

WINE ENTHUSIAST

Your Guide to the Perfect St. Barths Getaway

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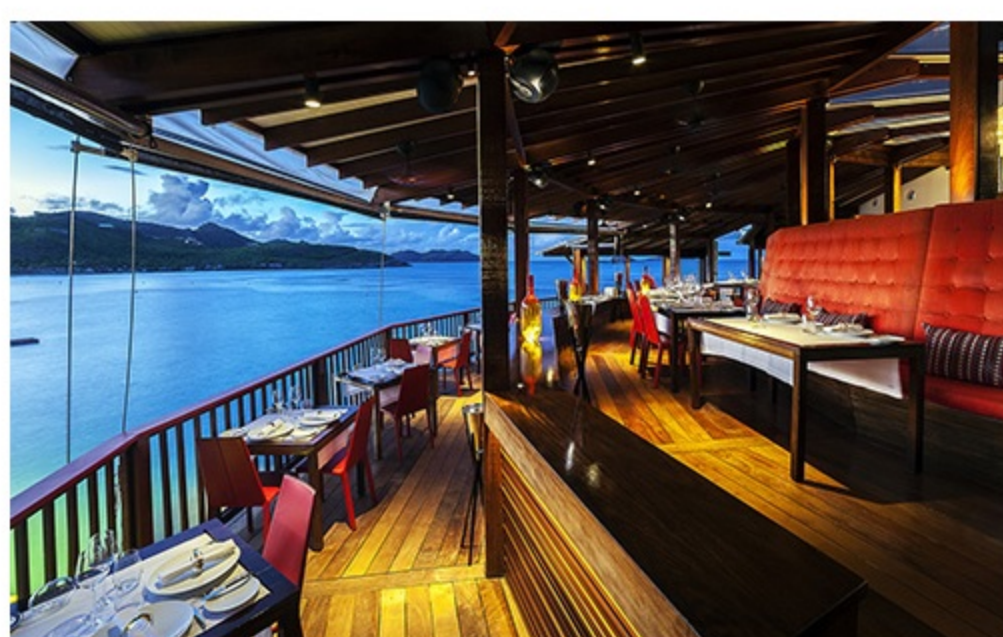


Le Guanahani Admiral Porch

Saint Barthélemy, or St. Barths, may be just eight square miles, but the French Caribbean island is often jam-packed with A-list celebrities amid luxury accommodations—not to mention breathtaking beaches and swanky bars and restaurants that beckon wine and food lovers.

Considered by many as the gastronomical capital of the West Indies (it feels more like the South of France than the Caribbean), the island boasts more than 80 diverse restaurants with deep wine lists and crafty cocktail programs. Wine and food are at the center of island life, with culinary events taking place throughout the year.

Visitors from around the world flock here for more than sailing, scuba diving and sunbathing (all of which are phenomenal, by the way). Here's where to drink, eat and stay during your sojourn to St. Barths.



On the Rocks restaurant's terraced dining hall overlooking St. Jean Bay.

Where to Eat & Drink

On the Rocks Restaurant is built into Eden Rock (literally) and features exquisite views of St. Jean Bay. Michelin-starred master chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten and executive chef Eric Desbordes are behind the upscale French fare, like octopus salad topped with tomatoes and olives, and saké-caramelized black cod with yuzu turnips. Navigate the dense French-laden wine list by region. You'll find everything from Alsace to Beaujolais and Bordeaux. (There's even a small selection of magnums.) If you crave a cocktail, order a classic Negroni or one of the house specials like Chili-Chili Bang Bang, featuring jalapeño-infused Tequila, passion fruit liquor and lime.

For lunch, book at table at **La Case de L'Isle**, located in the LVMH-owned hotel, **Cheval Blanc**. Beyond the stunning views of Flamands Beach, it's all about exclusivity, light French fare (like club sandwiches and elaborate salads) and—you guessed it—top-notch wine. The list boasts more than 150 French bottlings.

At **Bartolomeo**, located in the gardens of Le Guanahani Hotel & Spa, you'll find refined Mediterranean-inspired cuisine that highlights fresh ingredients and Caribbean spices. The Branzino fillet with violet artichokes, taggiasche olives and candied tomatoes is a favorite, as is the Crab risotto, with fresh raspberries and licorice powder. The French-heavy wine list and classic-cocktail menu is equally tasty. Try the De La Louisianne a St. Barth, made with dark rum, sweet vermouth, *Bénédictine*, absinthe and Peychaud's Bitters.

Stop by **Bonito**, located in the town of Gustavia, for a cocktail or two and watch the sunset from its expansive terrace. The ocean views complement the cool cocktail list nicely, consisting of Caribbean-inspired sips like L'Exotiki, made with aged dark and white rum, and Bubbling Bonito, featuring Champagne and fresh herbs.

For late-night drinks, hit **Le Sayolita**, a charming little bar in Saint-Jean town frequented by locals and surfers for its relaxed atmosphere and affordable drinks.



Even the powder rooms at Le Guanahani hotel feature stunning views.

Where to Stay

Set on 18 tropical acres, **Le Guanahani** hotel and spa is situated on its own peninsula. The island's largest resort, it features 30 standard rooms (though there's nothing standard about them) and 37 cottage-style suites that range from \$680 to a whopping \$7,350 per night. On the high end of that spectrum is the Serenity Suite, nestled in the hotel's upper hillside. It boasts expansive beach views from its two-tier terrace, two bedrooms and a spacious living room and kitchen. But the best part (not including the indoor Jacuzzi tub) is the private pool. And when you decide to finally leave your room, get a massage at **Spa by Clarins**, located on the property.



Beach bar and restaurant Do Brazil offers outstanding views of sunset.

What to Do

When you're not eating and drinking, hit the beaches. There are 14 to choose from, and few are crowded, even during peak season. **Gouverneur** Beach is beautiful and quiet, since there are no hotels or water sports. For that, visit **Grand Cul de Sac**. **Colombier** and **Saline** are a bit out of the way, but worth the effort. **Shell Beach**, named for its shell-filled sand, is walkable from Gustavia Harbor and has a popular beachfront restaurant **Do Brazil**, where you'll want to get a table for drinks and watch the sunset.

When to Go

From mid-December through mid-April, prices are considered "high-season," and decrease during the summer and fall months. Lucky for wine-and-food lovers since **The Taste of St. Barth Gourmet Festival**, which pairs award-winning chefs from around the world with local counterparts to create exclusive tasting menus at island hotels and restaurants, is scheduled for Nov. 3–6.