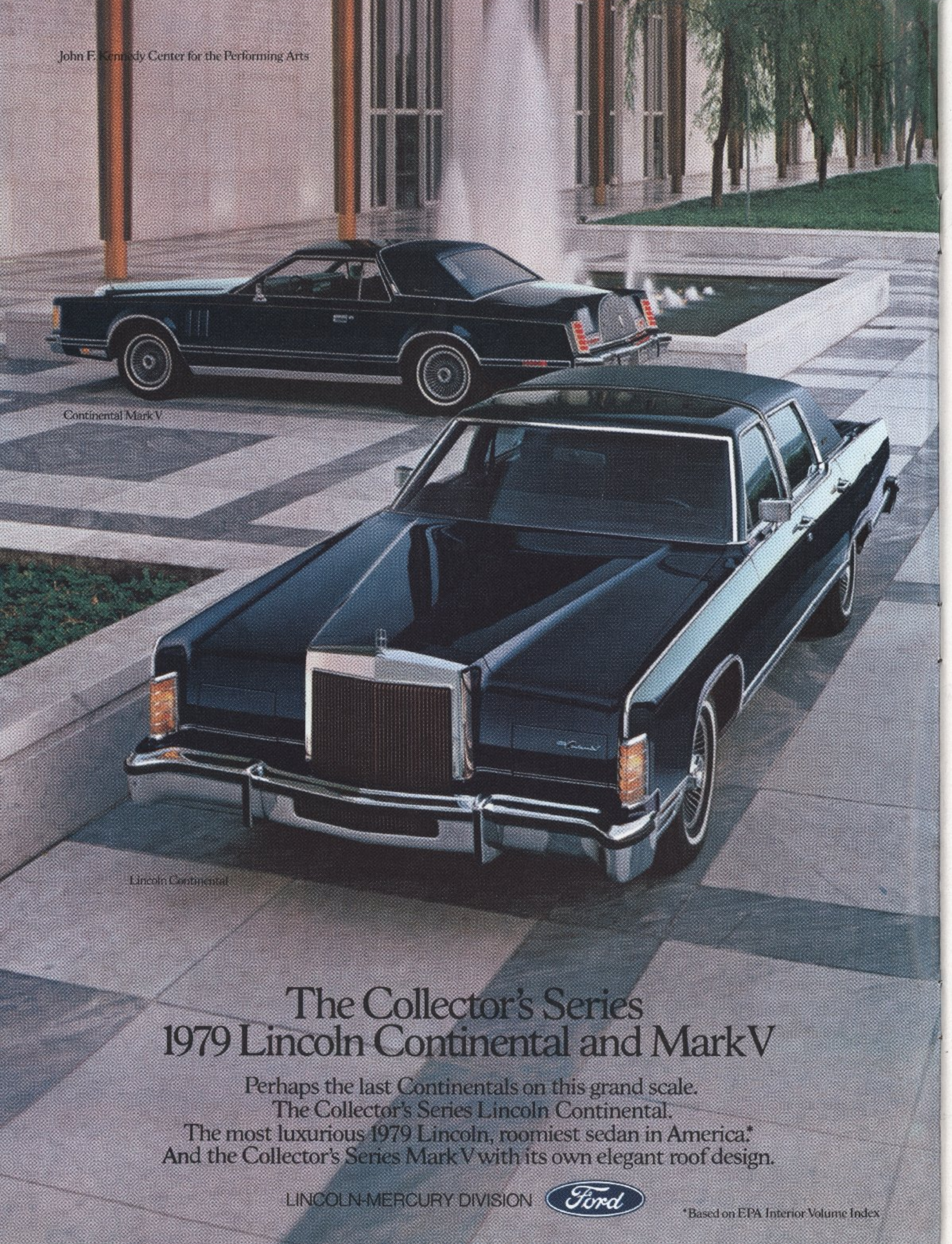

CONTINENTAL
THE CONTINENTAL MAGAZINE · WINTER 1978-79
At School
on the Slopes
St. Barts—French,
Warm, Small



CONTINENTAL

COVER: *On skis for the first time in her life, the young woman is taking lessons at Vail. A story on ski schools starts on page 2. Photograph by Wolfgang Herzog.*

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Going to School on the Slopes

by William O. Johnson

Two of the finest settings for top-notch skiing instruction are at Vail (Colorado) and St. Anton (Austria)

The ski school has come to be about as integral a part of recreational skiing these days as the mountain itself. No matter where you ski—from Kitzbuhel to St. Anton to Zurs or Lech in the Tyrolean Alps, from Vail and Aspen and Telluride in Colorado to Sun Valley in Idaho, to Stowe, Sugarbush or Mad River Glen in Vermont—you can scarcely ski an hour without coming across a class of diligent students, following along like obedient ducklings behind the god-like figure of their instructor. This sight is as common as snowbanks, as ordinary as icicles in any mountain resort in the world, for the ski school has arrived as a universal institution—indeed, has come to be something of a major industry in itself.

In the United States alone, some eight million people go skiing at least once a season and just under two million of them take at least one ski lesson. That lesson can range from a low-priced package-deal group rate of $5 a day on up to $100 or more for a full day of private lessons. There is something for everyone at a ski school—and there is also something of value in most everything offered. As Horst Abraham, technical director of the superb ski school at Vail, says: "Each person can select his own best way of doing things. For the average person, the private lesson is as valuable as a diagnostic tool. The instructor can spend all his time watching you to see what problems you have and then suggest ways to correct them. However, in the group lesson, you might find a better learning environment. The mistakes and achievements of others can help reinforce your own achievements, and when there's a good feeling, the class members help each other."

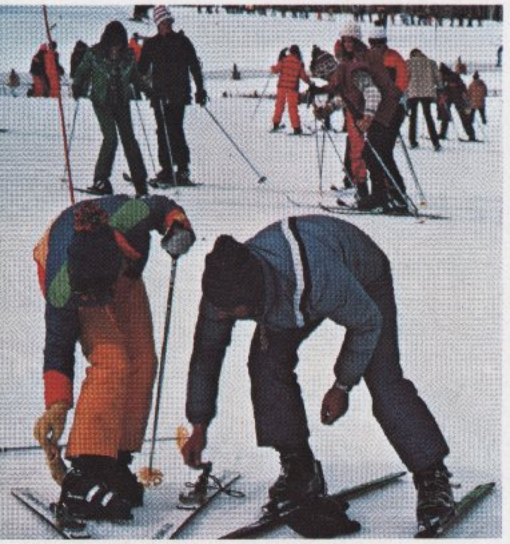
Private or en masse, ski lessons are by no means a luxury anymore; they are pretty much a necessity. It is, of course, all but mandatory for a first-time beginner to take lessons: he or she faces nothing but confusion, hard times, embarrassment—and possibly even temporarily crippling injury—by venturing onto even the mildest slope without some kind of formal training in how to organize oneself in order to slide downhill on those unwieldy slipper slats that have come to be bolted to one's boots. There are few things in sports less natural than the art of fast, graceful downhill skiing, and there is no point in avoiding school when one begins. As a matter of fact, there is no point in avoiding ski school at *any* time in a recreational skiing career. Every level of skier—on up through the expert who might like a spot of polish on his technique in deep powder or down steep moguls—can use instruction from time to time.

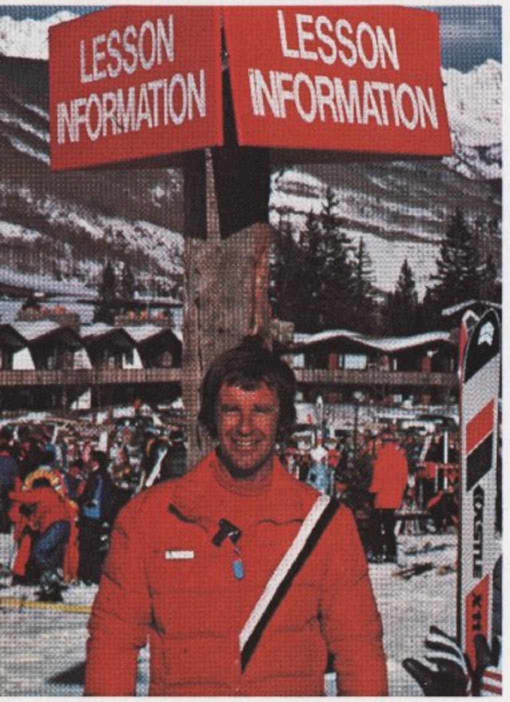
As Horst Abraham put it: "We aren't trying to mass produce skiers in one day or one week on the mountain. We want skiers to come back and continue lessons to improve at every level. There are lots of reasons people ski—exercise, escape, social satisfaction, ego trips. But almost everyone wants to achieve a kind of perfection—to bring the mountain to its knees, at least on one's own terms and within the limits of one's own capabilities. That's what ski schools are meant to do: help everyone reach his own idea of perfection as soon as possible."

The art (or is it a science?) of ski instruction has come to be fairly arcane and terribly intricate over the years. It has changed drastically from year to year, from country to country. It has changed when the equipment changed, it has changed when ways of grooming mountain slopes changed. New theories have popped up with numbing regularity and what was "right" five years ago is now discarded as old hat.

But skiing has been like that—in a constant state of change—since its inception in the dim dark ages. The beginnings of skiing as raw transportation go back perhaps 12,000 years to the arctic wastes of Norway where Laplanders chased down reindeer while wearing massive eleven-foot slats on their feet. There were probably instructors back then arguing differing theories of teaching techniques, but in fact the first recognizable ski classes did not occur until 1896. In the Austrian village of Lilienfeld, near Vienna, a man named Mathias Zdarsky bought a pair of Norwegian skis,

Photographs by Wolfgang Herzog and Helmut Gritscher





then proceeded to invent a strange but very effective new way of turning in the snow. Zdarsky's revolutionary method consisted of simply stemming out the ski tails while the tips stayed together and—presto!—he had created the redoubtable snowplow turn, still the first and most fundamental maneuver most beginners learn when they learn to ski.

Zdarsky held informal classes at Lilienthal, but he never did open a true school. Not until 1907 in the tiny Alpine village of St. Anton near the famed Arlberg Pass did an official ski school actually open its doors. The first head of the St. Anton school was a young fellow named Hannes Schneider, a brilliant thinker and daring skier who had been imported from his hometown across the pass by an enterprising innkeeper who perceived an ultimate truth: if you want to make money from tourists who ski, first you must *teach* them to ski. Schneider not only helped put St. Anton on the map as a splendid ski resort, he also managed to reform the technique of skiing for all time.

He began by introducing a quick crouching turn called the Christiana, which included a stem with one ski. Later he progressed so well that, even before World War I, he was performing the world's earliest swinging parallel turns—a difficult though infinitely graceful maneuver executed by keeping ankles and skis tightly together while producing the proper rotating movement with shoulders and hips. Soon Schneider's "Arlberg Technique" was the talk of the Alps, and by the mid-1930s his school in St. Anton was drawing 3,000 pupils a year—including such luminaries as King Albert of Belgium, Spain's King Alfonso, and Umberto, the crown prince of Italy. Then, in 1939, after Nazi Germany annexed Austria, Schneider was forced to flee to the United States where he set up a ski school in Cranmore, New Hampshire. Yet what he had begun in St. Anton was so significant that the little village is still considered the symbolic home and headquarters of ski schools the world around.

Over the years hundreds of stalwart young instructors, armed with old Hannes's Arlberg Technique, have left St. Anton to staff ski schools wherever there were mountains. "We were like apostles leaving the Messiah to broadcast the message to the ends of the earth," said one Austrian who taught in Australia, Wyoming and Vermont. Because of Schneider's pioneering techniques for teaching, an unofficial academy for ski instructors eventually opened in St. Christoph, a hamlet located a mile or so up the mountain from St. Anton. It was funded by the Austrian government and its headmaster eventually came to be known as "The Pope of Skiing," the venerable Stefan Kruckenhauser, a theoretician who eventually went beyond even Hannes Schneider's ideas in his development of revolutionary ski techniques. Perhaps the best known of Kruckenhauser's innumerable technical contributions was the hip-swivelling method of making many tiny connected turns, a form of skiing called "wedeln"—a word that translates literally as "tail wagging."

The instructors at the St. Anton Ski School have always been a proud and loyal cadre, young men who consider themselves quite elite, the crème de la crème of the Alps. "No one in the world is so conceited as the instructors of St. Anton," said one young woman after spending most of a winter there. They are a tough and disciplined bunch who brook no nonsense from their students. Sepp Fahrner, a co-director of the school, said recently, "If you are in a class here, the instructor will tell you once, then once again, to follow his line down the mountain. If you don't do it, he puts you in a lower class. Immediately. Either you are not good enough or you are not interested enough to learn from him." At St. Anton, instructors consider their profession a lifetime commitment, a professional career that carries almost as much prestige and respect as any job in the Alps. As Sepp Fahrner said, "You don't find so many ski teachers in the States who think it's a real job. It's a part-time entertainment there. But here, people wouldn't think of moving."

Things are different in the United States. Ski instructing is perhaps not held in particularly high respect as a professional pursuit, yet neither are American ski instructors so itinerant or flighty as the Austrians might imply. At Vail, which is one of the U.S.'s largest schools, with more than 350 instructors available, Bob Dorf, administrative director, said that the annual turnover is less than ten per cent a year lately and that most of the instructors have been teaching at Vail for at least seven years.

Nevertheless, though they may be relatively rooted to their jobs, American instructors are by no means bound to the tried and true ways of teaching skiing. They have been willing—indeed, eager—to try new, even radical techniques of instruction.

The most revolutionary of the American ideas was GLM—the Graduated Length Method of teaching. This involves using very short skis, some less than three feet long, on the theory (which proved indubitably true) that it was easier for a rank beginner to make turns on tiny skis than on unwieldy long ones. The GLM technique was first tried in the early 1960s and proved so successful that it spread everywhere—yes, even to St. Anton, though only in very small quantities.

But GLM was not the absolute answer: it turned out that too-short skis are fine for easy slopes and slow turns, but they are very difficult to control at high speeds on steep runs. There is still a modified short-ski technique in use at most American ski schools today, but they have also added yet another bit of new alphabet soup to their instructional menus —ATM, which stands for the American Teaching Method. This is pretty much the brainchild of Horst Abraham of Vail. Ironically, the inventor of the American Teaching Method is an Austrian, a graduate himself of St. Christoph Academy and, for several years, an instructor at some of the Alps' best resorts. He left each one—was indeed fired from them all—because he liked to bend the rigid teaching rules from time to time and treat students as individuals. At last, he came to the United States and hit upon the ATM which is, not surprisingly, almost the exact opposite of the classic St. Anton ways.

"We are trying to avoid the stereotyped learning and teaching process," said Horst. "We must find what a student expects to get out of ski school and then we must find a way to let him meet his *own* expectations. People ski to enjoy themselves. They are not on a mountain to be punished, to be ordered about like naughty children. We want to accommodate the skier, and to do that, we must be flexible, we must be free."

Abraham's ATM approach has a number of intricate technical methods built into it which are important. But the key to it, in fact, is to bring a sense of relaxation—and individuality—to the lessons. Also, Abraham likes to do away with the slavish attempts to produce parallel skiing. "People want to ski pretty. They are paranoid about skiing parallel and they seem to think that even a hint of a stem in a turn makes them a leper. What we are trying to do is to get them to relax and learn to function on skis. To get down the hill, keeping the skis apart in a way that is comfortable—and natural. Later we will get to style. Function produces style."

At Vail, a pretty little Tyrolean-style village in the Rockies about 120 miles from Denver, ski school students are treated to this kind of flexible, casual—yet highly rewarding—approach to instruction. There is a sense of freedom in the classes, a definite feeling of *fun*. And that, as Horst Abraham says, "is the whole point of skiing. People are here to *enjoy* themselves and to satisfy their own ideas of how they should ski better. They are here to please themselves. And we are here to please the student, *not* to make them please us."

And so it goes in the ski school industry, something for everyone —from the eagles of St. Anton to the easy riders of Vail.

by Alexis Bespaloff

How to Care for Your Wines

If you prize the finest vintages, there are temperatures and rooms to consider and equipment to help you out

Photographs by Don Rockhey

Although wine has been made, enjoyed and written about for more than 5,000 years, it was only in 1920, when the distinguished literary critic George Saintsbury published his *Notes on a Cellar-Book*, that wine cellars and wine commentary were given a certain respectability. Underground wine cellars—dank, dimly lit, moldy and cobwebbed—often fascinate even those who don't drink much wine, so it's ironic to learn that Saintsbury himself kept his wine in a spare closet.

Today, someone with a ten-bottle wine rack in a corner of his living room might make a reference to his "wine cellar." A more serious collector who has air-conditioned a spare room in a city apartment and built racks to hold, say, 1,500 bottles will also talk enthusiastically about his "cellar," even though it's located ten floors above the street. Whether we describe these bottles as a cellar, a collection, or a library of wine, the purpose is the same: it's a way to keep more than a few days' supply of wines on hand.

Anyone who drinks wine knows the advantages of setting aside space to store even one or two dozen bottles. You can take advantage of bargains when you shop, and many stores offer a discount on wine bought by the case. You can stock a variety of wines, which enables you to match wine and food without leaving the house, and you'll always have a bottle or two of your favorite wine on hand. Even the simplest "cellar"—one that consists of no more than a dozen bottles—should include several moderately priced red and white wines for casual entertaining, two or three bottles of fine wine for special occasions, and perhaps a bottle or two of sparkling wine.

Whether a wine cellar consists of a cardboard carton turned on its side and tucked away in a corner of a closet, or is a specially constructed, temperature-controlled walk-in closet that may cost $3,000, the basic principles concerning wine storage remain the same. Wine bottles should be stored on their sides so that the cork, in contact with the wine, remains moist and expanded; a dried-out cork might let air seep into the bottle, which would eventually spoil the wine. When putting away your bottles, remember always to put the label side up. Not only does this make it easier to find a particular bottle, but if the wine has sediment, you'll know it's along the side opposite the label.

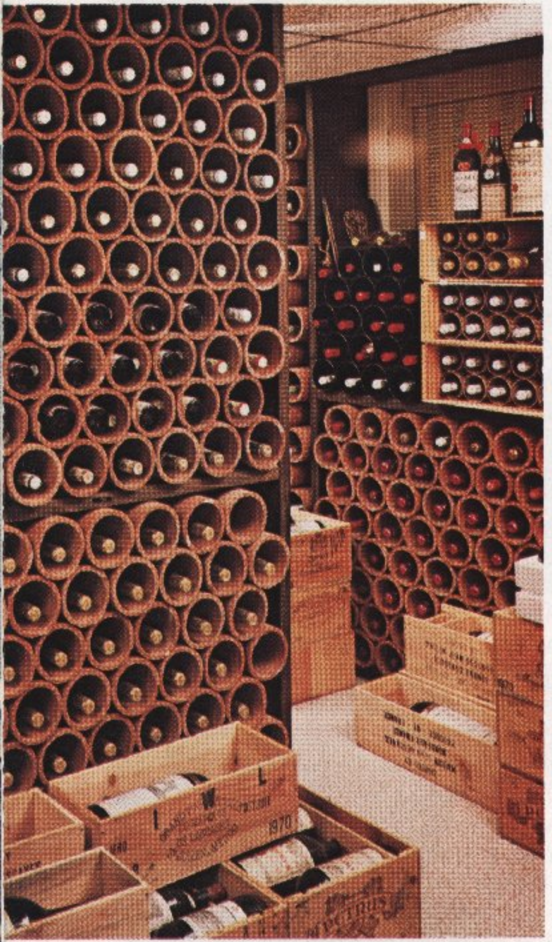
Wines should be stored away from vibration, so keep your bottles away from dishwashers and washing machines. If you use a closet or hallway, find one that's not constantly in use. Direct sunlight is harmful to wines, whether in a shop window or in your own living room, so bear that in mind when you pick a storage area. Ideally, a wine cellar should be not only cool—say 55 to 60 degrees—but should be maintained at a temperature that remains relatively constant. A kitchen, or any area near heating or hot water pipes, where the temperature fluctuates on a daily basis, is harmful even to inexpensive wines. If you're not certain whether a particular spot in your apartment or house is suitable for storing wine, just test it out with a thermometer. With these basic requirements in mind, you can look around to find an appropriate storage area in your home.

As to the choice of wine racks, that depends both on your budget and on whether or not you plan to store your wines where they are visible. Cartons on their sides are certainly adequate, but they are neither as sturdy nor as attractive as wine racks. There are now any number of wooden and metal racks available in some wine shops and many department stores. When buying racks, even for a limited number of bottles, it's preferable to choose those that will permit you to enlarge your cellar. Some racks are stackable; others, of a modular design, can be expanded easily.

The storage suggestions

proposed so far—a closet, a corner of the living room, or part of a basement—which are those adopted by most people, all have one element in common—none are self-contained and temperature-controlled. Though they represent the simplest approach to storing wine, they are not ideal for wines that are meant to mature for several years.

When serious wine buffs talk about a cellar, they think of more than convenience, bargains and variety—they visualize a place where fine wines can rest quietly while they mature. Many of the top red wines, and a number of fine white wines as well, need some years of bottle age before they are at their best, and anyone who has created a storage area can buy these wines when they first appear on retail shelves and put them aside. Not only are the best wines cheaper when they are young than when they are mature, but some fine wines are produced in such limited quantities that a particular vintage may only be available in shops for six months or a year.



Let's say you gradually acquire a collection of fine wines and want to store them under more or less ideal temperature-controlled conditions. A spare room, in an apartment or a house, is one possibility, as is a large walk-in closet which might accommodate 1,000 bottles. But you will want to call in an air-conditioning or refrigeration specialist who can advise you as to the most efficient way of maintaining a constant cool temperature. Remember that for a space of less than 1,000 cubic feet, refrigeration is considered preferable to air conditioning. If you decide to set aside part of your basement as a cellar, you might want to obtain estimates for constructing a self-contained room insulated with styrofoam, fiberglass or other suitable material.

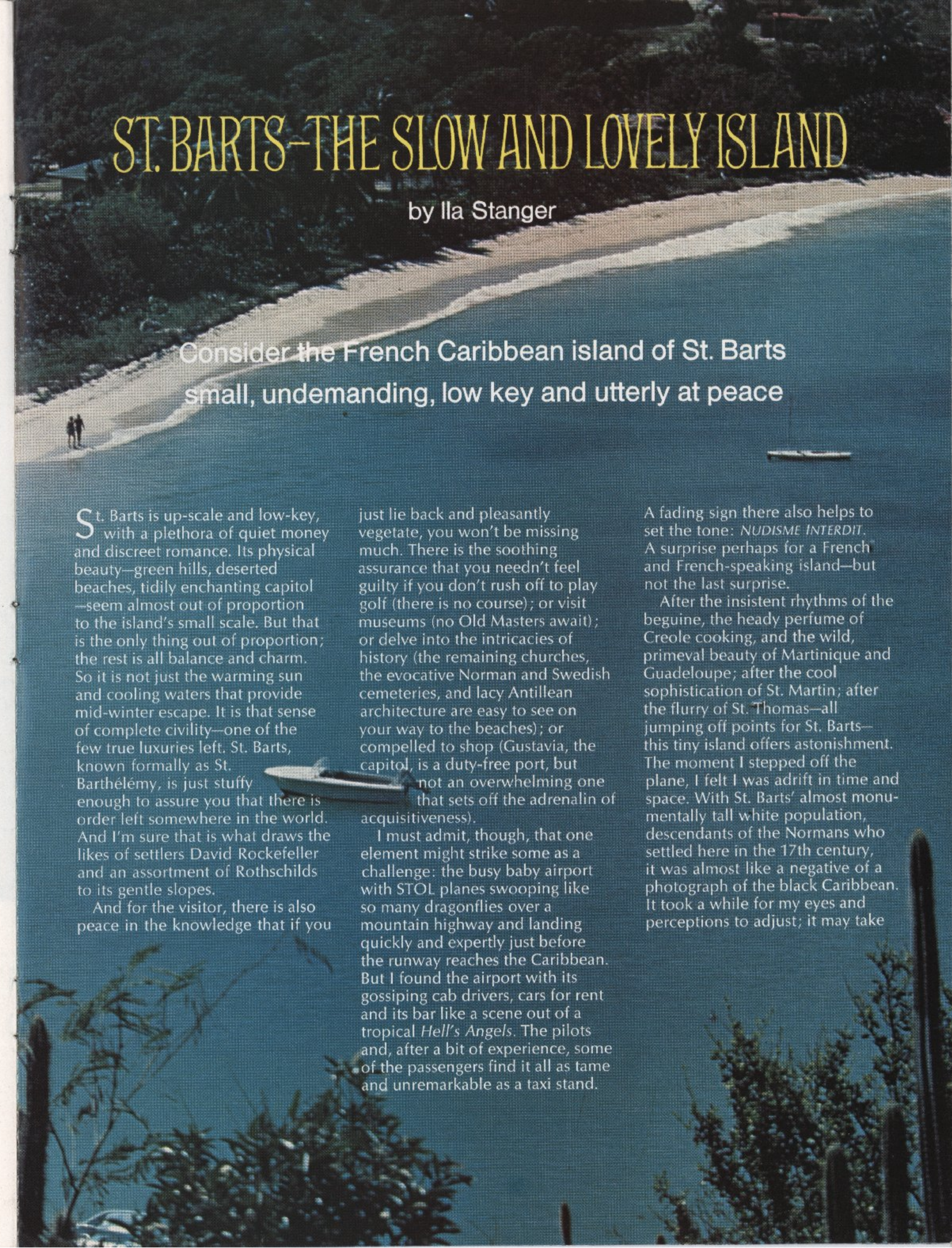
Once you create a storage space for a large number of bottles, you may decide to build special diamond-shaped bins for your wines, rather than buying wine racks. The bins can hold more wines, but it makes sense to use them only for lots of a case or more of the same wine. If your collection consists, say, of a bottle or two of a great many different wines, then it's going to be easier to locate and remove individual bottles from racks than to hunt for a particular wine in a bin holding fifteen or twenty assorted bottles.

For anyone serious about wines, there's another solution. There are two companies that specialize in temperature-controlled wine storage units. The Wine Vault (909 Park Avenue, San Jose, Calif. 95150) offers a number of specially constructed "vaults" with built-in redwood racks: the smallest holds 156 bottles, the largest is a walk-in unit that can hold almost 2,000 bottles. Prices range from $2,000 to $6,000. Based on a per-bottle cost, it's much cheaper to invest in a large model, and it may make sense for a group of neighboring wine lovers to buy a large unit together. Then each person can use a part of the unit to store his or her best bottles. Note, however, that the cost of electricity adds 25 to 50 cents per bottle per year, and that the biggest unit weighs 8,000 pounds when fully stocked.

Cramer Products (381 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016) offers The Well Tempered Cabinet, a portable unit which holds 40 bottles and sells for $900. They will also construct custom-built refrigeration units in a city apartment or a house. In an eight-by ten-foot space, for example, they can build a 1,000-bottle cellar for about $2,500.

Whether you have twenty bottles in a wine rack, a specially constructed refrigerated closet or a $6,000 Wine Vault, it will pay you to keep a record, however informal, of the wines you own. Looking over an inventory list will remind you to drink up those simple wines that do not benefit from bottle age, and which will gradually lose their appeal if left around too long. And, just as important, you'll recall those special bottles in time to serve them, instead of remembering the next morning what you should have opened the night before.

George Saintsbury wrote of his wine purchases, "There is no money, among that which I have spent since I began to earn my living, of the expenditure of which I am less ashamed, or which gave me better value in return." For anyone who enjoys wine, creating an appropriate storage space may turn out to be an equally sound and satisfying investment.



ST. BARTS—THE SLOW AND LOVELY ISLAND

by Ila Stanger

Consider the French Caribbean island of St. Barts small, undemanding, low key and utterly at peace

St. Barts is up-scale and low-key, with a plethora of quiet money and discreet romance. Its physical beauty—green hills, deserted beaches, tidily enchanting capitol—seem almost out of proportion to the island's small scale. But that is the only thing out of proportion; the rest is all balance and charm. So it is not just the warming sun and cooling waters that provide mid-winter escape. It is that sense of complete civility—one of the few true luxuries left. St. Barts, known formally as St. Barthélémy, is just stuffy enough to assure you that there is order left somewhere in the world. And I'm sure that is what draws the likes of settlers David Rockefeller and an assortment of Rothschilds to its gentle slopes.

And for the visitor, there is also peace in the knowledge that if you just lie back and pleasantly vegetate, you won't be missing much. There is the soothing assurance that you needn't feel guilty if you don't rush off to play golf (there is no course); or visit museums (no Old Masters await); or delve into the intricacies of history (the remaining churches, the evocative Norman and Swedish cemeteries, and lacy Antillean architecture are easy to see on your way to the beaches); or compelled to shop (Gustavia, the capitol, is a duty-free port, but not an overwhelming one that sets off the adrenalin of acquisitiveness).

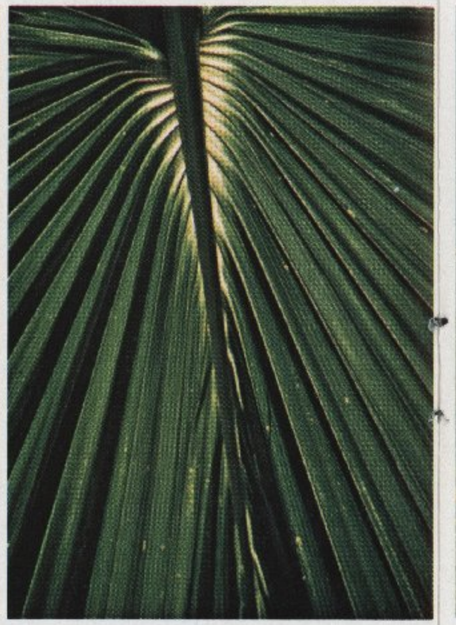
I must admit, though, that one element might strike some as a challenge: the busy baby airport with STOL planes swooping like so many dragonflies over a mountain highway and landing quickly and expertly just before the runway reaches the Caribbean. But I found the airport with its gossiping cab drivers, cars for rent and its bar like a scene out of a tropical *Hell's Angels*. The pilots and, after a bit of experience, some of the passengers find it all as tame and unremarkable as a taxi stand.

A fading sign there also helps to set the tone: *NUDISME INTERDIT*. A surprise perhaps for a French and French-speaking island—but not the last surprise.

After the insistent rhythms of the beguine, the heady perfume of Creole cooking, and the wild, primeval beauty of Martinique and Guadeloupe; after the cool sophistication of St. Martin; after the flurry of St. Thomas—all jumping off points for St. Barts—this tiny island offers astonishment. The moment I stepped off the plane, I felt I was adrift in time and space. With St. Barts' almost monumentally tall white population, descendants of the Normans who settled here in the 17th century, it was almost like a negative of a photograph of the black Caribbean. It took a while for my eyes and perceptions to adjust; it may take you even longer to adjust to the delight of tranquillity.

Tranquillity is what the island's tiny hotels offer in abundance. The newest hotel is also the biggest, the PLM Jean Bart with thirty rooms, which if measured by St. Barts' standards is a giant, although an unobtrusive one. Its pattern is exactly the same as almost all the others, such as the Emeraude Plage and Baie des Flamandes: checking into comfortable but not spectacular rooms, dining quite well in the open-air, swimming from sparkling beaches.

Les Castelets, where I stayed not long ago and where I would happily and gratefully stay once a year for the rest of my life, breaks the pattern. It is pinned, like the butterfly it so eminently is, to the top of one of St. Barts' mini-mountains (it is helpful to be part mountain goat to traverse its terrain). Its elegantly decorated two-bedroom villas, its lovely rooms opening onto a marble veranda overlooking the sea, its inviting bar and well-appointed dining room all bespeak a kind of elaborate simplicity. The one drawback—it is not near a beach—was more than made up for as



I watched a sunset first illumine and then darken the landscape and water, and as I sunbathed by the tiny pool, feeling totally private, untouched and unreachable by the rest of the world. Despite Les Castelets' ambitious cuisine and uncompromising standards, it shares with the rest of the island's hotels an aura of complete informality and ease. As someone once said, "on St. Barts, jackets are only worn at weddings and funerals."

That, of course, extends to the shops, restaurants and beach clubs, where you can watch the decidedly French-accented lifestyle in action. Or perhaps inaction would be a more precise word—the major event is the Saturday night movie at the local bakery. You can ease into the pace over drinks at the pioneer Eden Rock Hotel, which I wouldn't recommend for stays but I would advise for a quick reading of the island scene. You can find it at the Maughamesque Presq'ile with its view of Gustavia's yacht-filled harbor. Or at L'Entrepoint, the local meeting and mixing den for residents, visitors and boatpersons. L'Entrepoint has one of the enduringly popular Gustavia restaurants for its Creole-flavored French food. Also in town, you can find Gallic standbys at Au Port and La Crémaillère, and Creole classics at Chez Cocotte. But for Creole at its assertively spiced finest, make reservations at the Auberge du Fort Oscar. Madame Jacqua (like all West Indies culinary superstars, female) presides over meals of langouste from local waters; her renowned cheese souffle; and a wide-ranging repertoire of island specialties accompanied by the French wines found everywhere on St. Barts.

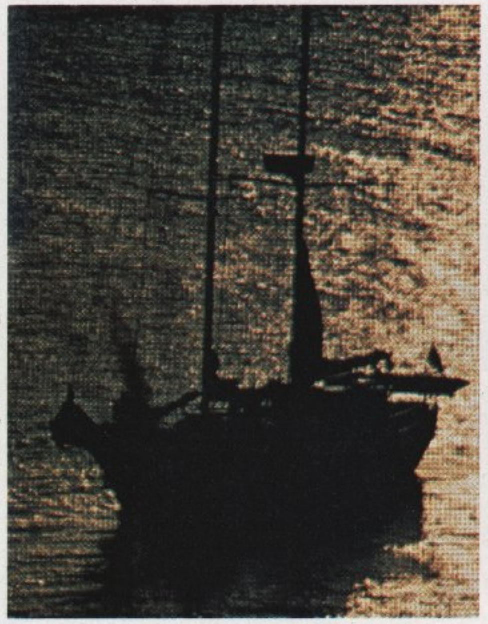
You can hire taxis to whisk you there and around all eight square miles of the island, but a better idea might be a rented car (about $95 a week, less if you've booked a villa). One of the decided pleasures is to take a picnic and escape over the green hills; the effect is not unlike an unterrifying roller coaster with every crest of the hill offering a sudden heart-stopping view.

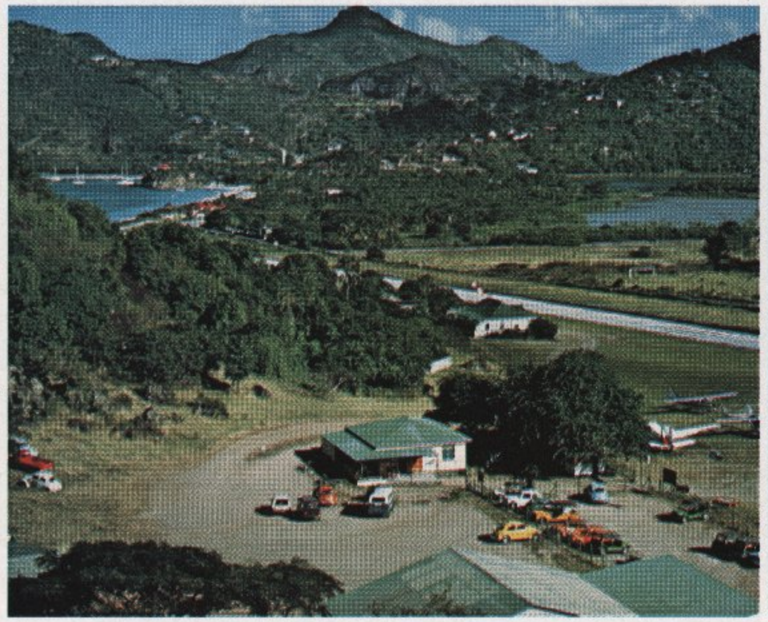
With a map in hand, you can head to the town of Corossol to see the stage-set Caribbean: men tending fishing boats and women nearly enveloped by Norman sunbonnets selling handmade straw and hand-embroidered wares. Admittedly, there is the faint aroma of Central Casting about the scene, but it's charming nonetheless. Or you can drive until you find your own empty crescent of sand. Or spend part of a day at one of the delightful beach clubs. The newest is Lafayette, where you can swim in the Caribbean or a pool and have a meal in its open-air restaurant—of course, since this is France, a light lunch there consisted of a perfect lobster salad with home-made mayonnaise and a half-bottle of Beaujolais.

The few hours I spent there seemed to sum up so much of St. Barts' allure: Watching windsurfing just off shore with beautiful tan young bodies set against the bright sails. The casual elegance of the French at table, with even the children eating sophisticated food with Gallic high seriousness. Brief rain beating on the roof in blazing sunlight. Sailboats, modest and grandiose, passing in and out of view on the horizon. The small scale of everything except sea and sky.

The facts: St. Barts can be reached by short flights on Air Guadeloupe from St. Martin and Guadeloupe; on Virgin Air from St. Thomas; on Windward Island Airways from the Dutch side of St. Martin. For further information on hotels, car and villa rentals, yacht chartering, anything, write the French West Indies Tourist Board, 610 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10020.

Photographs by Kay Chernush, Cecile Graffin and French West Indies Tourist Board





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(109.9" wheelbase) (197.8" length) (3,191 lbs. curb weight)

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(94.5" wheelbase) (168.8" length) (2,519 lbs. curb weight)

Mercury Bobcat Station Wagon

Sporty, versatile station wagon—trim on the outside and practical on the inside. Smallest of Mercury's three station wagon offerings. Bucket seats in front. Rear seat folds down to provide over 57 cubic feet of cargo-carrying volume. Villager option (shown left) features Rosewood-tone applique on sides and on counter-balanced rear lift gate. Choice of 4-cylinder or V-6 engine.*

(94.8" wheelbase) (178.6" length) (2,674 lbs. curb weight)

**V-6 not available on Bobcat in California.*

Mercury Zephyr Station Wagon

A smartly styled mid-size 4-door station wagon. Over 79 cubic feet of cargo volume with rear seat folded down. Choice of three engines—4-cylinder, 6-cylinder or V-8. Villager option (shown below) features woodtone applique on sides and tailgate. Ideal for vacation travel and weekend hauling.

(105.5" wheelbase) (194.9" length) (2,836 lbs. curb weight)

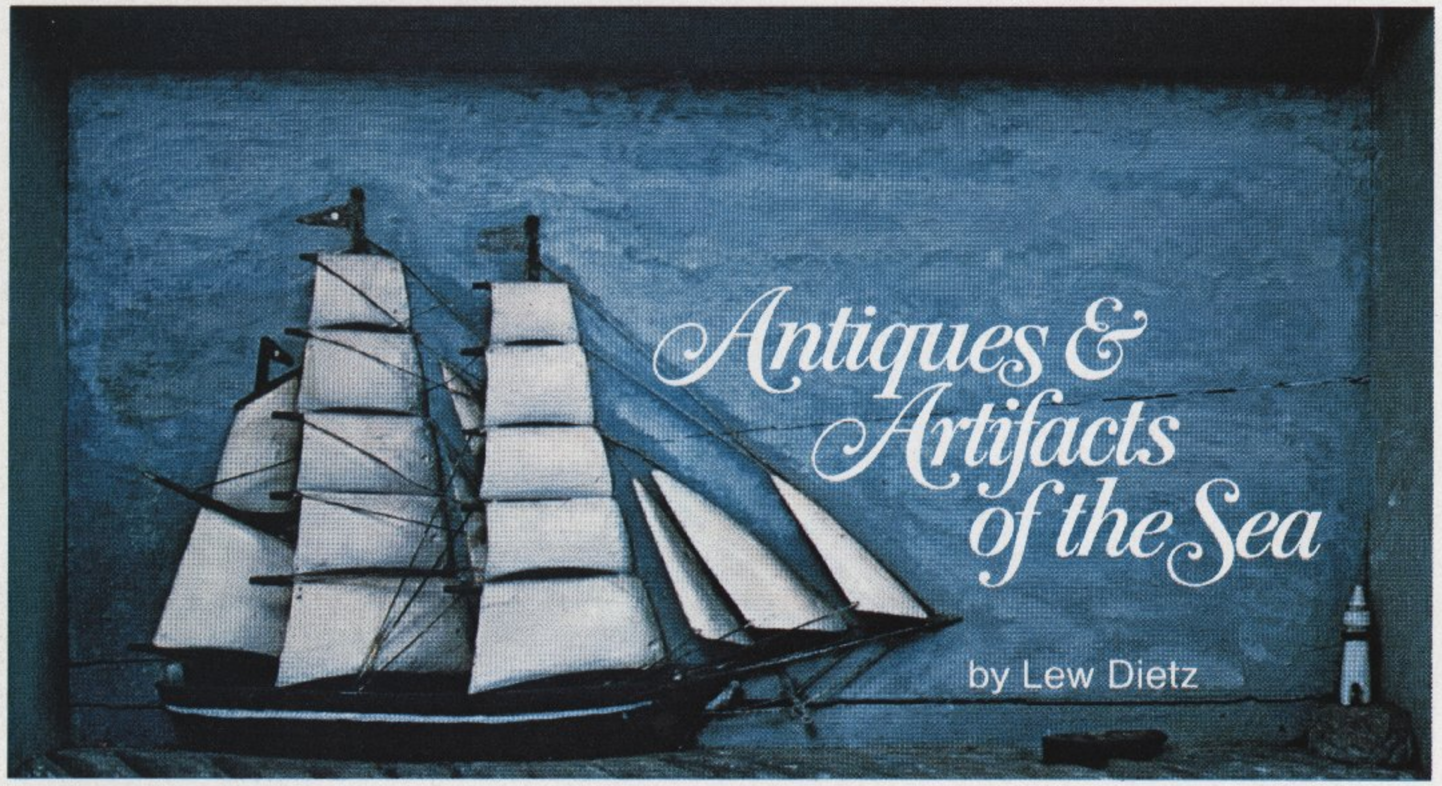
Mercury Zephyr

First introduced in 1978, this versatile 5-passenger mid-size car offers surprising roominess in a car engineered and sized to meet today's driving needs. Available with 4-cylinder, 6-cylinder or V-8 engine in a 2-door or 4-door sedan (shown, above left, with Ghia option) or Z-7 Sport Coupe (shown left). ES Type option, featuring European blackout accent treatment, is available on 2- or 4-door models.

(105.5" wheelbase) (194.9" length) (2,694 lbs. curb weight)

You'll find great small car values at the sign of the little cat.

Objects courtesy of Lannan Nautiques, Quincy, Massachusetts; Samuel L. Lowe, Jr., Antiques, Boston; Marine Antiques and Americana, Wiscasset, Maine



Antiques & Artifacts of the Sea

by Lew Dietz

Photographs by John Littlewood

They are coming now in the autumn when the summer madness is over. Mostly they know what they want and they know a good item when they see it. It's happened in the last half-dozen years and the traffic is growing."

This was John Newton speaking. Newton is one of four or five dealers on the Maine coast who specialize in marine artifacts. He was referring to a new and passionate breed of collector invading the state, coming from all over the nation seeking remainders and reminders of the glory days of New England's maritime past.

Maine has a maritime heritage. Maine people are reluctant to throw anything away. Old Maine houses have attics, barns and a myriad of cubby corners to serve as repositories for oddments of no immediate use. But who knows when one might find an old sea chest or a telescope once owned by a seafaring ancestor? It says in the captain's logbook that he paid $10 for that glass back in 1842, and there's not a scratch on it.

Marine treasures are rarely cheap, but their usefulness and integrity give collectors special pleasure

The telescope, if it is cased and happens to be a Dolland, may be worth $300 on today's market. And that sea chest, if it's double-splayed, decorated and equipped with turkshead beckets, could fetch up to $700.

A decade back there were no dealers on the Maine Coast specializing in marine items. Old glass, old china, early American furniture found a lively market, while a fine old 18th century octant might gather dust in some dark corner of an antique dealer's establishment. Suddenly, marine antiques have achieved heirloom esteem, and the coast of Maine has become the Happy Hunting Ground for avid seekers of relics associated with New England's sea heritage.

Forty miles downeast from Wiscasset, Dan Fortin of Camden and Lincolnville Beach tells the same story. Like Newton, Dan is a marine antique specialist. He had just returned from a buying trip along the coast and his truck was laden with nautical items, among them marine paintings, navigation instruments, ship's wheels, ship's bells, tools, half-models, ship clocks, brass signal cannons, long glasses, figureheads.

The collectors who are piling into Maine from as far west as California have learned very quickly that a tight little consortium of dealers pretty much controls the flow of marine artifacts on the coast of Maine. Along with Newton and Fortin, there are Charles Deluca of York and Tom Prindle of Brunswick. Together they cover the waterfront and informally divide up the territory.

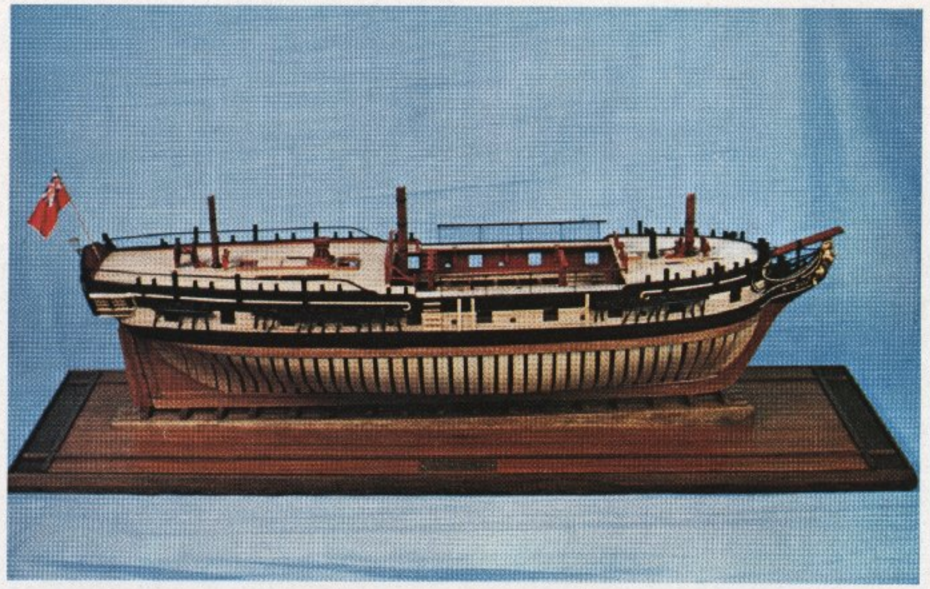
The Maine Yankee has a reputation for canniness. By nature a trader, he's not above playing one dealer against another. For their part, Maine dealers have learned to play the waiting game. It took John Newton ten years to acquire one valuable marine collection that included a carved whale weathervane, a fitted liquor case, and the logbook of the sea captain who made it. Newton made trip after trip to the house on a backcountry road. Each time the price went up. There was another prospective buyer, he was told.

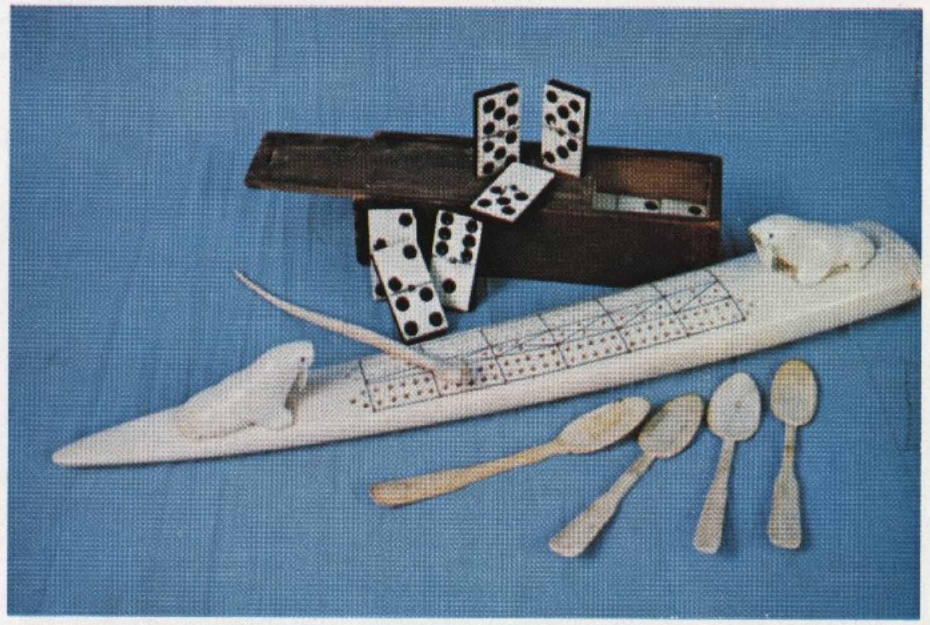
Newton didn't mention the price he finally paid for the collection. "But I did learn later that my competitor had stopped bidding five years earlier and that his final bid was something like $5000 under what I finally paid for it. But I had a pre-sold buyer for whom money was no object, so all of us ended up happy."

Maine marine antique dealers don't depend entirely upon Yankee householders for their inventories. Each has his own troop of "pickers," free-lance associates who are constantly on the prowl seeking out collectable marine items. And dealers buy from one another, finding sources as far afield as Boston. Also, there is a lively traffic in buying back items sold to collectors. Not long ago, Newton paid $750 for a tripod telescope he had sold to a client earlier for $250. He will price it at $900.

Though Maine dealers have little trouble stocking their shops, certain marine artifacts are becoming increasingly difficult to find. There was a time when a dealer might come upon a fine ship's figurehead at a house on a backcountry road. These carved figures that once adorned the prows of windships run in the $1200 or $4000 range on today's market, with eager buyers waiting in line to acquire them.

Once common, builder's half-models, hull-sections, carved and smoothed to serve as working patterns, are in short supply. Some years ago, John Newton learned that an important half-





model was kicking around a boatshop in the coastal village of Friendship. He hurried over with an offer of $700 in mind. It had just been sold for $100. Today, a good builder's half-model goes for $100 a foot for models over three feet in length, with documented half-models running higher.

Scrimshaw, the ancient sailor folk art of etching on ivory and especially on the teeth of sperm whales, is still available, but fine documented pieces run in the $500 to $2000 range. Nor are well-preserved 18th century telescopes picked up casually. Not many years ago a Maine dealer might stock 50 or more; now he'll offer a half dozen.

Inevitably, this rising market for marine collectables breeds fakery. A few years back the American market was flooded with fraudulent, made-in-England figureheads. Today, ersatz scrimshaw is foisted upon the inexpert and unwary. Marine paintings are being counterfeited by unscrupulous artists and peddled by dishonest entrepreneurs.

"Dealers are seldom fooled," John Newton insists. "The experienced dealer has a feel for anything that isn't right. The collector's best protection is to buy only from reputable dealers. We don't acquire anything without first getting its complete history."

Needless to say, dealers have no control over artifacts once they depart their premises. They know from their records that a good 90 percent of these treasures leave Maine and end up primarily on the West Coast and Middle West, with a good proportion of the choicer items finding homes in the metropolitan region of southern New England.

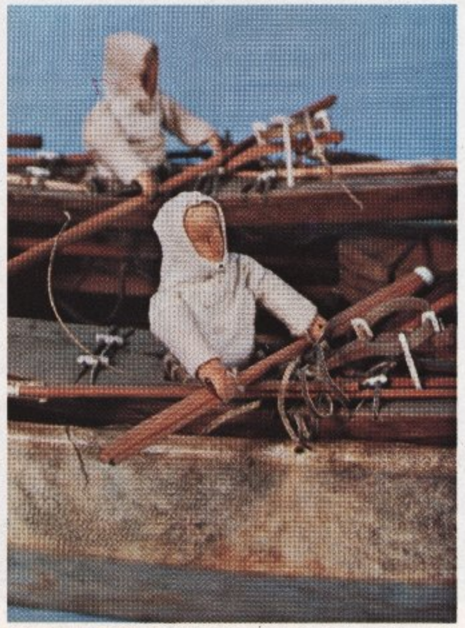
It is obvious as well that Maine traders are in no position to ask what their clients have in mind when they acquire say a ship's wheel or bronze bell. It's quite unlikely that a collector who buys as an investment as well as for the joy of proud possession would even think of downgrading a lovely brass quadrant by boring holes in it for wiring a lamp.

Nor would the middle-income buyers that are swelling the current market for marine items consider investing $500 in a light for the living room. Thus, ship's wheels that become coffee tables, ship's lanterns that adorn patios and bells that are used to call the children for supper are, for the most part, less than choice artifacts and not truly "collectables."

"After all," Dan Fortin remarked, "we have to make a living and selling marine items for home decoration helps to move the things the serious collectors don't want. I see nothing wrong in using a sea chest for children's toys or blanket storage. But I did cringe when I learned that a fine decorated 18th century sea chest was being used as a woodbox."

Knowledge is of course the first step toward appreciation. There is beauty as well as history involved in these relics of another day. Home decorators become serious collectors. Many return to this salty coast seeking artifacts of true and lasting value.

The learners as well as the knowledgable are finding their way to the fine marine museums of the state. The Bath Marine Museum has one of the best collections of sea artifacts in the nation. And there are the Penobscot Marine Museum at Searsport and the Allie Ryan Steamboat Museum in Castine. Recently opened is the Shore Village Museum at Rockland, which houses a fascinating assemblage of Coast Guard instruments and artifacts of days gone by.



by Adam Turnbull

Photographs by Leonard P. Johnson

These aren't primitive cabins. They're a growing development in sophisticated new and second homes

The Boom in Log Homes

Boyne Falls Log Homes

Ward Log Home

Vermont Log Buildings, Inc.

The idea of living in a house made of logs is of course not new to Americans. After all, one of the best known dwellings in our history is the log cabin that Abraham Lincoln was born in. Today, however, we have a new phenomenon in housing—sophisticated log homes that have every modern convenience—and architectural distinction as well. There are at least 15 manufacturers of log homes in the country now; business is said to be excellent.

There is a kind of upward mobility in the history of their names—from cabin, to house, to home. Some present-day log homes are spacious, chock full of the most modern equipment and beautiful. Some are small and work perfectly either as summer or winter homes on lakes or mountains in northern states or in the desert of the Southwest. Others are in the finest residential areas of big cities and have two stories, six bedrooms and two-car garages.

A person who orders a log home gets a kit. It includes all the logs—cut, notched and otherwise prepared for assembly. The cost may range anywhere from $8,000 to $40,000. That figure, however, is just a starting point. Afterward come the labor costs, the interior materials and whatever luxuries the buyer cares to install. The final figure may run to three times the cost of the kit. Just how this compares with the cost of a conventional home is hard to judge, but it is thought conservatively to be around five per cent less.

Why do people do it and why is it becoming more popular? There are a number of reasons, among which expense is perhaps the least important.

A log home is easy to maintain. It requires neither paint nor paper. Damage that would be repaired in a conventional home is ignored in a log home. So what if someone dents a log? So what if the grandchildren decide to carve their initials inside or out? It seems perfectly natural.

A log home is cheaper to heat. Logs make naturally fine insulation, and the way log homes are built the logs fit together tightly. One builder of kits estimates that a log has six times the insulating capacity of a brick of equal thickness.

A log home is easier to build. The kits come with the logs coded and the doors and windows pre-built. Theoretically all one needs is a sledgehammer and the accompanying blueprint, plus some friends. There's more to it than that, but a truly gifted tinkerer can certainly cut his labor costs considerably if he has the time to devote to the project.

Finally, the log home tracks with a lot of today's philosophy—whole-grain cereals, natural materials, the simpler life, a closer touch with nature. A log home is cozy. A lot of people would pay any price for this one quality.

These are the companies whose log homes are shown on these pages:

Authentic Homes Corp.
P.O. Box 1288
Laramie, Wyoming 82070

Bellaire Log Cabin Mfg. Co.
P.O. Box 322
Bellaire, Michigan 49612

Boyne Falls Log Homes, Inc.
Boyne Falls, Michigan 49713

Green Mountain Cabins, Inc.
Box 190
Chester, Vermont 05143

Vermont Log Buildings, Inc.
Hartland, Vermont 05048

Ward Cabin Company
P.O. Box 72
Houlton, Maine 04730


Boyne Falls Log Homes


Authentic Homes Corp.

Green Mountain Cabins, Inc.


Bellaire Log Cabin Mfg. Co.


Green Mountain Cabins, Inc.



Ward Cabin Company

A Primer of Essential Herbs

by Martine Wells


oregano


Tarragon


Chervil


Sage


Thyme


Rosemary


Mint


Basil


Parsley


Lavender

There isn't anything more satisfying or appetizing than a patch of the basic herbs near the kitchen door

Illustrations by David McCall Johnston

Essential herbs? In one way or another, they're all essential. Whether as medicine, for use in food, or for fragrance, there's a use for all of them. They have held the imagination of humans for so long that they precede known history. There is so much lore about them and so many books have been written about them that it's a work of major scholarship to assimilate the thoughts and knowledge surrounding them. They figure in the Bible, in Shakespeare and in the legends of all the people on earth.

As a body of plants they aren't much to look at. There are very few blooms among them. Unless the viewer has a well-trained eye, when he looks at an herb garden, he will see only some clumps of greenery. There are subtle differences, though. The shades of green vary and the texture of the leaves is different from one herb to another. Many of them make excellent border plants for gardens.

However undistinguished their colors may be, herbs have wonderful names—names that are beautiful, very English and very old. Among them are yarrow, pennyroyal, tansy, costmary, foxglove, sweet cicely and hyssop. They roll off the tongue like music.

Herb gardening is not very difficult. Most herbs manage in poor soil. A patch of herbs near the kitchen door is a great aid to gourmet cuisine, and it is surprising how many useful herbs can be grown in a space six by six feet.

These days, with the sophisticated lives we lead, we think of herbs mainly in terms of cooking, but sometimes an herb will have another function. One is medicinal. Herbs used to figure very strongly in medicine, but this has pretty much faded away, although people still brew leaves of the several mints for coughs and colds—and of course the South wouldn't be the South without its mint julep.

Another function of herbs is fragrance. People grow lavender for the sole purpose of scent. It can be grown between the slabs of a garden walk. It is hardy and not only survives being stepped on, but, when crushed this way, or any other, releases a cloud of marvelous odor.

Our list of so-called essential herbs is concerned mainly with food. There are many more that could be added, but these are among the more common:

Oregano. Has an affinity for Italian cooking and is found in spaghetti sauce and meatballs.

Tarragon. Goes well with chicken. It releases its flavor in vinegar.

Chervil. The fresh leaves are used on cucumber and fish and impart a very faint anise flavor.

Sage. Used to flavor poultry stuffing and sausage. In New England it is the particular ingredient of sage cheese.

Thyme. Endless uses in cooking. It goes into soup stocks, sauce bases, flavoring for omelets.

Rosemary. A popular flavoring for lamb.

Mint. Used in iced tea and juleps, and is steeped in water as a cold remedy.

Basil. Goes with tomatoes or any dish in which tomatoes figure. When combined with garlic it makes what the French call *pistou*, a wonderful sauce for fish.

Parsley. Endlessly valuable as a garnish for soups, meats and fish.

Marjoram. Another excellent flavoring for poultry stuffing.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