

Resort offers beds to go

ROCHELLE LASH
MONTREAL GAZETTE

If you liked your seductive Caribbean sojourn at Ladera, the resort wants you to bring home an important part of it.

Ladera is a tropical paradise in St. Lucia, an enchanting and exclusive honeymoon resort perched on a cliff overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Consistently rated among the most romantic resorts in the world by such travel bibles as Condé Nast, it is unique in many ways, primarily its open-air ethos and eco-luxury amid the rainforest.

Hotelier Olivier Bottois, a former Montrealer who is from France, has added innovative features to an already special destination.

“Ladera is about creating lifetime memories,” said Bottois, Ladera’s vice-president of operations who also has a prestigious background at Four Seasons Hotels, the illustrious Hôtel Le Saint-James in Old Montreal, the tony Relais & Châteaux and the presidential Elysée Palace in Paris.

“We have taken Ladera’s romantic experience to the next level, personalizing honeymoons and special occasions in unforgettable ways — with seductive indulgences here on the island plus something rare to take home.”

Ladera’s Honeymoon Furniture Concierge works with guests to customize their beds, which are then crafted by in-house artisan carpenters.

Carved in tropical hardwood with the guests’ names or initials, the bed can be shipped home, a memento to cherish forever. Vacationers can even re-create their entire idyllic Caribbean suite — all of the folkloric furniture is built on site and can be ordered.

OPEN-AIR SUITES
Ladera is full of surprises and rich with romantic experiences that play on St. Lucia’s sensual vibe

and sultry climate. If you are honeymooning, the celebrations start before you arrive. Ladera has an online gift registry so friends and family can buy the newlyweds extras such as spa treatments, meals or excursions.

The resort’s most distinctive aspect is that each of its 37 luxurious suites and villas has only three walls, so guests always are at one with nature — constantly soothed by gentle trade winds and entertained by the songs of tropical birds fluttering on mango and almond trees. As you and your lover lounge in your own honeymoon haven, you will have a view of the vivid blue sky, the splendid aquamarine waters of the Caribbean and the sharp points of St. Lucia’s defining landmarks, the Piton Mountains, which are UNESCO heritage sites. You can gaze outdoors from your bed, from your sitting area and from your own private plunge pool. Yet, each space is the ultimate in privacy, the perfect arena for the game of love.

SECLUDED OR SOCIABLE
Ladera guests can have two distinct experiences: The privacy of a secluded hideaway where you can skinny-dip and cocoon all day, and later the sociability of the island-style celebration of the sunset, energized by steel-band music and cocktails.

To mark the resort’s 40th anniversary in 2012, Bottois expanded the hotel’s spa services with outdoor couples’ massages and added platinum-level, ultra-luxe suites called Paradise Ridge.

Also recent, the resort’s only air-conditioned spaces are the fitness room and the sophisticated wine cellar and tasting room for gourmet events.

Ladera’s cuisine is a blend of executive chef Nigel Mitchel’s island heritage and Bottois’s Gallic gourmet background. Delectable dishes — both sweet and tart — include:



The eco-luxury suites at Ladera in St. Lucia have private plunge pools and open-air façades overlooking the Caribbean. Carved in tropical hardwood with guests’ names or initials, the bed can be shipped home. *LADERA RESORT*

sugarcane duck, plantain-crusted mahi-mahi, guava-teriyaki glazed chicken, sweet potato and coconut soup, BBQ scallops, citrus ceviche with cilantro, papillote of salmon and seafood pepper pot.

The way to your lover’s heart just might be through food, after all. The local delicacy, conch, either stewed or grilled, is considered an aphrodisiac.

IF YOU GO

Air Canada flies directly to St. Lucia, seasonally from Montreal and year-round from Toronto.

Ladera, Soufrière, St. Lucia: ladera.com, 866-290-0978, 758-459-6618. January rates start at about \$450 per night, for two, including private ensuite plunge pool, central swimming

pool, fitness room, walking paths. The customized honeymoon bed frame is \$5,000 U.S., plus shipping. **Excursions:** hiking the Piton Mountains, deepsea fishing, Soufrière Sulphur Springs.

Tourism Saint Lucia, West Indies: 800-869-0377, www.stlucianow.ca.

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