

# CHARTER A COURSE

TOUCAN HILL, MUSTIQUE, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



IF EVER THERE WERE A PRIVATE ISLAND TO EXUDE EXCLUSIVITY, it would be Mustique, made world famous by frequent royal visitor and homeowner Princess Margaret Windsor. Purchased by Lord Glenconner Colin Tennant in 1958 with zero infrastructure and a name that bore evidence to its most populous inhabitant (Mustique comes from *moustique*, the French word for mosquito), the island's initial endeavor was to become a booming cotton plantation. Alas, the cotton didn't hold and in 1968 Tennant formed the Mustique Company, establishing home plots for his wealthy friends, and friends of friends, who sought a tropical hideaway that ensured privacy. Led by Swedish architect and British set designer Oliver Messel, Mustique Company's various home plots offered their eccentric owners (rock stars, socialites, private entrepreneurs) tremendous freedom to build the home of their dreams while using their investment in turn to help cover infrastructure costs. One such incredible home is that of Tatiana and Gerret Copeland, 30-year visitors to the island, which sits proudly on the highest point of the island and is known as Toucan Hill. Conceived entirely from the vision of philanthropist-businesswoman Tatiana Copeland, whose

temerity and perseverance were essential for the home's initial construction, Toucan Hill is every bit the marvel Mrs. Copeland originally intended.

Drawing upon her love for the Moorish architecture of southern Spain's Alhambra and the folktales of *1001 Arabian Nights*, mixed with the termite- and sun-laden environment's demand for a concrete structure, Toucan Hill is a determined departure from the norm of modern box-like construction. Its many arches, colorfully painted columns, fountains and Moroccan and Turkish pearl-inlaid and silver furnishings create an ambiance that is decidedly otherworldly, which is just what she intended. "I don't want this to feel like anywhere else," Mrs. Copeland explained. "I want people to visit and feel as though they're somewhere completely different from their everyday, so they can really relax and disconnect." Her husband Gerret emphatically agrees that there is no other place where he feels more relaxed than Toucan Hill. Despite her neighbors' shock when she shared the initial drawings—not to mention interior designers who were too traditional to properly see through her vision—Mrs. Copeland set out to bring her

imagination to reality on her own, relying on her husband as a partner. The name is actually derived from her initials, T.C., and the idea that "one can't, but two can," as she says, referring to their teamwork.

Beyond the intriguing design, guests are further wowed by the 360-degree hilltop view that includes both the Atlantic and the Caribbean, and ensures no room is without a full sea vista. Guests and visitors are hard pressed not to drop their jaws upon first glance at the incredible view, idyllically framed by the Moorish arches. With various sitting areas, including individual porches off each room, the ability to share the villa and yet still enjoy private moments away was an important design element for Mrs. Copeland. She was adamant during the design phase that each room be equal in size and offerings so that everyone would feel similarly indulged. The master suite, however, is tucked away from the other four bedrooms, affording the owners more privacy when they entertain and, given its decadent 24-karat-gold bed frame, it is rarely rented with the rest of the property, though there have been exceptions. With a permanent staff of seven, every whim is answered

including unpacking service upon arrival. Deemed an excellent party house by the lovely Patricia, Toucan Hill's loyal house manager, the property lends itself well to large celebrations and has played host to 300-person galas in the past. However, having enjoyed it during a more serene setting, we can vouch for the indulgent luxury that is a quiet candlelit dinner in the octagonal blue dining veranda, whose windows are forever open to the fresh sea breeze and whose exquisite Brazilian blue marble tile floor is almost too pretty to walk on. Whether it's the view, the thematic design or the sheer comfort of the villa's lofty luxury, Toucan Hill will never dull its guests, no matter how many times one is fortunate enough to visit. As such, the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote comes to mind: "Beauty without expression is boring."

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