

LIVING THE RIGHT LIFE

RICHARD DAVID STORY



What's Fashionable Now?

By the time this magazine arrives in your hands, it will, hopefully, be a perfectly polished product—and a useful, if not indispensable, guide to what's happening this fall in the worlds of fashion, culture, restaurants, and design. Just yesterday, our Photo Director, Lea Golis, sent “uncorrected” pictures from the fashion shoot taking place in Lower Manhattan with our Fashion Editor, Kareem Rashed, and photographers Luciana Val and Franco Musso. From Milk Studios on West 15th Street and Tenth Avenue, she sent the following note:

Hi Richard,

I am sending you a preview of the women's shoot—today we are shooting against the paintings, tomorrow will be against a gray backdrop. Tomorrow we will also not be doing the hats; we mapped out a plan with clothes/hair/backdrop so are shooting these first strategically! Please let me know your thoughts!

My one-word response was FANTASTIC.

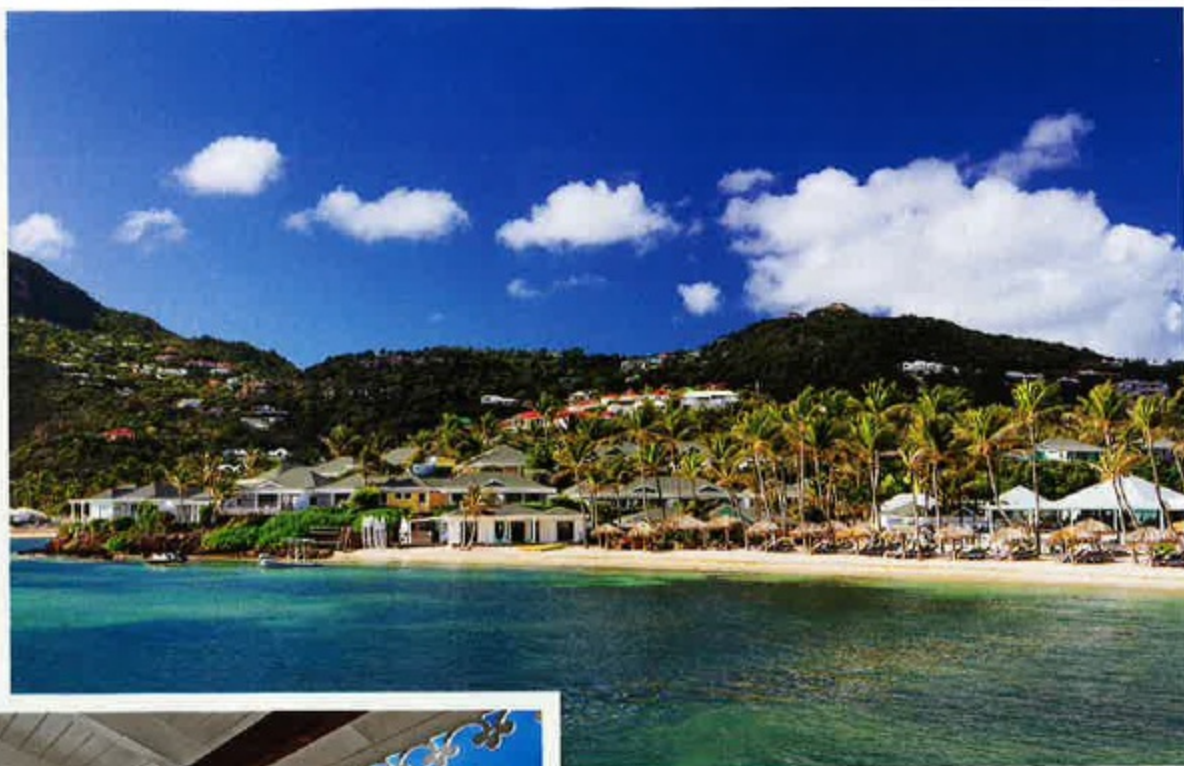
But then this September issue, typically devoted to fashion and style, has many fantastic elements—whether it be fashion or Goya's Madrid, or the recently restored mansion of designer Christian Dior, which writer Patricia Morrisroe fell head over stilettos for on a visit this spring. Jessica Flint answers the question HOW DO I DO PATAGONIA? in an amazing package on the Chilean wilderness area in BlackBook, which she edits. Upper East Side cosmetic dentist Michael Apa is the focus of an interesting story on “Doing Business in Dubai” with all of its complications—i.e., chiefly, how Sharia law influences everything, including the business culture. Tiffany design director Francesca Amfitheatrof explains WHY I WEAR WHAT I WEAR as the most recent installment in that ongoing series, and there are so many words of advice on where to stay in the world.

And speaking of fashionable, my own travels recently took me to St. Bart's, which a reporter once described as a private French club posing as a Caribbean island—with all the attendant exclusivity and Gallic

charm, or not, that implies. The description always stuck with me. I hadn't been to St. Bart's since the '80s, but I recently picked up a JetBlue ticket and headed there for a long Thursday–Monday weekend. The weather wasn't perfect, but luckily the island still pretty much is. Off-season in St. Bart's has recently become *très* chic. In fact, I wouldn't even consider crashing with the crowds in-season but would much prefer May or August.

So, yes, it's been built up. *Tremendously* so since I was there. But what made St. Bart's a jet-set dream is still very much part of the DNA: great little hotels, beautiful beaches, the best food in the Caribbean. To tell the truth, I have no memory of where I stayed on my first honeymoon all those many years ago, but this time around, I opted for **Le Guanahani**, which recently completed a four-year, \$40 million renovation of 67 beechwood cottages done up in a sort of French-Creole style, along with the public rooms, three dining areas, and a brand-new spa by Clarins, where I had the best “full body” massage in years. The ten two- and three-bedroom suites are the *pièces de résistance* of the property and are some of the largest

Le Guanahani is spread out over 18 acres on its own peninsula. The Admiral Suite, below right, features a separate living area with a convertible sofa, two bedrooms, and a private deck with access to the beach.



anywhere on the island. Given its sprawl, swimming pools, three restaurants, where the service is particularly accommodating, and two beachfronts, it's also ideal for families.

And if you don't want to have every meal at Le Guanahani, here's my take: Lunch at **O' Corail**, a little beach hut near the hotel, which has the best ceviche, Thai salads, and fresh fish tartare, *and* rum, particularly ginger and vanilla. “I buy the bottles to take home just because I love the labels,” said Francesca Leoni, the chicest woman we know, who runs international communications for Valentino in Rome

and spends two weeks in St. Bart's with her family every March. “And did you go to the **Jean-Georges** restaurant at the Eden Röck?” she asked. We did, and it was terrific. There's also **Maya's**, which has been around forever; **Orega**, a new French-Japanese fusion restaurant; **Bonito** has a good Caribbean vibe; and **Do Brazil** on Shell Beach is perfect at lunch for a Caribbean tea with lemon and a shrimp skewer. My own favorite is the new **Bagatelle** in Gustavia at the harbor. Aymeric Clemente and his partner, Remi Laba, who also have Bagatelles in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles,

combine amazingly wonderful food with one of the craziest, sexiest, coolest party scenes anywhere. And as for shopping? I hand that over to Ms. Leoni, who wrote me: “**Yuma** is tucked away in the Oasis village area and is owned by a lovely, chic, and very elegant Italian woman who has lived on the island for 26 years. I love her objects and clothing. Apart from the local Hermès store, it's a must-stop for me. I also like **Donale's** gorgeous vintage caftans and cool jewelry and a fragrance called White, which is great for the body and home for only 55 euros. Best and cheapest thing on St. Bart's.” ♦