

What It's Like to Stay at Le Barthélemy, a St. Barts Resort With Michelin-Star Culinary Cred

Believe it or not, the property's just-opened restaurant Amis has the only Michelin-starred resident chef on the entire island.



Describe the hotel in three words: Quintessential barefoot luxury.

What's the deal?

Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa opened in 2016 on the Bay de Gran Cru de Sac and saw a redesign just two years later following Hurricane Irma.

With 44 rooms and suites—80 percent have ocean views—plus two connected villas, Le Barthélemy practices what they call *haute couture hospitalité*. In pursuit of that, before traveling every guest receives a call from a concierge to discern their particular interests, diet restrictions, and beverage preferences—even what type of pillow they favor. The hotel's team then springs into action, stocking the room with everything from honeymoon, anniversary, and birthday delights (decorations, personalized notes, Champagne, balloons) to children's and baby amusements (games, coloring sets, bibs, plush toys, etc.). Dogs are welcome here and the chef will even create a menu for canine companions.



Two identical six-bedroom villas, named Aqua and Bleu, are located just a minute stroll from the lobby. The whitewashed, two-story homes started life as seasonal rentals but are now extensions of the hotel. Like the rest of the hotel, they're styled by celebrated French designer Sybille de Margerie and feature two giant upstairs master bedrooms with walk-in showers and terraces overlooking the private pool and bay. On the first floor, four standard bedrooms bookend a vast, high-ceiling living room and an open kitchen.

Did they greet you by name at check-in?

Yes, and what a greeting. Your dedicated butler and a concierge from Le Barth Villa Rental greet you at the Aqua Villa with Champagne from the owners' vineyard, Leclerc Briant, as well as pastries, charcuterie, French cheese, and a welcome package (beach and swimsuit bags, hats, flip flops, reusable water bottles, etc).

Was a welcome drink ready and waiting when you arrived? (Bonus points if it wasn't just fruit juice)

If you elect for pickup service, the Le Barthélemy shuttle picks you up at the airport with cold waters (flat, still, or infused), fruit juices, a bevy of snacks, wet *oshibori* towels to freshen up with, and even free Wi-Fi as soon as you arrive at the van. Rent a car and the same welcome awaits you as you check in. Aqua and Bleu guests skip registration and head directly to their villas where they are personally greeted (with an optional tour).

Is there a private butler for every room?

Not the 44 rooms in the main hotel, however the villas come with a dedicated butler—available 24 hours a day. A private chef is available as well, and you can even opt for a “zero waste” cooking class from Czaplicki himself at your villa. Or better yet, have the chef prepare you and your guests a “Bohemian Table” (or romantic “Love Table” for couples) on the sand, while you sip martinis and watch the waves gently lap the shore.

Is the sheet thread count higher than 300?

They’re 100 percent cotton with a 300 thread count. Plus there are six pillow options: standard, memory foam, and feather, each available in soft or firm versions.

Is there a heated floor in the bathroom? What about a bidet?

While you won’t find heat floors anywhere in the Caribbean, the A/C is powerful enough to do just the opposite: cool the smooth wood underfoot. There is no bidet or fancy electronics in the toilet, but the shower and bath are each located in their own rooms larger than most Manhattan apartments.

Are the toiletries full-sized?

In the main hotel rooms, all Diptyque toiletries are full-sized; in the Villas they’re 50 ml samplers. It should be noted the hotel’s Le Spa exclusively features La Mer’s uber-coveted skin-care products.

Is there a private pool for the room’s exclusive use? How are the spa and gym?

Both villas have their own large private pools, while a half-dozen of the top suites in the main hotel offer plunge pools. Otherwise there is an expansive seaside infinity pool with bar service, or nearly 700 feet of white-sand beach that opens to the Bay de Grand Cru de Sac. With extensive sand bars across the turquoise water, you can swim almost completely across the bay or explore the calm waters via kayak. There is also a well-stocked gym.

After your workout, the Le Spa is waiting with a litany of massage and treatment options, including Janzu water meditations and La Mer Miracle Broth body and face rituals. With four treatment rooms, plus a sauna, a hammam and Nordic baths, the space is serene and immaculate, offering up a subtle aromatic buoyancy that doesn't overwhelm.



Do you want to spend Friday night in the lobby bar?

Perhaps not Friday night—if you're looking for action, Nikki Beach rules St. Barts's Friday slot. But the hotel's "WTF Rooftop," overlooking Grand Etang Lake, aims to be the island's preferred destination on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Allegedly named after the first words uttered by the Le Barthélemy's GM when he climbed there to survey the devastation from Hurricane Irma, the rooftop's culinary concept rotates weekly. (An Asian-inspired night might mean pizza layered with thick slices of sashimi ahi tuna and sprinkled with wasabi.) Live music keeps things festive.

Is there caviar on the room service menu? If so, what kind?

Sort of. While not on the room service menu itself, you can order anything from the restaurant or bar menus delivered to the privacy of your villa. So, yes, order up the Oscietra V20 and Sevruga from the Aman & Volzhenka caviar experience typically served at the pool.

Would you buy the hotel if you could?

There's simply no island in the Caribbean that matches St. Barts's refinement, sophistication, security, luxury shopping, and superb culinary options. Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa has a ridiculous rate of return guests and is consistently ranked among the top three of the island's five-star hotels. You'd be a fool not to want a piece of this paradise.

Rates: Ocean View Rooms from \$1,315.

Score: 7 out of 10.

What Our Score Means:

1-3: Fire your travel agent if they suggest you stay here.

4-6: Solid if you're in a pinch—but only if you're in a pinch.

7-8: Very good. We'd stay here again and recommend it without qualms.

9-10: Forget booking a week. When can we move in permanently?