

# THE WEEK

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THE WEEK RECOMMENDS

## Serenity at Coconut Bay: a romantic hideaway in St Lucia

Adults-only resort offers a luxury retreat for couples in the Caribbean

BY HOLLIE CLEMENCE, THE WEEK UK PUBLISHED 17 HOURS AGO



Cabanas line the beach at Coconut Bay  
(Image credit: Serenity at Coconut Bay)

“Everyone knows everyone in St Lucia,” said our driver as he took us through the palm-fringed roads of the eastern Caribbean island. “When we toot our horns, it’s because we’re saying hello.” And toot they did, always with a smile and a wave.

This warmth is part of the draw for the million or so tourists who visit St Lucia each year. That and the exceptional beaches, views and experiences. If you want to throw in some romance and adventure, Serenity at Coconut Bay has you covered.

## Why stay here?



Each villa at Serenity has a plunge pool, outdoor kitchen area and hammock built for two

(Image credit: Serenity at Coconut Bay)

Serenity is an adults-only resort within the larger family-friendly Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa. Popular with honeymooners and couples celebrating anniversaries and birthdays, it has 36 suites, each with its own plunge pool, indoor soaking tub and 24-hour personal butler service. Guests are greeted by their butler with a drink on arrival (there's nothing like rum served in a fresh coconut to welcome you to the Caribbean) and shown around their suite.

Every villa feels tucked away from the rest, giving couples a quiet space to themselves. There's even a service hatch by the outside door so messages and room service can be delivered discreetly. As well as the private pool, the large deck includes an outdoor kitchen area, shower and hammock built for two, the perfect place to watch the stars with just the sound of the birds and crickets. Inside, there is a four-poster bed, rain shower and tub, which was filled up for me with bubbles and fresh bougainvillea petals more than once during my stay. His and hers wardrobes and sinks mean you won't be fighting over space.

Butlers can help with anything from arranging meals and excursions to creating once-in-a-lifetime moments like proposals or a birthday surprise. They can be reached on a special mobile phone, dubbed the "batphone" by my butler, which can be taken around the resort. Serenity has its own pool area, or guests can head over to the larger Coconut Bay before returning to their exclusive hideaway.

## Eating and drinking



The terrace at The Greathouse overlooks Serenity's pool

(Image credit: Serenity at Coconut Bay)

St Lucia is a rum lover's dream. It's a primary ingredient for many of the cocktails on Serenity's extensive drinks list (if you have a sweet tooth, don't leave without trying Jonathan's Special or the Dirty Banana) and guests can take part in rum-tasting nights, where locally produced blends like Chairman's Reserve are paired with different foods.

Serenity has its own restaurant, The Greathouse, which serves up an extensive range of options, from chargrilled octopus to filet mignon and pistachio-crusting lamb rack. It caters well for different dietary needs and offers service with a whole lot of smiles. Guests also have the choice of Coconut Bay's eight restaurants and seven bars, which include contemporary Caribbean fine-dining at Calabash, the Asian-inspired Silk and the outdoor Jerk Treehouse. Couples can hire beach cabanas for the day, with food and drinks brought to them, or celebrate a special occasion in the private oceanside dining spaces of La Luna.

Be sure to try the island's national dish, green fig (actually a green banana) and saltfish, as well as the fried plantain and freshly grown fruit. Bananas are the island's biggest export and it has dozens of varieties of mangoes. And did I mention the rum?

## Things to do



St Lucia's Pitons can be viewed from the land or sea

(Image credit: Hollie Clemence)

You could easily while away a week at the resort, enjoying the pools, spa and entertainment. The mile-long beach suffers from sargassum (floating algae) at certain times of the year, but the hotel is efficient at clearing it each day and it is home to water sports, like kayaking and paddleboarding, as well as a turtle conservation programme. There are plenty of night activities, too, including creole classes, sushi-making and "Paint and Punch".

Those who choose to venture beyond the hotel will be rewarded with jaw-dropping views of the volcanic island, with its famous twin peaks and lush rainforests. You will get a snapshot of island life just driving past the brightly coloured houses, churches, schools and fishing villages. Serenity can organise a huge range of trips, from boats and dune buggies to zip-lines and ATV tours. One unforgettable way to explore the island is by horse. Atlantic Shores Riding Stables can take you on a ride over hills above the Atlantic Ocean and down to the beach for an hour – or more, if your glutes can handle it.

We took a catamaran from Port Vieux up the southwest coast of the island, past the iconic Pitons, stopping to snorkel in the turquoise Caribbean Sea. After lunch at a local restaurant, we drove to the mud baths at Sulphur Springs in Soufriere to douse ourselves in mineral-rich mud. You'll have to practise mouth breathing to avoid the sulphur smell but your soft skin will thank you for it.

## The verdict

Just a few minutes' drive from Hewanorra International Airport and about 45 minutes from the Pitons, Serenity is conveniently located for a trip to the south of St Lucia. As the name suggests, it is a peaceful sanctuary offering a truly special grown-up break on the friendliest of islands.

*Hollie was a guest of Serenity at Coconut Bay.*