



Echoed images frame a diver as she explores the wreck of the *Friar's Craig*.

non," my fearless navigator advised, still nervous about driving on the left side of the street. My terrestrial maneuvering error corrected, we were once again enroute to an inland eco-encounter.

The National Trust of Barbados, equal to our EPA, Greenpeace and The National Parks Service all rolled into one, is one of this country's biggest assets. Numerous National Trust sites exist on the island, but the free-range wildlife reserve, is not to be missed.

Exuberant green monkeys scamper overhead as visitors traverse the converging limestone trails of this interactive sanctuary. This is no zoo! This is a dynamic jungle-like experience. Want to see regional Caribbean reptiles, mammals, birds, or amphibians up close and personal? Then this is your E-ticket encounter!

Having been abused by an overactive monkey, it was time to head back to more reclusive environs. Since we were also here to dive wrecks, it was clearly time to check out Mr. Big! Without a doubt, the ultimate wreck dive on Barbados and possibly the Caribbean is that of the *SS Stavronikita*, a 365-foot Greek cargo ship. Sitting upright in 130 feet of water, this auspicious ship now appears to be engaged on an endless journey across the ocean floor.

The *Stavro*, as she is affectionately known, is the kind of wreck that causes serious wreck divers' hearts to race. As an effort to gain some perspective, imagine a 36-story skyscraper lying on its side with a ship's mast protruding and coming to within 15 feet of the surface. Approaching almost 20 years of submersion, the *Stavro* has become adorned with huge tube sponges and gorgonians. At the ship's crosstree on its forward mast, divers encounter a large colony of banded coral shrimp and arrow crabs. Close by, colorful coney scoot up and down the mast among fluorescent rope sponges. Divers are constantly entertained from the moment they descend the prolific mast until the moment they ascend to their waiting boat.

As divers are shuttled to and from the various dive sites, largely along the

western shoreline of Barbados, it becomes apparent that the powder-white beaches of Barbados are a magnet for tourists and locals alike. Children commonly play in the shallow protected breakwater lagoons, amused by the most common of things.

Inland Barbados has its own uniqueness; a coral limestone cap which spans the majority of the island in many areas has now collapsed, forming ravines. One of these is known as Welchman Hall Gully. Ranging to over 50 feet deep, this unusual geologic formation now affords a tranquil respite for hundreds of species of indigenous, exotic

TRAVEL INFO

Direct flights to Barbados are available from Miami and New York (JFK) on American Airlines, Air Jamaica and BWIA. US citizens will be required to show a passport or birth certificate with a government-issued photo ID.

