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*Luxury Living in Tampa Bay*



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# THE ISLAND ESCAPE OF YOUR DREAMS

By Susan B. Barnes

Close your eyes and picture your perfect tropical island. Do you see waters of unimaginable shades of blue? Lush foliage and bright flowers surrounding you? Private beaches with no one else in sight? Intimate, luxurious accommodations from which to take it all in and enjoy the splendor of your private retreat?

Open your eyes, and look no further than Ladera in St. Lucia. For 20 years, Ladera has welcomed visitors to St. Lucia, and to their own private sanctuaries. With just 32 accommodations to choose from—26 suites and six villas—all with private pools, you'll feel as if you're the only guest on the property. From its perch on a forested ridge, 1,100 feet above the Caribbean Sea, the hotel offers breathtaking views of the volcanic Piton Mountains, a World Heritage Site, and the coastline below.

If you must leave your suite or villa, continue your luxurious getaway at Ti Kai Posé Spa ("little house of rest") with one of its wellness treatments. Recently opened onsite mineral pools are perfect for a soak, whether before or after a spa treatment, or after a hike on the mountainside or a day at the beach. The mineral pools were originally built in 1785, and it's rumored that Napoleon's Empress Josephine bathed in the same waters.

If you want something that requires a little more exertion, the hotel will gladly arrange island tours, hiking/rainforest walks with local guides, bird watching, SCUBA diving and snorkeling trips, horseback riding, climbing the Pitons, and sailboat and fishing charters. If you'd rather lay on the beach, hop aboard the complimentary shuttle and you're there! Or, visit the Saturday morning Soufrière market and take a cooking class using your finds.


When it's time to refill your tank, Ladera has its own on-site restaurant, Dasheene, which serves complimentary breakfast and afternoon tea, as well as lunch and dinner. The menu features Saint Lucian and Caribbean fare, based on local produce and fresh fish.

At the end of the day at Ladera, retire to your private suite or villa and watch the sun set seemingly just for your viewing pleasure. One of the most remarkable features of the hotel's suites and villas is the lack of a fourth wall, opening up to the breathtaking views beyond. When the stars come out at night, you'll have unobstructed star gazing, too.

In celebration of its twentieth anniversary, Ladera is unveiling five additional Hilltop Dream suites (October 2012), a new fitness room and yoga classes to further compliment its guests' experiences.

It's evident that Ladera is beloved by world travelers: it's been voted one of the 10 Best Caribbean Hotels for the tenth consecutive year by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers in the magazine's Annual Readers' Choice Awards, and recognized by *Travel + Leisure*, *ForbesLife* and *Caribbean Travel + Life* magazines.

Find out for yourself why Ladera has received so many accolades—plan your getaway to Ladera. When you open your eyes, you'll be in the place seen only in your dreams.

When you go: Ready to find your tropical oasis at Ladera? Getting there could take some time, but oh, the reward is so great! The best options flying from Tampa are via American Airlines and Delta Airlines. 



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[www.ladera.com](http://www.ladera.com)

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