

Sunday Travel

M

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS
BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE | DECEMBER 1, 2019 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF

Introducing Bequia

The Caribbean escape worth getting to know

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER



BEQUIA, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

If the American Psychological Association is on the lookout for a new disorder, I have one to offer. It's called Travel Superiority Complex.

The symptoms are easy to spot. Tell someone with TSC that you're planning a trip to Costa Rica, Germany, or Vietnam, and they haughtily inform you that they've already been there.

Furthermore, they know the best restaurant in the entire country, which likely has no sign or is situated on a far-flung, nameless street. They tell you — unprompted, of course — about the best beach to see rare birds or a market where they bought a spice that can only be found growing beneath the South African quiver tree.

But this year I found a way to silence those afflicted with Travel Superiority Complex. I started talking about Bequia. With stunned expressions, they humbly asked, "Where's that?"

Truth be told, I also had no idea about Bequia (pronounced BECK-way) when I first heard the name. It's the second-largest island in the string of 32 islands that make up St. Vincent and the Grenadines. With a population just over 5,000, it's an unpretentious place where flights can't land at night because



ABOVE: A pair of boys play on a dock at sunset near Princess Margaret beach in Bequia.

LEFT: A view down into Port Elizabeth from Fort Hamilton on the Caribbean island of Bequia.

the tiny airport has no runway lights and the narrow, winding roads have ruts on the sides large enough to swallow up cows. (No cows were harmed in the writing of this story.) There are no big-chain hotels or over-the-top resorts to be found. There isn't even a Starbucks. There is one ATM machine on the entire island.

I don't know if I dare say it, but Bequia is the Caribbean the way the Caribbean used to be. Wait, that sounds like a cornball marketing slogan. Let's try this: Bequia is an actual escape in an age where it feels as if there are few true escapes remaining on the planet. From Boston it's a direct flight to Barbados on JetBlue and then a short hop on a turbo-prop plane. Some areas of the island can feel a bit rough around the edges, but that's my perception of the Caribbean of

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DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Unplugged and liking it. (Unlocked? Not so much.)

By Diane Bair
and Pamela Wright
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

It sounds like a game of "Would you rather." As in, would you rather ... go to a gorgeous island in the Caribbean if it meant no Internet, no text messaging, and no locks on the door? Or would you rather stay home?

First, we'll set the stage. The island in question is Petit St. Vincent, home to a luxury resort that's been called one of the world's most enchanting hideaways. Lapped by the aqua waters of the Caribbean Sea on one side, and the wild Atlantic on the other side, the humpy green is-

land of Petit St. Vincent sits between St. Lucia and Grenada. The 115-acre volcano-borne island and the resort are one in the same — this private island is owned by the resort, and it's part of the island country of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

And what a resort it is. Twenty-two cottages peek out of the foliage, perched on hillsides and along a 2-mile stretch of pearlescent beach. The design style is best described as Flintstones-Gone-Fabulous. The cottages are built from stone that was hand-quarried on the island. Each is free standing, with a vaulted hardwood ceiling and an open

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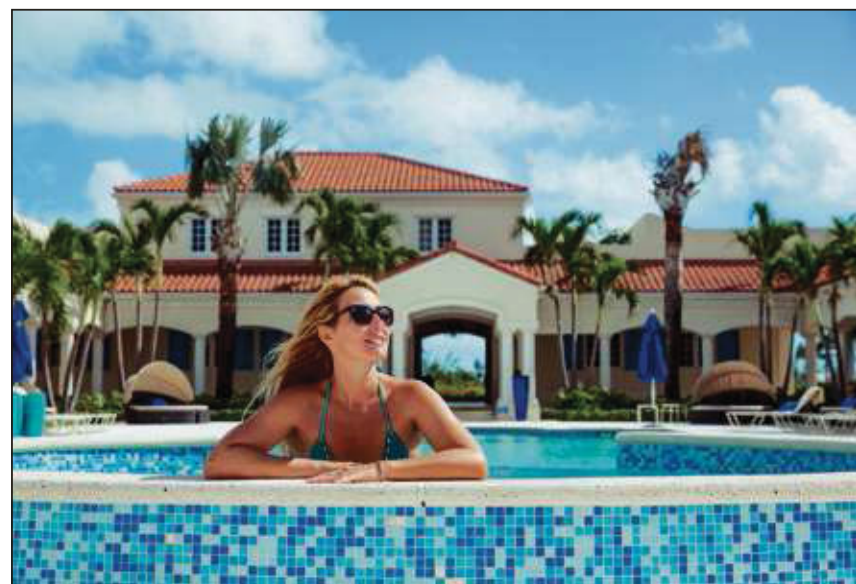


Inside

GIFT GUIDE
MADE IN
NEW ENGLAND

You don't have to go far for that special something for those on your holiday list.

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ESCAPE THE WINTER BLUES

OCEANFRONT RESORTS IN THE TURKS & CAICOS OFFER SPECIAL PROMOTIONS

Try a Non-Stop flight from Boston to Providenciales and plan an escape to beautiful Grace Bay beach in the Turks & Caicos Islands. The Tuscany Resort, currently #1 on TripAdvisor and its sister resort, The Venetian on Grace Bay, currently #2, are offering special promotions during the months of January, February and April.

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ESCAPE INTO LUXURY

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

A view of Logoa do Fogo (Fire Lake) on the island of São Miguel in the Azores. TAP Air Portugal is adding a new flight between Boston and the Azores in summer 2020.

Planning a trip? Consider this.

BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

New direct flights out of Logan: Beginning in February, American Airlines will launch a seasonal direct flight from Boston to Key West. Austria Airlines will begin Boston's first-ever direct flight to Vienna beginning March 29. TAP announced it's adding a direct flight from Boston to the Azores in summer 2020. Bargain European airline Level will add flights between Boston and Paris in May, with fares beginning at \$140. JetBlue is discontinuing direct flights between Boston and Mexico City on Jan. 9.

Forget Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Travel Deal Tuesday is the day to book: The best day look for deals on flights is Dec. 3. The travel booking site Hopper analyzed its database of more than 25 billion to 30 billion flight and hotel prices and found the Tuesday following Thanksgiving has consistently been the best day in the post-Thanksgiving shopping period for travel deals. Hopper's data shows that last year more flights were discounted on Travel Deal Tuesday than Black Friday and Cyber Monday combined.

Logan Airport scores low on dependability: A new study found that Logan is the fifth least-reliable airport for in the country for on-time arrivals. Insurance comparison company Policy Genius looked at the percentage of on-time arrivals at the country's 30 largest airports and found that Logan ranked fifth least-reliable after Chicago, San Francisco, La Guardia, and Newark. Data for the study was culled from the Department of Transportation's Air Travel Consumer Report. Speaking of Logan, travelers can now sign up to receive text messages about airport construction updates. Text SIGNUP to 30256 to receive the updates.

The wild Frontier: Bargain carrier Frontier Airlines is more likely to bump passengers than any other airline, according to a study by the company Upgraded Points. Using data from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the study found the rate of involuntary denied boarding to be the highest on Frontier (6.28 per 100,000 passengers), followed by Spirit Airlines, Alaska Airlines, PSA Airlines, and American. The number of involuntary denied boardings has declined over the past three years.

Love thy neighbor, but not while traveling: Three-quarters of Americans admit that they actively avoid other Americans when traveling internationally, according to a study by fare comparison website JetCost. The same study found that Americans think English tourists are the most annoying travelers, followed by tourists from Germany and Brazil.

Top Insta-worthy destinations (a.k.a., where you'll find narcissistic members of Gen Z and millennials): The social travel company Contiki, polled its 320,000 Instagram followers to find out where they are looking to travel in 2020. If you're looking to avoid selfie-centric 18- to 35-year-olds, knock these destinations from your list. If you love taking selfies, then have at it. The top destinations are: Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Croatia, England, Japan, the Pacific Northwest, Namibia, and Iceland.

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HERE

SANTA HITS THE SLOPES

Santa fans and wannabes are heading to Sunday River Resort in Maine on Dec. 8 to watch or participate in Shredding Santas, an event where 250 skiers in full Santa attire cruise down South Ridge like a red and white ho-ho avalanche. Preregistration opens Dec. 2 at noon; all skiing Santas must sign up in advance. For a good view, spectators should arrive by 11 a.m. Registration fee: \$20. All proceeds of this fund-raising event go to the River Fund, a nonprofit organization for youth education and recreation in the local community. New this year at Sunday River: Four new surface lifts include three covered conveyor lifts to access the learning terrain on South Ridge, as well as a T-bar on Locke Mountain for alpine race and boarder-cross training and competitions. 800-543-2754, www.sundayriver.com/events/santa-sunday

NEW BEER TOUR DEBUTS

Take a break from holiday shopping at the Metrowest Brew Tour, the newest offering from Boston-based City Brew Tours. Get a close-up, VIP-access look at the beer-making methods used by four different Massachusetts breweries, with entertainment, history and all-things-beer facts provided by knowledgeable guides. The 5- to 6-hour tour includes tasting up to 16 craft beers paired with a tasty lunch at Beerworks; round-trip transportation from Boston to Metrowest breweries; and City Brew Tours swag. Limited to 14 guests. Tours offered Sundays at 10:45 a.m. \$99 per person. 617-453-



8687, www.citybrewtours.com/boston/tours/metro-west-brew-tour

RING IN THE NEW YEAR ON A HARBOR CRUISE

It's not too early to make plans for spectacular New Year's cruises. Classic Harbor Line is offering two fun-filled trips in Boston Harbor aboard the luxury yacht Northern Lights. On the 3-hour New Year's Eve Fireworks cruise, dance to a live funk music band, enjoy tasty hors d'oeuvres and ring in 2020 watching Boston's fabulous fireworks. Drinks available for purchase. Adults only, ages 21 and up. \$185. Not a late-night fan? Celebrate in leisurely style on the two-hour morning New Year's Day Brunch Cruise. Take in historic sites along the harbor and enjoy panoramic views of Boston's skyline while sipping hot cocoa from the hot chocolate bar. The three-course brunch menu includes such items as avocado eggs Benedict, sliced honey ham, assorted pastries, yogurt, waffle station, and more. Adult \$75; child \$50.

THERE

HOLIDAY MODEL TRAIN SHOW IN N.Y. Model railway enthusiasts won't want

to miss this year's Holiday Train Show at the New York Botanical Garden where more than 25 G-scale model trains and trolleys hum along nearly a half-mile track past re-creations of iconic sites from all five boroughs of New York City, Hudson River Valley, and other locations in New York State. Now in its 28th year, this season's newest display showcases New York City's Central Park, featuring replicas of architectural features — Belvedere Castle, the Dairy, the Old Bandstand, the Angel of the Waters sculpture atop the Bethesda Fountain, and two graceful pedestrian bridges — re-created from natural materials such as birch bark, lotus pods, acorns, and cinna-



mon sticks. Set within an immersive indoor winter wonderland, the tableau also includes famous New York buildings that are either adjacent to the park or just inside it, including the Plaza Hotel, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Rose Center for Earth and Space, part of the American Museum of Natural History. Open through Jan. 26. Tickets from \$23 adults; \$10 children (ages 2-12); advance timed tickets strongly recommended. 718-817-8700, www.nybg.org/event/holiday-train-show

LUXURY JOURNEY TO GUATEMALA

Looking to avoid predictable mass tourism trips? Those looking for a personalized itinerary may want to consider visiting Guatemala, the newest destination offered by Naya Traveler. Travelers can help curate their experiences — including architectural marvels, majestic landscapes, and a rich cultural heritage — by choosing among four journeys: Tracing the Mayas; The Highland Hues; Wonders of Nature; and The Colonial Legacy. The suggested best time to visit this tropical climate is November through April. Rates from \$800 per person per day, double occupancy; rates vary depending on season and itinerary specifics. Price includes all hand-picked boutique and private accommodations,

domestic airfare, transportation, host and expert guides, daily activities and excursions in private, some meals, and services of an on-call operational team monitoring the trip 24/7. International airfare is not included. 301-358-5096, www.nayatraveler.com/guatemala



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NECEE REGIS



PHOTOS BY ERIC WILBUR

How I fell in love with Park City

By Eric Wilbur
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

I had heard the narratives about skiing in Utah.

But when it came to planning what would be my first family trip out west, I was also somewhat fastened to personal, previous experiences. Shouldn't the kids' first big-mountain skiing experiences be like mine and include something like gaping at the wide expanse of Vail's back bowls? Navigating the California-Nevada border at Heavenly with the majestic view of Lake Tahoe engulfing below? Appreciating the all-encompassing vibe that comes with skiing with locals at favorite spots like Copper Mountain or Arapahoe Basin?

Utah was the great unknown, an enticing prospect on its own, but one that also posed some challenges when it came to relating to my three children what to expect.

But it was the promise of getting to our journey's end within an hour of landing at Salt Lake City International that really enticed my wife. She reminded me about the traffic and weather that have hindered some of our trips on I-70 from Denver International to the Rocky Mountains. She also prompted me to recall that time we suffered a flat tire at the side of the slushy interstate somewhere near Idaho Springs. "Now, imagine that with three kids," she said.

I didn't want to.

Which was how Utah, ultimately, won the debate.

There was the ever-present promise of Utah's defining champagne powder to look forward to, but even higher on the list of selling points for the Beehive State (who knew?) was the near-immediate access to the mountains from Salt Lake City International. "You'll be on the slopes by lunch time," goes the tagline directed at East Coasters looking to depart at daybreak, a premise that seemed somewhat foolhardy, even with a two-hour Mountain Time rollback. Even more so when you consider traveling with three children, their luggage, and skis all in tow.

But our early-morning flight from Logan landed in Salt Lake before 10 a.m., local time. By the time we retrieved our bags, ski equipment, and found the pickup site for our shuttle to Park City, about a half hour had passed. Surely some level of traffic had to be waiting for us outside the airport doors as well. I thought, bringing the mind-set of a Bostonian three-quarters of the way across the country.

It was 10:55 a.m. when the shuttle pulled up to our destination at the Westgate Resort and Spa, just a breath away from the Canyons Village located at the base of Park City Mountain Resort.

That's one early lunch. Following Park City Resort's mid-decade acquisition of neighboring Canyons Resort — and the subsequent combination of the two ski areas — the resort now bills itself as the largest resort in the United States. More than 330 trails cover the peaks with a 10,000-foot summit. There are 7,300



From top: There are 7,300 skiable acres to explore, a dozen bowls, and seven terrain parks in Park City. A view from a ski lift. Pinball Alley was a favorite run of the writer's children.

skiable acres to explore, a dozen bowls, and seven terrain parks, leaving the door open for a variety of terrain for every level of skiing in my family.

We went with Park City Resort over a number of other alternatives for a few different reasons. The base village at the Canyons is not only convenient and burgeoning, but it also presented my non-skiing wife with a variety of ways to occupy herself when she wasn't pampering herself at the Westgate spa. Downtown Park City also gave her a local hotbed for shopping and dining, all accessible via the free bus system.

But being under the umbrella of Vail Resorts made Park City simply made the acquisition of an all-encompassing winter pass all the more enticing. It is, after all, the manipulative genius of the Epic Pass, available starting at \$739 (\$989 unrestricted) and good at dozens of resorts across the United States and Canada. Seeing a three-day lift ticket for our trip

would run somewhere around \$430, it only made sense to spend the extra few hundred to gain local access to fellow Vail properties Stowe, Okemo, and Mount Sunapee (joined in 2019 by Attitash, Wildcat, Crotched Mountain, and Mount Snow).

Sticker shock at Vail resorts isn't exactly anything new. In 2010, Vail and sister property Beaver Creek, both in Colorado, became the first resorts in the country to break the \$100 mark, with a \$108 holiday rate. Last winter, Vail Mountain Resort cracked the \$200 walk-up window rate (By comparison, Stowe's window rate will be somewhere around \$139 this season) and has long dominated the discussion surrounding the prohibitive costs that can limit the reaches of skiing and snowboarding. Those costs entice visitors to devote themselves to the Epic Pass because of the overreaching access it provides to more than 60 resorts.

It's that kind of variety that might prompt skiers and riders to their own waters away from their test backyards, which makes Vail Resort properties the dominating option during the winter months.

All three children — ages 11, 8, and 6 — were enrolled in les-

sons on the first day of skiing (figuring that would get them better accustomed to big-mountain skiing), giving me plenty of opportunity to explore. I eased in with some runs off the Saddleback Express, soaring through threes and into some more genteel terrain that I would later explore with the kids over the weekend. I made the arduous hike up Murdock's Peak and — once I caught my breath — dipped into the Murdock Bowl, immediately re-appreciating the sensation of floating in shin-deep powder.

Around noontime, I navigated my way to the other side of the resort, figuring I'd check out the Park City side, passing some of the old mining remains that still reside on the Utah mountain's landscape. I took advantage of being solo and checked out some of the more gnarly terrain on Jupiter Peak, shooting from McConkey's Bowl into the Black Forest. The quality of the snow, terrain, and vibe was immediately making Park City a favorite, something I found out later that afternoon that the kids were feeling as well (Tunnel of Fun and Pinball Alley, both intermediate, bumpy tree runs, were their favorites).

Park City was a hit, and Saturday provided the four of us with the opportunity to explore together. Their excitement of exploring new avenues in their skiing ventures was as satisfactory for me as watching their improvements a day after some influential lessons left them with a comfort I had not yet seen in their approach.

With Sunday brought the end of February vacation and a flight home scheduled for 5 p.m. That left plenty of time during the day to head on back over to the Park City side of the resort, where I was able to experience some of the bowls on Jupiter, at 10,026 feet, the highest peak of the Park City experience.

I didn't finish skiing until around 1 that afternoon, at which point I joined my family for lunch at the slopeside Drafts Burger Bar, where the kids were only about halfway through their selections of the menu's enormous \$12 milkshakes.

Lunch was over by 2. The shuttle arrived at 3. We were at the airport a half-hour later, 90 minutes before our 5 p.m. flight home.

No rental car, no traffic headaches, no flat tires on I-70.

It was all, in fact, so easy, that I jumped at the opportunity to return to Park City, sans family, some six weeks later in order to attend the US Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame induction ceremonies. After all, I had the lift pass already, and knowing what I did about the ease of getting from airport to terrain, it was an easy decision to make in terms of maximizing the time I had over a weekend. In all, I ended up skiing Park City resort a total of seven days, easily my largest haul of any resort

during the 2018-19 season. I didn't see that coming, despite what I had been told about trips to Utah.

Skiing by lunch time, they said? Maybe.

I guess that only depends on how late you eat your breakfast.

Eric Wilbur can be reached at ewilbs@yahoo.com.

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THE VIP LOUNGE | MEGAN RAPINOE

Traveling light is not an option for this US soccer star

The most iconic image from the US women's soccer team's World Cup victory over the Netherlands in July was Megan Rapinoe running to the sideline after scoring a penalty kick and striking her signature mischievous, playful post-goal pose that crowds had eaten up in previous matches. Rapinoe, who along with her teammates, inspired a generation of young female athletes, will be in Boston Dec. 12 as a keynote speaker at the Massachusetts Conference for Women (at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center). An outspoken advocate for equality — including pay equity between the sexes — Rapinoe said in a recent phone interview that she is looking forward to speaking at the conference and meeting other female leaders. The international soccer star, 34, who is co-captain of Tacoma, Wash.-based Reign FC (part of the National Women's Soccer

League), is from Redding, Calif., where she lived with her parents, twin sister, and four older siblings, and lives in Seattle with her girlfriend, Women's National Basketball Association standout Sue Bird, who plays for the Seattle Storm. We caught up with Rapinoe to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? Anywhere. I mean anytime I get to go on vacation, I don't even care where — but preferably somewhere sunny and warm where I can just sit and not do anything.

Favorite food or drink while on vacation? Pina colada. And good vacation sushi is always nice.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? So many places. Definitely Vietnam and other parts of Southeast



Megan Rapinoe (left) and Sue Bird in Grenada.

Asia. I mean, rest in peace Anthony Bourdain ... how can you watch [his show "Parts Unknown"] and not want to go to Vietnam? The food is so phenomenal. The vibe, everything ... I

don't know, I might want to backpack around and just be there for a while. There's such a different energy that can't be found anywhere else in the world, so I kind of want to get involved.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling? There are a lot of items. I do not travel light — ever. I need all of my things. I mean, I always have my AirPods, but also my iPad, my computer ... especially flying a lot. Oh, and a good hat — anything to cover my hair. We're getting into the winter months, so beanies will start coming out again.

Aisle or window? I actually kind of prefer the aisle because I get up and pee a lot because I'm constantly drinking water, so it's nice to have that freedom of access.

Favorite childhood travel memory? We mostly just drove around in our van to soccer tournaments. Sleeping in the van was the jam.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Airplane food. Sometimes it's so good. I'm like: Why is it tasting so good? I mean, sometimes it's trash and you don't want to eat it, but sometimes ... like when they bring those hot chocolate chip cookies around, I'm like: Oh yes.

Best travel tip? Be organized. Do not get to the screening area and be a total mess. Be organized. Have a system and a plan, so you can just take your backpack off, put your phone in the bag — in the little pocket in your backpack — take your jacket off, then go through. Don't be a mess.

JULIET PENNINGTON



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF

Escape to this old-style Caribbean getaway

►BEQUIA
Continued from Page M1

yore. However, I don't suffer from Travel Superiority Complex, so please let me know if my assumption is incorrect.

I snorkeled, plunged into the aquamarine water at Princess Margaret Beach, and took a small boat to a floating bar in a harbor for some of the island's famous 86 proof rum, which I was told is more plentiful here than water. There are a few key restaurants that everyone visits, including Mac's Pizza & Kitchen, where the lobster pizza is a local institution, and Fernando's Hideaway. Makeshift beach bars set up by locals selling cheap beer are almost as common as pink, sunburnt noses. The island is filled with an unlikely collection of local fishermen, yachters, vacationing families, and stray dogs, but not necessarily in that order.

I strategically arrived in Bequia just as the northeastern corner of the United States descended into its first arctic freeze, and I counted my Lucky Charms that I was in the Lesser Antilles watching a purple sunset rather than watching my lips turn purple. My first night was spent at a boutique hotel called the Liming Bequia. Liming is Caribbean slang for lazing about and doing nothing. I'm quite good at lazing about and doing nothing, so it seemed like an ideal match. Even if you opt not to stay here, I recommend the hotel's restaurant both for its food and its views.

There's lots of liming going on in Bequia. This isn't a place you visit if you're looking to parasail, jet ski, or engage in whatever water sport the strapping youth of today are attempting to perfect. The pace is strictly paddle board. Bequia is that rare breed of island where you don't feel pressure to race about and see the sights, because the sights are the beach, snorkeling, and the beach again. Oh, there's also a turtle sanctuary and a small town center.

I cannot write a travel story about basting myself with Coppertone and lying in the sand re-reading "Valley of the Dolls," (trust me, I've tried), so instead I put together an itinerary that allowed for a basic education of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is relatively simple because you can get around on ferries or charter a boat between islands without filing for Chapter 11 by the end of your trip. On our second day on the island, my husband and I took a three-hour sailboat ride



TOP: The clear water is ideal for snorkeling in the Tobago Cays in the Grenadines.

ABOVE: Basil's Bar in Mustique is perched over the water for optimal sunset views.

RIGHT: A guest at the Liming hotel watches the purple glow of the sunset from an infinity pool.

from Bequia to the Tobago Cays to snorkel in a very popular marine park with giant turtles. It may have been raining at the surface, but beneath, in the clear water, the passing showers went unnoticed by both us and the turtles.

While the Tobago Cays satisfied my need to get into the water, the nearby island of Mustique satisfied my need to see how the other half vacations. This is an island that was put on the map by the late Princess Margaret. It's where she honeymooned (and was gifted 10 acres of land). It's also where she was famously photographed enjoying the company of a much younger man in the 1970s when her marriage to Lord Anthony Snowden hit the skids. The royals still come to Mustique to vacation. St. Vincent and the Grenadines were under British rule until 1969, which explains why Mick Jagger has a house here, although it doesn't explain why Canadian rocker Bryan Adams



and American designer Tommy Hilfinger have homes here as well.

For a true taste of Mustique, you can rent the late Princess's villa, called Les Jolies Eaux, for about \$30,000 a week. You can also rent Mick Jagger's Stargroves villa, which comes with a household staff of seven. Or, you can take a boat over for the day, go to the stunning Macaroni Beach, and then linger at the Beach Cafe at the Cotton House and save yourself about \$29,700. We rented a couple of lounge chairs at the club after lunch and later found ourselves at Basil's Bar getting slightly pie-eyed before boarding the boat and heading back to the decidedly

less posh shores of Bequia.

To experience another part of Bequia we switched hotels from the remote Liming to the Plantation Hotel, which is in the main town of Port Elizabeth. Despite the small shops and stalls selling fruit and bric-a-brac, Port Elizabeth is a sleepy place. At least in the off-season there was no discernible party scene. From our hotel we could walk a path along the water called the Belmont walkway and look at the stars, or giggle like fifth-graders at a restaurant called the Whale Boner.

The restaurant's name is not meant to simply elicit chortles. Noncommercial whaling is still allowed in Bequia

with the same tools that have been used for more than a century. Locals can catch no more than four whales per year. The quota is seldom met, and some years no whales are killed. The Whale Boner welcomes diners with an entry made of two ribs from a humpback whale and the bar's seats are made of whale vertebrae. Despite the whale theme, don't look for whale on the menu.

To the north of Bequia is the island of St. Vincent, which acts as the urban center of the islands. There are beach resorts here, but honestly, if you've got beach on the brain, head to the Grenadines. On the morning we went to St. Vincent we skipped Kingstown, which is generally where most cruise ships deposit their passengers, and headed north to the lush, green hills of the island that are often overlooked. You can hike the island's volcano, called Soufrière, but we didn't fly to the Caribbean to hike. So instead we explored the black sand beaches and ate an obscenely long lunch of home-cooked chicken at Ferdie's Footsteps in St. George.

This may sound hard to believe — so please try to muster up some fake sympathy — but running around an archipelago of Caribbean islands at a slow-to-medium pace can really take a lot out of a guy. By the end of the week I was ready to give the Bequia beaches a proper testing, and by proper testing, I mean do absolutely nothing in the sun. On the last full day of the trip, I walked over to Princess Margaret Beach, which was named for her after she visited Bequia in the 1950s. There were more boats anchored in the harbor than people sitting on the white sand. After a thorough slathering of sunscreen, I unfurled my towel and dropped with a yawn.

This is where the true indulgence begins. I can't remember the last time I actually fell asleep on a beach. There's usually indistinct chatter or someone playing music through a Bluetooth speaker keeping me awake. But in Bequia, in the sun-warmed sand, I felt as if I was truly away from it all and dozed off without a care. That, my friends, is what a Caribbean escape should feel like.

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New England Travel

GIFT GUIDE

Stymied about what to give?
Check out these locally made goods
(Bonus points for up-cycling and attitude)

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright

GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

After prowling the summer craft fair circuit, haunting the fall art shows, and visiting numerous shops selling locally-made *this* and regionally-made *that*, we're hear to tell you: New Englanders are a crafty bunch. Talented folks put their hearts and souls into making cool things, so why not support them? Plus, your gift-giving street cred spikes when you give something unique, thoughtful, and artisan-made. (Bonus: no China tariffs that we know of.) Here's a look at a few of our favorite finds.



RECYCLED SWEATERS MADE FABULOUS

Jack & Mary Designs, York, Maine

"(Old) sweaters talk to me. I can look at a sweater and instantly know from its weight, texture, pattern, and shape what product we should make," says Marilyn Robertson, founder and designer of Jack & Mary Designs. The team takes donated and recycled sweaters from local thrift stores and up-cycles them into "bun warmer" mini skirts (\$50), cashmere circle scarves (\$70), mittens with buttons (\$44), and our favorite, jaunty women's hats made of sweater fabric and lined with fleece (\$36).

No two of anything are alike. They also create "memory mittens" — send them a sweater from a late friend or family member, and they'll turn it into a pair of mittens (\$50 adult-size/\$40 kid-size) that you can keep forever. Now that's warm and fuzzy. Available at *Wild Goose Chase, Brookline; Joy Street Home, Concord; and online at www.jackandmarydesigns.com.*



FOR THAT FRESH FEELING

Cap City Soap Co., Concord, N.H.

Remember the scene in "Annie Hall," when Alvy complained about Annie's black soap? Maybe she was onto something; Diane Keaton looks amazing. New England has a bazillion purveyors of handmade, small-batch soaps, but Cap City Soap Co. caught our eye (nose?), thanks to unique, essential oil-blended scents such as Frankincense & Fir, a body bar made with cacao, alfalfa, hemp oil, and shea butter; Tomato and Sea Salt (it's white, made with yellow tomatoes); Lavender and Kombucha; and Charcoal & Clay, a black facial bar made with activated charcoal. Soap queen Bridget Overson also makes a coconut shave cream (\$6; a good stocking stuffer), with hints of cedarwood, clove, and vetiver. Soap bars, \$7.50 each. Available at *Manchester Craft Market at the Mall of New Hampshire and online at www.capcitysoapco.com.*



TOY TRUCKS FOR EARTH-FRIENDLY TOTS

Luke's Toy Factory, Danbury, Conn.

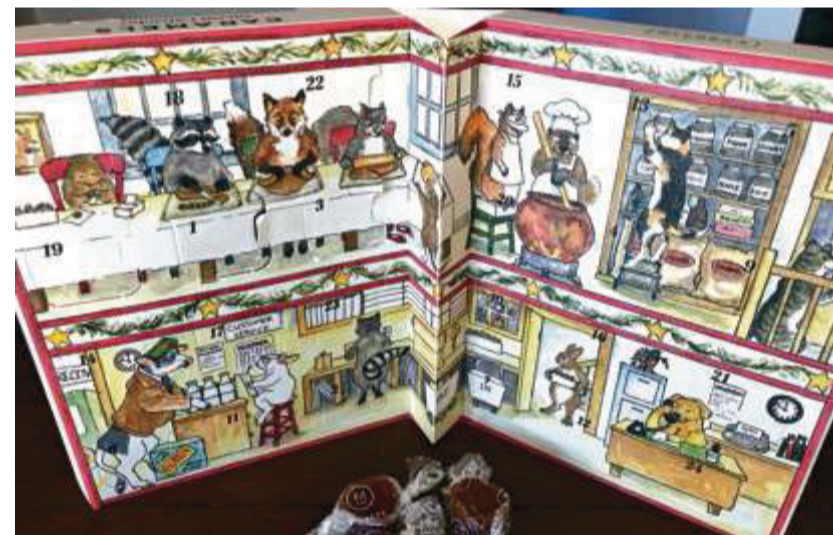
Colorful toy vehicles are a perennial kid-pleaser. We love the preschooler-friendly, 3-D stacking puzzle trucks designed by toymaker Luke Barber. Parts can be mixed and matched by little hands, making the trucks a more creative plaything than the usual roll-it-around model. Made in the USA, the trucks use 30 percent less plastic than traditional toys, replacing that 30 percent with sawdust collected from furniture mills and window factories. The trucks are smooth to the touch, but you can see the wood fibers. The rest of the toy is made with polypropylene. Colors are molded in, not painted on. Choices include a cargo truck, fire truck, dump truck, and more. \$19.95; Four-pack of trucks, \$69.95. Available at *Massachusetts Bay Trading Co., Weston; Joy Street, West Concord, and online. www.lukestoyfactory.com.*



THE MORE (MAPLE), THE MERRIER

Mount Mansfield Maple, Winooski, Vt.

Maple is having a moment, and the best way to give the gift of maple-y deliciousness — so New England — is with a little something from this 1,000-acre family farm. Go the stocking-stuffer route, with a 3.4-ounce bottle of organic granulated maple sugar (\$8), or spring for barrel-aged maple syrup (\$7 to \$25), or maybe maple syrup with added oomph, infused with organic coffee beans, vanilla beans, or cinnamon stick (from \$7.) Available at *Cardullo's Gourmet Shoppe in Cambridge; Debra's Natural Gourmet, Concord; and online, www.vermontpuremaple.com.*



PEACE, LOVE & CARAMELS

McCrea's Candies Advent Calendar, Hyde Park

By now, you probably know McCrea's handcrafted, small-batch caramels — even the caramel-averse swoon after that first taste of sea salt-sprinkled, buttery-sweet perfection. For 2019, they teamed up with New Hampshire artist Cindy Hendrick and Franklin Printing in Maine to create a caramel-stuffed advent calendar: A box of caramels opens up to reveal a charming kitchen scene populated with woodland creatures who are making (you guessed it) caramels. Behind the 24 doors are wrapped caramels in a dozen flavors, including cinnamon clove, café noir, and single malt scotch, along with the classic vanilla, chocolate, and maple. So maybe this is a family share-me gift? \$35; available at *Beacon Hill Chocolates and Eatery Boston, and online. www.mccreascandies.com.*

AT HOME WITH RUTH BADER GINSBERG

Jennie Blue Ceramics, Belfast, Maine

At an art show in Camden this summer, the Jennie Blue booth was a-bustle. And why not: Jennifer Connor's work is whimsical and unique. The artist adds water to glaze to create washes for bisque, and then works with a fine brush to create the look of pencil drawings. Her subjects include skeletons, sea creatures, farm animals, and pitchforks. Super-hot right now: Tea towels emblazoned with a portrait of certain Supreme Court Justice with her distinctive "I dissent" gaze. The Notorious RBG rules, even in the kitchen. "Usable art can be a vehicle for discourse," Connor says, "and my admiration for her is endless." For each towel sold, the artist donates one dollar to a local women's crisis center. Connor also makes an RBG platter. Tea towels, \$34 for set of two; pottery, \$20 to \$225. Available online at www.jennieblue.com.



FOR THAT OCEAN STATE OF MIND

Tees by Bit & Little Bit, Providence

For a small state, Rhode Island has a lot of attitude, as reflected in the statement tees made by artist Hilary Treadwell (Bit & Little Bit), available at Craftland in Providence. We love "Don't Mess with Rhode Island, Either," featuring a map of Texas with its (so, so tiny) inset of Rhode Island. (You could fit more than 200 Rhode Islands into the state of Texas, we're told.) And there's this: "Rhode Island: 3 Percent Bigger At Low Tide." They're available for men, women, and children, but these tees say "guy gift" to us. Men's and women's tees, \$34; available at *Craftland and online at www.shop.craftlandshop.com.*



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PUT A RING ON IT, OR AN OYSTER IN IT

Liza Curtis Studio, Natick

Because who can't use a snazzy little dish to hold bits and bobs (as the Brits would say)? Ceramicist Liza Curtis creates large and small ceramic vessels inspired by gemstones and the ocean, she says. Curtis uses stoneware clay fused with glaze, glass, resin, and 22-karat gold luster to create food-safe pieces designed to hold your treasures. "I love that the elements come from the earth and can be transformed by water, fire, and air to create something lasting and functional," Curtis says. Every step of the process of making these dishes brings me joy." \$38 for one; \$58/pair; available at *Five Crows, Natick; and Salem Holiday Market, Salem (Dec. 21); and online, www.lizacurtis.com.*



On Petit St. Vincent, unplug and connect

►UNPLUGGED

Continued from Page M1

floor plan. Inside are driftwood-inspired teak furnishings, colorful artwork, and a wood-padded ceiling fan. Outside, you've got the requisite hammock, tied between two palms, and your own little thatched palapa, plus unlimited blue-on-blue views of sea and sky. Here, a nearby islet; there, a yacht swaying on its mooring.

Rustic, it's not. Beds are king-size, linens come from Italy, toiletries are by Bulgari, and each cottage has a Nespresso coffee machine and a Bose iPod dock. So far, so good, right? Until you try to send an "I made it!" message to a loved one at home. Nothing. Nada. The only spots with connectivity are at the resort's main pavilion and its restaurants, a long walk or bike ride from our cottage. (Guest rooms have intercoms in case of emergency, but no Internet.)

"At first, some guests panic a little," says general manager Matt Semark, who lives on site with his wife, Anie, and two young sons. "But the following day, they appreciate [the lack of Wi-Fi]. You can see the weight shift off their shoulders when they are unplugged from their devices."

OK, we thought. Unplugged it is! We limited ourselves to one quickie e-mail session per day. None of the frivolous stuff: No Sox, CNN, or Serial. There was just one problem: Come nightfall, without a dose of HGTV house porn to lull us to sleep (there are no TVs in the rooms, and we hadn't downloaded anything), we were stone cold awake, conjuring monsters in the dark. Why? There were no locks on the doors.

Lock us up! Lock us up!

For city folks in particular, the notion of no locks is unsettling. Rationally, we knew we were quite safe on this lightly populated island — probably the biggest personal safety risk here is getting conked on the head by a falling coconut. Plus, we're campers, and there are no deadbolts on an L.L. Bean tent.

But who's rational at 2 a.m.? We confess, dear reader, that on our first night we blocked our front door with a teak settee and booby-trapped the patio door with a yoga strap. (Take *that*, boogieman!) Not a restful night. That Nespresso machine was put to good use the next morning.

We had to ask Semark: Why no locks? "It's been like this since the resort opened in 1968," he said. "There's no other resort on the island — we're it. There's no crime. And everyone's an 'auntie' or 'uncle.'"

But it wasn't the employees we were worried about. What if a random (drunken) guest wandered into the wrong cottage (they do look alike) and scared the bejeezus out of us? Then there's the personal property issue. We've all been trained not to leave our valuables unattended *anywhere*, so it's a leap of faith to leave your laptop and iPhone X in your unlocked cottage while you go for a swim.

Ultimately, our concerns melted away like lip balm in a beach bag. Maybe we were simply too exhausted after a day of splashing in the surf to lie awake listening for intruders. Or maybe common sense took over. In any case, we slipped into the rhythm of island life. And we got acquainted with our room butler, who brought us breakfast each day and (we imagined) would magically appear if anything bad happened.

The days drifted by in a happy haze of eating and water sports. The resort offers an array of kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, Sunfish sailboats, and snorkeling gear for guests' use. You can snorkel right off the beach. When we discovered that the famed Tobago Cays (one of the "1000 Places to See Before You Die") was *thisclose* to the island, we had to sign up for a sail-and-snorkel trip to the Cays aboard the 49-



PHOTOS BY DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



Clockwise from left: Petit St. Vincent offers yoga classes; a treetop spa; the requisite hammock, tied between two palms, and a thatched palapa; cottages made of stone and wood; and water sports equipment: kayaks, stand-up paddle boards, sailboats, and snorkeling gear.

If you go . . .

Most people fly to Barbados, and then take a short flight to Union Island, followed by a ferry to Petit St. Vincent. Rates from \$1,260 per night for a one-bedroom cottage. Rate includes three meals daily, all non-alcoholic beverages, and use of non-motorized water sports equipment and bicycles. 800-654-9326; www.petitstvincent.com.

Our takeaway: Unplugged island life is delightful. No Twitter rants! No Cardi B, no Kanye, no Kardashians. Life moves at a slower pace, and frees up time to chat with random strangers and commune with goats. Life without HGTV is just fine, as long as the reading material doesn't run out.

But next time we'll bring one of those electronic alarms to shove under the door. Haven't these people ever watched "Death in Paradise"?

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foot sloop Beauty.

What to do when you're not checking your phone

In digital detox mode, you discover chunks of free time each day (hours, for most of us) that you normally spend diddling with your phone. We filled the day with low-tech, low-key pleasures like bicycling around the island, hiking up Marni Hill, the island's highest point, and indulging in a Balinese massage at PSV's treetop spa. We took a morning yoga class overlooking the bay. We met the island goats. And, wonder of wonders (since we're frosty Bostonians), we chatted with other guests. "Getting your face out of your phone means tuning in to the people around you, and tuning into the charms of this lovely island," said Dani from the UK, who was visiting with

two teenagers in tow. (The teens were Fortnite-deprived, but still cheery, we noted.)

Remarkably, everyone we met seemed relaxed — and even grateful to be off-line. "Petit St. Vincent provides a welcome rest from our usual, hyperactive life style," said Bruce Sykes of Burlington, Ontario (west of Toronto), visiting the resort with his wife, Nancy. The Sykes have been coming to the island since the 1980s, and have returned at least 20 times. "When we first visited, we were surprised by the unplugged environment, but we adapted to it," he says. Now, "we actually prefer this resort over other places that we've traveled." The Sykes didn't care a whit that their cottage was lockless, by the way.

Instead of looking forward to an episode of "Fleabag," we planned our ac-

tivities around mealtimes, a testament to the quality of the food. Much of it is sourced from the island or the waters that surround it, so it couldn't be fresher. A walk past the resort's gardens reveals a bounty of kale, lettuces, and herbs. The resort relies on local farmers and fishermen, with sustainable practices a priority. You see it in small ways, like refill stations for water bottles, instead of one-use plastic. The casual Beach Restaurant offers toes-in-the-sand dining, featuring Caribbean tapas and pizza from a clay oven, along with live music some nights. For a more formal, three-course dining experience, there's the Main Pavilion Restaurant. The fresh seafood and aged rums are exquisite, but the real joy here is the setting, on a hilltop overlooking the harbor with a curtain of frangipani and hibiscus.

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER | CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

FlightNetwork canceled her flight. Where is her money?

Q. I booked a flight from Chicago to Zagreb, Croatia, on FlightNetwork.com, recently. The charge was posted on my credit card in February 2018. Eight months later, I received an e-mail from FlightNetwork saying my flight was canceled, but that I could change my flight to the day before or the day after my planned departure. That did not work for my schedule.

A FlightNetwork representative told me I could get a complete refund and it would take 30 to 60 days. It's been four months and I still have not received the refund. I have e-mailed FlightNetwork repeatedly, and they have apologized

for the delay, but I still haven't received a refund. I would like a refund to my credit card for \$712.39, as promised by FlightNetwork. Can you help me?

ANN MELODY, *Ottawa, Ill.*

A. If your flight was canceled, you're owed a prompt refund. Four months is way too long.

First, if an airline cancels your flight, you're entitled to a refund according to the Department of Transportation — regardless of the reason for the cancellation. If an airline offers you an alternative flight and you accept it, then it gets to

keep your money.

If a refund is due, the airline must forward a credit to your card within seven business days after receiving a complete refund application. But the credit may take a month or two to appear on your statement.

You were way past that point.

Further complicating your case: FlightNetwork had cobbled together an itinerary with several airlines, including Lufthansa, KLM, and Croatia Airlines. Sometimes, refund requests across several carriers can take longer even though they shouldn't. After all, they took your money in seconds.

I think a brief, friendly e-mail to FlightNetwork might have moved your refund along. Or, at least you might have received an update on your refund. I publish the names, numbers, and e-mail addresses of the FlightNetwork executives on my consumer advocacy site.

I contacted FlightNetwork on your behalf. The company claims that it sent the refund to your credit card a month ago. You checked your credit card. Eventually, the full refund appeared. Better late than never.

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