

Mustique's tranquil beaches beckon those seeking solitude.

**Opposite:** Villa pools are designed to blend into the island's beautiful views.

# Unique MUSTIQUE

The SPARKLING JEWEL of BAREFOOT ISLAND LUXURY

By CAROLYN O'NEIL

Photography courtesy of  
THE COTTON HOUSE



The tiny island of Mustique is a magical world away from Caribbean crowds. One of the Windward Islands not too far from St. Lucia, this three-mile-long island is part of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Here you'll find a bamboo airport building, protected coral reefs, scenic hiking trails, and a community spirit that encourages quiet beachside picnics and lively nights of music under the stars.

It's the kind of place where the phrase "if you know, you know" is aptly applied.

## *The Serene and Social Isle*

Long the sunny escape chosen by royalty, rock stars, and business leaders searching for paradise without paparazzi, Mustique is now home to over a hundred architecturally jaw-dropping private villas and The Cotton House boutique hotel with its elegant colonial chic decor.

Mustique is a private island. You can't just show up here. Pre-approved travelers arrive via small planes from the larger airports in St. Lucia or Barbados. And you must arrive before dark because there are no lights on the runway in Mustique.

Once here, guests get around the island's coastal and hilltop roads via beach buggies fondly called "mules," but they won't find any street signs, billboards, or golf courses. Instead, touring Mustique is an immersive experience through a lush wildlife sanctuary dotted with the manicured gardens of villas tucked into the landscape.



While Mustique is open to all who arrange a visit here, privacy remains paramount. The island is owned and operated by the Mustique Company, established over fifty years ago to govern the island and its development. Today protecting the environment on land and sea is an island priority.

Water filtration systems provide clean drinking water to encourage the use of refillable personal containers instead of plastic water bottles. Beyond protecting threatened reefs, a coral nursery restoration project began in 2015 to add more healthy coral to the under-water landscape. Wildlife populations are protected, too, including indigenous seabirds, green sea turtles, and land tortoises. Ocean-safe sunscreens are advised and are the only type sold on the island to safeguard water-born critters further. Hit the hiking trails that wind across the island for incredible views of the biodiverse beauty being protected for generations to come.

Free from the throng of beachgoing crowds, there's still a need to plan some daily outings. Reservations are required to book your rustic table under the palms for a catered beach picnic, one of the most treasured traditions on Mustique. Securing a spot overlooking the deep blue waters and wide white sands of Macaroni Beach is a coup. But not to worry, there are plenty of other picturesque beaches to enjoy a swim and a lazy lunch of grilled fish, colorful salads, and bottles of chilled rose wine.

More active pursuits include cycling, horseback riding, fishing, sailing, diving, snorkeling, and guided boat trips to neighboring islands. And after all of that, the lovely spa at The Cotton House soothes body, mind, and spirit with a range of treatments.



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**Above:** Villas range in style from laid-back pavilions to palatial estates.

**Left:** The bar in the Great Room of The Cotton House

**Far left:** The Cotton House boutique hotel



**Left:** “No visit is complete without a beach picnic.”

**Below left:** You’ll find a tiny museum of the island’s history in the old sugar mill.

**Below right:** Mustique’s Equestrian Centre arranges island treks.



## The Social Set

The nightly social scene is subdued but lively on Mustique, with a calendar of events that bring all guests and residents together. There’s backgammon night in the Great Room of The Cotton House, the Beach Café Happy Hour and a Half on Fridays, sunset live music sessions at Basil’s Bar on Sundays, and the weekly not-to-miss Mustique Company cocktail party, which almost the whole island attends.

Parties are a way of life on Mustique and have been since Scotsman Colin Tennant (later Lord Glenconner) bought the island in 1958 to develop the ultimate tropical holiday spot for a select group of high-profile friends.

Villa building commenced under the architectural direction of Oliver Messel, formerly a London theater set designer. Messel’s villas (including Les Jolies Eaux for Princess Margaret and her husband Anthony Armstrong-Jones) feature an open plan so that from the front door, you look straight through the house to the view beyond. Gardens grow in and around the homes, and latticework trim is often painted in a now-famous color, Messel green.

## Your Villa or Mine?

With exotic names like Indigo, Frangipani, and “ti Soleil,” the villas on Mustique reflect the owners’ fantasies expressed in a diverse range of architectural designs.

Whether contemporary or traditional, most homes are built with a sense of “alone together,” providing guests a tranquil hideaway to read a book and a central hub for social activities and dining. Swimming pools glimmer in the sun, often perched on the edge of hillside properties with a great view looking out to the Atlantic or the Caribbean Sea.

Villas are available to rent year-round complete with chefs, butlers, housekeepers, and gardeners who know every corner of the villas and how to care for them.





## Make The Cotton House Your Home

The Cotton House is more clubhouse than hotel and is the social center of the island. Originally a sugar and cotton warehouse, the main buildings were also designed by Messel. The property occupies three acres alongside the turquoise waters of Endeavor Bay. Accommodations range from charming cottages to two-story suites with private plunge pools.

The Veranda Restaurant in the main house offers quiet breakfasts in the company of light breezes and songbirds and elegant candlelit dinners inspired by West Indies cuisine. The Beach Café and Bar overlooking the Caribbean Sea is the place to be seen at lunch—perhaps with an airy caftan over your swimsuit—to enjoy fresh seafood, slow-cooked pork, and everyone's favorite these days, delicious tacos.

Are you craving a deeper dive into tropical flavors? Join the weekly Rum Master Class held in the Great Room to taste from an extensive collection of rums and learn more about the nuances of this historically Caribbean spirit.



**Above:** Basil's Bar sparkles as one of the finest beach bars in the world.

**Left:** Basil's Bar serves up lively local cuisine, music, and dancing.



For any island visit to be complete, there must be at least one visit to Mustique's most famous watering hole, Basil's Bar. Founded in 1974 and named for barman and consummate host Basil Charles, this open-air bamboo pavilion was newly crafted in Balinese style by architect Philippe Starck. This is where the music plays and the cocktails flow. The annual Mustique Blues Festival attracts top blues artists. Still, guests celebrate every day and night at Basil's Bar, enjoying an impressive menu of refined beach cuisine and cold drinks with a view of Britannia Bay. ▀

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*Visit [Mustique-Island.com](http://Mustique-Island.com) and [CottonHouse.net](http://CottonHouse.net) to start planning your trip, plus [BasilsBar.com](http://BasilsBar.com) for more on this island oasis.*