

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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SPECIAL ISSUE

The New AD100

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TALENTS IN
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World of
Peter Marino

Mario Buatta's
Romantic Style

Beverly Hills
Minimalism

A Seductive
Caribbean Getaway





Clockwise from left: A newly renovated cottage on the resort island of Petit St. Vincent in the Caribbean. The interiors have been enlivened with refinished ceilings and upholstery in beachy hues. Just one of the area's immaculate stretches of white sand.

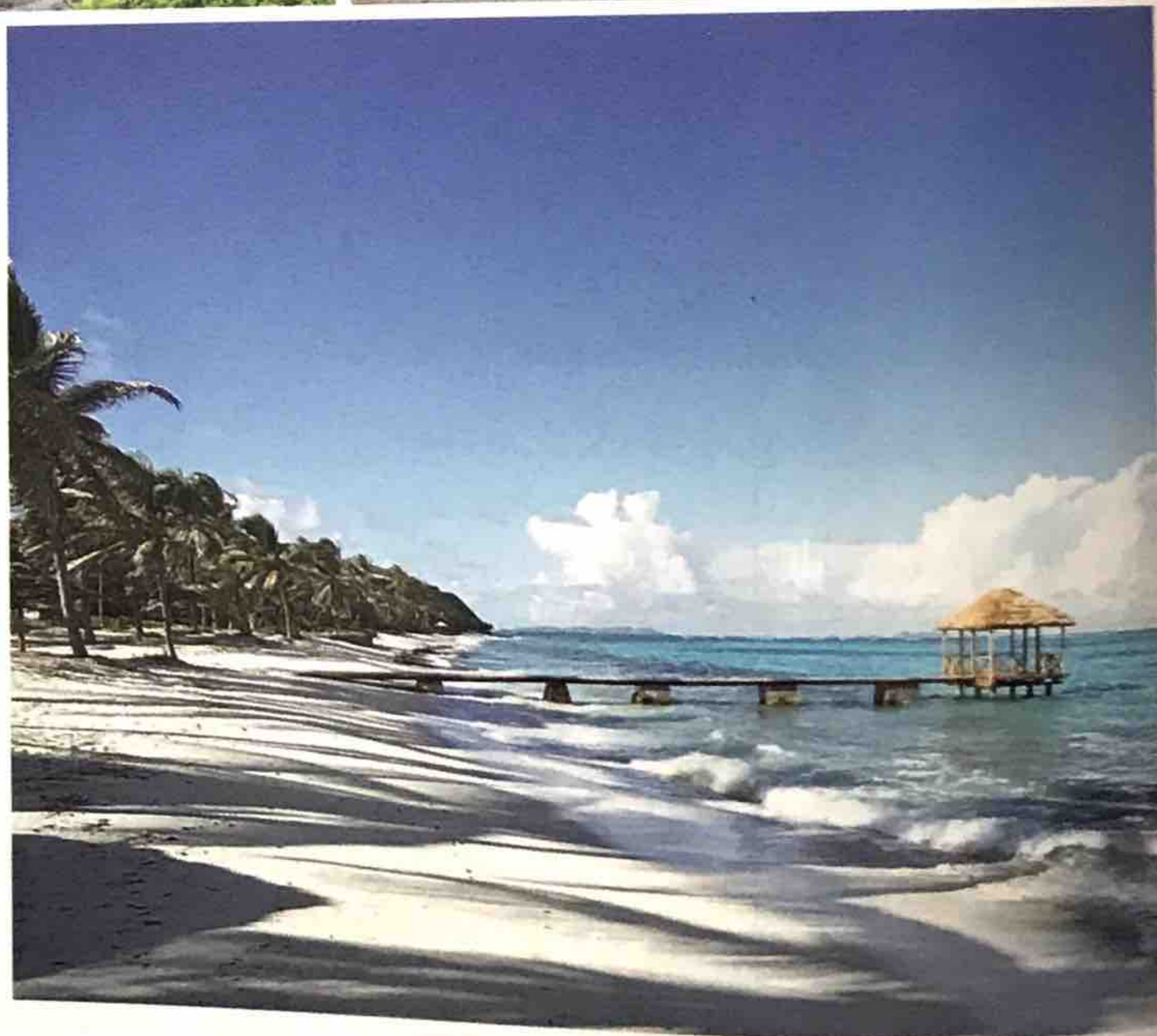


THE GREAT ESCAPE

Petit St. Vincent—for years one of the Caribbean's most pristine island hideaways—gets an enchanting new look

Sister spot Mustique may be better known among the glitterati, but the resort haven of Petit St. Vincent, a speck of land at the southern tip of the necklace of islands collectively called the Grenadines, has drawn travelers craving unpretentious luxury since the late 1960s. Philip Stephenson first saw the retreat more than two decades ago. "I sailed up on a small chartered sailboat with my father, and we were told, 'This is a private island—you're not welcome,'" the former financier recalls. "My attitude was, Damn you, I'll come back and buy this place someday!" In November 2010 Stephenson made good on that promise and embarked, with business partner Robin Paterson, on a dream project: to update the 115-acre property while maintaining its reputation for unaffected opulence and paparazzi-proof seclusion.

The basics were enviable. Over half of Petit St. Vincent is rimmed by a coral reef, and its beaches are lined with white sand rather than the gray volcanic kind more common throughout the rest of the British West Indies. And though the island is hilly—there



are three peaks along its skyline—it is almost entirely walkable. The lush green landscape conceals the resort's 22 simple cottages, designed more than 40 years ago by Arne Hasselquist, the architect responsible for many of Mustique's signature homes.

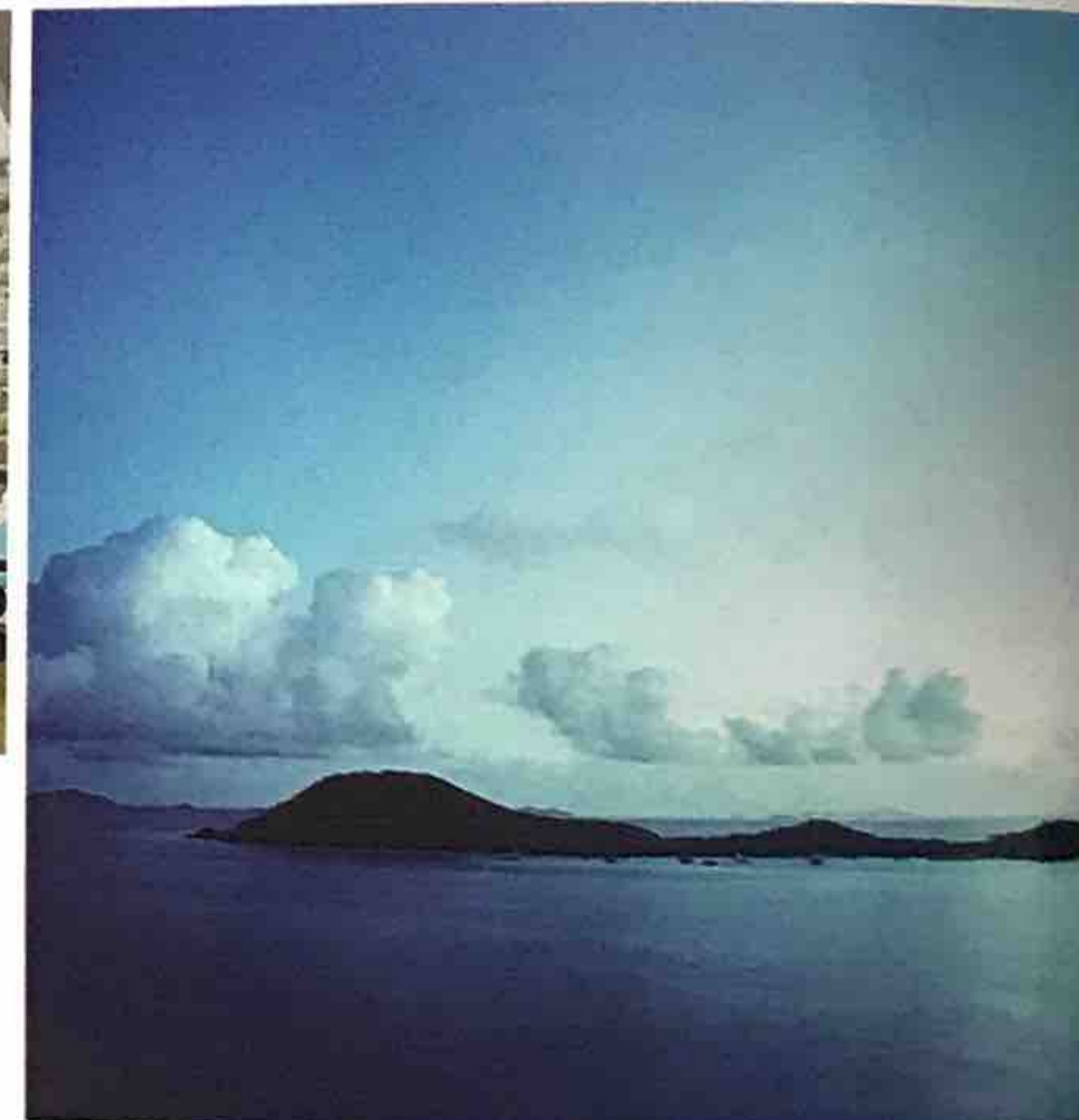
Aiming to refresh the place without losing its air of tranquility, Stephenson brought in British architect Alistair Downie of the firm Harper Downie and Miami decorators Teri D'Amico and Chris Lamb. Downie preserved the location of the rustic cottages, which had been hand-built of blue-bitch volcanic stone and purple-heart hardwood, but remodeled bathrooms and added thoughtful touches such as dining terraces and louvered window shutters. He also designed a new beach bar and spa and even repurposed →

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TRAVELS



Clockwise from top: Sheltered terraces have been extended and paved with Spanish limestone. The 115-acre retreat is situated at the southern tip of the Grenadine island chain. Volcanic-stone walls date from the 1960s.

an abandoned water tank as a wine cellar with a tasting table. Downie confesses a partisan fondness for villa 17, a short stroll from its own beach. "It's at the farthest extremity from the main pavilion, and it has a single, long view out to the north."

For the interiors, D'Amico and Lamb looked to Bali for inspiration, commissioning, among other pieces, reclaimed-teak furniture and shell-and-rope tiebacks for the curtains. Donghia upholstery beckons in turquoise, chartreuse, and white. Discreetly recessed lighting showcases the beamed and vaulted ceilings, while Spanish limestone floors provide a neutral contrast to the lava-rock walls. The designers kept the hotel's quirky "Do Not Disturb" system (hoistable red flags), but swapped the driftwood flagpoles for ones made of bamboo.

The changes at Petit St. Vincent are subtle and respectful, for the new owners have a cadre of protective regulars to please. Seventy percent of the resort's bookings are from repeat guests. "They have a sense of ownership," says Paterson. "Some of them may just see us as stewards of their island." So the remade Petit St. Vincent is still a low-key paradise, with no formal check-in and few organized activities (though the snorkeling and scuba diving on offer are both top-notch). And phones, televisions, and Internet have been kept out of the rooms—an emphatic request by the island's clientele. "They were quite vociferous on that point," Paterson says. "That's what's so unique about this place. People come here to disconnect." Rates from \$1,350/night per couple; psvresort.com —MARK ELLWOOD

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