



Imbued with character and sizzling with colour, the atmospheric Caribbean photography of Derek Galon captures the region's essence. Each photograph less a tableau than a foray into a magical tropical story – a journey down the rabbit hole to a land of swaying coconut trees, quaint gingerbread cottages and the untamed aesthetic of emerald isles scattered in the Big Blue. Striking and visceral, each photo begs not just to be seen, but experienced with all the senses.

“These photographs are my individual way of showing the Caribbean the way I feel it – of capturing the smells and colours that are everywhere,” explains Galon. “In my experience, very few places on Earth exist where there is such a dense mixture of styles and architecture. It is utterly captivating and entirely consuming.”

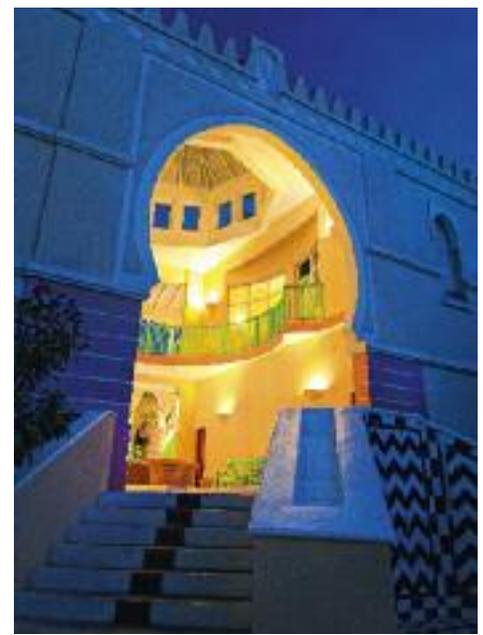
Industrious in his beginnings, Galon was only fourteen when he accepted his first paying gig photographing world-renowned violinists Vladimir Spivakov, Ruggiero Ricci and Igor Oistrakh. Though a budding virtuoso himself, he traded violin for camera; a fateful decision met with no regret some forty years later as it has allowed for an entirely original life dominated by artistic pursuits.

Having travelled the world shooting the living and inanimate, the beautiful and grim, the inimitable and the ironic, it was only five short years ago that Galon discovered the West Indies. Grenada's pristine beauty provided him with his first introduction to the Tropics – a choice based solely on a family member's recommendation. Perhaps it was a happy accident, but given his →

The lure of the lens

Photographer, Derek Galon, heeds the call of the Caribbean, capturing its beauty through his lens.

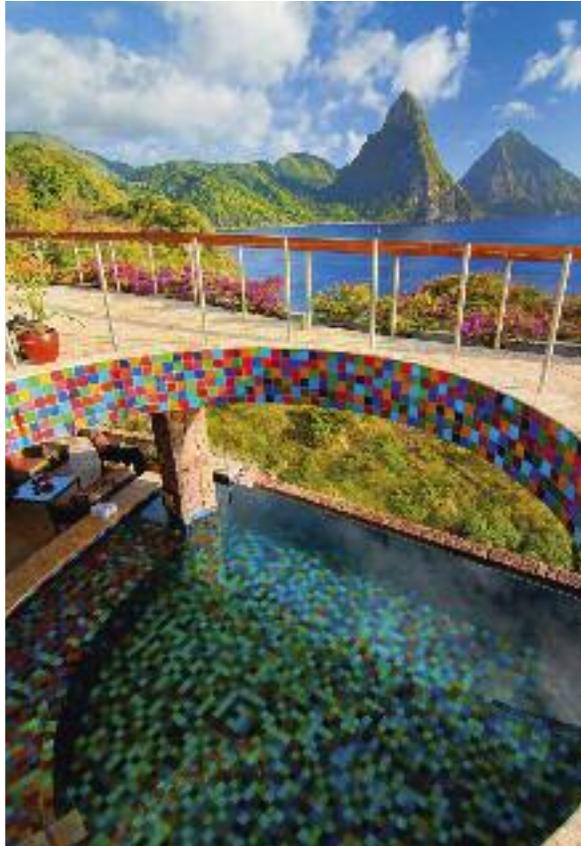
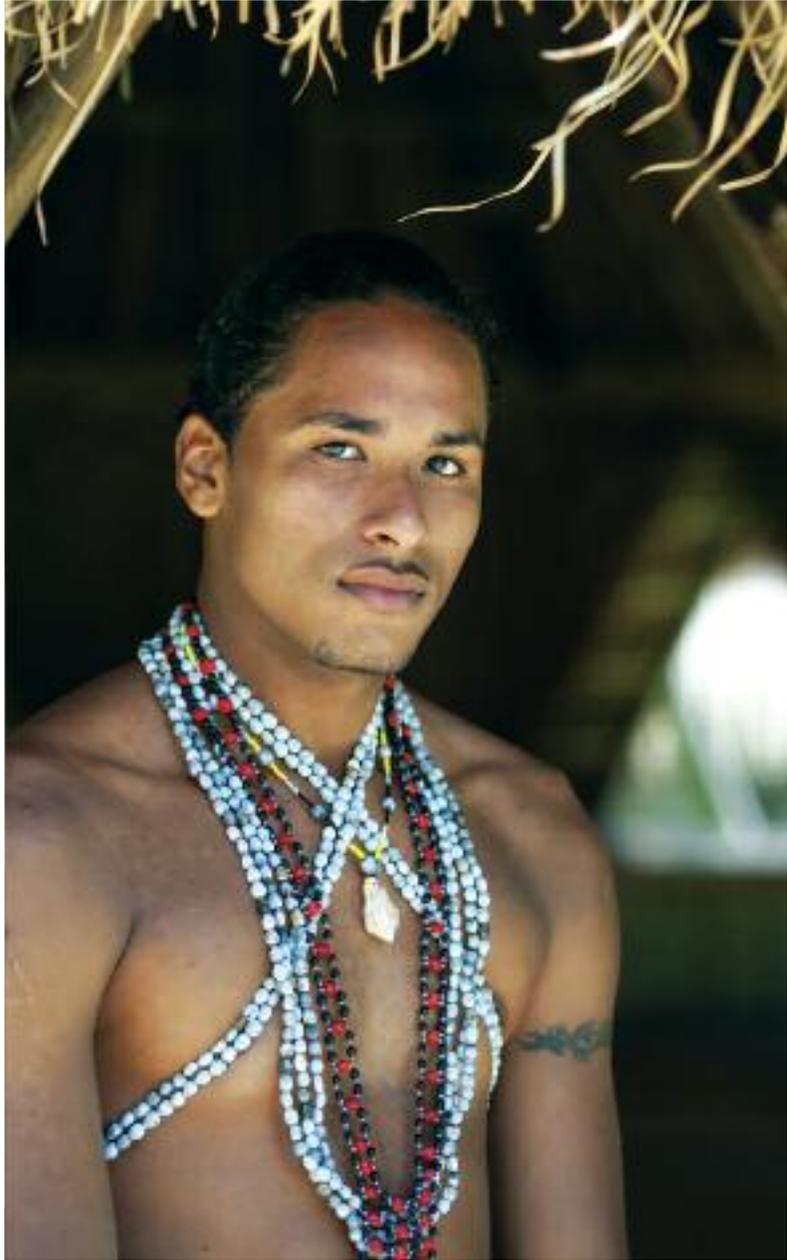
Words by Erin Burke. Photography by Derek Galon.





First page clockwise from top: Juxtaposed with the behemoth modernism of a cruise ship are the traditional Caribbean buildings of Dominica's capital, Roseau; beckoning to guests is the glowing, backlit wonder of LeSport, St Lucia, otherwise known as "the body holiday."
This page clockwise from top: The decaying beauty of a Montserrat church which was buried when the previously dormant Soufrière Hills volcano erupted in 1995; recently past away, the notorious Lord Glenconner stands as rich and colourful in character as the artefact behind him at his St Lucia home; A local Dominica woman quaffs the essence of island life fresh from a coconut; a koi pond in Sunnyside Garden, Grenada provides for a peaceful retreat.
Following page clockwise from top: Celebrating Montserrat's summer Calabash Festival, a local lady serves up soup; A proud member of Dominica's Kalingo tribe; an en suite pool at Jade Mountain Resort is the perfect place to lap up St Lucia's jaw-dropping Piton Mountains.





instant connection with the 'Island of Spice', it seems more likely that Fate was once again wielding her hand to intertwine life and land. "It was supposed to be a holiday, but it never is with my life," states Galon. "I just fell in love with the colours, the unspoiled nature, the people – all of which make the Caribbean the special place it is."

Instantly enchanted, the West Indies quickly became his chosen muse. Now, Galon and his wife, writer Margaret Gajek, travel to the region two to three times a year from their home in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada for both pleasure and work as word-of-mouth demand for his photographic expertise increases. And, in recognition of the Caribbean's contribution to their

art and lives, the artistic duo have since published two award-winning books as proper homage: *Tropical Homes of the Eastern Caribbean* and *Exotic Gardens of the Eastern Caribbean*, both of which focus on the West Indies. They are also collaborating with the Montserrat government to document the rebirth and reconstruction of Plymouth, the capital city destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1997.

In time, Galon and his wife plan to relocate to Dominica, a place for which they feel genuine ardour and a sense of belonging. More than just a fleeting dalliance, it seems the region remains Galon's artistic paramour, having captured not just his lens but also his heart. And so, in time, one must believe that Fate will lead the way. 📷