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## 1. ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

SAGHS' Young Leaders 2005 ... Strengthening Our Societies ... Our Vision ... Our People ... Our Culture

**St. Vincent and the Grenadines** are located in the south Eastern Caribbean about 90 miles west of Barbados. The Grenadines are some 32 islands and cays stretching south from St. Vincent. Only 8 of the Grenadines are populated and 4 of these have small Airports: Bequia, Mustique, Canouan and Union. The remainder are bird sanctuaries and havens for hikers and snorklers. All are volcanic in origin, deeply embayed with inlets where clear aquamarine waters shallow up on fine white sand beaches. The larger islands include Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Palm, Petit St. Vincent, Mayreau and Union. There are some uninhabited islets and rocks including the famous Tabago Cays. All the Grenadines have lovely soft white coral sand beaches and clear water, ideal for snorkelling, diving and sailing.

The true boys of St. Vincent are men of the sea. This fact defines the type of visitor that finds these islands truly enchanting.

The big island of **St. Vincent** has rugged mountainous terrain, lush forest and many uncluttered beaches and inlets that more than imitates an Amazon getaway. Yet the island is sufficiently small (133 sq. miles - 18 miles long and 11 miles wide) that there is never the dread of being lost to civilization with a good guide. This most fertile of Caribbean islands has been fed by volcanic ash as recently as April 1979 - and provides for its inhabitants enough fruit and vegetables to make them self-sufficient. The Soufriere volcano which is to the north of the island is itself a wonderful attraction for the energetic and adventurous visitor.

On the south west coast of the island is Kingstown the small bustling capital, built on a broad bay between two hilly promontories. From Kingstown, highways wind their way northward along both coasts: the Atlantic or Windward coast is rugged, with pounding surf and rocky shores, providing dramatic landscapes; the Caribbean or Leeward coast offers spectacular scenery and most of the island's beaches. The most beautiful beaches in St. Vincent lie along the south coast, some of the best being at Villa, four miles from Kingstown.

### GRENADINES

Largest and first of the chain of Grenadines Islands, the name **Bequia** comes from the Carib word meaning "*Island of the Clouds*". Many yacht people from the countries like New Zealand, Australia, France, Belgium, Norway, Italy, South Africa, Canada, Great Britain and the United States think of Bequia as the "*Jewel of the Grenadines*". Picturesque Admiralty Bay well known for the Seventeenth Century pirates and the British, French and Spanish

Navies is now found dotted with as many as 100 sailing yachts and other ships of calling.

The very name Bequia hides the fact of romantic visions of blue skies, white beaches and lazy days under a tropical sun and a tropical moon - unless you think of "clouds" as heavenly. Bequia is an island for the connoisseur. Very few Caribbean islands offer such a tranquil and beautiful location for an escapist's dream holiday. The island is just 7 miles long.

Bequia offers a paradise complete with quiet lagoons, beautiful reefs and long stretches of near-deserted beaches. Small, beautifully lush, and the quiet side, Bequia has its own unique culture. The atmosphere is very West Indian and the inhabitants who enjoy a comfortable standard of living, are usually friendly and polite.

**Mustique** (mus-teek) - an island that is 3 x 1 1/2 miles in size and is 1 1/2 hours sailing from St. Vincent (12 miles). Some twenty five years ago, the completely unspoiled Caribbean island became the property of a devotee of the island life, who then directed a gradual development of the island. In the years since, some of the world's most sophisticated beachcombers arrived, lured to this island gem by safe, warm waters, varied terrain and astonishing views.

Mustique offered the new arrivals an opportunity to participate in something rare. The houses they built were under the direction of British Designer the late Oliver Messel and his sensitive restorations to ensure that existing structures reflect the lifestyle and taste of their owners. There was respect given to topography, climate and above all the relaxed, casual comfort sought by the members. Now the directors of the Mustique Company invite all to enjoy the unspoiled enchantment of the island.

**Canouan** (ca-o-one) is about 3 hours from St. Vincent (25 miles). A crescent-shaped island surrounded by wide shallows and coral - A scuba diver's dream. The islanders are mainly fisherman and small farmers. However, with a wealth of excellent beaches and unspoilt scenery, Canouan is attracting significant hotel development.

**Mayreau** (mi-roe) has about 40 to 60 persons living on the island - again mainly fishermen and small farmers. The island is privately owned and modest plans for development are projected. The island is only accessible by boat and is approximately 4 hours from St. Vincent (35 miles).

**Union Island** is about 4 1/2 hours from St. Vincent (40 miles). The island is approximately 3 miles long and 1 mile wide. The island has a dramatic profile of ridges and peaks - the highest is Mount Parnassus some 900 feet above sea level for such a small island - a little Tahiti. Because Union Island is the most southern of the island nation: St. Vincent and the Grenadines, it boasts the headquarters of the southern Grenadines.

**Palm Island** is just 400 yards offshore of Union Island - it is surrounded to the north, south

and east by coral reefs - so access is limited to a launch from Union Island. Of its four beaches, the west - Casvarina is reputed to be one of the finest in the Grenadines.

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