

Île à Vache

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT VISION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

In a world where a billion people have officially become tourists, it is increasingly rare to find a place that seems to our eyes untouched by time – especially right in the Caribbean, one of the world’s favourite holiday destinations.

Île à Vache, an island just off the southwest coast of Haiti 30 minutes from the town of Les Cayes, is a true treasure. Just 3.2 km. wide and 13 km. long, it is a virtually undeveloped place with some 10,000 inhabitants, more than 20 beaches, a landscape of mountains and mangrove forests, an artisanal fishing economy and a history that includes hosting Sir Henry Morgan, one of piracy’s most successful practitioners. Reefs and shipwrecks line the waters offshore.

Île à Vache is singular for its complete absence of roads and cars.

The Ministry of Tourism of Haiti is developing Île à Vache into a destination with 1,000 new beds in bungalows and small hotels for luxury travellers seeking an authentic, somewhat adventurous and unusual island experience. The goal is to develop a sustainable tourism that will borrow from the successes of eco-tourism practices and benefit local inhabitants, the island environment and the economy. The vision for the island is described below:

“Île à Vache is one of the last treasure islands in the Caribbean. Unpaved, unplugged, unspoiled and unlike anywhere else, it is a raw and rustic paradise, a rarity in the world. Here, tourism treads lightly, surely and sustainably, responsibly creating places of exquisite peace and well-being, and helping local communities become strong, smart and self-sufficient.”

Caribbean tourism is growing, albeit slowly, and economic difficulties in the US and Europe are clearly affecting decisions to visit. 23.8 million stayover visitors came to the Caribbean in 2011, an increase of 3.3% over 2010.

The target visitor for Île à Vache is a well-heeled tourist from traditional markets of North America and Europe, but also from the Caribbean region, emerging markets in South America, and newly mobile Russians. They may be Explorers in search of knowledge and adventure; Lovers seeking a getaway; Rejuvenators seeking spiritual and physical solace; and Homecomers, Haitians from the diaspora looking for a second or retirement home in their country of birth.



Introduction cont'd

The development principles that will guide the growth of Île à Vache are as follows:

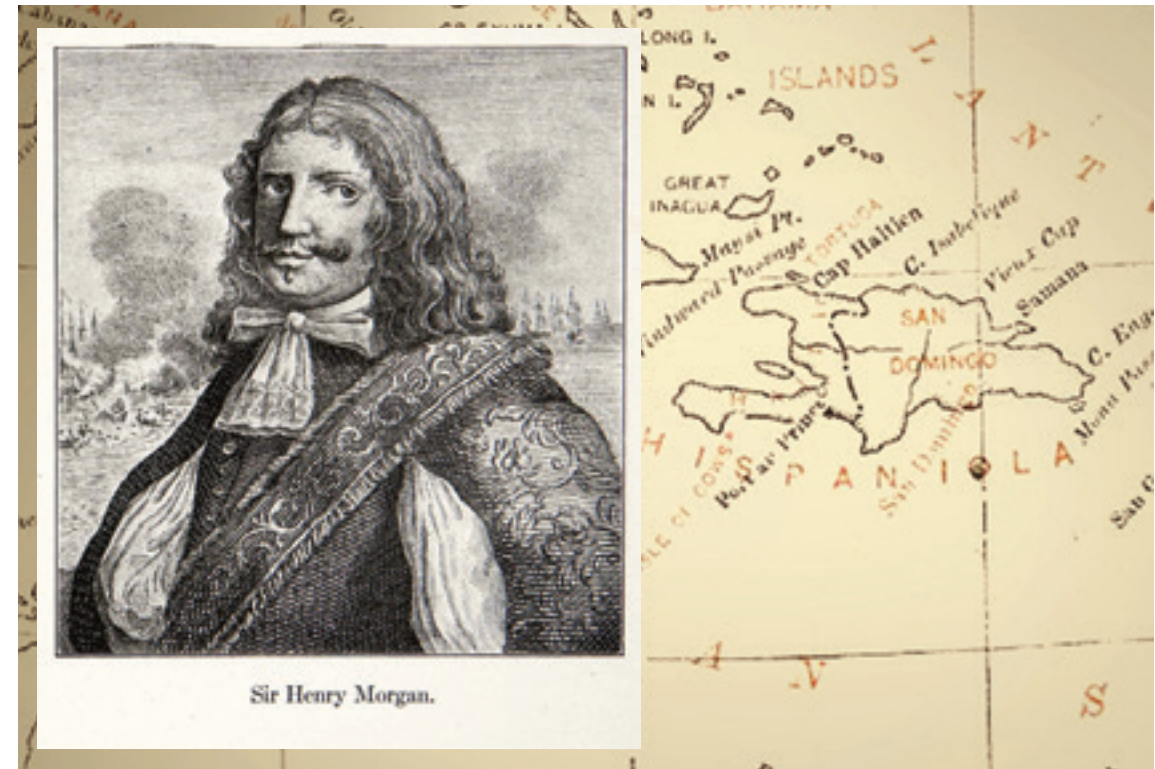
1) Transportation: Conspicuously Car-Free
2) Environment: Mothering Nature 3) Community: Hand in Hand 4) Development: Build for Good
Energy: Independence Quest.

Considerations for development:

- The construction of an airport, for easy access and to bypass Port-au-Prince
- The placement of several neighbourhoods combining boutique-hotel type accommodation and beachfront cottages on the western side of the island
- A village, offering restaurants, galleries, cafés and festival space – along with a docking facility – is being planned just to the west of the island capital of Mme. Bernard

- An underwater museum recounting the romance of pirates would be a major attraction
- A community farm would engage both visitors and locals
- Walking trails would be upgraded for the enjoyment of visitors and the utility of locals
- Caribbean sailors would be attracted to new docking facilities
- An electric trolley or other alternative-energy system would transport guests and permit servicing of rooms and restaurants

Detailed plans for the island are included in this document.

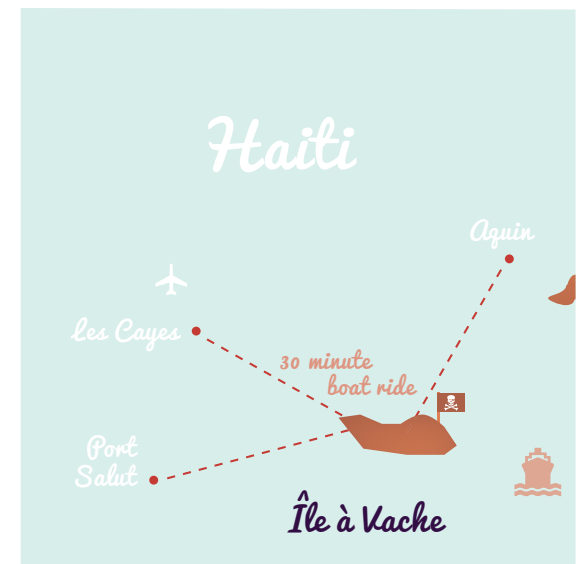
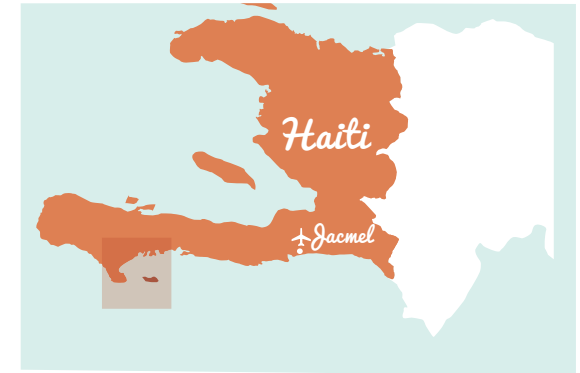


Location

Île à Vache is an island 30 minutes by boat from the town of Les Cayes on the southwest coast of Haiti. According to Wikipedia, Île à Vache is one of the most popular tourist sites in Haiti and it has some of the best island scenery in the Caribbean.

Here's an incomplete but indicative list of what Île à Vache offers:

- it has, according to official records, some 10-15,000 inhabitants, although anecdotal evidence would suggest there are far fewer
- it has hills up to 150 meters high on the western end of the island
- it has several important swamps in lower regions, especially on the east side, which boasts one of the largest mangrove forests in Haiti
- it has exactly two resorts, The Port Morgan and Abaka Bay, both on the western end of the island
- it has a series of important reefs, one of which was responsible for the wreck of Canada's pre-eminent racing clipper, the beloved Bluenose. Other shipwrecks, real and imagined, are part of the lore of the island and the delight of scuba divers
- it has Spanish origins, and was originally known as Isla Vaca until Hispaniola was divided between Spain and France in 1697
- it has a capital city named, charmingly, Madame Bernard, after the wife of an American named Bernard Kock, whose name is reflected in Cacoq. An orphanage named Soeur Flora Blanchette, after its Canadian founder, is also located in Madame Bernard
- it has a hillock of sand just off its shores called *L'île de l'amour*
- it has one key industry, and that is artisanal fishing on sailboats
- it has ports that were favoured by pirates. Among many other brigands, the notorious Captain Henry Morgan, immortalized by the rum brand, plied his dastardly trade around the island



Location cont'd

What Île à Vache does not have is the one piece of infrastructure that is entirely taken for granted in most destinations. It doesn't have running water or electricity, but that seems minor. Extraordinarily, Île à Vache does not have a road. Nor the cars that call it home.

And therein lies its *magie*.

At 3.2 km. wide, Île à Vache is narrow enough to walk across in an afternoon. And at 13 km long, it's a very manageable bike ride – if you're riding a mountain bike, of which there are a few on the island.

Despite the island's other attributes, it is this carless, carefree state of affairs that most intoxicates, and provokes the imagination.

Île à Vache is a luxury reboot, a spa retreat, a place for adventurous activities, *un voyage responsable*, a place that must be protected, a home to pirates, an ocean, a beach, sand. But it is also a communion, a place of purification, spirituality and rebirth, a therapy, *une rareté*, *une merveille* of peace and tranquility, *calme*, *serenité*, *santé* and well-being.

Most interesting, perhaps, are the words that explain the exquisitely untouched character of the place: *sauvage*, *vierge*, *déconnecté*, far away, raw, unlike, ripe. It is *rustique* and pure, and its *pureté* is a kind of nakedness – somehow, there is nothing between you and this paradise, a word used to describe Île à Vache again and again.

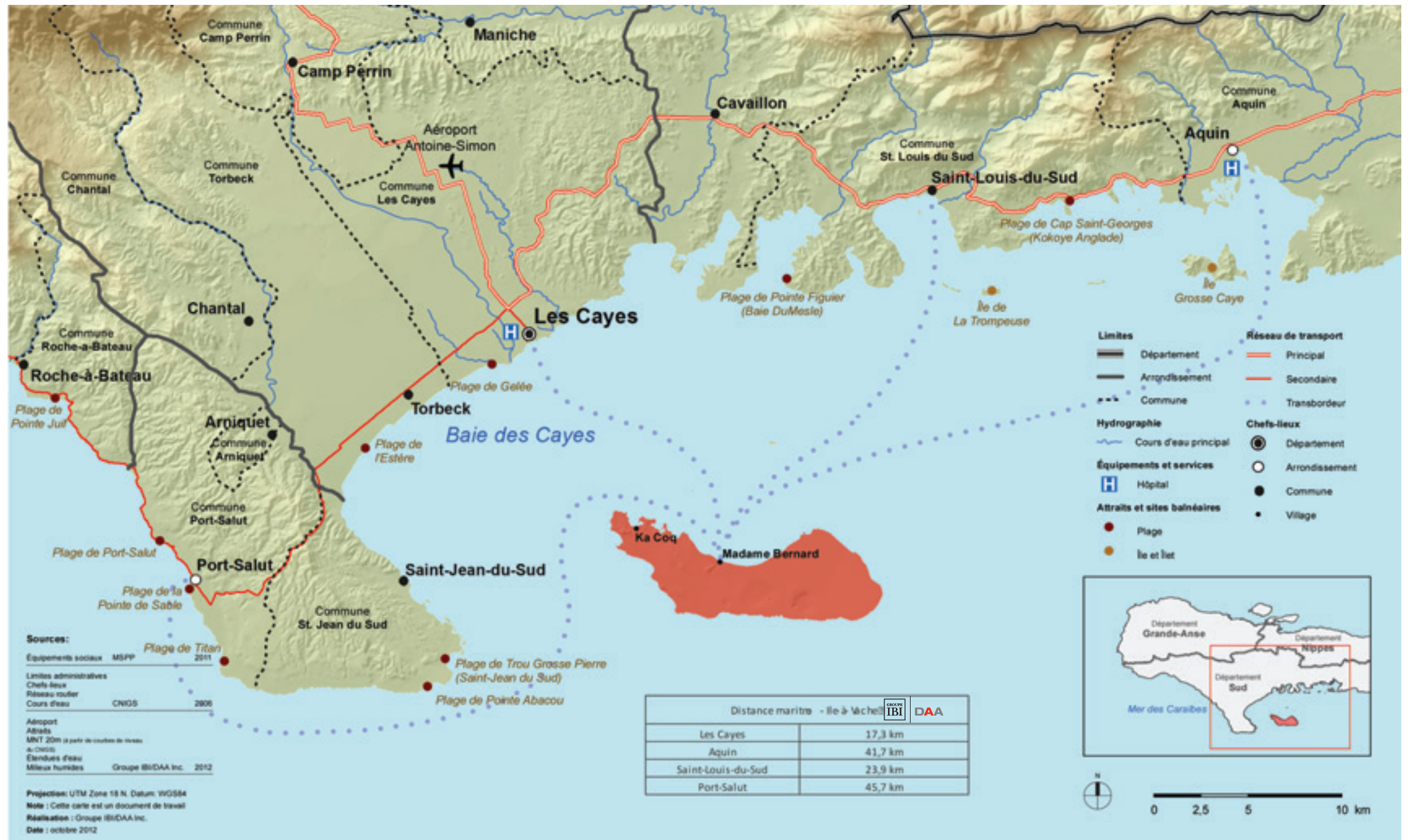
This island is, in short, *un trésor*.

LES CAYES

Les Cayes, the closest town to Île à Vache on the mainland, is a destination in its own right. The town of 70,000 is near Gelée Beach, a long white marvel punctuated with ocean-front restaurants serving local specialties. The town's music festival in mid-August attracts some of the country's best Compas bands. The Grotte Marie-Jeanne caves bring enthusiasts to virtually untouched formations.

A major port exporting coffee and sugar cane, Les Cayes is also the world's largest supplier of vetiver, a key ingredient in the making of perfume. More than 60 tons of the fragrant essence are exported every year.







Satellite view





General characterization

Traveler profiles

Île à Vache will have a particular appeal to four broad categories of educated, luxury-oriented travelers. Their provenance would be the Caribbean, the US, Canada and the European countries with a fondness for the Caribbean: England, France and Germany, along with the newly-mobile Russians and South Americans. The age of our visitors will vary, although the majority will be over 18, and children and families are not anticipated to be a main source of tourists.



Explorers

These are the visitors, amateur or professional, in search of knowledge and new frontiers: biologists, eco-system specialists, divers, archeologists, historians, cavers and all those fascinated by the underwater world.

Explorers include active tourists in search of experiences, ones who'll roam the surface and the waters of the island, above and below, perhaps making a stop at a submerged museum, or spending a day at Les Cayes to discover vetiver and checking out a festival. Explorers are also the "boat people" – yachters and sailors on the lookout for new destinations.



Lovers

Couples in search of the sensation of being alone in the world are a natural on our long beaches and quiet paths. Honeymooners of all ages, couples of all kinds in search of a getaway, empty nest boomers seeking a refuge just for the two of them...all feel the warm intimacy of our cozy island.



Homecomers

Île à Vache could become a second home or even a principal home to members of the diaspora looking to resettle in their country of birth, yet far enough away from its tumult to offer respite. Wealthy Haitians looking for second homes could build a wonderful getaway home that, with luck and planning, will be easy to come to.



Rejuvenators

These are visitors looking for a physical and spiritual renaissance on the island. They're of all ages, and include eco-conscious urbanites and young professionals from the city looking to escape on the weekend. They could be part of the Haitian jet set coming to party or chill. They might be a new class of medical tourists who've come for a state-of-the-art treatment combined with some folk plant treatments from the island. They might be a small group of work colleagues or spa goers seeking peace in paradise.

Program



AIR ACCESS

An airport on Île à Vache would be a game changer. In Tortola and Anguilla, both airports that accommodate regional jets and turboprops, runways are 5,500 ft. (1,676 metres) long. With a small airport, connections to Île à Vache could be made from Port-au-Prince, but also from Miami, Santo Domingo and San Juan, opening Île à Vache to many new markets.



RED SKY AT NIGHT

Île à Vache is dotted with quiet coves and places that are potentially a sailors' delight – it's deserving of inclusion on the itineraries of sailors cruising the Caribbean. With the addition of the proposed village, it could earn its share of the international crowd of mariners who are always looking for a new destination.

BEAUTY IS A BEACH

There are more than 20 beaches to explore on all sides of Île à Vache – virtually deserted beaches for picnics, beaches facing sunset, beaches with beautiful shells, with black, singing rocks, beaches for snorkeling...enough a to satisfy every vacationer's craving for the classic Caribbean beach experience.



A NEW VERNACULAR

The architectural design at Île à Vache, like its trails, transcends time: the materials are the very stuff of the island – the limestone that is just under the surface, the straw of vétiver that has long been roofing, and wood, now precious, that was once carved into doors. All these are made afresh by contemporary design that has made the resort a must-see destination for anyone passionate about architecture. Bungalows on the water are intimate with the shore without hogging it; boutique hotels on the hillside above melt into the mountain and their wide terraces offer views and lounging above the sea. Outdoor comes indoor in everyone's home – showers are outside, and beds can be rolled onto decks so you can sleep beneath the stars, safe under a net on a pillow-soft bed.



THE PATHS LESS TRAVELED

The experience of walking from settlement to settlement on Île à Vache is an unforgettable experience. Visitors will see life as it's lived on the island by wonderful schoolchildren skipping home from class, boys driving cows, naked babies, fishermen tending their nets, women carrying baskets on their heads. In Cinque Terre, the experience has been perfected: it's a walk of one or several days, with excellent restaurants along the way and spectacular views to be enjoyed. Hikers pay a modest fee, which goes to upkeep of the trails.

Program cont' d



ON THE TRAIL OF PIRATES

Île à Vache has an opportunity to take possession of and lovingly tell the pirate story in a highly innovative way. Captain Morgan, Anne Read and other merry marauders could become part of a museum exhibit....underwater. Inspired by the Museo Subacuatico de Arte in Cancun, the museum could lead divers deep into history – and also help conserve and support the life-giving reefs around the island.



MOVING PEOPLE AND THINGS

A system of surfaced paths needs to be created to facilitate the transportation of guests and their luggage from the airport and village, but also to service hotels and bungalows and move food and trash via efficient electric shuttles. Innovative surfacing means that asphalt can be avoided, which would prevent problems from runoff and keep paths passable year round.



ramon resort belize

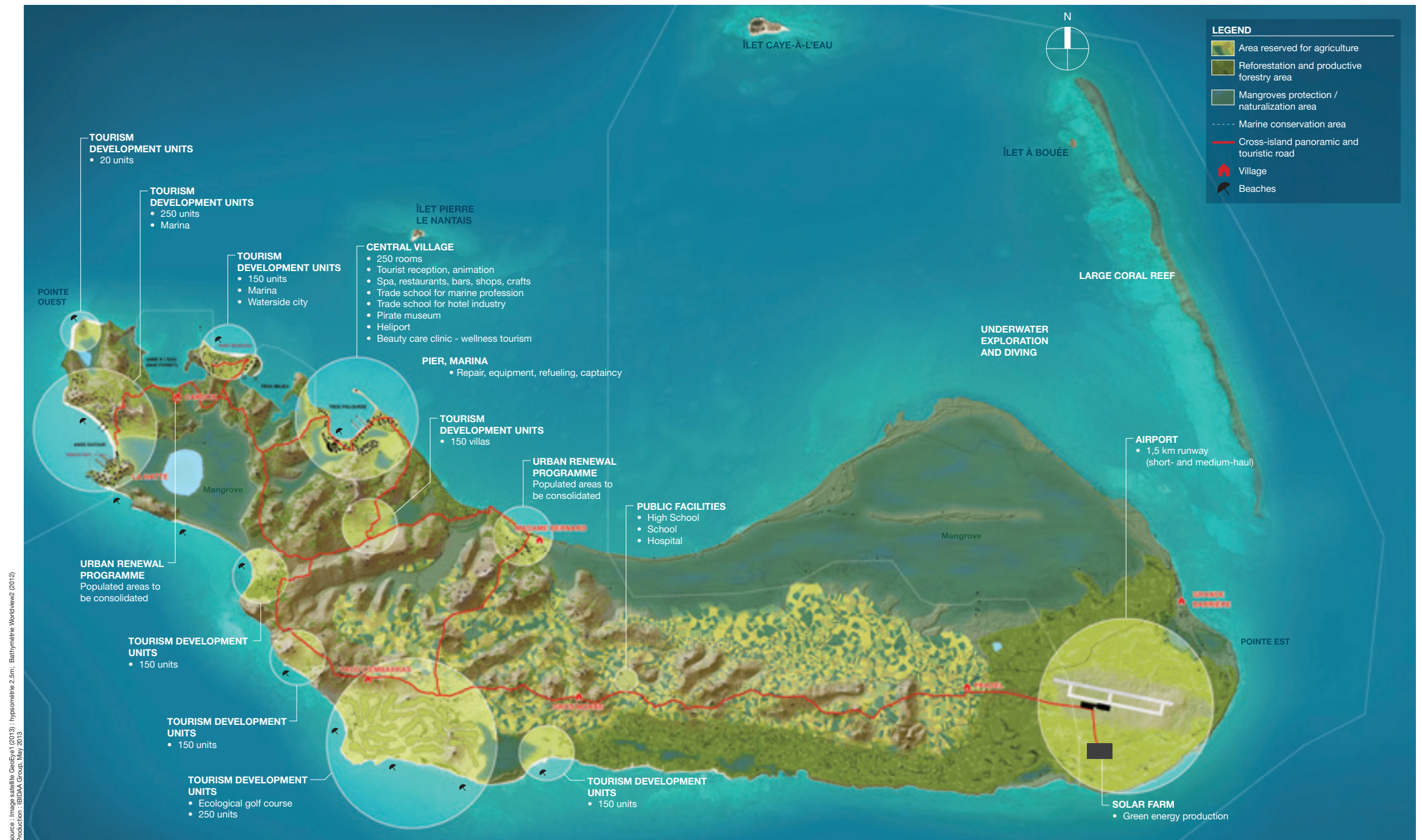
MARY ANNE VILLAGE

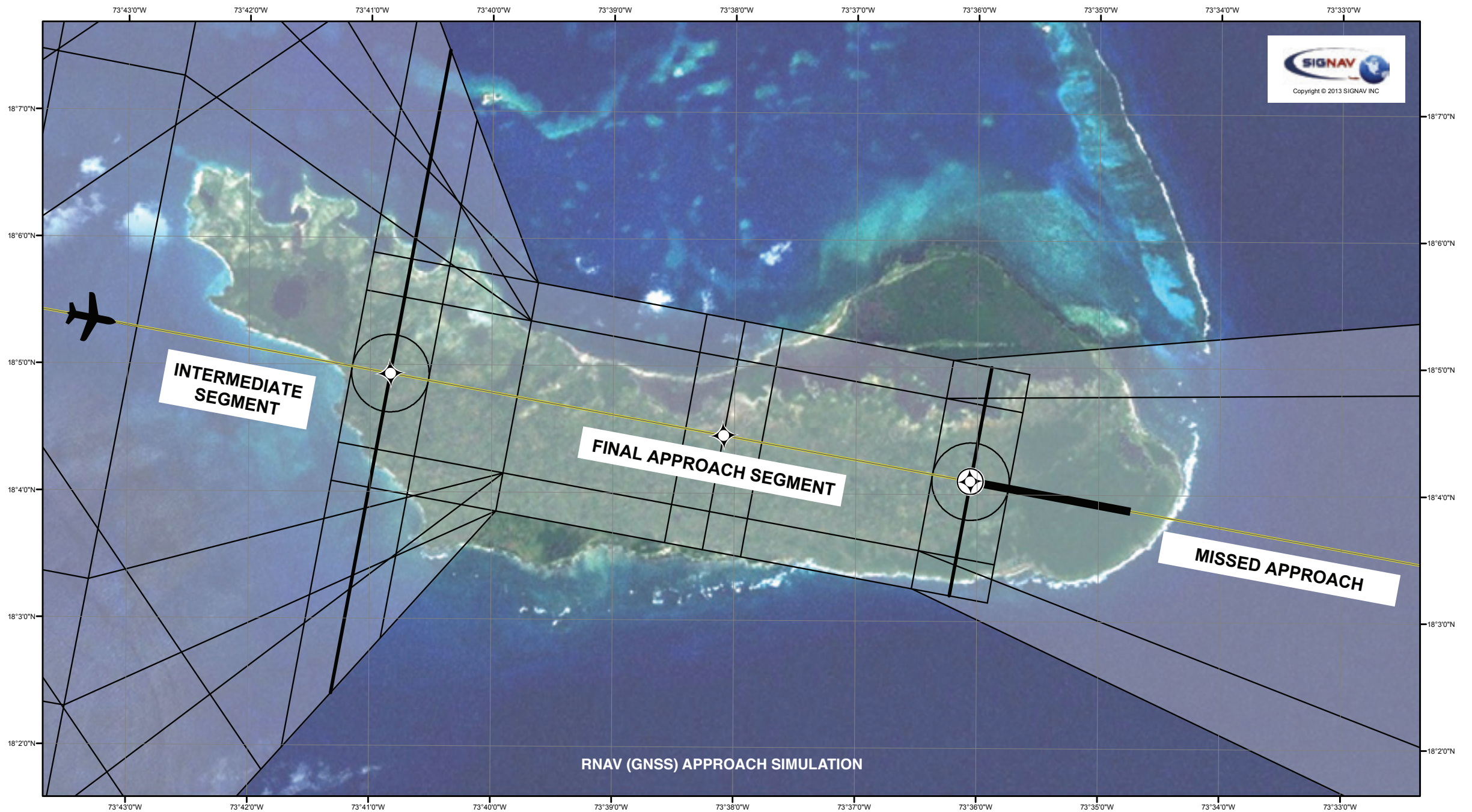
A village on the north coast would provide a gathering place for visitors at all the bungalows on the western end of the island, offer a variety of restaurants, cafés, galleries and markets, and provide a focal point for festivals and celebrations. Named for the Caribbean’s two most famous female pirates, and located on the north coast just west of Mme. Bernard, the village is walkable from most tourist neighbourhoods. It could also be home to a dock where visitors could initially arrive on the island, particularly before the airport is built. The historic docking area on the Haitian mainland lies just opposite the proposed village site.



ISLAND FARMS

Agriculture is a key activity on Île à Vache, and farms and food are an obsession amongst knowledgeable travelers. There’s an opportunity to create a kind of working community farm run by locals – who’ll benefit from technology and best practices – where visitors can be part of planting, harvests, and farm to table dinners prepared by local chefs. In the community of Kukui’ula on Kaua’i, Hawai’i, the farm is both a visual and literal feast, and residents enjoy fresh fruits, veg, herbs and flowers from the farm.







A	OVER THE CLIFF VILLAS
B	MARINA VILLAGE APARTHOTELS
C	COVE AND LAGOON VIEW SUITES
D	WELLNESS CENTER
E	TENNIS COURTS
F	KIDS CLUB AND BEACH CLUB ACTIVITIES
G	RESTAURANT
H	HOTEL FACILITIES
I	MARINA
J	POOL



Anse Dufour - Real estate project, phase 1





**GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI**
MINISTÈRE DE LA PLANIFICATION
ET DE LA COOPÉRATION EXTERNE