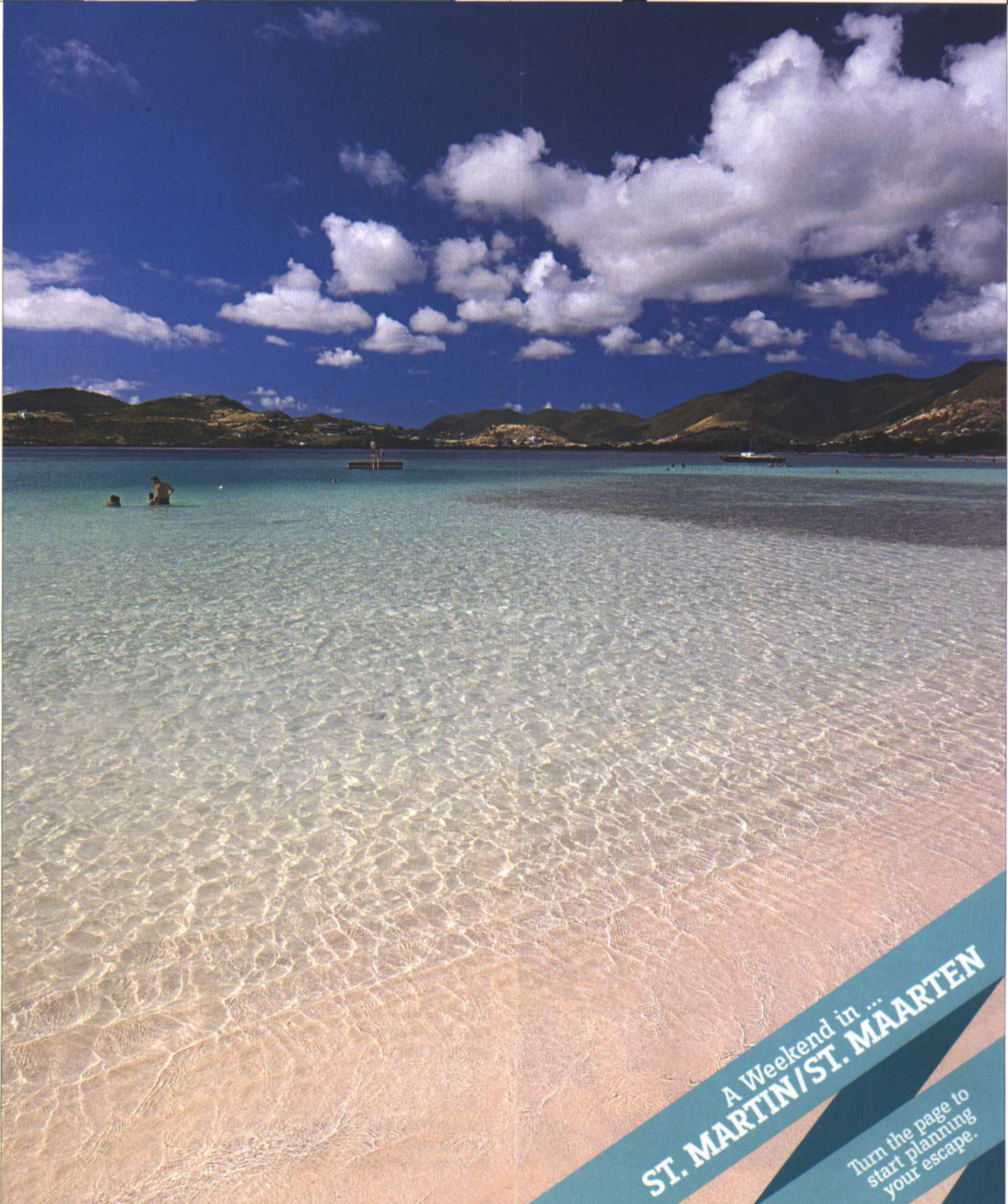


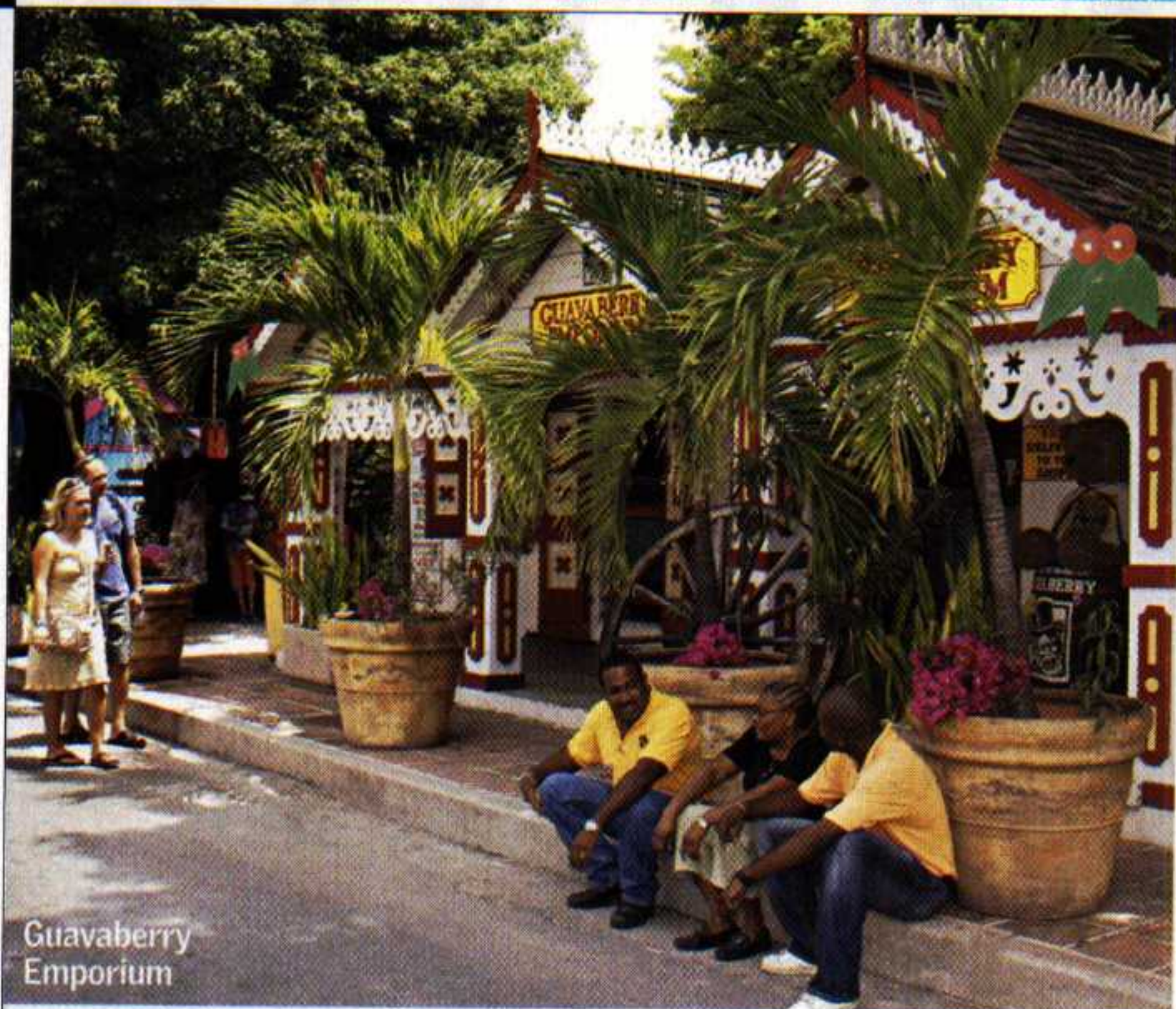
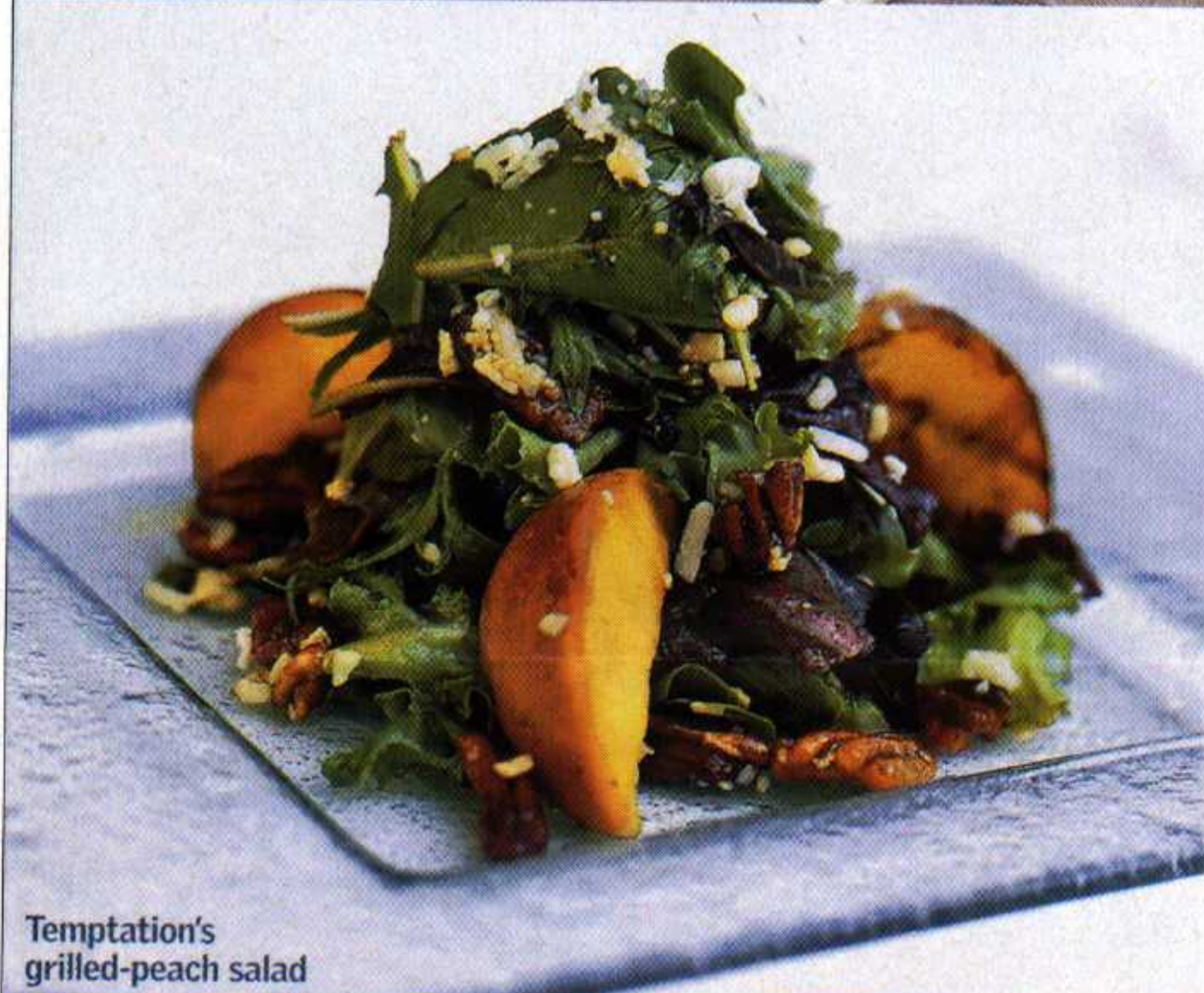
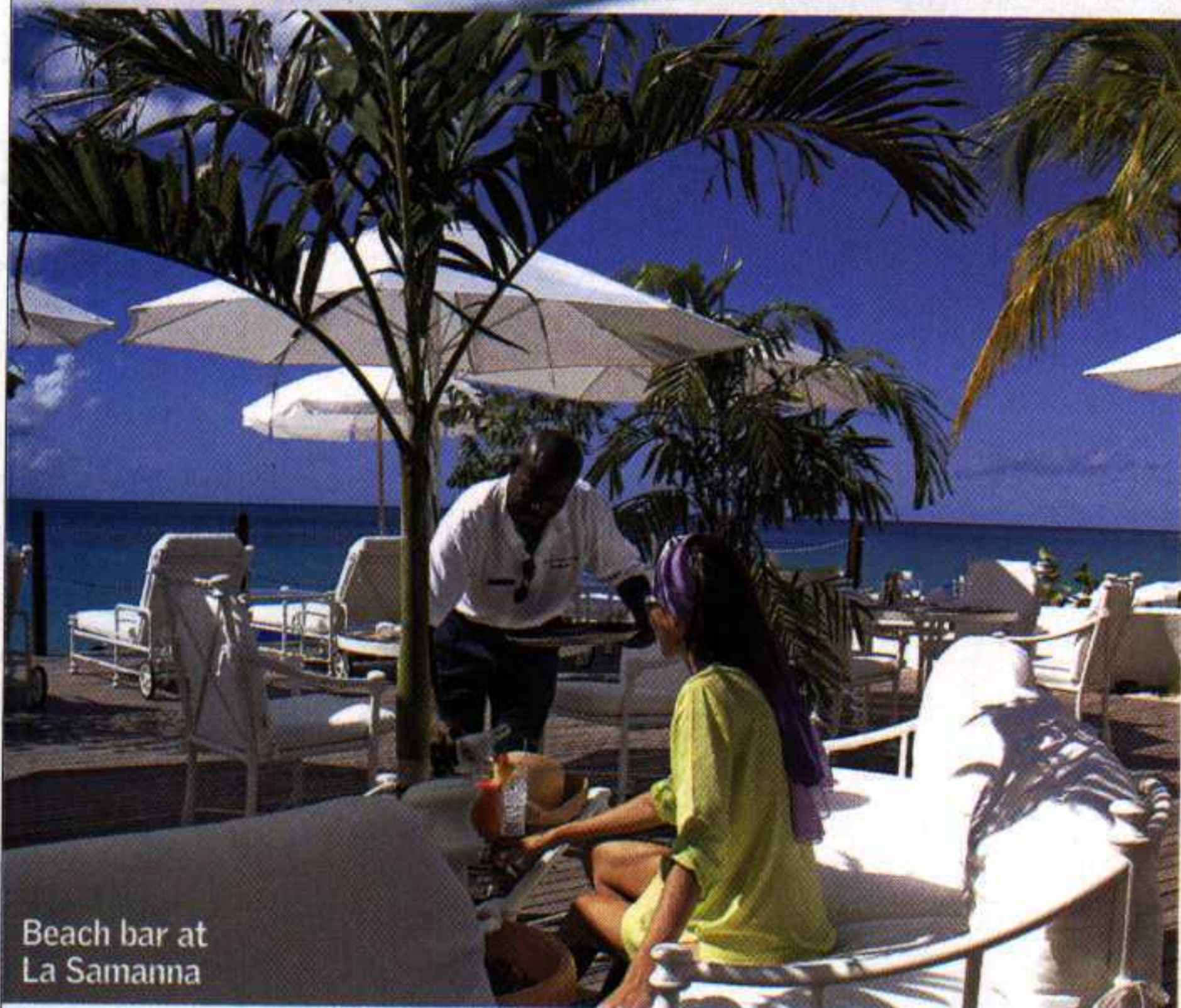
Sneak a peek at some of fall's best new gear ... page 20.

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A Weekend in ...  
**ST. MARTIN/ST. MAARTEN**  
Turn the page to  
start planning  
your escape.

GO NOW

Guavaberry  
EmporiumTemptation's  
grilled-peach saladBeach bar at  
La Samanna

This dual-nation island is half French and half Dutch, so a visit here makes for quite an interesting vacation. On the French side, St. Martin, you'll find gourmet restaurants and chic boutiques, while the Dutch side, St. Maarten, is known for its abundance of casinos, nightlife, and duty-free shopping. But they both lay claim to pampering spas, luxe hotels, and, of course, gorgeous beaches. (Plus, going back and forth between the two is a cinch.) — Jill Fergus

### SLEEP

At **La Samanna** (from \$950; 800-237-1236, [www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)), one of the island's poshest resorts, there are several new additions, including an infinity-edge pool that overlooks beautiful Baie Longue beach and a new beach bar with an outdoor deck. Grabbing a drink here is the perfect solution for anyone wanting to enjoy the setting without springing for the overnight stay. Kids will love **Captain Oliver's** (from \$150; 011-590-590-87-40-26, [www.captainolivers.com](http://www.captainolivers.com)), an affordable bungalow-style hotel on Oyster Pond, which borders both the French and Dutch sides of the island (stand on the hotel's International Bridge and you'll be in two countries at the same time). In addition to the beach and marina, there's a glass-walled pool, a mini-zoo, an open-air restaurant serving French/Creole cuisine (don't miss the weekly lobster buffet), and several watering holes, including the rustic Iguana Bar overlooking St. Bart's.

### EAT

The island's gourmet hub is Grand Case on St. Martin, where you'll

find classic spots like **Le Pressoir** (011-590-877-662). The Dutch side has been getting attention, too, for its innovative restaurants, including **Temptation** (011-599-545-2254, [www.nouveaucaribbean.com](http://www.nouveaucaribbean.com)), from island-born Dino Jagtiani, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. His Caribbean/international cuisine features dishes like grilled-peach salad, tamarind-glazed mahimahi, and tempura mussel shooters with coconut curry.

### SHOP

There are plenty of unique shops on the island, especially in Marigot, the capital of St. Martin. At **Blooming Baskets by Lisa** (011-599-545-2270, [www.bloomingbasketsbylisa.com](http://www.bloomingbasketsbylisa.com)), owned by former Pennsylvanians Lisa and Michele Warden, you'll be charmed by the whimsical, flower-bedecked straw handbags. **Roland Richardson** (011-590-590-873-224, [www.rolandrichardson.com](http://www.rolandrichardson.com)), one of the Caribbean's leading artists, exhibits his vibrant watercolors of island scenes in his gallery in a historic Marigot home.

### PAMPER

In spa news, the Westin St. Maarten, Dawn Beach Resort & Spa has opened the **Hibiscus Spa** (011-599-543-6700, [www.starwoodhotels.com/westin](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin)). It's the island's largest, and it specializes in a variety of massages and treatments, such as the Hibiscus Rain Shower Ritual. At the sleek **Dior Spa** (011-599-546-6620, [www.diorspa-stmaarten.com](http://www.diorspa-stmaarten.com)), guests can indulge in hydrotherapy treatments like seawater and sea-salt baths as well as treat themselves to fango mud masks and reflexology.

### DRINK

Be sure to sample guavaberry liqueur, the island's national spirit, made from rum aged in oak barrels, cane sugar, and wild guavaberries. To learn about this local staple, visit the **Guavaberry Emporium** (011-599-542 2965, [www.guavaberry.com](http://www.guavaberry.com)), which is housed in a pretty gingerbread cottage in Philipsburg. You can also purchase a bottle of the spicy, fruity liqueur there and find other guavaberry products like barbecue sauces, perfumes, and even love potions.