



## An escape to paradise...

November 19-23, 2009



**Chanel welcomes us to Cap Maison**

I knew we'd found our paradise when Joseph, our driver from Executive Club, was waiting patiently for us after our two-hour delay and an unexpected stop in St. Vincent en route from Barbados to St. Lucia courtesy of Liat, the Caribbean airline. Our luggage did not follow our route but eventually caught up to us later that evening. Joseph whisked us away in a nicely air-conditioned BMW complete with cold cloths, icy cold water and a narrative on his island.

He joked that champagne was next and actually it was when we pulled into [Cap Maison](#) and Chanel handed us a flute. She welcomed us with her warm Caribbean smile and assured us she would track down our luggage. Throughout our stay, she helped us by calling Charlie, our taxi driver, for trips into town, sightseeing and she advised us about what to see and do in the area making sure that our every need was met.

Cap Maison is a new elegant five star boutique resort and spa perched on a private ocean bluff complete with breathtaking views of the turquoise Caribbean Sea with panoramic views of Pigeon Island to the west and Martinique to the north. Ross Stevenson, the General Manager, is a gracious host who sees that this intimate family owned 49 villa hotel and superb restaurant, The Cliff at Cap runs like clockwork. Cap Maison combines luxury, elegance, charm, and uncompromising standards of five star personal service. The St Lucia Golf & Country Club is minutes away, tennis adjacent, and the restaurants and bars of Rodney Bay are but a short drive.



**Ocean view villa with pool**

Monica escorted us to our one-bedroom ocean view villa suite with our own private plunge pool that ran two sides of our spacious and elegantly furnished verandah overlooking the gardens, the restaurant, the main pool and the ocean beyond.

Our 2,000 square foot villa offered an open concept with a fully equipped kitchen, a laundry closet with washer and dryer, a breakfast nook (complete with a gift basket of short bread and Cap Maison signature rum punch including a note saying, "Welcome to Cap Maison & this beautiful Island of St. Lucia. Relax & Enjoy"), a dining room, a living room with flat screen TV (iPod station, BOSE system, stereo and Internet), a

side powder room and doors that opened onto our verandah and pool.



**Cap Maison main pool**

Our air-conditioned bedroom had a large king size bed with luxurious soft linens and fluffy pillows, flat screen TV and a large bathroom with his and her sinks, deep bath tub and custom open tiled shower with built in bench. A private side porch and chaise lounge allowed for quiet moments of contemplation in the exquisitely manicured gardens that rivaled any botanical garden.

The Spanish Caribbean architecture with terra cotta tiled roofs, dark wood accents and white walls are highlighted with gorgeous gardens, amazing views of the ocean and squared off white umbrellas that welcome the shade from the tropical sun and shelter from the occasional rain shower. The resort offers 24-hour concierge service, The

Cliff at Cap restaurant, Spa Maison, walk in wine cellar, sunset deck, fitness room, Smugglers Cove beach club, water-sports, Cap Maison 1, the luxury 46 foot Sea Ray motor yacht and beach bar.

Once we settled in, we went to have an amazing dinner at The Cliff restaurant just a few steps from our verandah. The restaurant has a unique bar and layout that reminded me of interconnected tree houses. High above the ocean with magnificent sunset views, we watched the frigate birds dive for fish, the tropical clouds breeze by, the sails of various vessels and the setting moon. With soft tropical breezes came an occasional shower and the unique ingenuity of automated red canvas shades that rolled down to form temporary walls at the restaurant. Just as easily as the shades came down they rose as the passing shower moved on.



**The Cliff at Cap Restaurant**

The restaurant's experienced award-winning chefs ensure the cuisine matches the restaurant. Their culinary emphasis is on using fresh seasonal produce with a French-Caribbean influence. Service is discreet and just there when you need it. With over 170 different wines, The Cliff at Cap offers a wide choice of wines from around the world. Tucked away under The Main House is their wine cellar: a brick-lined and vaulted cave surrounded by 1,500 wine bottles.



**Rock Maison deck**

Below the restaurant is Cap Maison's best-kept secret. A wooden deck has been built on Rock Maison surrounded on three sides by the sea surging over the reefs. Accessed by a wooden staircase,



**View of Pigeon Island from Cap Maison**

drinks travel down a zip-line to the deck below. Perfect for sunset drinks, private dining and special events.

Rock Maison has also played host to full moon meditation, early morning yoga and tai chi, and spa treatments. At night flambeaus light your way along the stretch of sand to the rock. We were “lulled” to sleep by what the locals call crickets but we likened them to peepers, which lent an exotic flare to our tropical retreat.

Each morning we were welcomed with warm smiles and attentive staff at The Cliff restaurant. We had the option of a continental breakfast complete with fresh fruit, cheeses, and delicious pastries or delectable

dishes such as eggs Benedict with portabella mushrooms, smoked salmon on bagels with scrambled eggs or local St. Lucian fare.

We ventured downtown to Rodney Bay Marina shops to find souvenirs and visit the local grocery store. Returning later in the day, we enjoyed beverages by the pool and our amazing view. On Friday night, Ross Stevenson treated us and two other couples to a private wine tasting. A fine sommelier, Ross tempted our taste buds with several selections; my favorite was Chateau Chasse-Spleen a fine French Cabernet Sauvignon with a mix of Merlot and Petit Verdot. We then decided to take on the local fare and go down town for the Friday night Jump-Up, at Gros Islet near Rodney Bay for the local street party.

Charlie, our cab driver, dropped us off to the sounds of Soca dance music blaring in the street from huge speakers and offered to come pick us up in two hours. Down the center of the main street were several tents and vendors with grills offering home-cooked food – grilled chicken, rice, macaroni and cheese, root vegetables, noodles, lentils, pork and turtle to name a few. We piled up a large plate and found refuge from the rain on a picnic table tucked in under the cover of a porch. Our tablemates included a German and Austrian couple, a Jamaican with a British accent who grew up in Germany and now lives on the neighboring island of Bequia and some locals. We washed down the delicious fare with a Piton, the national beer and watched as locals and tourists enjoyed the food and huddled to find cover from the pouring rain.

On Saturday, we watched the rain come down as we enjoyed our breakfast overlooking Pigeon Island and debated if we would make the trek there to climb the peaks. But like most tropical rains, they left as quickly as they came and we ventured forth. Pigeon Point National Park is 44-acres and includes the ruins of Fort Rodney, a beach, two restaurants, an interpretive center (that we somehow missed) and



**Signal Post on Pigeon Island**

landscaped grounds. We climbed to the top of the highest peak, which was used as a signal station by the US in WWII, and to the other peak, which was part of the fort from the 1700's. Both offered amazing views as we looked back on Cap Maison, our home away from home.

The climb took about an hour and a half to do both peaks and was easily traversed. Interpretive signs gave an overview of the history and a sense of how important this land was in the continual battles between the British and the French. The land was originally an Island but was connected to the mainland in 1972 when the Rodney Bay Marina was being constructed. We returned to our pool and enjoyed a unique Saturday tapas night at our restaurant, Cliff at Cap, which offered an appetizer, entre and dessert course complete with wine pairings and a great jazz saxophonist. Delectable tastes of sushi, cauliflower chowder, and shrimp cocktail, duck, red snapper and so many more treats delighted our taste buds. Not to mention the sweets.



**Smugglers Cove Beach Cap Maison**

Sunday was our beach day as we explored the private pocket beach, Smugglers Cove of Cap Maison. Dunstan, our beach attendant, outfitted us with fins and snorkels and then a sea kayak. We enjoyed seeing several colorful fish and coral and then decided to relax on our beach lounge chairs. Later in the day we had the beach to ourselves and watched the resort's hobie cat sail along the waters. We then headed back to our pool and another amazing dinner at the Cliff.

Sadly on Monday we had to head from Cap Maison, located on the northwest tip of St. Lucia to Hewanorra International Airport in the south for a one hour and 30 minutes ride. We saw more of the island including going through a portion of the rainforest and banana plantations. Our arrival was into the local George F.L. Charles Airport in the north near the capital Castries, about 20 minutes from our hotel.

Cap Maison is a member of Virtuoso and as such offers our guests the following amenities:

- Upgrade on arrival, subject to availability
- Complimentary full breakfast daily for up to two in-room guests
- For stays of 1 to 3 nights, guests receive one luncheon for two and one glass of wine per person, once during stay, in addition to the upgrade and daily breakfast
- For stays of 4 or more nights, guests receive a US \$100 resort credit per room, once during stay, in addition to the upgrade and daily breakfast

On my next visit to St. Lucia, I look forward to exploring the rain forest, taking a catamaran tour, going on a zip line, visiting other fishing villages, banana plantations and more.

Our stay at Cap Maison was truly amazing – a refined location that instantly made you feel at home and in good hands with those who wanted to insure that your stay with the hotel and on the island offered everything a trip to paradise could offer.