



# A TASTE OF *Paradise*

**Our summer raffle last year included an amazing holiday in the Caribbean. For those who didn't win, Michelle Preston paints a picture of what you missed...**

**“B**e dazzled by the panoramic views of hills, valleys, rainforest, mountains, the Caribbean Sea, sunsets and sunrises. Or just relax in our landscaped gardens, enjoying the cooling breezes, swimming in the pool, lounging on the sun deck, watching butterflies flutter by and hummingbirds feed from the flowers.” Those are the words used to describe The Lodge by proprietors Mark and Mary Hardy – and every word is true.

For 10 years, Mark and Mary ran a vegetarian guest house in Bristol but five years ago they upped sticks to fulfil their dream and moved to St George's on the island of Grenada, the largest of the Grenadine Islands. It is a rolling, mountainous island, covered with rare tropical flowers and fragrant spice trees – nutmeg, cloves, ginger, cinnamon and cocoa.

In the interior of this volcanic paradise are cascading rivers and waterfalls, lush rainforests and one of the most breathtakingly beautiful mountain lakes imaginable. The capital, St George's, is widely held to be the loveliest city in the Caribbean, its horseshoe-shaped harbour surrounded by a pastel rainbow of dockside warehouses and red-tiled roofs of traditional shops and homes.

And as though that wasn't enough, it is bordered by stunning beaches and dotted with picturesque towns which come to life with colourful Saturday markets. Bristol? No competition, really!

The Lodge is an old plantation or 'great' house built in classic open Caribbean style to benefit from the cooling breezes of the trade winds. Being 600 feet above sea level, you have a 360 degree view of the island:

“By walking around the garden, you have a full sense of the island's terrain,” says Mary. “The only 'wow' we have ever encountered to surpass the views at The Lodge is the Grand Canyon!”



Even paradise has a price but a stay at The Lodge is great value for money. The daily rate per person is £75, which includes all meals (minimum 5 days – two people sharing a double room. For single occupancy, add 20 per cent).

There are also some great offers for 2006 (limited availability – price per person):

7 days for 5: £375  
14 days for 10: £750  
21 days for 15: £1125

Prices include: Free airport transfers. Free beach shuttle. Daily vegan breakfast, lunch and three-course evening meal. Housekeeping and laundry service. Local government hotel taxes. Service charges.

For more information, contact  
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Within this extraordinary setting, Mary and Mark have created an ethical haven. All food is animal-free and created using local, organic ingredients or those grown on their almost three acres of land. This sample of dishes from the seven-day menu will tickle your taste buds – pumpkin and ginger soup, roast garlic and artichokes in vinaigrette dressing, tempura with spinach sauce and rice 'n' peas with stuffed peppers and a hot salsa sauce – and coconut sorbet, of course.

Imagine indulging yourself at The Lodge for a fortnight – free. That's precisely what happened to Suzanne Owen-Davies, 47, and her partner Bob Barrett, 52, from Egham in Surrey after they won *Viva!*'s 2005 summer raffle. In fact, they weren't the actual winners – it was Suzanne's mother who generously passed on the prize as a present.

"There was a wonderfully varied selection of food – some of which I'd never had before or which was cooked in a novel way," says Suzanne. "In fact, the chef was excellent and although not vegan we thoroughly enjoyed it. After eating such great food for two weeks, we felt extremely satisfied and healthy at the end of our holiday! Since coming home, I've been incorporated some of The Lodge's recipes into our own cooking."

With accommodation available for only six people at a time, The Lodge offers an extremely intimate and luxurious experience for guests. Suzanne, a solicitor, enthused:

"We were the only people there during our visit so it was like being house guests. Mark and Mary gave us lifts to different beaches, conducted tours of the island and the fact that they were able to describe the island's background for us in detail made us feel

much more a part of the real Grenada and its people rather than simply being tourists."

Mark explained: "Guests are offered an island sightseeing tour as part of the package, with visits to the Grand Etang Rainforest, the Grenada (Organic) Chocolate Company, a vegan picnic at Bathway Beach and a visit to River Antoine traditional rum distillery, which generates its power from a huge water wheel."

"The island itself is just lovely," continued Suzanne, "and not overdeveloped so there are no high-rise buildings. In fact, the place is idyllic. I saw other tourists and their hotels in the town but much preferred it where we were, on top of a beautiful hill with its delightful cooling breeze. Peace and quiet but only five minutes away from the centre of things. Wonderful!"

Suzanne concluded: "Coming home, our flight was delayed by 24 hours which meant we had to stay an extra day – not exactly a hardship. It was a unique experience and we will certainly be going back!"

