Lucelle doesn't have guests. It's one of the first things she says, that at her laid back hotel she only has friends. Even if you're new friends, arriving at her little patch of Indian Bay fresh from the airport, just in from Grenada, you'll understand it easily that she's not only saying that. When she learns you have no car it's unimportant because in her older model, brown car she takes enjoyment from showing her friends a lot of the little main island. Lucelle is proud of her West Indian nation, independent since 1979 and homeland to 120,000 people, her SVG.

St Vincent and the Grenadines: she sees so much goodness in it.

You'll wonder if it was Lucelle who added the final touches to island calm or if the island brought its kindly disposition to bear on her. There's an inkling of the sound of the waves in her demeanour and the soft crunch of beach sand in her pace. Or perhaps it's merely the sort of gentleness to be expected from a diplomat's wife.

By narrow road into the green hills away from the coast she took us to the gardens of Mesopotamia. We strolled and chatted among a bounty of fruit, patterned leaf and orchid flower; and the conversation flowed as simply as the stream, there.



The hills of Mesopotamia, St Vincent.



A set from the film, Pirates of the Caribbean.



Left
Lucelle doesn't have guests, only friends.

Yet it's no cure-all. Wherever there are humans there are problems and we can see this by the black sand beaches of the east coast. Lucelle wanted to show us the tunnel dug under the hillside by African-origin slaves, at the time when the British engaged the island in sugar production. There aren't natural harbours on the east side so the tunnel was a convenience through which trolleys of cane could be hauled and loaded aboard small boats and anchored ships. The British ordered the landscape altered, there.

But there exists no obstacle that can obstruct beauty, according to St Vincent, and what should have been a morbid site of slavery's remodelling,