

DESTINATIONS

CARIBBEAN, THE BAHAMAS & BERMUDA

Clonsilla is one of the Mustique Classic villas, built and/or designed by Oliver Messel and Arne Hasselquist.

Intimate MUSTIQUE

For clients who think they've done the Caribbean, suggest this island escape.

"YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET what you want," wrote Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones. But that was before Jagger vacationed—and eventually bought a house—on the Caribbean island of Mustique. Since then, countless other celebrities have visited the island. Perhaps it's time your clients did, too.

The Mustique Mystique

Mustique is a private island owned by shareholders of the Mustique Company, representing 17 countries. Apart from the 1,200 people living on the island, there's a maximum of 500 guests staying there at any given time. With this small population sharing nine impressive beaches and 1,400 acres, seclusion is not hard to come by.

Mustique attracts visitors mostly from the U.S. and UK, each contributing 35 percent of the total number annually. The remaining visitors come mainly from other European nations. In addition to Jagger, other celebs who have jetted down to Mustique include David Bowie, Bryan Adams and Tommy Hilfiger.

The **Cotton House Resort** (www.cottonhousesort.com) is the island's only hotel, but it's a bona fide five-star property. It has 17 rooms, all suites, most of which boast private plunge pools facing the ocean. But if your clients are truly interested in a real Mustique vacation, a villa is the way to go.

There are 72 villas on the island, ranging from two- to nine-bedroom accommodations. (Even Jagger's and Adams' villas are included in the rental pool.) All the villas have different design themes—Balinese, Asian, French and Italian Renaissance among them.

Based on our research and conversations with experts, we recommend the Opium, Sunrise, Nirvana and Mimosa villas. Opium is a five-bedroom villa with two swimming pools. There are three bedrooms in the main house and two in the guest cottages. Sunrise is a five-bedroom villa with a tennis court and two swimming pools. Nirvana is also a five-bedroom villa that has a staff of four people, and Mimosa is a four-bedroom villa with three people on staff. Every villa, depending on its size,

has anywhere from three to 12 staff members assigned to it.

The majority of what are known as the "Mustique Classics" are original Oliver Messel and Arne Hasselquist houses, all of which have undergone recent facelifts. Messel, a well-known production and costume designer of stage and screen productions, fell in love with the Caribbean while redesigning his own home in Barbados and was lured by his good friend, Baron Glenconner, to his private island home, Mustique. Glenconner commissioned Messel to design all the houses built on the island and between 1960 and the time of his death in 1978, Messel created some 30 house plans, many with Hasselquist, who became Mustique's primary architect and builder in 1969.

The current owners have restored, renovated and upgraded these in the past six to eight months.

Among the improvements, Nirvana had its two main bedrooms extended and upgraded; Gingerbread had a soft facelift by New York-based interior designer Jennifer Bradford Davis; Ti

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CLIENTS EN ROUTE to Mustique can spend time in St. Lucia or Barbados. Visit www.travelagentcentral.com/caribbean for more info.

Soleil had a total facelift and upgrade; Callaloo has new bathrooms; and the Heron Bay villa just added new design features and furnishings. Also, the Shogun, Seafan and Baliceaux villas all underwent complete refurbishments. The Liselund, Serenissima and Emerald Hill villas were also lightly refreshed and upgraded.

Every villa is different, especially in terms of design. For specific information on which villa would be best suited for your Mustique-bound clients, we suggest calling Pippa Ona, director of sales and marketing for The Mustique Company, at 784-488-8000 or e-mailing villarentals@mustique.vc. Agents can also call the toll-free number: 855-261-1316.

Island Tip

Basil's Bar (www.basilsmustique.com) is the most popular hangout on the island and offers a refreshing contrast to restaurants and bars found on other

Caribbean islands. There are no stuffy dress requirements at this comfortable beach shack of a bar owned by Basil Charles, who is the most famous local on the island and often referred to as the "King of Mustique." Wednesday and Sunday nights here are great; also, if your clients love seafood, this place serves up some delicious grilled lobster.

Despite its reputation as being in the middle of nowhere, Mustique is not hard to get to at all. Clients need to fly to either St. Lucia or Barbados and then take a 45-minute flight operated by The Mustique Company.

—JOE PIKE



HERE: Seafan is one of the many villas on Mustique that has undergone a thorough refurbishment. BELOW: A Duplex Suite at the five-star Cotton House Resort includes a spacious outdoor area for guests.



AGENTADVICE

Answering the first question your clients will have about Mustique, Jeffrey Kane of Great Neck, NY-based **World of Travel**, says, "Yes, you do need to have some money to stay in Mustique, but if you can get a nice group together, you can definitely swing it." His agency recently made a \$500,000 group booking to Mustique, and Kane notes, "This place is not for your average traveler. It offers great privacy, and the staff is some of the best I've ever dealt with. An agent selling this needs to go there first and experience the destination. This is not for a first-time Caribbean traveler. It's for the been-there, done-that client looking for something else. It's the type of place where it doesn't matter if you are a celebrity or not, you always get treated the same."

According to Kane, Mustique is a great pitch for families because of the array of villas, and he also recommends it for clients who have been to other affluent islands in the Caribbean such as St. Barts and Anguilla.

"Mustique is unlike any other luxury island in the Caribbean," he says. "It's a place where you can enjoy luxury but wear your flip-flops. I have never sent someone there who didn't want to go back."