



Hotel Review: Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas

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The recently branded Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas tempts families with thoughtful design, ample dining options and fun programs that cater to children and teens

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Hotels

Family Travel



Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas offers 297 rooms with bay or ocean views. // © 2015 Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas

Feature image (above): Amenities include a pool and a private beach. // © 2015 Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas

The Details

Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas
www.dreamsresorts.com

The U.S. Virgin Islands call to the imaginations of children and adults alike. A pleasant climate allows for constant outdoor amusement, and tales of legendary swashbucklers — including Blackbeard and Captain Kidd — mesmerize young minds. Grown-ups enjoy the destination for its lush, photogenic environment, elite shopping, delicious rum and West Indian cuisine. As a bonus for U.S. citizens, no passport is needed, so large or extended families don't have to bother with extra pre-trip preparation.

Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas is a recently-branded Dreams Resorts & Spas property, which is part of AMResorts. This newly renovated resort has been brought up to brand standards by upgrading all guestrooms, 100 of which have been updated to Preferred Club Level. Additionally, the focus has shifted to families, with Dreams' signature Explorer's Club for kids and other multigenerational inclusions.

Upon entering the open air, two-story lobby, painted a calming deep blue, many sensory experiences happen at once. Cooling white fans circle high above, while refreshing champagne is offered to mom and dad. The decor is nautical, mixed with neoclassical architecture. Two curving staircases lead up to exposed second-story balconies with large glass light fixtures hanging underneath. The staff is welcoming and helpful, making Dreams Sugar Bay St. Thomas feel more like an elegant home than a huge resort.

Despite its size, the resort doesn't feel overwhelming. Most of the action takes place around the pool and beach area. This gives children their freedom to roam and play while parents relax. The gift shop contains well-curated souvenirs, from pepper sauce and handicrafts to beach attire, as well as any essentials that may have been forgotten.

Dreams Sugar Bay Resort offers 297 rooms and suites with bay or ocean views, and connecting rooms are available for families. Some furnished balconies feature vast seascapes, with the British Virgin Islands in the distance. Consider upgrading to a room with a view and a bathtub as not all suites have both. Minibars come stocked with complimentary water, soft drinks, juice and beer. Bath products are also generous: Gilchrist & Soames created an exclusive scent for the resort, and bath gel, shampoo and lotion come in sizable 4-ounce bottles.

Unlimited Luxury, Dreams' all-inclusive package, makes settling the bill stress-free for families. The package includes accommodations and use of the minibar, plus room service (food only), breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks at multiple eateries.

The restaurants serve delicious cuisine, under the direction of celebrity chef Ron Duprat. The Bordeaux restaurant offers an elegant French ambiance, with dark wood walls and ornate chairs and fixtures. Himitsu provides Pan-Asian dishes, and Seaside Grill serves fresh, Mediterranean-inspired plates with a Caribbean backdrop. Portofino hosts breakfast and Italian dinner. Market Cafe is a casual buffet option, and the Barefoot Grill offers beachside mid-day snacks. Coco Cafe, a family-inspired option, is open all day, serving sandwiches, pastries and beverages to go so kids can grab whatever they wish, whenever they wish. This is also a lifesaver for groups venturing out to sightsee around the island and who can grab lunch for their excursions.

The Explorer's Club gives youngsters ages 3 to 12 a place to make new friends and have fun, while offering parents and guardians their vacation time. Open from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., the club has treasure hunts, arts and crafts, sandcastle contests, a playground, an indoor game room, a trampoline and movies on the beach to keep little ones delighted and happy.

All Explorer's Club staff are Red Cross-certified in CPR and first aid, and parents are given beepers to stay in contact. Teenagers are also taken care of with the Core Zone Teens Club. Bonfires, dances, video games, water sports, active games and more are available from 9 a.m. until midnight. Both the Explorer's Club and Core Zone are included in the Unlimited Luxury package.

For adult diversion, choose from the Rendezvous lobby bar, Manatees swim-up pool bar or the adults-only Barracuda lounge. All drinks are bottomless, made with top-shelf spirits, and do not require gratuity. The resort offers theme parties and live nightly entertainment for all ages.

The Unlimited Luxury package includes numerous services and amenities for vacationers; however, there are a few things to note. For free Internet service, a mini-bar with liquor and a private beach area, upgrading to Preferred Club Privileges is recommended. Not all the restaurants and bars are open every day, and the wine list can be limited. Travel planners should also let clients know that the spa and gym are under renovation and not open yet.