account of a hope, a wish, and a machete has done nothing but urge the encouragement of pipe dreams we've all heard whispered through cubicles and mirrored in Papermans fictional life. "It's been more of a journey than a destination. I see the complete irony in it all as what my journey has created, is a destination to others." Nick finishes, and to some, that destination is even a dream in itself ●

i For more information on Ti Kaye Resort & Spa visit our website www.tikaye.com



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