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**PAGE 59**

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By the pool at Hôtel Saint-Barth Isle de France. *Right*, a balcony at Carlisle Bay, Antigua. *Opposite, from top*: the exterior of Hôtel Saint-Barth Isle de France; a beach on Martinique

## Caribbean

There are many advantages to visiting the Caribbean in summer. Average rainfall is lower than it is from September to March, while the air temperature is only fractionally higher. Even the sea is warmer (though that may encourage jellyfish). It is less crowded than during the winter high season. And although it is worth remembering that St Barts, Martinique, St Martin and Guadeloupe are all in the eurozone, they are considerably less expensive in summer when many of the hotels slash their rates.

Take **Carlisle Bay** ([www.carlisle-bay.com](http://www.carlisle-bay.com)), the perennially modish resort hotel on the south coast of Antigua. Despite its sophisticated monochrome decor, library and metropolitan spa, it goes out of its way to be child-friendly, with an expansive kids' club that runs to a 'jungle gym' and

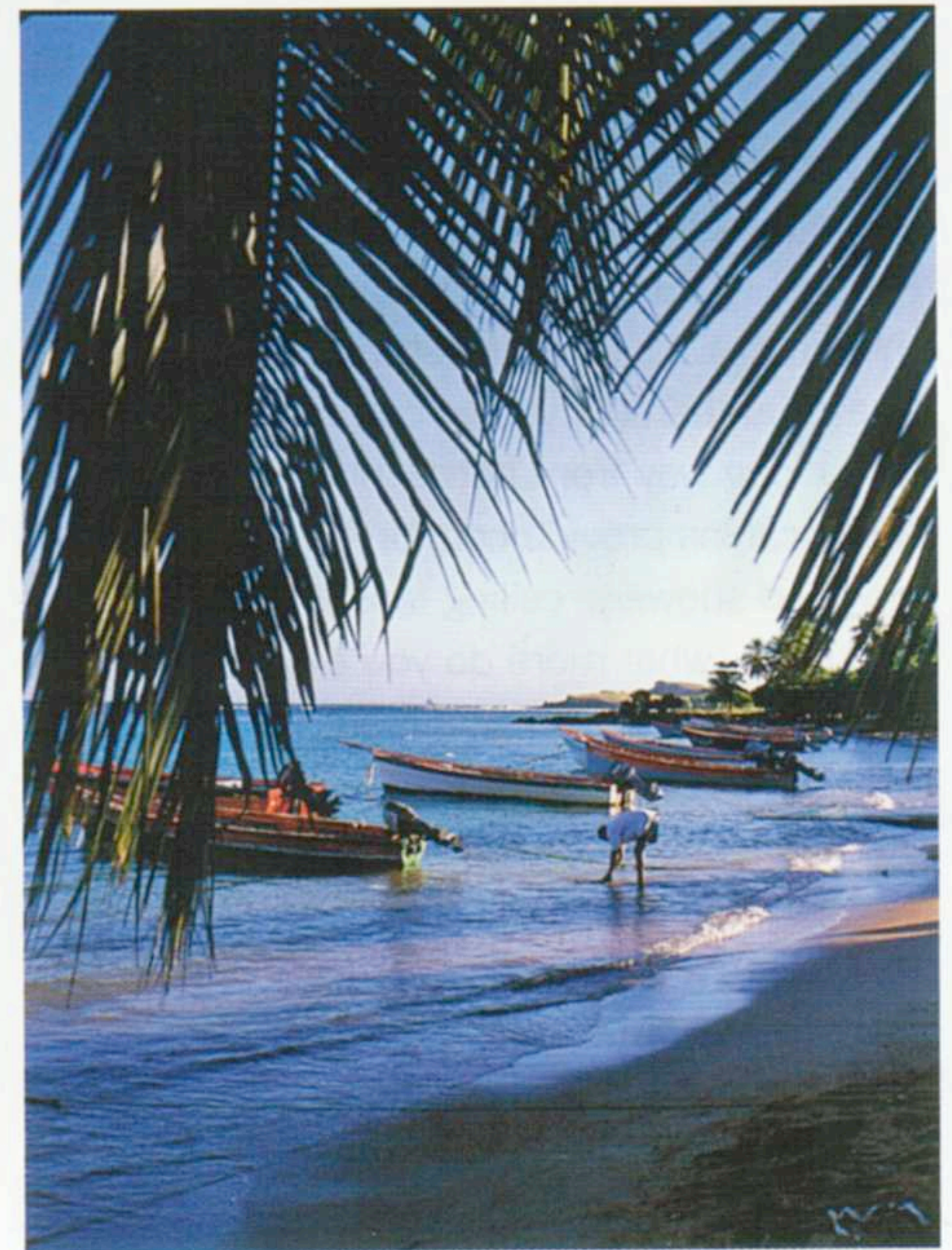
its own scaled-down tennis courts, plus matinee screenings of cartoons and other children's movies in its comfortable cinema. A sea-facing suite there costs US\$1,150 a night in high season, but from 10 April to 27 August that figure falls by more than 30 per cent to US\$795.

Another option in Antigua is the luxurious **Jumby Bay** ([www.jumbybayresort.com](http://www.jumbybayresort.com)), an all-inclusive, private-island resort which reopened in winter 2009 after a US\$28-million refurbishment. The lead-in rack rate of US\$1,395 falls to US\$950 after Easter (too bad the rate excludes treatments in its new, open-air Sense Spa). At **Hermitage Bay** ([www.hermitagebay.com](http://www.hermitagebay.com)), another small, all-inclusive hotel and perhaps the loveliest place to stay on Antigua, a beachfront cottage costs US\$990 per night from 1 July to





PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHEL ARNAUD;  
SEAN GLEASON; KEN KOCHY



5 September, 40 per cent less than the rate charged in February and March.

Hurricanes shouldn't be regarded as a disincentive to spending a summer holiday in the Caribbean. According to National Hurricane Center statistics, they are more likely to make landfall in Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, Bermuda and the Bahamas than within the Caribbean itself, where the southern nations – Aruba, Barbados, Grenada, the Netherlands Antilles and Trinidad & Tobago – are held to run the lowest risk. Of course, hurricanes can cause havoc between June and November (the risk peaks in September), but they don't tend to hit unexpectedly so evacuation is usually possible.

The only downside is that direct flights from the UK to the Caribbean can cost about 30 per cent more during the school summer holidays than they do in the winter/spring season.