

The Sun
Saturday 9 January 2016
Pg 1 of 2



the **S**aturday

your weekend starts here

4 pages of travel



DOWNTON VIBE AND ROYAL NEIGHBOURS

MACDONALD BERYSEDE SPA HOTEL, ASCOT, BERKS

WHAT'S IT LIKE? Enjoy a very British weekend. The owners are proud of having taken a beautiful Victorian building and turned it into a comfortable hotel.

And it is only two miles from Ascot Racecourse and eight miles from Windsor Castle.

It is the perfect stopover for a spot of sightseeing and afternoon tea.

ROOMS ANY GOOD? The rooms and suites feel very Downton Abbey with pretty four-poster beds, vast bathrooms and views over endless parkland.

EAT HERE OR GRAB A PIZZA? The fine-dining restaurant offers British classics such as rump of lamb or steak and hand-cooked chips. The service is fabulous and atmosphere relaxed.

The wine selection is also good and there is a lovely open fire to sit by and enjoy an after-dinner drink.

WHAT ELSE? The spa is a relaxing place to read a book or have a dunk in the outdoor hydro-pool.

The treatments available are varied and the hot-stone massage leaves you floating back to your bedroom.

There's also a fantastic pool and plenty of scope for places to see nearby for a day out.

SO YOU'D GO BACK? Yes. It's worth visiting the spa even if you can't stay over – the Elemis therapists really do ensure you are treated like royalty.

And Macdonald Berysede hotel and the Ascot area offers so much that one night almost isn't enough.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE? Based on two adults, bed and breakfast for one night is £171 for a classic room or £206 for an executive room. Spa treatments cost extra.

For more information see macdonald-hotels.co.uk.
JENNIFER TIPPETT

check in check it out

A VERY familiar detective is trying to get to the bottom of the latest murder on a sun-drenched Caribbean island.

I'm in Guadeloupe on the set of *Death In Paradise*, one of the UK's most popular dramas and which beat even *Poldark* in last year's ratings.

It's not hard to see why the BBC show is so huge – who doesn't want to mentally bathe in the beauty of turquoise oceans and endless golden beaches at this God-forsaken, wind-swept time of year?

No, the real mystery is not *Death In Paradise*'s popularity, nor the murderer's identity, but this – why don't more Brits visit Guadeloupe?

To be fair, it's been a bit of a pain to get here. I woke at the crack of dawn, flew to Paris, fuffed about there for a bit, then got on another rather bum-numbing flight to the Caribbean.

Because it is a French colony, there are

REAL TASTE OF TV'S DEATH IN

no direct flights from the UK, so it is a bit of a slog and certainly not as easy to reach as the British colony islands.

But boy, is it worth the extra effort.

Guadeloupe has all the beauty of any of the Caribbean islands, but with an extra dollop of exoticism and a dash of French "Je ne sais quoi".

Kris Marshall, who plays DI Humphrey Goodman in the show, says: "There is something about the French Caribbean people which is just incredibly laid-back but also very cool with a bit of attitude. It's sort of a walk, a way of being. But it's just a veneer. They are incredibly giving, warm, welcoming people. And very funny, they love a joke."

"The mix of the two cultures just works incredibly well and it makes Guadeloupe a bit different from a lot of the other

Caribbean islands that British people might be more familiar with."

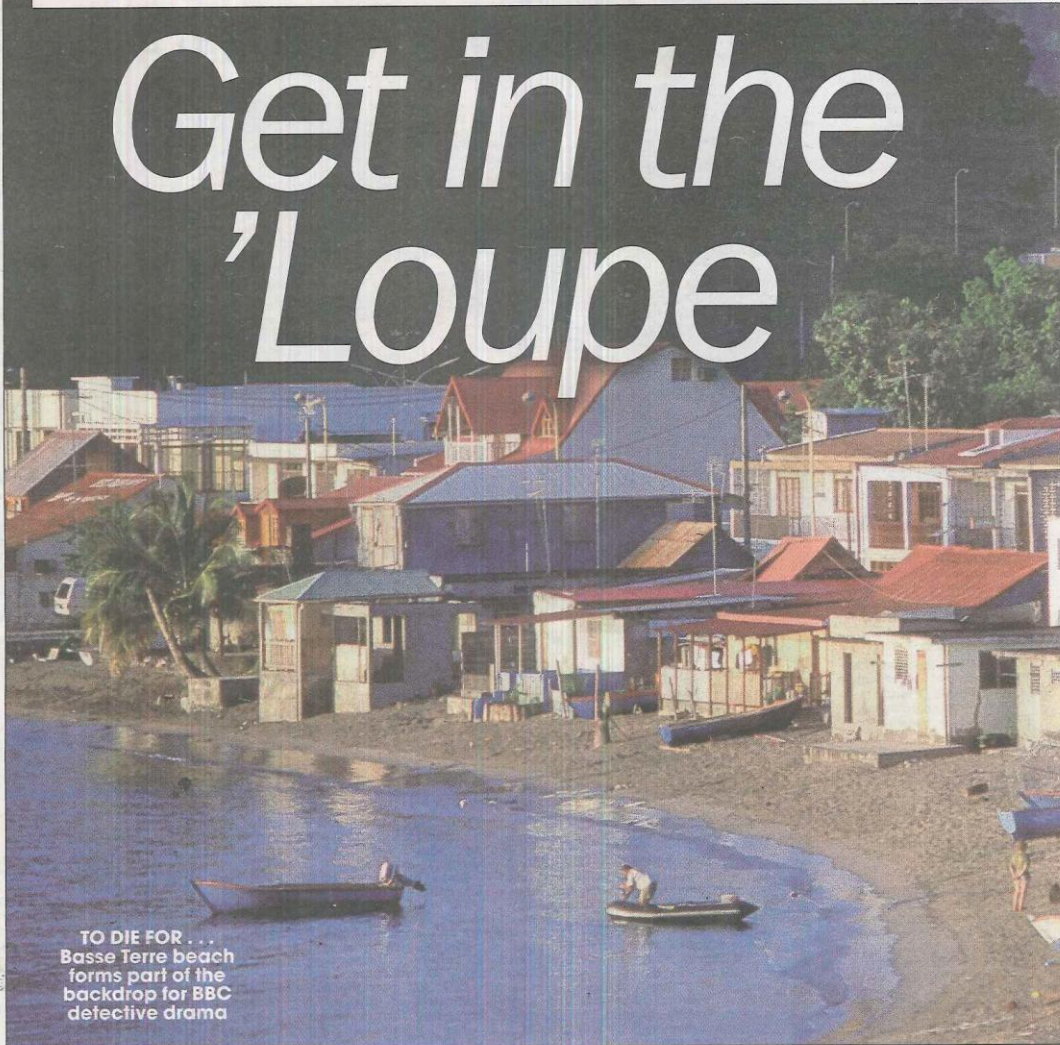
Guadeloupe is shaped like a butterfly, with the "wings" divided into two areas called Grande Terre and Basse Terre. Both parts of the island are quite different. Grande Terre is grander, with more hotels, and faces the Atlantic.

Enough potent rum cocktails to blow your head off

Basse Terre, on the other hand, is on the Caribbean sea, less touristy, a lot flatter, and punctuated with rainforests.

The island fluctuates hugely – you can come across beaches with either black, brown, golden or white sand depending on where you are and what the local geology is like. *Death In Paradise* is

Get in the 'Loupe



TO DIE FOR... Basse Terre beach forms part of the backdrop for BBC detective drama



WIN £150

SunSNAPS!

IT'S hard to say what we like most about this pic – the sheer oddness of it all, or learning that Spanish for "wet floor" sounds like an exotic cocktail.

Or perhaps it was the decision to render it

The Sun
Saturday 9 January 2016
Pg 2 of 2

Edited by Lisa Minot

PARADISE CARIBBEAN BASE

filmed all over the island but its base is one of the island's loveliest spots, Deshaies, on Basse Terre.

It's a tiny town – with a handful of bars and restaurants, a few shops for essentials, and a couple of cute beaches mainly inhabited by kids and fishermen.

The church is taken over for six months of the year to double up as Death In Paradise's police station, and the crew try not to upset too many locals by keeping their presence low-key.

Kris says: "There's one road and a crew of about 150. So if you walk down that road, you'll see people you know in every shop, bar and restaurant."

"I just popped into a shop for some batteries thinking there would be nobody in there but no, there's Danny John Jules! We're every-

where." The food is often Caribbean – expect lots of seafood, rice, salad and so on – but with a twist, so also expect French pancakes and Creole curries.

And rum. Lots of rum. Straight rum, rum on the rocks, and rum cocktails potent enough to blow your head off.

Dad-of-two Kris admits: "Friday night is my night out. I have weekends with my family but there's not that much to do if you're living here for six months, so Friday is Daddy's night out."

Many of the cast have their own apartments, including Kris, but I first meet him at the beach-fronted bar of the Fort Royal Hotel

near Deshaies, where many of the cast and crew stay. The hotel has a pool, watersports facility, tennis courts and restaurant – and fabulously helpful staff.

But with three stars, it is not as fancy as you might expect for the base of a show that is screened in 237 countries.

If you want somewhere more luxurious, head to Grande Terre. But my choice would be Basse Terre, which has charm in buckets. One evening, we grabbed a drink at the slightly ramshackle La Kaz, which is often used in Death In Paradise to double up as Catherine's Bar.

Sitting watching the sun go down over a chilled beer in this pretty spot was great enough, but the temptation to join locals for a dusky dip proved too much for us – and that was even better.

Treading water I looked back at the colourful wooden buildings along the shore, and I could not think of a more gorgeous spot.

Yet there are plenty more stunning beaches – one of the best is Plage de la Perle, where Humphrey's shack is located.

But if you do get bored with beaches in Guadeloupe, there is plenty more to do here.

The Botanic Gardens are simply stunning – and if you are lucky, you will also see hummingbirds here.

Then there are some fabulous crystal clear waters for snorkelling or diving. Pigeon Island, Malendure Bay and Petite Berre are all highly recommended.

Josephine Jobert, who plays Humphrey's sidekick Florence, adores the island. She says: "They got it right when they named this show – it really is paradise."

EMMA COX

● Death in Paradise, is on BBC1, Thursdays at 9pm.

LAID-BACK . . .
Emma, right, on set of show. Below, stars Kris Marshall and Josephine Jobert. Bottom, a stunning waterfall in Deshaies



GO: GUADELOUPE

GETTING THERE: Air France has flights via Paris from £596 taking 11 hours in total with a one-hour stopover in Paris. For details, see airfrance.co.uk.

STAYING THERE: The Langley Fort Royal Hotel in Basse Terre has a beach, watersports, tennis courts and pool, as well as a lovely restaurant. Rooms from £113 a night. See fortroyal.eu/en

WHERE TO GO...

... TO EAT
Pain de Sucre restaurant in Deshaies is small and cosy, with excellent seafood, potent rum cocktails and a pool table.

La Petite Creperie in St Francois is the perfect place to watch the sun go down on the marina after a trip to Petite Terre.

Set on the beach, L'Orientik is a favourite with the Death In Paradise cast.

... TO SUNBATHE
Plage la Perle, where Humphrey's shack is situated, is a long beach, popular for games of volleyball and surrounded by hills.

The popular, mile-long Grand Anse is one of the most majestic beaches on the island. Anse de la Gourde, on the south east tip of Grande Terre, is great for families with picnic facilities and snacks sold on the beach.

... TO HANG OUT
Pigeon Island has the best snorkelling and diving, or try a glass-bottom boat.

Guadeloupe National Park draws one million visitors per year thanks hiking trails, a volcano, birds, orchids and waterfalls.

The Jardin Botanique in Deshaies features flora and fauna, a restaurant and the opportunity to feed parrots and carp fish.