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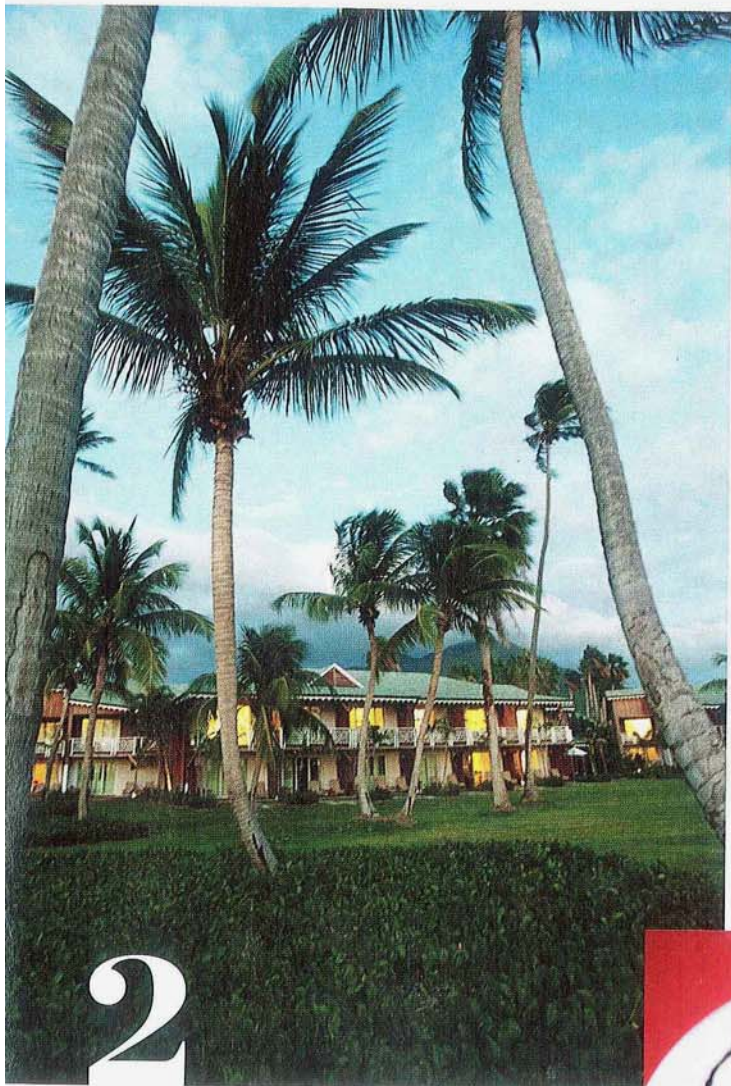
Nevis on the Rise

Natural attractions, a spanking new Four Seasons Resort and possibly the Caribbean's friendliest people make this diverse destination a must.

STORY & PHOTOS BY DEBBIE SNOW



L **Fine Liming** If the cocoa-colored sand, luxuriant stands of palm trees and in-your-face view of neighboring St. Kitts aren't reason enough to visit Pinney's Beach, perhaps the Four Seasons' new Mango restaurant is. Set so close to the sea that rocks provide its foundation, this upscale eatery boasts food that's as impressive as the scenery — no mean feat, especially during happy hour, when the west-facing terrace becomes *the* place to snap that sunset shot.



2 Perennial Favorite Newly reopened after a two-year renovation, the Four Seasons' flagship Caribbean resort (869-469-1111; fourseasons.com) is raising the bar on opulence while retaining the special touches — such as the West Indian fretwork — guests have always loved. Standout upgrades include the Library Bar, a new hot spot for aperitifs, and strikingly designed reflecting pools. Must-splurge bonus: the new beach cabanas, where your every wish is fulfilled for a mere \$325 per day (\$650 in high season).



3 Good-Karma Garden For the ultimate Nevisian slow-food experience, just follow your nose — and the cars pulling over for barbecue at Mansa's Last Stop (869-469-8530), near Oualie Beach Resort. Once a simple pumpkin patch, the stand now includes six acres of vegetables and fruit trees, with a storefront and covered deck for liming and dining. Mansa himself grows most of the fresh produce he sells, or uses it to make treats such as tangerine juice and wine distilled from guava or sorrel. He's there seven days a week, from early morning till late at night.



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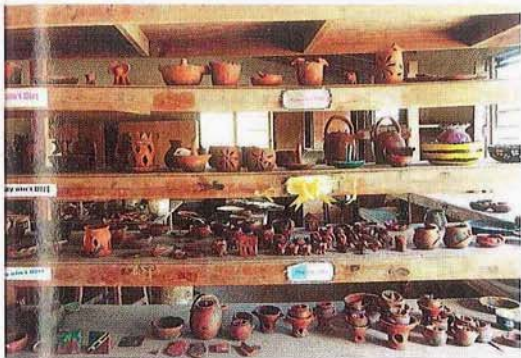
Artful Dining

Riviere House (869-469-7117), formerly the home of a family with the same name, has recently been transformed into a restaurant and art gallery. Lunch and dinner are served alfresco under the auspices of chef Wendy Brear, who runs the kitchen with an organic mindset, offering only food that's locally raised, free-range or freshly caught — and garnished with herbs plucked right from her garden. Bookend any of the entrees with a salad of conch, shrimp, papaya, coconut, cucumber and avocado, along with pineapple-coconut bread pudding for dessert. Friday nights light up with live entertainment courtesy of favorite local bands.

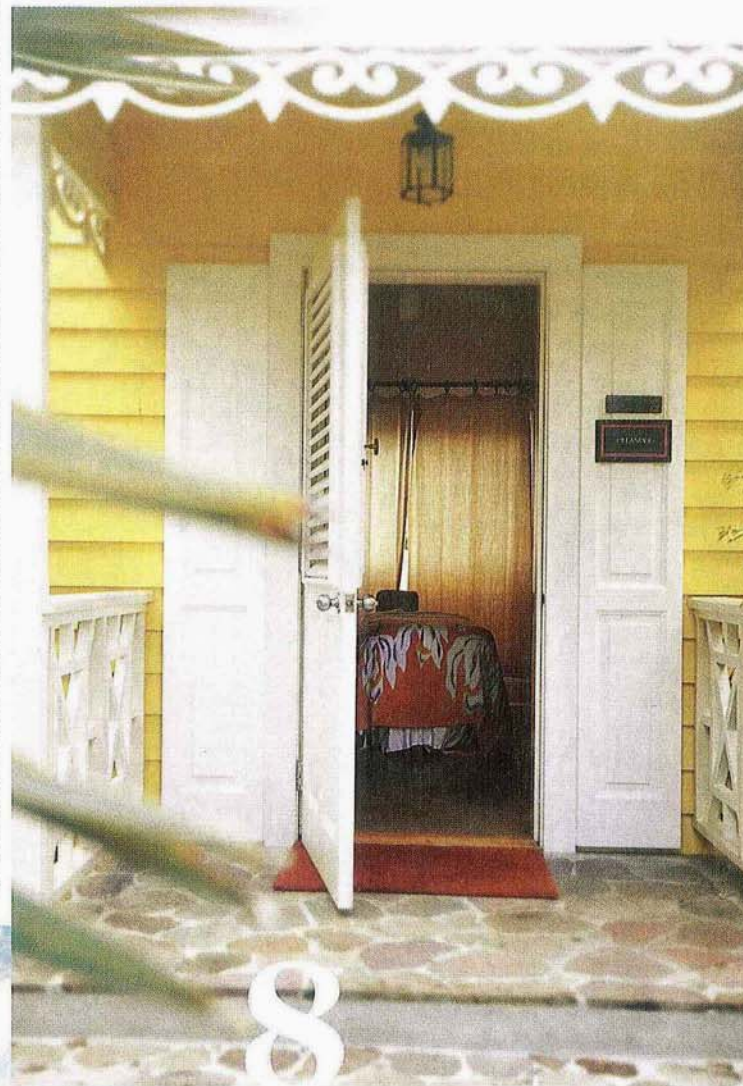


4 Monkey Business Initially brought in as pets, vervet monkeys now far outnumber Nevisians. They amuse visitors but annoy locals — the hungry simians aren't shy about helping themselves to whatever fruit they find (mangoes seem to be a favorite). For a sure sighting, hit the Four Seasons golf course near Mahogany Hill in the afternoon or take an early morning walk along the Golden Rock nature trail.

6 Old-Time Pottery Unearth a terra-cotta treasure at Newcastle Pottery (869-469-9746), a working studio across from Nisbet Plantation. Almena Cornelius and her skilled potters still make their wares the way Nevisians have for 300 years: building them by hand, then burnishing the pieces with wood and stone before firing them in a bed of coconut husks, shells and local wood. Shoppers never know what they might find: Almena says the artisans simply make what they feel like making and try to keep the shelves full.



7 Tiptop Treks As views of volcanic Nevis Peak are visible from almost anywhere on the island, a hike up its slopes should top any must-do list. Don't let the summit's mere 3,232 feet fool you — the climb involves ropes and a slippery mud-coated trail. Sunrise Tours (869-469-2758) offers a dozen ways to get there, from a trip through the rainforest in search of monkeys to a more adventurous trek to the top of the peak. (A certificate marking your accomplishment awaits you after the descent.)



8 Serenity Now The spa at the Four Seasons takes the art of relaxation seriously so you don't have to. Tucked into a garden setting designed to encourage tranquil contemplation, chaises invite sunbathing before (or between) treatments, an oversize hot tub backed by a rock-wall fountain soothes body and soul, and comfy blue sofas offer the perfect perch from which to gaze upon Nevis Peak in the distance. The main house has six treatment rooms, but for the ultimate indulgence, reserve one of the highly coveted Nevisian-style cottages. Take your pick from an impressive menu of treatments — you won't go wrong by going local: The Rum Tonic uses the isle's famed sugar cane to exfoliate, followed by a blissful body glaze of honey, ginger and rum.