

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

This Celebrity-loved Private Island Has a 17-Room Boutique Hotel—and Some of the Caribbean's Most Over-the-top Villas

An inside look at some of the best villa rentals on Mustique.



Scenic aerial view of Mustique.
Credit: The Mustique Company

WHAT WE LIKE

- You'll notice Mustique's glamor in everything from the rental portfolio (Princess Margaret's five-bedroom villa is one of the island's most popular) to the often star-studded clientele at Basil's Bar.
- International visitors can only access Mustique via air charter run by the company that manages the island, which lends the island a feeling of absolute privacy.
- Though most accommodations on Mustique are extremely luxurious, the island itself feels wild and unspoiled.

MUSTIQUE ISLAND'S VILLAS

Ever since Britain's Princess Margaret received a plot of land on this private island in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as a wedding gift in the 1960s, a long list of celebrities, from Justin Bieber to Mick Jagger, have vacationed on Mustique's sandy shores.



An 18-seater airplane landing on Mustique's airstrip.
Credit: Alex Amengual/The Mustique Company

So when my family and I touched down in an 18-seater plane on Mustique's airstrip, I was expecting to find a place with the high-touch sheen of private island resorts elsewhere in the region: a celebrity chef-driven restaurant, perhaps; a ritzy beach club; or a boutique selling designer swimwear. But Mustique isn't about five-star bells and whistles—not on the surface, at least.

We took a tour in a golf-cart—known on Mustique as a “mule”—and were immediately struck by how raw and unspoiled the island felt. Untamed tropical foliage spills onto the roads, signage is idiosyncratic at best, and you'll find loungers on only one of its nine beaches. Cotton House, where the hotel and restaurant are located, has an old-school clubhouse feel—right down to the grand piano set up for impromptu sing-alongs in the bar.



Guests driving around the island.
Credit: Alex Amengual/The Mustique Company

That's a reflection of the island's origin story, which was defined by a group of British aristocrats in search of an off-the-grid retreat. Mustique was bought for £45,000 in 1958 by Colin Tennant, who later became Lord Glenconner, with the intention of developing it as farmland. When that proved unsuccessful, Tennant decided to develop the island as a private vacation destination for his social set. (His wife, Anne Glenconner, was a childhood friend of Margaret's, and later served as one of her ladies-in-waiting.)

After paparazzi photos helped put the island on the map, Glenconner's friends flocked to buy plots of land. But the emphasis was always more on privacy and seclusion than conspicuous luxury—an ethos that remains intact to this day.

There are now 85 villas hidden away among Mustique's coves and hilltop lookouts, each developed by a private owner. This has resulted in a rental portfolio of extraordinary diversity. Among my favorites were Mandalay, a Balinese-style seven-bedroom villa overlooking Britannia Bay that once belonged to Iman and David Bowie, and a Palladian-style nine-bedroom mansion with frescoes and gilded furniture that takes its inspiration from the Palace of Versailles.



The living room inside the Flomarine Villa.
Credit: Roger Bool/The Mustique Company

Our family of four stayed in Flomarine, an elegant five-bedroom villa designed in the style of Oliver Messel, the interior designer who worked on Princess Margaret's vacation home, Les Jolie Eaux. Light and airy, with an array of indoor-outdoor spaces to showcase the ocean views, Flomarine was renovated in 2024, with abundant use of natural materials and a chic neutral palette. Like all villas on Mustique, it has a full-sized private pool.

Another thing all of Mustique's villas have in common: a dedicated staff. The exact size varies depending on the property, but Flomarine is staffed by a chef, butler, gardener, and housekeeper. The team takes excellent care of the villa's guests, whether delivering a fresh-cut coconut poolside, or preparing a lavish breakfast in the open-air dining room.

Mustique also has a small hotel, Cotton House, where 17 guest rooms and suites are arranged between a two-story building and a series of garden cottages. Wherever you choose to stay, you'll notice how limited access to the island creates a sense of complete privacy and security. (International visitors can only arrive by private air charter, which is operated by the same company that manages the resort.)

"Mustique is a home away from home," Delano Henry, the island's maintenance manager, told me. "It's completely safe, completely peaceful. Even if your kids go out for the day and get stuck down at Basil's Bar, security is going to bring them home."



A guest riding a horse along the beach.

Mustique has two stand-out amenities worth mentioning: an equestrian center where guests can take one of nine horses for a ride along the sands of Macaroni Beach or tropical forest trails inland. Nearby, you'll find a tennis club with five Astroturf courts and one hard court, as well as pickleball and padel. You can book a lesson with a pro, or take on an island regular in one of the facility's daily drop-in games.

Here, what to know before you book a vacation on Mustique.

The Accommodations



Aerial view of the Sienna Villa.

On Mustique, no two villas are alike. Some properties, like the three-bedroom Macaroni Beach House, channel a breezy, beach aesthetic (think teak four-poster beds with white muslin curtains). At La Palma, a six-bedroom villa on the white sands of L'Ansecoy Bay, interiors are Chinoiserie-inspired, with plentiful use of bamboo and rattan. A villa called Sienna has the feel of a Tuscan farmhouse, while the six-bedroom Taliesin was designed in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Rooms at the Cotton House hotel are a little more straightforward. Here, a neutral palette, cane furniture, and botanical textiles lend the accommodation a cozy, comfortable feel. Deluxe Garden and Sea View Suites have a small private plunge pool, while Cottages, Superior Garden Suites, and Superior Sea View Suites come with a private veranda or balcony.

Food and Drink



View of the Beach Cafe from the water.

1 of 3

Within Cotton House, you'll find the Great Room Bar, which channels a charmingly old-school Caribbean aesthetic with a grand piano, wood-paneled walls, and a high, vaulted ceiling. It stocks one of the widest selections of rum in the Caribbean, alongside a range of cigars.

For lunch, there's the Beach Café, which sits on the sugar-fine sands of Endeavor Bay, and offers a crowd-pleasing array of pizzas, sushi, tacos, and salads. Villa staff are also experts at arranging beach picnics: our chef and butler laid out a Mediterranean-style spread of salads, grilled chicken, and vegetables under the trees lining the beach at Lagoon Bay.

Last but not least is Basil's Bar. This Britannia Bay institution is where Mustique goes to party, so in addition to cocktails and a broad menu offering everything from a whole grilled lobster to a quarter pounder with cheese, you'll find a nightly roster of DJs and live bands.

How to Book



Exterior of the Two Bedroom Suites at the Cotton House.
Credit: Alex Amengual/The Mustique Company

Visit mustique-island.com for reservations, and the full villa directory. Nightly rates at The Cotton House hotel start from \$1,070; villa rentals start from \$16,000 per week for a two-bedroom property.

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