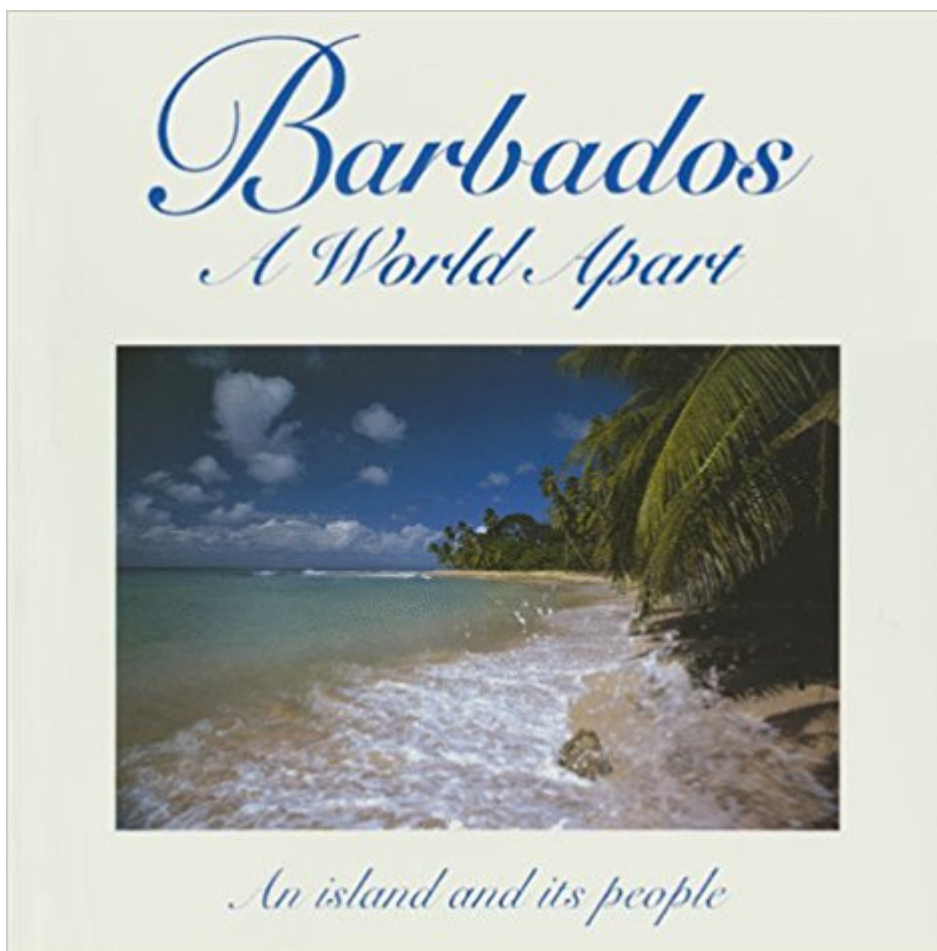




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Barbados A World Apart



Synopsis

Barbados, A World Apart is a photographic-essay coffee-table book about the island of Barbados. It covers, in photographs, paintings, maps, and text Barbados's history, culture, people, flora, fauna, geography, and scenery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born and raised in California, photojournalist Roger LaBrucherie began his exploration of islands in the late 1960s, when he undertook his training and service as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. His formal education as an economist and lawyer at Harvard College and Stanford University has enabled him to bring an unusually deep and analytical approach to his subjects. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that his works are as highly acclaimed for their commitment to the research and accuracy of their texts as they are for the beauty of their visual presentations. Among the islands he has covered to date are: Bermuda, Barbados, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, as well as the Hawaiian Islands.

"Floating at the edge of their crystalline blue sea, they lie in a sweeping gem-like arc stretching from South America to Florida, these islands called the West Indies. Seemingly too small and fragile to have long withstood the pounding waves of the vast Atlantic, their presence has nonetheless sheltered and defined the waters of the Caribbean Sea for tens of millions of years. The tops of mighty undersea mountains, the islands owe their existence to plate tectonics, the glacially-slow movement of the enormous segments of rock which form the earth's crust. Along the line of the

bulging curve where the Caribbean Plate joins the American Plate, a combination of volcanic, folding, and scraping forces have lifted the sea floor to form the chain of the Lesser Antilles. Barbados itself, however, is little more than a half million years old, vastly younger than the other Windward Islands, which are volcanic in origin. Barbados base is not volcanic, but rather was uplifted by the scraping and folding of the sea floor as one plate overrode the other. Then, as the level of the sea rose and fell over the eons in response to the changing size of the polar ice caps, and periodic upliftings of the island continued, a coral reef some 250 feet thick was added to the top of this undersea mountain formed from the skeletal remains of countless coral polyps. Later still, after the top of this mountain was lifted above the level of the sea, the central part of the island was tilted, so that the surface rises gently away from the West Coast to about the middle of the island, where it reaches Barbados highest elevation at Mt. Hillaby (1116'). There the coral cap breaks, and the island falls dramatically toward the Atlantic shore in the precipitous slopes of the Scotland District, where tropical rains borne by the trade winds have ceaselessly eroded the underlying sedimentary rock. Where the coral cap remained, however, as it did over most of the island, the porous limestone rock absorbed those rains, carving the surface into a landscape of rolling hills traversed here and there by deep gullies, and concealing huge caverns carved by subterranean streams and rivers carrying the rainfall to the sea. Wind and current, and later, birds of passage, brought seeds, and in time a dense forest including the cabbage palm, destined to become one of the symbols of Barbados covered the moister parts of the island. As this lush paradise took form, birds and insects, carried perhaps by fierce winds from neighboring islands or the South American continent, reached the island and made it their home. At great intervals, lizards, iguanas, one species of tree frog, and a handful of mammals notably the raccoon overcame incredible odds, survived a driftwood-aided sea journey and established themselves on the island. And so, over the vastness of unrecorded time, this island world took shape, pristine in its protecting sea. Worlds away, perhaps 400,000 years ago, the earliest beings we call humans were evolving and spreading across Africa, Asia, and Europe. Only much later, perhaps twelve thousand years before Christ, did the first Asian tribes venture across the land bridge which from time to time linked Siberia with Alaska, and begin spreading throughout the Americas. Just when the first of these continental peoples began exploring the islands of the Caribbean it is impossible to say with precision, but extensive archaeological evidence suggests that a people of the Arawak culture who made their home in the Saladero-Barrancas region of the Orinoco River valley of Venezuela had settled the Lesser Antilles, including Barbados, around the time of Christ. The Arawaks were at home on the sea, travelling and trading up and down the island chain in large dugout canoes, some

of which were capable of carrying forty men or more. This facility with sea travel meant that no island was culturally isolated from its neighbors, and the culture the Arawaks developed was to a great extent common throughout the entire Caribbean basin. Thus, much of what is known about the Amerindian culture on Barbados is derived from artifacts found not only on Barbados itself, but from the artifacts and anthropological evidence of other islands throughout the Caribbean. (One aspect of the Amerindian culture on Barbados does appear to be unique to the island, however: since the island lacked a native stone of sufficient hardness for tool-making, the Arawaks fashioned a wide variety of tools from the conch shells which they found in abundance in the surrounding waters.) --Excerpt from Chapter Two: Beginnings

Nice table book and I saw a few relatives.

Extraordinary photography, combined with intelligent, concise, even poetic text. I am English, but I have lived in Boston for many years. Barbados is perhaps my favorite island in the Caribbean--"Little England" as it is known. This book captures Barbados as I have seen no other book do ... perhaps because it focuses on the small things: flowers, the black-belly sheep, the young schoolgirl gazing deep into the camera ... The picture captions are concise, but packed with information; the author chooses and rations his words carefully! There's also, for those who want it, a complete text which conveys the history of the island. A small quibble: there's no information about hotels, restaurants, etc. However, this is not a guidebook, but rather a coffee-table "documentary" book, and in that department it is to my mind incomparable.

Having travelled to Barbados many times over the past twenty years (and I lived there for a time as well), I have to say this is the finest and most complete "coffee-table" book on the island that I have ever seen. It is large-format, filled with superb color photographs (including a number of aerial shots, as well as some archival photographs of Barbados in the mid-20th century). The text gives you a concise, intelligent overview of the island's history. I've given a number of copies to friends who love the island. The jacket blurb says the author was once a Peace Corps Volunteer, and it shows ... this is a real in-depth portrait, not just "post-cardy" superficial coverage. I have several other books on Barbados, but this one is in a class by itself.

This is an excellent text and touching text which adequately captures the essence of Barbados past present and its future in the global economy. As a Bajan I was impressed that in the choice of topics

as opposed to the usual postcard presentation. Well and tastefully done.

The photography in this book is beautiful, and the text is well written. Rather than buying this before your next trip to Barbados, I'd recommend a simple travel guide instead. You may want to buy this book later for your coffee table for when you are feeling nostalgic for the warm air and white beaches.

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