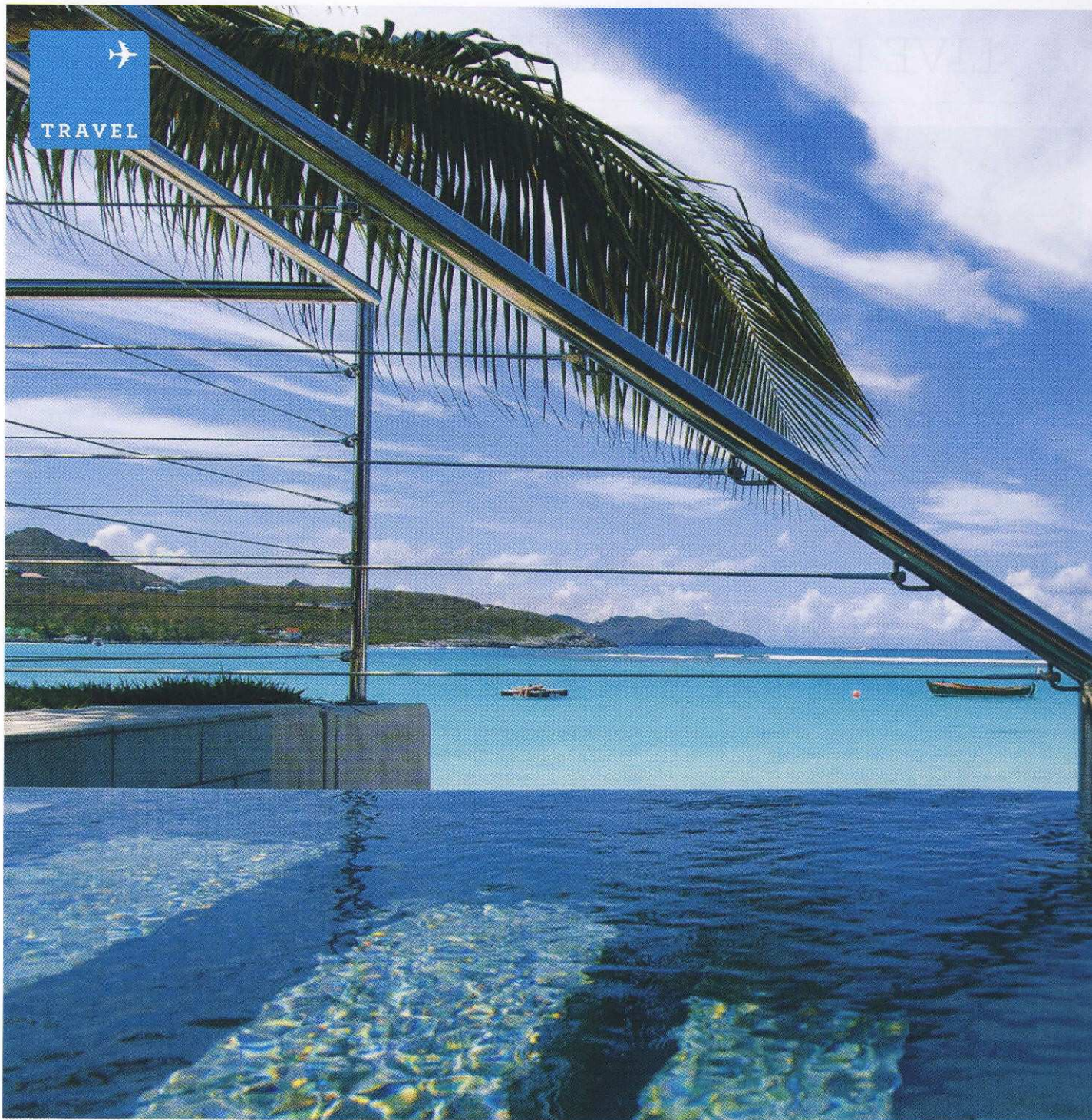


# ICON

MAGAZINE

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TRAVEL

# BETTER THAN PARADISE

Thanks to the efforts of the tourist industry, idyllic destinations are ten a penny. Only very few, such as St Barths in the Caribbean's Leeward Islands, successfully combine luxury with exclusivity.

By RYAN BAILEY

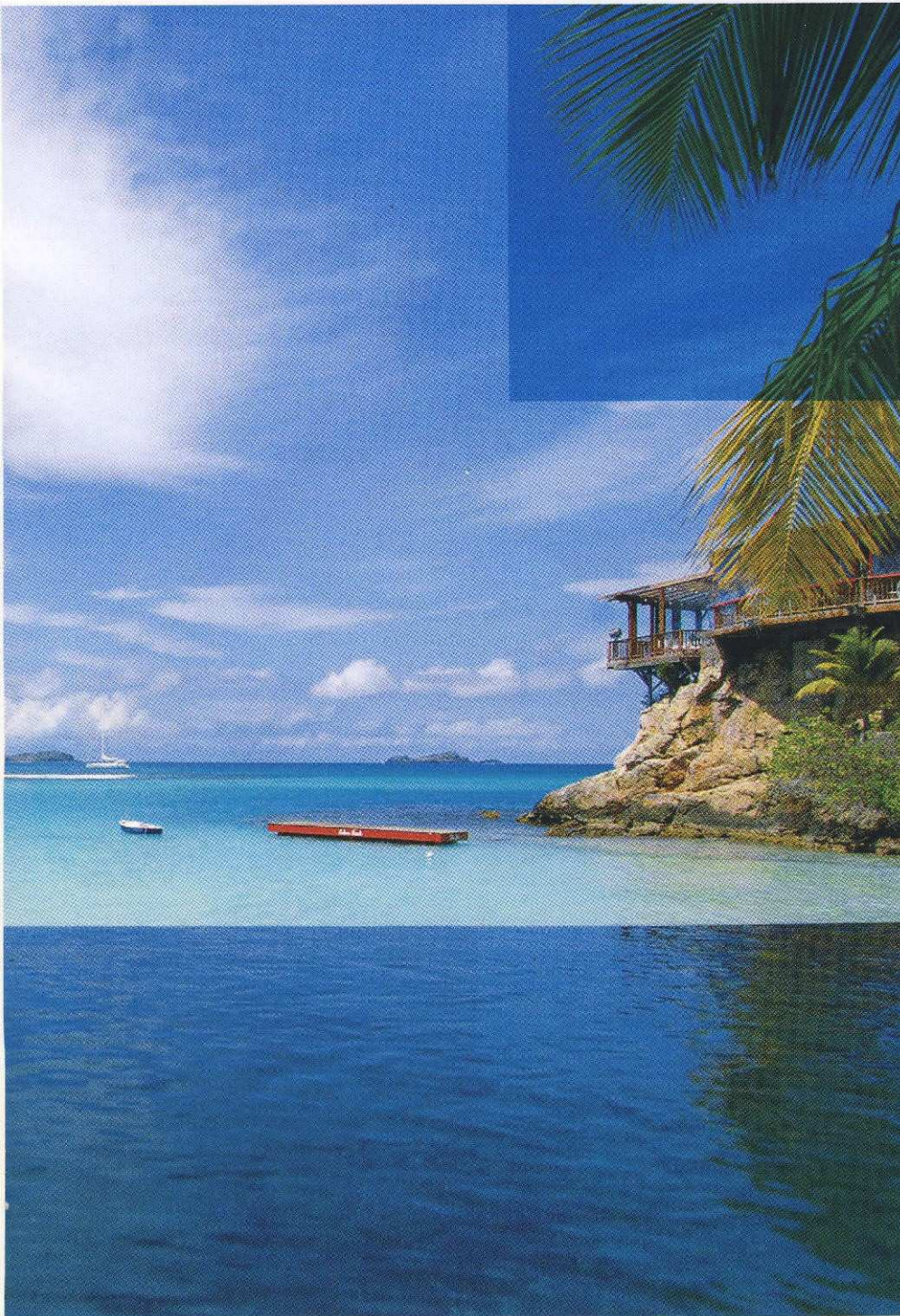
## The Eden Rock

The Caribbean has been popular with winter sun seekers for decades, but as Amy Winehouse's well-documented stay in St Lucia recently proved, not all of the islands offer a great deal of privacy.

► The French island of St Barthelemy provides the level of seclusion that high profile travellers demand, and the sort of luxury that attracts the likes of Paul McCartney, Bill Gates and Steven Spielberg to its shores. The best way to experience the Caribbean's sequestered playground of the rich and famous is via a stay at the luxurious Eden Rock - St Barths hotel.

British owner David Matthews explains why astute travellers and Hollywood A listers are flocking to St Barths, and why the Eden Rock, once the home of the mayor of the island, has become one of the world's leading boutique hotels: "St Barths is a world class destination, where crime is almost non-existent and celebrities are not troubled. On an island where only the finest standards are acceptable, our hotel offers impeccable attention to detail, and most importantly, a refreshingly good sense of humour."

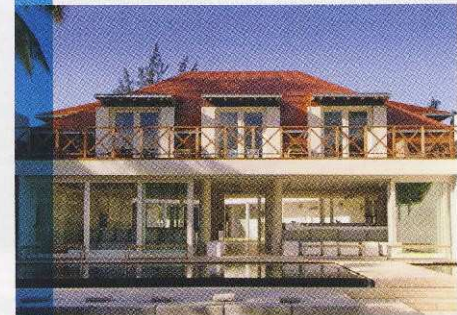
The Eden Rock hotel offers stunning views of the St Jean Bay, a little slice of heaven, where celebs from Greta Garbo to Beyonce Knowles have caught some rays



The family-owned four star hotel and residence club offers 34 opulent accommodations with stunning views of the white coral and picture postcard sandy beaches of St Jean Bay. Aside from the awe inspiring natural beauty, guests may also enjoy an art gallery, access to a yacht and the world class restaurant On The Rocks. Resident chef Jean-Claude Dufour and his 30-strong team provide an outstanding French dining experience with a mixture of fresh local produce and ingredients imported from around the globe – try the sweet chilli snow crab. Younger barefoot jet-setters lunch at the more low-key, but stratospherically chic Sand Bar.

Those who can rouse themselves to stray from the Eden Rock's award-winning environs will not be disappointed. St Barths offers 21 beaches (whose beauty makes them prime locations for swimsuit photoshoots and therefore magazine editors on expense accounts) and perfect conditions for sailing, windsurfing and scuba diving. On dry land, the vast array of gourmet French restaurants provide the backdrop to a chic dining scene, and those with energy left for shopping will be elated by the duty free designer boutiques available.

[www.edenrockhotel.com](http://www.edenrockhotel.com)  
Rates start at €490 per night.



## Villa Rockstar

Thanks to the Eden Rock's new luxury private villa, the dream of living a bone fide rock and roll lifestyle is a reality. The 16,500 sq ft Villa Rockstar features four large master suites, a unique circular bathroom tiled in white gold, a 20-seat cinema and access to personal vehicles in the shape of a Mini Cooper and a Land Rover. The pièce de résistance is the fully equipped recording studio, created in partnership with Hollywood's legendary Ocean Way Recording studio and world famous sound engineer Allen Sides – a man whose CV includes Michael Jackson's *Thriller*, the best selling album of all time. Those whose musical inclination fails to stretch beyond air guitar may simply marvel at the recording console used to record John Lennon's 1971 *Imagine* album, or take advantage of Villa Rockstar's other world class facilities, which include two pools, a bar, a putting green, a croquet lawn and a gym.

[www.villarockstar.com](http://www.villarockstar.com)  
Rates start at €105,000 per week.