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FANTASTIC FOUR: COOL NEW ALL-INCLUSIVES PG. 40

CARIBBEAN

TRAVEL+LIFE

PUERTO RICO'S VIRGIN ISLES

Paradise Found?

(Where to kick back in isolated bliss)



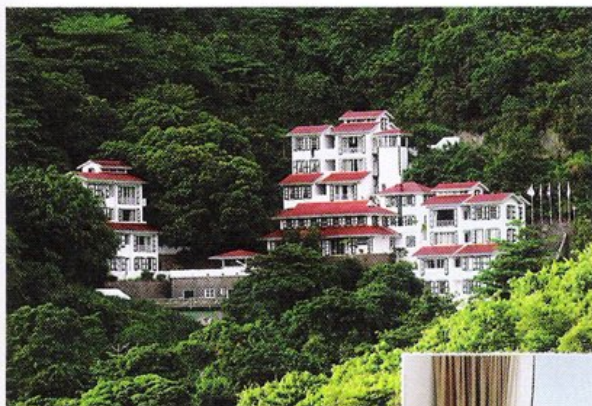
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Sitting pretty pretty amid the greenery, Queen's Garden Resort gives guests a front-row seat to action on the water. Below: The view's the thing on hilly Saba.

Hillside Hideaway

The quiet charms of this Saba secret beguile lovers and nature lovers alike.

NOT ALL OF SABA'S MOST dramatic sunset-viewing perches require hiking boots, or even clothes. At Queen's Gardens Resort, the only necessary climb is into a steamy in-room hot tub. Each of the 12 open-air suites claims an entire floor, barring fellow guests from becoming part of the scenery. As you soak in the view, only the knock of a Bordeaux-bearing butler interrupts the reverie.

Conceived in 1990 as an artists retreat, the property aims to inspire by maximizing its singular vantage point, which includes the surrounding rainforest of Troy Hill and, cloud cover permitting, nearby St. Eustatius, St. Kitts and Nevis.

Five years and a face-lift later, the intimate resort began courting divers, nature lovers, honeymooners and other solitude seekers. Appointed in earth tones, each room re-creates the relaxing vibe of the outdoors; antique mahogany four-poster beds sit high enough that, even in repose, you can study the sea. Alongside the West Indian antiques, accent pieces from Indonesia and other balmy climes add a touch of the exotic.

The innovative restaurant serves three meals daily, seven days a week; twice a month the terrace lounge hosts a tapas



party set against the glittering lights of the capital city below. Chef Keith Murphy's small-bite delights include conch fritters with garlic aioli and lamb wonton with a coconut yogurt sauce. There's always an appropriate vintage on hand to complement his ever-changing creations; the expansive wine list features more than 65 choices, representing France, New Zealand, Argentina and beyond.

Après-meal, venture mere yards from the front desk to find four trailheads. The Sandy Cruz Trail winds along the edge of the island, through orchards bearing bananas, mangoes, papayas and grapefruit. Listen for tree frogs in the rainforest canopy, and watch for flashes of color — orchids and exotic birds — like purple-throated caribs and iridescent-green Antillean crested hummingbirds. The lovely 2½-hour trek will leave you thankful that you packed boots after all. — BROOKE MORTON

✦ *Queen's Gardens Resort, Saba. From \$190 in low season (\$250 high). 599-416-3495; queensaba.com*