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St Barts on a budget

Jane Anderson finds the affordable and enchanting side of this Caribbean playground for the rich and famous.



St Barts attracts the world's wealthy, from Roman Abramovich to David Rockefeller Photo: CORBIS

By Jane Anderson 10:15AM GMT 14 Feb 2011

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I'm just back from a week in St Barts. I feel as if I should keep quiet about it. It's far too flashy an island to be talking about at the school gate isn't it?

Burger in Lorient, which serves cocktails from 4.30pm and does a delicious hamburger for around £8.

During July and August there's a celebration most weekends in villages across the island that are free. Boat races, fishing competitions, lotteries, live music, DJs, local French dancing, Creole food and fireworks are all on the agenda.

Fête in Anse des Cayes (July 16 and 17), for example, has games, tournaments and various activities organised by the neighbourhood of Anse des Cayes. At the end of July Flamands holds the Northern Neighbour-hood Fête with games, theatre, dance, raffle and live music on the beach.

As low season kicks off, there's a Festival of Caribbean Cinema (April 12-17) with open-air screenings in Lorient and at Le Capitainerie in Gustavia, while the St Barth Theatre Festival (May 3-15) is followed by the SBJAM Music Festival (August 18-20). Les Voile de St Barth Regatta gears up for its second year this April (4-9), a great way to see some of the world's finest sailboats as they race round the island

But of course the top bargain in St Barts is the island's natural beauty. I spent my final hours strolling along a pristine beach at Saint-Jean Bay where the airport's tiny runway comes to a stop.

Pelicans languish on a powerboat casually moored in the bay before divebombing the water for fish, blissfully unaware of the latest celebrity checking into Rockstar Villa.

Maybe I'll just tell the school-gate mothers I've been to an island to look at some pelicans.