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TRAVEL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Publication: Travel Weekly

Date: 5th March 2015

Circulation: 15,572

PR Value: 18,993

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Booking clients a Caribbean beachfront property may seem like a no-brainer, but there's also a welcome in the hillsides, writes Jo Cooke

That ribbon of white sand that edges the shore of many a West Indian isle draws us like a magnet. The urge is to get as close to it as possible. After all, it's hard to beat falling out of bed just footsteps away from the sea and sand that are the region's biggest selling points. But if we turn our backs on this beach scene for a minute, there's just as much beauty within.

The interiors of islands such as Jamaica and Saint Lucia are a sweeping mass of tropical vegetation that begins beyond the shoreline, then extends to cloak undulating mountain ranges. It's punctuated by bursts of exotic blooms from fiery ginger lilies to vivid bromeliads. Staying at a hotel surrounded by this botanical wonderland will see clients swap the sound of breaking waves for bird song, beach buzz for countryside tranquillity, and tropical fish for fireflies. It complements the more typical seaside experience beautifully, so

why not suggest a hillside retreat with day trips to the beach, or a twin-centre with stays at both, to clients who want more than sun, sea and sand? Here are some of our favourite suggestions.

● **SAINT LUCIA**

The wow factor of Saint Lucia's twin Piton peaks cannot be overstated. The first time you gaze upon these majestic, alluring pinnacles remains etched on your memory for ever. But they're just a hint of the island's natural assets. Rainforest trails teeming with bird life, waterfalls, botanic gardens and the geysers at Saint Lucia's sulphur springs, all make life quite exciting beyond the beaches.

Get your clients close to all these treasures by booking them into the hilltop Ladera resort, one of the upscale properties in the island's hilly south-west. Ladera recently added Paradise Ridge, a collection of four luxury suites and a villa. They all have an eye-level view of the Pitons and wooden furnishings

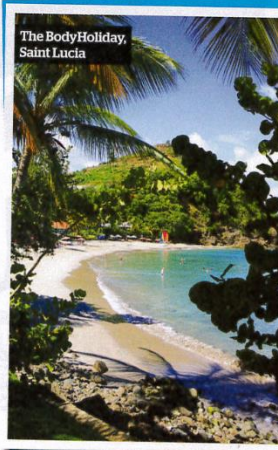
handcrafted by local artisans. For those who prefer to be smack bang on the beach, rather than looking down upon it, there's the 155-room BodyHoliday. Set on a secluded beach, it also has its own golf academy, extensive spa, yoga pavilion, three swimming pools and tennis courts.

Book it: Elegant Resorts offers four nights with breakfast in a suite at Paradise Ridge at Ladera and four nights' all-inclusive at The BodyHoliday, plus private transfers and British Airways flights from Gatwick, departing May 11, from £4,845. elegantresorts.co.uk

● **BVI**

The British Virgin Islands is an archipelago that champions individuality. Each property, and each island, has its own distinct personality, which is perfect for those who see variety as the spice of life. Island-hopping is easy too, so you can book clients a beachside and mountain-top

experience in the same holiday. A perfect elevated escape is the 850-acre Guana Island, a private island reserved for residents only. A mere 19 minimalist-chic rooms and a restaurant are perched on a ridge overlooking Guana's rolling



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NEW HILLTOP HOTEL, ST KITTS



St Kitts' newest hotel, Belle Mont Farm, is a hilltop property – you can tell from the name, which means beautiful mountain. Its 84 guesthouses and seven, four-bedroom farmhouses, set in a 400-acre site, offer panoramic views of neighbouring islands

St Eustatius, St Barths and St Maarten from their wrap-around verandas. It's a luxurious spot with a focus on sustainability and farm-to-table eating, and is part of Kittitian Hill, an ongoing \$600 million hospitality and real estate development.