



Housed in converted sugar mills dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, Nevis's four plantation inns each provide an enchanting setting for a lunchtime libation or evening cocktail. These remarkable 'great houses' also represent living history BY PETER SWAIN

The Hermitage

Accommodating an English pub-style bar, fascinating library and fine selection of antique furniture, the Great House is believed to be the oldest surviving wooden building in the Caribbean, dating back to about 1670. The establishment was reclaimed from the jungle in 1971 by Richard Lupanacci – he and his family have run it ever since, turning it into one of the region's premier historic hotels.

The bar, decorated with racehorse prints, has a fine selection of aged rums, single malt whiskies, craft gins and flavoured vodkas. The humidor is well stocked, and conversation always lively – what more could a visitor possibly want? hermitagenevis.com



Montpelier Plantation

Nevis's only Relais & Châteaux hotel has a splendid Great Room in which pre-dinner cocktails and canapes are served in the grand style. About 750 feet above sea level, the place oozes romantic history – it was here that Horatio Nelson married Frances 'Fanny' Nisbet in 1787, and Princess Diana stayed with Princes William and Harry in 1992.

The rum punch, reputedly made with local sour oranges, is one of the more

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lethal on island, and the bar staff have a wealth of experience when it comes to creating the perfect aperitif. There's also live music at the hipster bar next to the poolside Indigo restaurant. montpeliernevis.com

Golden Rock

This plantation inn also dates back several hundred years, but it's the transformation by fêted artists Brice and Helen Marden that's put it on the international map. Architect Ed Tuttle, of Aman fame, and landscape designer Raymond Jungles have created an exotic restaurant terrace featuring reflection pools and modern sculpture that's magical by day, and reminiscent of a James Bond film at night.

With a view out towards Montserrat, the fantastical gardens – featuring 30 different varieties of bamboo, 75 palms, many orchids and countless bougainvillea – can be enjoyed by lunchtime patrons, while the cosy bar is better suited to pre-dinner drinks. goldenrocknevis.com



Nisbet Plantation

The only historic plantation inn in the Caribbean right next to the beach has a grandeur epitomised by English-style afternoon tea that can be taken on the lawn where Fanny Nisbet and Horatio Nelson once strolled. It also has the perfect hosts in Tim Thuell and his wife Tina, as well as the friendliest staff on island. The Great House, built in about 1778, offers a relatively formal dining experience with a sophisticated bar to match.

Sea Breezes Beach Bar is an altogether looser affair. Within feet of the surf, this is the perfect venue in which to slake the thirst during a day at the beach, or kick back in the early evening while listening to live music. nisbetplantation.com



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EAT & DRINK



Sundowners

Several bars also specialise in mouthwatering sundowners

SUNSHINE'S

Sunshine has been wowing visitors with his 'secret recipe' Killer Bees for years. The combination of the infamous rum cocktail's potency and the bar's location at the southern end of Pinney's Beach are perfect for watching the fabled 'green flash' as the sun dips below a cloudless horizon. 469 5817

BANANAS

The stylish restaurant and boutique art gallery halfway up Nevis Peak has a rooftop 'firefly lounge' affording a stunning view over the mango trees down to the beach and cobalt sea beyond. A signature Passion fruit martini, the



perfect sundowner, can be accompanied by a Cohiba Robusto before dinner. bananasnevis.com, 469 1891

MANGO

Right next to the ocean, prize-winning mixologist Kendie Williams, the queen of the Caribbean cocktail, has over 120 rums – from Ron Zacapa Centenario to El Dorado – with which to toast the setting sun. Opposite the twinkling lights of St. Kitts, this is an altogether upscale affair. fourseasons.com, 469 1111

CHRISHI BEACH

Norwegians Christian and Hedda Wienpahl's convivial beach bar and restaurant has a Euro Lounge vibe. As well as a fine selection of rosés, long, cool daytime cocktails feature fresh fruits and exotic rums. Sundowners are altogether spicier... chrishibeachclub.com, 469 5959

THE GIN TRAP

Overlooking the Narrows, this elegant bar and sunset cocktail deck favours frozen drinks, fresh juices and 101 varieties of gin. Other beverages are available, but this is the place for a dirty martini, gimlet or house speciality, a Ginmare – gin, chocolate liqueur, peach schnapps, Midori and fresh orange juice. thegintrapnevis.com, 469 8230