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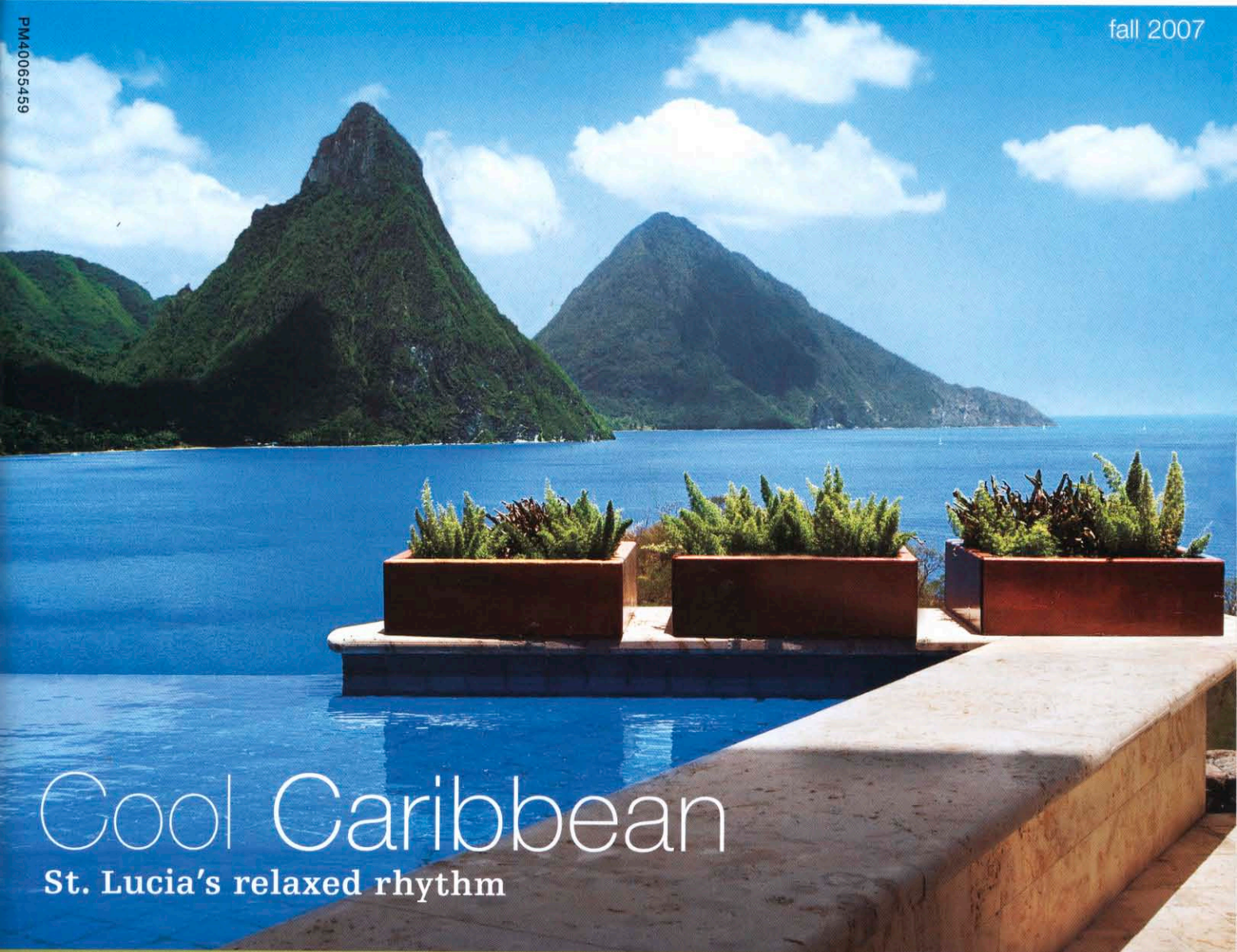
magazine

Lifestyle, travel and cool car stuff

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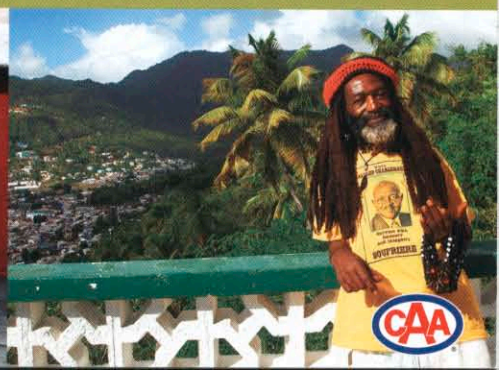
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Cool Caribbean

St. Lucia's relaxed rhythm

car psychology + pet products to go + fall field trips + enter our Irish getaway contest



MAR



Caribbean Champions

by Robyn Moreno and Terence Baker

For many, a vacation should be all about ease, comfort and relaxation. When we work hard all year, why should our week or two off be fraught with problems? All-inclusive resorts allow visitors to pay up front, charge the occasional expense to their rooms and not have to reach for their wallets and purses, ever. With stellar food, stylish surroundings and top-notch amenities, these Caribbean gems (each being a star in its category, from midlevel to luxury) prove that all-inclusive hotels can be both easy *and* elegant. *Car & Travel* looks at three lesser-visited islands and picks out its favorite resorts.

ST. LUCIA

This island often is referred to as the "Helen of the West Indies," a reference mirroring its natural splendor with that of

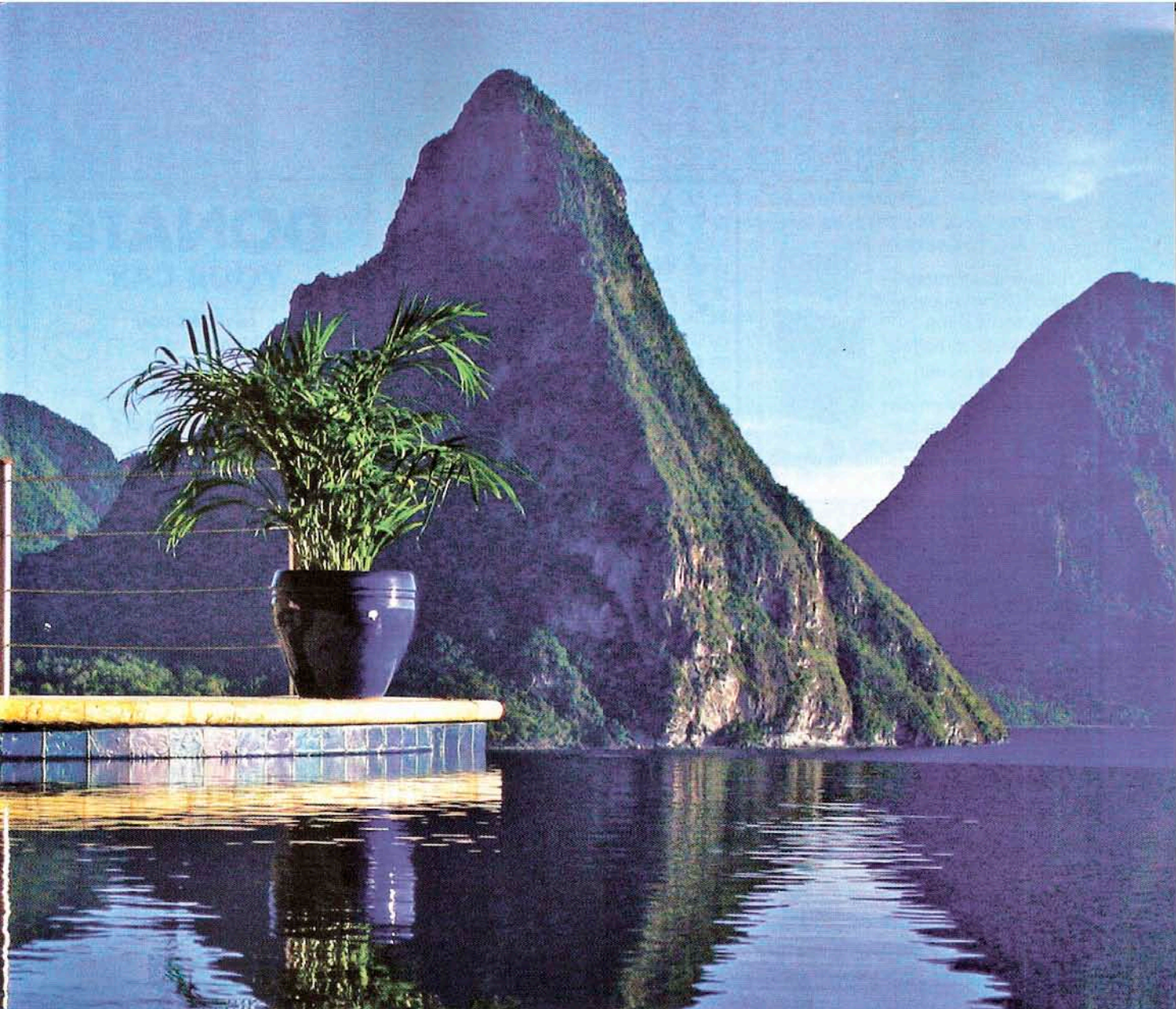
Helen of Troy's fair face, which launched a thousand ships. The island boasts both an aquamarine coastline and dramatic mountain views, perfect for sun worshippers and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort, Castries

North of St. Lucia's capital, Castries, and the airport, this resplendent, 56-acre resort has Mediterranean-style accommodations ranging from oceanview rooms to three-bedroom villas with plunge pools. Guests enjoy varied meal options and premium wine and liquor. Sporty types delight in windsurfing, catamarans and night tennis. Nonmotorized sports are included, as are all tips, taxes and service charges. Spa visits are not included, but sybaritic guests enjoy relaxing treatments and a superfriendly staff.

Anse Chastanet/Jade Mountain, Soufriere

On the island's southwest coast, Anse Chastanet offers jaw-dropping views of the sugarloaf-shape mountains of Grand Piton and Petit Piton, the symbols of St. Lucia. The sparkling sea here is considered to be among the world's best, as is its snorkeling and diving. The hotel's 49 rooms are stylishly adorned. Dining options abound, including fusion cuisine at the open-air Treehouse and the beachside Indian cuisine of Apsara. Mountain biking on the resort's private plantation supplements spa treatments, sunset cruising and tours to volcanic springs and the Pitons. Everything here is luxurious, but for even more opulent digs, book a stay at the new, 24-room Jade Mountain. Guests ascend an ingenious series of ramps and steps before



arriving at private walkways. No two rooms are alike, but all have plunge pools, canopy beds and gorgeous views of the Pitons. This resort-within-a-resort also has a private restaurant and rooftop terrace.

JAMAICA

No other Caribbean island conjures up the same blissful escape-from-it-all vibe as does Jamaica. Home to reggae, the idyllic Dunn's River Falls and Blue Mountain coffee, a trip here is sure to make everything alright, to paraphrase the lyrics of its most famous son, Bob Marley.

Couples Swept Away, Negril, Jamaica

On Negril's famed seven-mile beach, the resort's white sands and warm, turquoise waters are its biggest draws. That said, Swept Away tantalizes patrons with

water skiing, golf and rides on glass-bottom boats. Diners choose between six restaurants, whose offerings range from Thai to fine dining, and six bars. Smartly decorated are its 312 rooms, but the resort does spread itself out somewhat (can guests' demands for both privacy and convenience ever be satisfactorily solved?). The staff is warm and efficient at this resort, consistently voted one of the Caribbean's top values.

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

The first job visitors here have is to contemplate which of its 365 beaches they want to head to (the local joke is that the islands have 366 beaches on leap years). Azure waters, naval history and historic sugar mills add to the islands' lure.

Jolly Beach Resort, Bolans, Antigua

This 462-room resort occupies a beautiful beach (a second gorgeous strand is on the opposite side of the small hill to its left). An 8,000-square-foot pool divides the sea from five restaurants. Of the restaurants, the Indian choice, Utsav, is the best and hints at a British presence (the islands were a British colony until 1981), with Bocciolo, serving Italian food, a good runner-up. King Superior rooms have the most space, while Supersavers are small. Nonmotorized water sports are included, and daily entertainment and a tour desk are on hand. A spa is planned for this winter.

Hermitage Bay, Hermitage Bay, Antigua

Opened earlier this year, Hermitage Bay

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