

A Proustian Travel Guide: St. Barth



A Caribbean hotelier gives us some local tips for a visit to St. Barth.

BY OUTTRAVELER EDITORS
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Name: Martein van Wagenberg

Age: 50...ish.

Profession: Managing Director, **Le Guanahani**

Location: St. Barth

Though originally from the Netherlands, Martein van Wagenberg has spent over two decades in the Caribbean overseeing iconic properties. He joined Le Guanahani as Managing Director in August 2013 and guided a now-completed multi-million-dollar renovation program. Prior to Le Guanahani, Martein spent nine years at Rosewood Little Dix Bay in Virgin Gorda, BVI, and Las Ventanas al Paraiso in Los Cabos, BCS Mexico. He was most recently nominated as a finalist for Virtuoso's prestigious 2015 Best of the Best Hotelier of the Year Award.

What are three things you wish people knew about you?

I studied tropical plant diseases, which has actually been very useful in the Caribbean. My first hospitality-related job was peeling potatoes in the kitchen at "De Efteling" after which I worked my way up after receiving a degree in Hotel administration. Also, I can get emotional with a good movie whether it's laughing or crying.

What are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the way guests are made to feel after they visit us, and the employees I have mentored along the way. Many of them are now General Managers themselves. That's when you know it's all worth it.

What is your most cherished possession?

A rosary I received from my father.

What was the best gift you've ever received?

A dear friend gave me a Santos Cartier Watch some 30 years ago.

What is your favorite thing to splurge on?

I love splurging on my friends and family. There is no better feeling than giving to the ones you love, no matter what you receive in return.

When traveling, what do you never leave home without?

My personal journal.

Where is your all-time favorite travel destination?

This is a difficult question to answer as there are many destinations I love for various reasons. Some examples are: the wilderness of western Canada, tango in Buenos Aires, the beaches of the Caribbean or the canals in Amsterdam.

Describe the perfect weekend in St. Barth.

St. Barth is the ultimate relaxing and romantic destination. A perfect day would start after a restful sleep, waking up to the sounds of the lapping ocean and seeing a bright blue sky with a few fluffy clouds. Have breakfast overlooking the lagoon, then spend the day at the beach with a good book, a few swims past sea turtles, lunch with your toes in the sand and a nap under the shade of a palm tree. In the afternoon, take a drive down to Gustavia for some shopping and watch the sunset cocktail in hand. Then head back to Le Guanahani to refresh and relax before a candlelit dinner of fresh lobster straight from the sea.

What makes someone a local in St. Barth?

A cool, chic attitude: relaxed, respectful, joyful, no tooting of horns—laid back but still invigorated.

Tell us about your favorite restaurant or cafe in St. Barth.

For an energetic night on the town, my favorites are **Bonito** and **Orega**. For something more relaxed and remote, I love **Tamarin** and **L'Esprit**.

What is the most unique experience in St. Barth?

It starts with the landing at St. Barth's airport—one of the shortest and most exhilarating airport strips in the world! What makes St. Barth so unique in comparison to other Caribbean destinations is that you have access to quality shopping, world class dining, beautiful beaches, and understated nightlife—and it's all safe. St. Barth also does its best to protect and preserve its beautiful environment and natural resources.