

A photograph of a tropical resort at night. Two large palm trees are illuminated from below, standing on either side of a swimming pool. The pool is lit with a blue glow. In the background, there are lounge chairs and a building with lights. The sky is dark blue with some clouds.

TANDREW HARPER Traveler

EXCLUSIVELY FOR ANDREW HARPER MEMBERS

JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER 2011

Islands *of the* Caribbean

LAOS, CAMBODIA
& VIETNAM

ART-LOVER'S EUROPE

ANDREW HARPER'S
NEW YORK

Plus 39 Special Offers Inside!



Islands of the Caribbean

EVEN BEFORE YOUR PLANE TOUCHES DOWN IN THE Caribbean, the view elicits wonder and instills a sense of calm. The vivid turquoise waters lap against sandy shores, and when the tropical sun hits your face, you know you've arrived at someplace special.

"The [Caribbean] contains much more variety than many people realize," says Andrew Harper. The region is home to more than 700 islands, similar in their sun-drenched allure, but each with its own charm and culture.

If you can't wait to feel the warm sand beneath your feet, look no farther than **Puerto Rico**. As a United States commonwealth, it requires no passport, which means spending less time at the airport and more time experiencing island life. "I love the Latino influence and find the culture and the people here very interesting," says Wilhelm Sack, general manager and co-owner of **The Horned Dorset Primavera**, a resort in Rincón, Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico attracts all types of travelers, from families to romantics. Surfers congregate in **Rincón**, where the Caribbean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean and creates ideal wave-riding conditions. For those more comfortable on land, Sack suggests visiting the **Rio Camuy Caves** or the **Arecibo Observatory**. The island's well-developed road system makes it easy to experience it all.

For a more remote feel, make your way to **St. Vincent & the Grenadines**, where seclusion is part of the appeal. "People come here because they want to opt out of the rat race. They're coming to chill out," says Robin Paterson, managing director and co-owner of **Petit St. Vincent**, a private island retreat. Guests can take short, leisurely boat rides to explore the nation's 30-plus islands, all just a few miles apart. Paterson recommends **Tobago Cays** in particular, an untouched marvel he describes as "quite magical." This grouping of four uninhabited islands showcases pristine beaches and extraordinary snorkeling conditions.

Snorkeling brings visitors to **St. John**, part of the **U.S. Virgin Islands** (USVI), as well. “I’ve seen sea turtles, octopus, a wide array of brightly colored fish and a stingray, just to name a few—and all in their natural environment,” recalls Carolyn Rebeck, associate director of travel industry sales for **Caneel Bay**, a Rosewood Resort on St. John. While any visitors with fins and snorkel masks can explore on their own, Rebeck suggests that guests, particularly families, book a guided tour. “The experts who operate these tours know all of the ‘hot spots’ of where to find the most interesting sea life,” she explains.

Above the surface, St. John proves equally stunning. The island’s lush, green hills and sandy beaches contrast with the brilliant cobalt water. No matter where you are on the island, “you always feel like you are in the Caribbean,” says Rebeck. “Make sure you see a sunset and a sunrise, two of the most spectacular scenes Mother Nature has given us.”

The unspoiled landscape in the neighboring **British Virgin Islands** (BVI) is just as awe-inspiring. “Come here with an open mind and be prepared to enjoy nature to the fullest,” says Wilbert Mason, general manager of **Peter Island Resort & Spa**. In particular, Mason recommends a visit to “**The Baths**” on **Virgin Gorda**. Huge rock formations, thought to be the result of volcanic eruptions, surround white-sand beaches in this national park that offers something for everyone: dramatic caves for explorers, tranquil beaches for sunbathers, crystal-clear grottoes for swimmers, and exquisite coral ledges for snorkelers.

Nature lovers will be wowed in **Turks & Caicos**, home to the world’s third-largest coral reef. Here, guests can whale-watch, swim with sharks and enjoy warm ocean temperatures. Conch diving is also a popular activity. Unlike traditional diving and snorkeling, “conch diving is best done in the grass and muddy area of the sea floor, just off the shore of an uninhabited island,” says Prasad Sankaran, director of guest experience at **Grace Bay Club**. Back on dry land, divers often get to eat their fresh catch.

Turks & Caicos doesn’t have much in terms of nightlife, says Ana Fonseca, global sales manager at **Amanyara**, an Aman resort. “[It] is a place to relax and enjoy the sun and sea,” she explains. “So bring a few good books and pick the perfect lounge chair.” As this quiet paradise is popular with families and couples, Sankaran suggests booking activities and excursions in advance.

AREA ALLIANCE PARTNERS

Hotels & Villas

ANGUILLA

Anguilla Luxury Collection (*villas*); multiple locations
Cap Juluca; Maundays Bay
Malliouhana Hotel & Spa; Meads Bay

ANTIGUA

Carlisle Bay; St. Mary’s Hermitage Bay; St. John’s

BAHAMAS

Beautiful Places (*villas*); Grand Bahama
Dunmore, The; Harbour Island
One&Only Ocean Club; Paradise Island
Ritz Carlton Destination Club (*villas*); Abaco

BARBADOS

Cobblers Cove; St. Peter

BERMUDA

Elbow Beach, Bermuda; Paget
Reefs Hotel & Club, The; Southampton
Tucker’s Point Hotel & Spa; Hamilton Parish

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Frenchmans Lookout (*villa*); Tortola

Peter Island Resort; Peter Island

Rosewood Little Dix Bay; Virgin Gorda

PUERTO RICO

Horned Dorset Primavera, The; Rincon

ST. BARTHS

Eden Rock; St. Jean Bay

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

A&K Villas (*villas*); Mustique

Clear Creek Group; The (*villas*); Mustique

Petit St. Vincent Resort; Petit St. Vincent

TURKS AND CAICOS

Amanyara; Providenciales

Grace Bay Club; Providenciales
(see offer on page 58)

Meridian Club, The; Pine Cay

US VIRGIN ISLANDS

Caneel Bay; St. John
(see offer on page 58)

Travel Partners

All Yachts Worldwide

Crystal Cruises

Sea Cloud Cruises

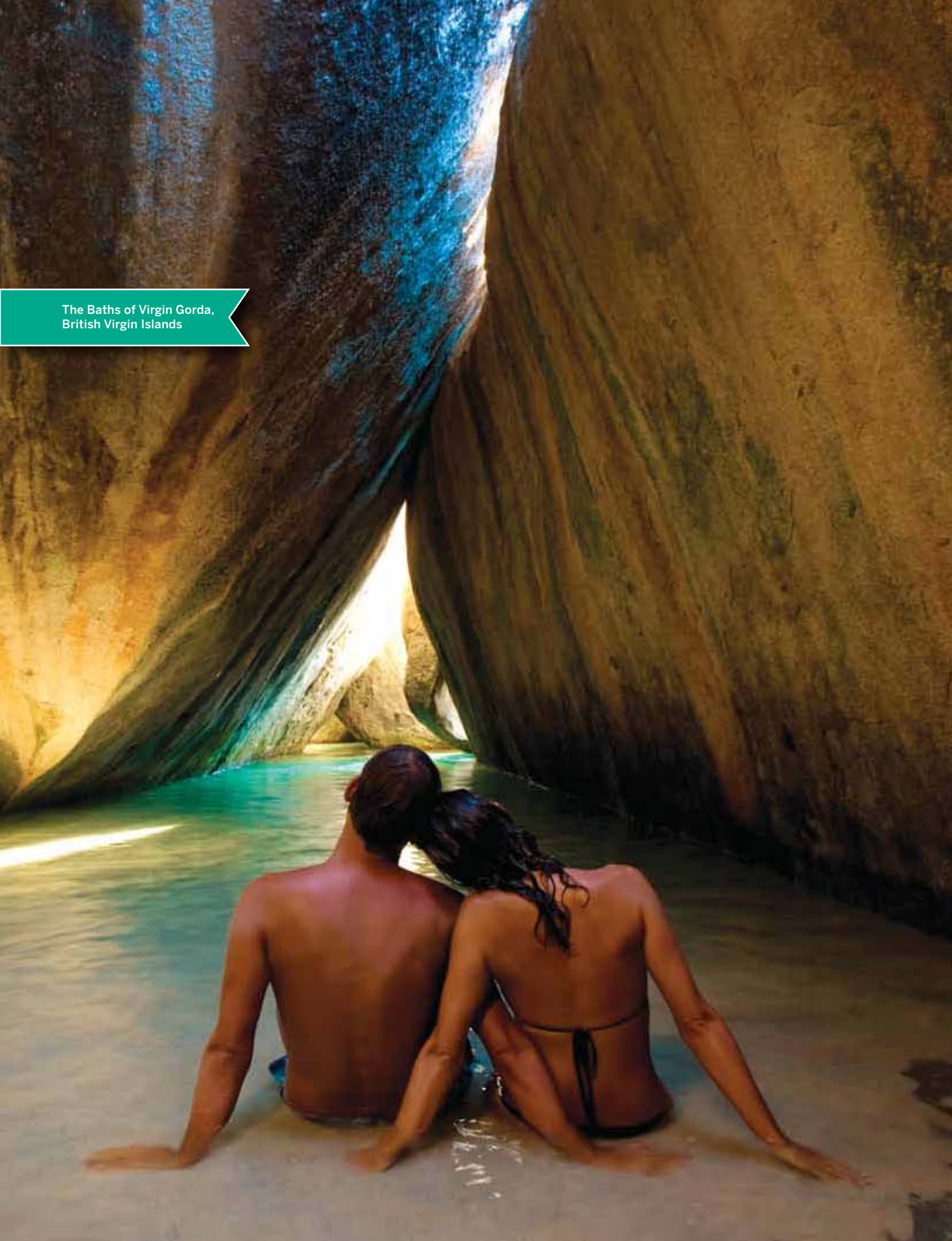
Silversea Cruises

The Yachts of Seabourn

Farther east, a gracious, welcoming culture and a wide range of pursuits draw visitors to **Anguilla**. “It’s really about creating your own activity at your own pace,” says Amelia Vanterpool-Kubisch, director of sales and marketing at **Malliouhana Hotel & Spa**. For beachcombers and families, Vanterpool-Kubisch suggests day trips to offshore cays and neighboring islands or an excursion to check out the growing number of art galleries.

For adventure seekers, Bart van Deventer, resort manager at **Malliouhana**, lauds the island’s scuba diving conditions. “There is no overfishing, and most areas are protected from anchoring, making for superb dives up

The Baths of Virgin Gorda,
British Virgin Islands



to 80-90 feet deep,” van Deventer explains. Intentionally sunk shipwrecks and natural reefs complete this underwater world of discovery.

In addition, Anguilla’s waters attract sailing enthusiasts. Boating is the national sport here, and for two weeks in July and August, the island comes to life for the **Summer Festival and Carnaval** celebrating Anguillan life and culture. “There are traditional sailboat races by day and musical events at night,” says Vanterpool-Kubisch.

Sailors also flock to **Antigua**, where **Sailing Week**, held annually in April, hosts one of the top five regattas in the world. But no matter the time of year, catamaran cruises and private charters are a charming, and efficient, way to see the local sights. “There are 365 beaches on the island, one for each day of the year,” says Andy Thesen, owner of **Hermitage Bay**, a resort on the west coast of the island. With its abundance of sparkling coastline, it’s not surprising

that watersports such as windsurfing and kite surfing are hugely popular.

Even with its many picturesque shores, Antigua is relatively small and undeveloped. Its quiet atmosphere makes it a perfect romantic escape and a popular honeymoon destination.

Lovers may also enjoy a side trip to the chic island of **St. Barthélemy** (more commonly known as St. Barths), where couples can spend the day at the spa or lounging on the beach. For added romance, staff at the **Eden Rock** hotel suggest taking in one of the island’s spectacular sunsets while enjoying a Champagne toast aboard a sailboat.

Whichever island you choose, be prepared to fall in love with the Caribbean; a single trip might just turn you into a repeat guest. As Andrew Harper notes, “The sun is hot but not too hot; the sand and water can be world-class; and the gently insistent trade wind brings a delicious softness to the island climate.” ✈

Bermuda and the Bahamas

Although not technically part of the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Bahamas are also popular island escapes. We asked some local experts for their thoughts on these tropical locales.

“Bermuda is a scuba diver’s dream, with nice warm waters and unparalleled clarity. Plus, with more than 400 shipwrecks around Bermuda’s coastline, there are so many exciting dive sites.”

David Dodwell Jr., Resort Manager, The Reefs Hotel & Club, Bermuda

“No one comes to [Bermuda] and leaves without going to the **Gibbs Hill Lighthouse**. This is because of the impressive view of the whole island they will enjoy after climbing the 185 steps to the top.”

Sophie Dier, Director of Communications, Elbow Beach, Bermuda



“Our annual **Cup Match holiday**, a two-day cricket match, is a great cultural event for visitors to enjoy. While relaxing at the game, guests can... indulge in traditional Bermudian seafood cooked on site.”

Liz Smith, Manager, Marketing and Special Projects, Tucker’s Point Hotel & Spa, Bermuda

“As far as location, the proximity to the U.S. sets the Bahamas apart from other islands in the Caribbean. **Nassau** is only a 50-minute airplane ride from Miami, and most major U.S. airlines have nonstop flights.”

Rachael Palumbo, Director of Sales and Marketing, One&Only Ocean Club, Paradise Island, Bahamas

“The local culture on **Harbour Island** in the Bahamas is welcoming to guests and includes a lot of fantastic local traditions: conch fritters, bonefishing (and anyone is willing to take you and teach you), and a number of historic, beautiful churches.”

Emily Frye, Director of Marketing, The Dunmore, Harbour Island, Bahamas