

May 24, 2008

...Welcome to St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands

Please note, we own 2 houses on st. john

Luxury 5 BR house/East end (# 6 Privateer Bay Estates @Hansen Bay)

Or

5 BR house at Coral Bay (under renovations for now)

Homeowner: John F. Gallagher

Our phone # in Massachusetts is (978) 526-7512

our website: www.OurRentalParadise.com

our email: susan@OurRentalParadise.com

Thanks for renting our villa(s). You'll notice the breath-taking views of the ocean and Coral Bay from every room in both houses! Both houses are on the quiet east side of the island where there are few cars, no traffic jams, gorgeous scenery, friendly people and more donkeys and wild goats than humans! It's paradise on the east side of the island!

The Privateer Bay house has 4 master suites, each with its own private bath. And a 5th private Bedroom. There is also a pull out couch/queen bed in the family room (in the rear pod)

Sleeps 12 people. Plus crib. The 5th br with a queen bed. All Br's are fully air-conditioned. This house has just been totally renovated at a cost of \$ 250K with extensive landscaping, new pool and patios, new deck railings, every room painted in bright tropical colors, new beds and mattresses, new designer sheets and new furniture. The house is appraised at near \$ 2 million.

The Coral Bay house will also sleep 12 guests. Note: this house is undergoing renovations including a new swimming pool, patios, painting, etc. and is not available until winter 2009

Tel # at the Privateer Bay house: (340) 715-1803

Tel # at the Coral Bay 3 br house: (340) _____

Each house has a fully equipped kitchen with oven, microwave, blender (of course), icemaker (of course), full sized refrigerator and outdoor gas grille. Most of your meals you'll want to eat outside on the decks with the awesome ocean views.

Local Assistance: Our neighbors Sloop Jones, next house down from the 4 BR Privateer bay house are good friends of ours. And my local workmen are often on island Jim Court Donovan at (339) 203-1463 or Kyle Olsen at (978) 423-0099 who are usually there. They will arrange for the housekeeper to greet you when you get to the house so email us the expected time your plane lands in St. Thomas and we'll forward that to the housekeepers.

Getting Here: There is no airport on St. John (and helicopters are not allowed to land on the island either). Even country music star Kenny Chesney has to take a boat to get to his Peter Bay house on St. John (his primary residence by the way). It's easiest to fly into St. Thomas. (airport code is STT). Then you can take a 20 minute taxi ride to Red Hook on the east end of St Thomas to catch the ferry which runs hourly on the hour until well into the later evening. You can buy your (people) ferry ticket right there for \$ 6 per person.

The ferry ride from Red Hook St. Thomas over to St. John's Cruz bay only takes 20 minutes. From there it's best to get your rental car (reserve in advance is advised).

(People)Ferries run once per hour from Red Hook to St John, and every several hours from downtown Charlotte Amalie to St. John (a bit longer but more scenic boat ride). 7 am until usually 11pm) For the ferry schedule :

www.couponstjohn/stjohnferryschedule.htm

Another car rental option: you can rent a car at St Thomas airport (STT) and drive yourself to Red Hook about 35-40 minutes and take the car ferry over to St. John. Car ferries run from Red Hook St. Thomas to Cruz Bay St. John hourly on the half hour. But be careful as last car ferry over is 6:30pm. If you miss this, you'll need to take a people ferry over to St. John, then a taxi to our house, then the following day, reverse the process and go back to Red Hook and retrieve your rental car. A major pain in the neck should you miss the last 6:30pm car ferry to the island of St. John each day. Don't try cutting it close as there is often a lot of traffic on St. Thomas.

Directions to 5 BR house at Privateer Bay/Hansen Bay: From Cruz Bay it's a 22 minute drive over to the East side of St. John. Follow signs along the north shore beaches (past Caneel bay and Trunk bay, etc) to Coral Bay and you'll follow the road around on the left side of Coral Bay another 4 miles to our house at Hansen Bay. Our house is just past artist Sloop Jones' studio/house (take a left here and it's first house on left up the hill a few hundred yards). Sharp turn into driveway on left. There is now a sign that says: Wild Jasmine

Directions to house at Coral Bay: From Cruz Bay (where the ferry comes in from St. Thomas), follow signs along the north shore road to Coral Bay.

At Coral Bay, you take a right (towards Concordia) and go one mile. Our driveway is on the right, just before the Shipwreck restaurant. Drive up the driveway and you'll see the house. Sign on street says: Our Rental Paradise.com

Many major airlines fly direct from U.S. cities into St. Thomas. American Airlines, Continental and Delta have many flights including direct flights from Boston and NY. Spirit Airlines is now flying into STT with discounted rates. Try [www.orbitz](http://www.orbitz.com) or [www.kayak](http://www.kayak.com) for airfare bookings. Many airlines (like Jet Blue) also fly into San Juan and you can then take a local airline like Liat or AirCaribes over to STT.

No Passport Needed for the U.S. virgin islands. Just a birth certificate and drivers license or other photo ID. (all other Caribbean islands visits require you to have a valid passport in order to re-enter the United States)

Car Rental: there's a limited number of cars or jeeps for rent on the island so reserving one in advance is recommended, especially in peak winter months. Try these car rental places: _____

L & L Jeeps Rental St. John (340) 776-1120 (www.bookajeep.com)

St. John Car Rental (340) 776-6103 (www.stjohncarrental.com)

(Important: drive on the left !!!)

St. John is only 19 sq. miles and has a year round population of 4,000 people. Most of the island is protected National Seashore donated by the Rockefellars. Avg. temp in winter is 77 degrees F, and in summer is 83 degrees. There's normally a nice tropical breeze year round. Average rainfall is 40-50 inches per year and houses collect rainwater on the roof (known as a cistern) for drinking so please conserve water. U.S. citizens can bring home \$ 1,200 worth of goods each, duty free. The U.S. dollar is the currency and credit cards are accepted at most places.

Residents of the U.S. Virgin islands are citizens of the United States and have the right to vote and must pay regular federal taxes to the IRS. The first inhabitants of St. John are thought to be the Arawak and Carib Indians. Christopher Columbus was the first European to see St. John and gave it the name "Virgin Islands". Sugar plantations were common and African slaves were brought in to work the fields and rum production facilities.

The United States bought the Virgin Islands from Denmark for \$ 25 million in 1917 in order to prevent Germany (pre World War) from building a sub base here. Today, some houses on St. John in Peter Bay are worth that alone !

In case you were wondering... our 5 br house at Privateer Bay has an appraised value of about \$ 2.5 million. The house at Coral Bay will have a finished value of about \$ 2.5 million when the pool and patios are completed winter 2009.

Pack Light: Each house has a washer and dryer so just bring a few pair of shorts, a few polos, some t shirts, sandals, walking shoes and bathing suits. Don't bring a sports jacket or fancy night clothes as you will likely not wear them (only restaurant that requests long pants and a shirt with collar for men is Caneel Bay resort's formal dining room and the Ritz-Carlton dining room on St. Thomas. Jackets are no longer mandatory but collared shirt and long slacks for men are mandatory in those 2 restaurants at night). Avg daytime temps are 83 and night time you'll seldom need a sweatshirt or light jacket, though if you're on a boat at night a light jacket might be handy.

Groceries: There's several little funky convenience stores in Coral Bay (a few miles from the Privateer Bay house and only one mile from the Coral Bay house). They also have fresh fruits and veggies and even some decent meats. A surprisingly good selection. Not terribly expensive and pretty good quality. You might want to take the side road from Coral Bay past the convenience store to the "Coral Bay Garden Center". The lady who owns it is named Josephine and she also does the landscaping at our house. Great fresh veggies and many restaurants buy from her and her hubby co-owner.

For a bigger shopping trip, Cruz Bay has an excellent large gourmet supermarket: the Dolphin with fine wines, cheeses, meats, fresh fish, veggies, etc. All the convenience stores sell beer, wine and usually liquors. Rum is dirt cheap—as you might expect.

The Starfish market in the Marketplace complex in Cruz Bay is a great gourmet store with fresh fish and excellent meats, veggies, baked goods, etc. In the Marketplace you'll also find a good drug store, hardware, video rentals, banks, mail center, and hair and nail salons.

Beaches: Our homeowners association (at the Privateer Bay house) has deeded beach rights to a small beach at the foot of our hill (it's not real sandy but excellent for snorkeling). It's an OK place to catch some rays or take a dip but there are much nicer beaches along the north shore road such as Friars Bay, Cinnamon Bay, Trunk Bay, Caneel Bay, etc. Many are often deserted and you can just park your car on the side of the road. At Trunk Bay, you can rent snorkel gear and there's an underwater snorkel tour which is quite cool (self guided).

Vi's Beach and food stand (shack) is near our houses, 5 minutes away and is quite a nice little beach. She charges \$ 3 per person for beach access and she makes outstanding garlic chicken in her little food stand. Real friendly local lady. You may want to order some food from her in the afternoon and pick it up when she closes at 5pm. Tell her you're renting John Gallagher's house which she calls "Wild Jasmine" (the 5 br house at Privateer Bay)

The local people are very friendly you'll find and a pleasant "good morning" before ordering breakfast is a good idea (or they'll look at you funny). There is very little violent crime on St. John. However St. Thomas has its share of crime so if you go over there for dinner, avoid the dark alleys or out of the way streets downtown at night. The excellent restaurant Herve on St. Thomas is on the hill behind downtown and they have parking right there.

Shopping in St. Thomas is excellent as it's duty free and a great place to buy fine Swiss watches, electronics, clothes at Tommy Hilfiger and other designers, etc. The town is known as Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas.

St. John has a number of shops in Cruz Bay and a few art and funky local shops scattered around the island.

Great Restaurants: St. John has 5-6 outstanding gourmet restaurants and probably a dozen or more really neat casual family style places.

If you want to stay close to our house for a casual dinner, try Miss Lucy's at Coral Bay which has an excellent new chef from Chicago and you can eat right next to the ocean. Also in Coral bay is the famous Skinny Legs which is very casual and has good grilled local fish and BBQ—and a busy bar scene late afternoon when happy hour(s) start; The Shipwreck at Coral Bay (340) 693-5640, and Island Blues at Coral Bay are also good casual family dining with water views.

Skinny Legs at Coral Bay is also a sports bar with satellite tv and great drinks. A lot of boaters moored out in the bay take their dinghy in here to party and have a great burger. They say here the richer the customer, the worse they dress. I heard Bill Clinton was here in January of this year putting them down one night as he was staying on a yacht out in Coral Bay. (they're also famous for their t-shirts)

For Breakfast, you can't top the Donkey Diner at Coral Bay (just past the fork in road on the way to east end from Coral Bay). Sit outside with the wild goats and birds, etc for an excellent casual breakfast. A few wild donkeys will probably meander by on the hill. Just a 5 minute ride from our house.

For a special gourmet dinner, try Chateau Bordeaux high on a hill on the central road halfway over to Cruz Bay (www.stjohnrestaurants.com) (340) 776-6611. Or the dining rooms at the swanky Canneel Bay Resort (where Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie stayed this winter with their entourage).

Asolare in Cruz Bay shares same owners as Café Bordeaux (www.stjohnrestaurants.com) or call (340) 779-4747. Same with www.paradiso.com (340) 693-8899 which is located in the Mongoose Junction shopping complex in Cruz Bay.

In Cruz bay, we love La Tapas which has a really fine selection of freshly opened wines by the glass and eclectic cuisine. Tage is excellent. ZoZo's is also excellent and has

ocean/harbor views. And there's a bunch of funky bars overlooking the ocean that are all fun. www.morgansmango.com is a popular casual funky place on the water in Cruz Bay for food and drinks (and big margaritas !).

Sushi: Happy Fish is located in the Marketplace complex in Cruz bay and is very good. You can also eat on their patio (340) 776-1717. Try the local fish and chilled sakes.

The swanky resort Caneel Bay hosts a lot of celebrities such as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie recently, Michael J. Fox, Anne Bancroft, actor Kevin Bacon, the band Metallica. They have a nice formal dining room as well as several outdoor cafés you may want to try for dinner one night. Or just go to their huge outdoor bar and have a drink and relax. The Turtle Bay room is their swanky high end restaurant in a former sugar mill. Expensive but worth it (long pants required for men, but they're dropped their requirement that men wear a jacket in evening).

St Thomas restaurants: If you go over to St. Thomas for dinner, the top places might include the Ritz Carlton dining room (now a steak house I think) or the Ritz' casual outdoor grille (the Ritz is only a 5 minute ride from Red Hook); Herve downtown Charlotte Amalie; or Blue Moon Grille at Secret Harbor (5 min. cab ride from Red Hook). Blue Moon is very romantic/casual gourmet-- sitting outside overlooking the beautiful beach. Agave Terrace is also very romantic and good food and wines and overlooks the ocean (just a 6-7 minute cab ride from the Red Hook ferry)

If you're shopping in Charlotte Amalie and feel like having sushi for lunch, find the little place called Benny Iguana's. Superb sushi and definitely try the cooked muscles from New Zealand that are fantastic and they always seem to have them. It's also open at night of course and has a few tables outdoors. Try the sake chilled instead of warm. There's a bigger and brand new Benny Iguana's opening shortly at the new shopping complex on St. Thomas where the cruise ships dock. This is sushi at its best at BI's. (frankly quite a bit superior to Happy Fish on St. John I'd say)

Chef at the house: www.stjohncatering.com (340) 776-6117 they'll come to the house to cook for your group, or they can just drop off a gourmet meal. Or try East-West Catering at (340) 693-9343 (www.eastwestcatering.com) . Small world.....we were at our Stowe VT house recently and the woman server at a local restaurant is also a chef in the winter months at East-West catering on St. John and remembered us.

Need a workout? There's a gym or two in Cruz Bay with good fitness equipment. Gym in Paradise (340) 776-0600 is located in the Marketplace complex in Cruz Bay town.

Fun things to do: Take a snorkel trip half day boat to the coral reefs. Easy even for beginners. Some include lunch and free drinks. Snorkel gear provided. Try Captain Dan who has snorkel trips and sunset yacht cruise rides at (340) 776-4037 or email him at dristuc@aol.com

Do something you wouldn't normally do at home and buy some fresh fish for lunch and fire up our gas grille on the patios. Open a fine chardonnay or red wine and have a gourmet meal at noon, followed by a nice little nap. Crack a beer before lunch if you're so inclined.

Sailboat: Our friend Jared is the Captain of a 50 foot sailboat. They go out everyday for a 4 hour sail or so. For reservation, call his cell phone at (340) 626-8229. (he also sells real estate part time at Remax Island Paradise realty). Bring cover-up so you don't get sunburnt to a crisp.

Remember, "mad dogs and Englishman" sit in the mid-day sun. You can get a hell of a sun burn in just 10-15 minutes outside so take precautions in the Caribbean.

Take a day trip via boat over to Tortolla or one of the British Virgin Islands. But passports are needed to go over to the BVI's (unless you're just tying up at the Soggy dollar bar (on Jost Van dyke) and "swimming/wading" into shore as most people do).

Power boat trip: www.lionindasun.com is a real nice 26 ft Mako owned by two brothers from Boston Josh and Matt. They have a fully licensed Captain take you snorkeling or over to Virgin Gorda or Jost Van Dkye, or all of them. Call for reservation (340) 626-4783

www.waywardsailor.net Capt Phil (340) 473-9705 six guests max. 30 ft sailboat. Half day sails, snorkeling trips, sail over to Jost Van dyke, sunset sails. Very flexible. Half day sail with snorkeling just \$ 60 pp. If you want to get married, Capt. Phil is also an ordained Minister/JOP who can take care of that also.

Power boat chartered boat with Captain (holds 12 people max) the Stormy Petrel and Pirate's Penny (340) 775-7990 does day trips to the BVI's and snorkeling.

www.handsonsailing.com Capt Doug has a 35 ft sailboat (340) 344-2211

www.bestdaycharters.com or call (340) 643-3155

www.divelowkey.com scuba diving rental and tours (beginners welcome also)

www.tropicpowerboatrentals.com rent a beautiful 26 ft powerboat (guide is optional if you have no clue what you're doing). Call (340) 776-6462. find deserted beaches that Gilligan would envy.

www.powerboatrentalsvi.com rents 26 ft power catamarans (340) 775-0860. you can rent with or without a captain and can go anywhere in the u.s. or british virgin islands

www.sportfishvi.com marlin, tuna, wahoo, etc. call (340) 775-6147. Figure on \$ 700-800 for a 4-6 fishing trip. (dinner is free of course)

www.divest.john.com rents boats, jetskis, scuba and snorkel tours et (340) 776-6234

www.oceanrunner.vi rents 22, 25 or 28 ft. Mako powerboats in Cruz Bay (340) 693-8809

A really cool thing is to take a rented power boat or sailboat over to Jost Van Dyke for the Soggy Dollar Bar which is quite a party bar. Or the famous Foxy's bar(s) (there are now 2 of them on the island). You can even rent a small power boat and do it yourself but don't attempt this if you've never driven (piloted?) a boat before (or plan on partying heavily at Soggy Dollar Bar). Technically a passport is needed but I'm sure no one checks any id's or anything else at Soggy Dollar or foxy's. If you take the scheduled ferry over, a passport is definitely required but pretty simple to clear bvi customs (as they know people are coming over to party). It's only a 20 minute boat ride.

Kayak 3 hour trip: www.arawakexp.com or call (340) 693-8312... \$ 50 pp

Golf: St. Thomas has an excellent 18 hole Fazio designed course called Mahogany Run. Bill Clinton has played it a bunch of times. It's famous for its Devils Triangle, holes 15-16-17 where you have to shoot over water. From the Red Hook ferry, it's a 15 minute cab ride. Call for t-time and to rent clubs (340) 777-6250 www.mahoganyrungolf.com

Relaxing Massage: www.massagestjohnvi.com Barbara or Carrie will come to your house or you can go to them for Swedish massage, hot stones, etc (340) 693-5663. Or try www.stjohnmassage.com (340) 626-2271 who does deep tissue or thai yoga massage. They also make house calls of course.

Horseback Riding: Carolina Corral call Dana at (340) 693-5778.
www.stjohnretreats.com/trailrides.htm (great for kids and donkey rides too)

Motorscooter rentals: www.beachscooters.com (340) 693-rent

Getting Married: www.stjohnweddings.com the barefoot minister AnneMarie (340) 626-4658 (also for vow renewals). Ceremonies on the beach available. www.usviwedding.com is another wedding coordinator. Call Stacy at (888) 282-3933. We allow weddings at our house by the way.

Nude Beaches: (I knew this would get your attention).....sorry, this is not the island for you if you like the "au naturel" look. You want our St. Maarten houses.

Our Luxury House: We usually leave a fully stocked bar but please replace with other bottles of premium vodka, rum, bourbons, etc. The refrigerator contains condiments such as mustard, ketchup, olive oils, butter, etc so we don't throw these out between guests. Don't throw any fresh unopened foods if they're still good and maybe just leave a note in the refrigerator that they're recently purchased.

We always keep gourmet coffee in the freezer. (and sometimes a bottle of Stoli vodka)

Beds have silky Egyptian cotton 600 thread count fine linens.

All 5 Br's are air-conditioned. Several also have ceiling fans but doors that open wide for nice tropical breezes.

Please shut off A/C when not in use as electricity is very dear and expensive in the Caribbean.

First Night Groceries: No, you won't arrive to an empty house. Our maid will stock the refrigerator with a few goodies to get you through the first night. She'll put some beers in there (usually Carib or Presidente both brewed in the Caribbean of course), a dozen eggs, kids' cereal, milk and bread. As noted, coffee beans in the freezer (usually Starbucks or Peets or other premium brands)

Computer: There's internet access on our computer. Follow instructions on the machine to log on. It's fairly high speed with a radio signal and works surprisingly well.

We also have a Skype telephone/computer account so you can call anywhere for a few pennies a minute, on us. Instructions posted on the computer.

Real Estate: If you want to buy a piece of paradise here on st. john, it's easy to do. As a point of Reference, our 5 br house at Hansen Bay is valued close to \$ 2.5 million. To view properties and more info, call Diana who owns Remax/st john at (340) 775-0949

Before you leave:

1. please strip any beds used and leave soiled sheets on the floor
2. please load and start the dishwasher
3. it would help the maids if you could start a load of sheets and towels in the washing machine, or two, as there's a lot of laundry to be done in 5 hours
4. leave key as instructed
5. a little gratuity for the maid of \$ 20 or 30 is very much appreciated
6. Have a safe trip home
7. When you get home, email John and book next year's trip to the Caribbean and next year's ski trip to Stowe or Bretton Woods, NH also !

Note: We also have vacation houses in St. Maarten (the friendly island-- half French and half Dutch).

And 2 Ski houses (5 bedrooms each) on the slopes at Bretton Woods, NH.

And 3 big luxury 6 BR ski houses at Stowe Vermont (the Aspen of the East).

And a huge Ski Chalet at Sunday River Maine with two 4 br units, heated pool, movie theater and tremendous views of the slopes. Great for a summer rental as one big house sleeps 24 people.

Best regards for a great vacation!

John and Susan.

Please Conserve Water at the St. John Houses !

(we collect rainwater from the roof into our cistern and it's been dry lately so please don't run water unless necessary. Keep showers short please.

Please shut off air conditioning and lights when not in use.

Thanks.