

Property Mail

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Are any affordable properties still available in the Caribbean? Yes, says **Liz Rowlinson**

ST LUCIA is a favourite honeymoon destination and has been voted the world's fourth most beautiful island by Condé Nast Traveller.

It is famous for its palm-edged beaches, lush green rainforests and its distinctive pair of volcanic mountains, the Pitons, which were last week declared a Unesco world heritage site.

This mango-shaped island, 27 miles long, has been underdeveloped for years and is a very different creature from its brash Caribbean neighbour, Barbados, where tourism and the expat community have been established for far longer.

Property prices on St Lucia are therefore among some of the most affordable in the Caribbean. And whereas Mustique, The Bahamas and Antigua mostly offer very expensive properties for sale, St Lucia's lack of celebrity razzle-dazzle means prices there are a



A TYPICAL example of St Lucia's affordable property market is this three-bedroom waterfront villa with private yacht mooring in Marlin Quay on Rodney Bay for £186,000. It is on the market with British estate agent Hastings & Co (01573 226999). Marlin Quay is a purpose-built holiday complex of

timeshare properties, although the owners of this villa have bought all the 52 weeks and now own it outright. A speedboat and Vitara 4x4 are being thrown in with this semi-detached three-floor, self-contained, townhouse villa. All the bedrooms are double, two of them en suite, and there's a sun terrace on the roof.

free membership of the nearby St Lucia Golf And Country Club.

With sheltered moorings, it will also appeal to yachters and the first 100 buyers are being offered a duty-free boat. Duty on boats is 50-60 per cent, so you can effectively buy a yacht for half price.

Sailing is much better here than in Barbados, and the properties are 40 per cent cheaper than in Port St Charles, an equivalent marina development there.

Anyone worried about hurricanes — the last one hit in 1981 — will be reassured to know that the apartments are being built to Florida construction codes.

Another very different project, also the first of its kind on the island, is Calabash Cove.

This adults-only resort takes the Sandals concept — 'luxury resorts for couples in love' — to a new level, yet promises to provide the peace and seclusion that more garish all-inclusive hotels do not always deliver.

This small five-star resort — due to open on October 1 — is being built on the north coast, ten minutes from Rodney Bay. Twenty-three Balinese-style cottages spread over a hill sloping down to a beach have large verandahs, a hammock, open-air shower and mahogany furniture.

Seven of these bungalows are being offered for sale with fractional ownership. You buy a tenth of a cottage for £61,000 and use it for five weeks a year on a fair rotation system with the nine other owners.

FRACTIONAL ownership — which is also very pop-