

# Property

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## House of common

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# Where you need a wide berth

Marina villages – playgrounds for boaty types – are now springing up in the Caribbean. **Chris Partridge** sets sail

MARINA villages, where a sailor can buy a house with a berth for a yacht at the bottom of the garden, are well established in the US and Europe. Now the concept is spreading to the Caribbean.

Building a marina village is not cheap: it usually involves excavating a basin or canal and constructing a mole or breakwater to protect the entrance. But it is usually worth the effort, because nowhere is nicer to live than a small harbour with boats sailing in and out, especially if the mole has a nice restaurant and bar at the end where you can enjoy the sunset in the company of other boaty types.

The first marina village in St Lucia, one of the loveliest of the Windward Islands, is being carved out of the beach at Rodney Bay.

It is to be called the **Landings**, and its lagoon will be excavated out of a causeway originally constructed, ironically, from the spoil from the excavation of the Rodney Bay Marina next door a few decades ago. The spoil will be reused on the development to create a small hill for the hotel at its centre.

The fact that the land is reclaimed is vital for the development. Most of St

Lucia's coast is owned by the government under the ancient 'Queen's Chain' regulation, under which the government owns the coastline for a distance of one chain (20 metres) from high water. Being artificial, this area is exempt and properties can be offered freehold.

The lagoon will be ringed with low-rise blocks of apartments in a Caribbean/Floridian style, with arcades on the ground floor and open balconies above. Inside, the apartments will be in a contemporary style, with fitting of local tropical hardwoods.

Apartment owners will be able to buy or lease berths in the lagoon (boats up to 15m) or on the mole outside (boats up to 60m). A number of mooring buoys will also be available for truly humungous yachts. The resort operators will undertake to get both your flat and your boat ready for your arrival by cleaning floors, swabbing decks and filling fridges.

It sounds like ownership without pain. Water and fuel are available at the Landings, but for slippage and maintenance, owners will have to go to the boatyards at Rodney Bay Marina next door. The first 100 boat owners to buy



Top, the marina village of Port St Charles in Six Mens Bay, Barbados, and above, Rodney Bay in St Lucia, where the Landings resort, right, will be built. Prices for apartments on the development will range from £250,000 to £400,000.



at the Landings will also get a waiver on import tax for their boat. As this is currently levied at 50 per cent, the tax on a million-dollar yacht is a significant saving. Several local people are said to have bought flats mainly for the tax saving, aiming to use the boat themselves and rent the flat out to holiday-makers.

Prices at the Landings start at about £250,000 for a

one-bedroom apartment overlooking the lagoon and rise to about £400,000 for a three-bedroom apartment looking over the beach and bay. Call Premier Resorts on 08000 835560 for details.

One of the first of the new marina villages in the Caribbean is Port St Charles in Six Mens Bay, Barbados, completed at the end of last year. The lagoon has two man-made islands and the

entrance is protected by a breakwater with super-yacht moorings, fuel dock and heliport.

The architecture here is more colonial in feel, with lots of classical columns and louvred turrets. Every home comes with a berth in the lagoon ranging from 30ft to 110ft. The few remaining apartments are on the beachfront and feature views over the beach and the

marina. Two huge five-bed apartments on Commodore's Point, each with 110ft berths, are also available at about £4 million – ring Knight Frank on 020 7629 8171.

Bajan Properties (0808 234 6006) is selling a second-floor apartment with three bedroom suites and a large balcony. It has lovely ocean and lagoon views plus direct access to a secluded beach and a 50ft dock. The price is about £1.5m.

Jolly Harbour in Antigua is much more affordable, so most of the houses and apartments there are smaller and less luxurious – but when you are out there you want to go sailing, don't

**Operators will clean both flat and boat – and fill up the fridges**

you? The development is now sold out except for the show house, a great big villa with four bedrooms, four bathrooms, garage and a 50ft mooring at the end of the patio. For many the main attraction will be the price – just £240,000 through Waterside Properties (02392 777073).

Back on St Lucia, **Marigot Bay** is where in the 1780s Admiral Barrington hid his fleet from the French by ordering the topmasts to be camouflaged with palm fronds. He then nipped out and took them by surprise. The bay is one of the loveliest in the island, with steep wooded sides and palm groves on the beaches. The narrow inlet is now lined with a gaggle of villas and restaurants, and **Discovery**, a hotel and marina village.

The marina village consists of small two-storey apartment blocks in traditional style with big verandas looking out over the water. Unfortunately for avid sailors, they do not come with their own moorings but these can be rented from the marina. Four two-bed apartments at the marina village are left, at prices starting at £150,000 through **Premier Resorts**.