

CARIBBEAN TRAVEL & LIFE

WINTER PARK, FL
9-TIMES/YEAR 130,000
FEBRUARY 2005



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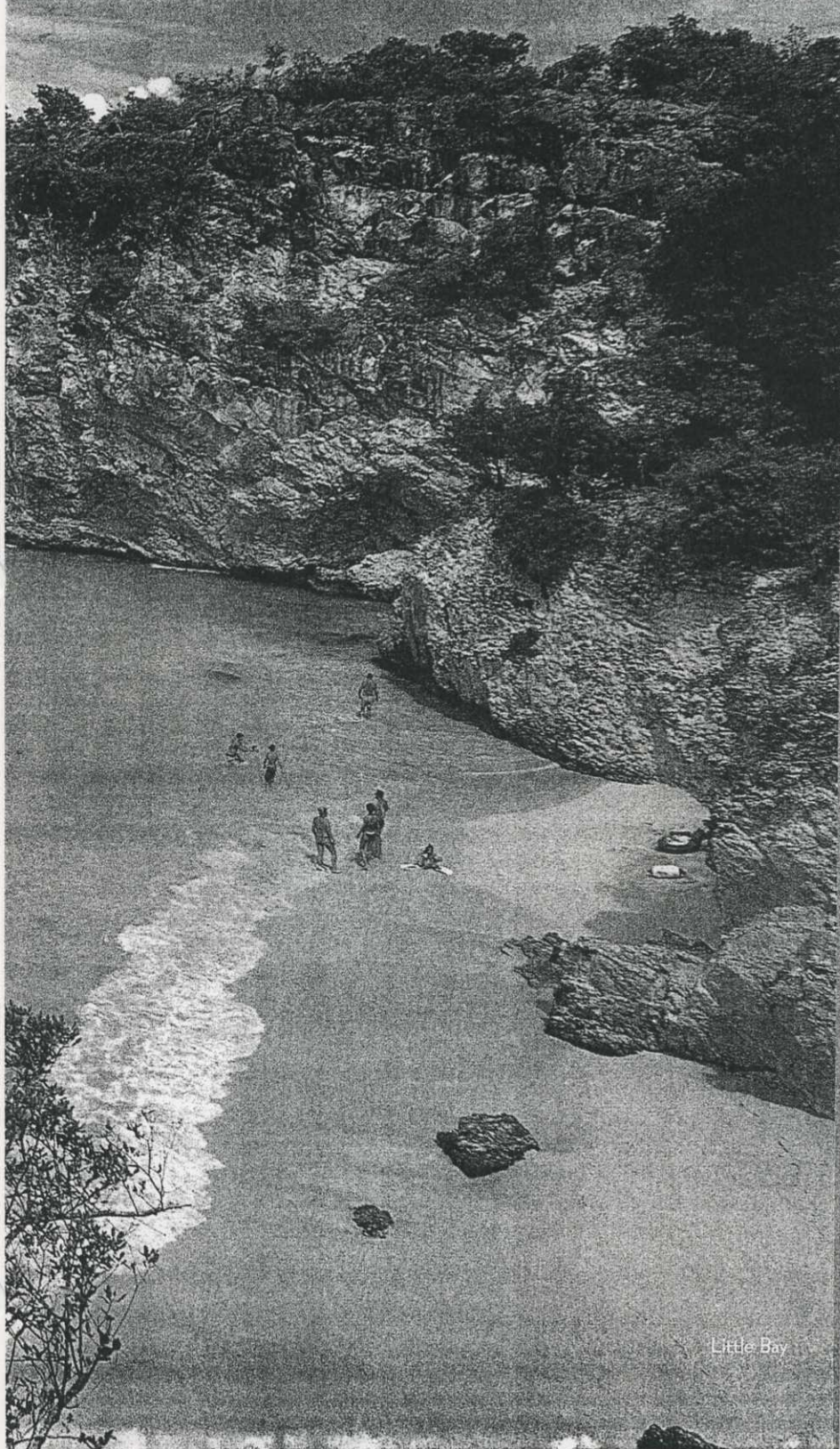


BEACHLOVER'S GUIDE TO

ANGUILLA

ultimate beach issue

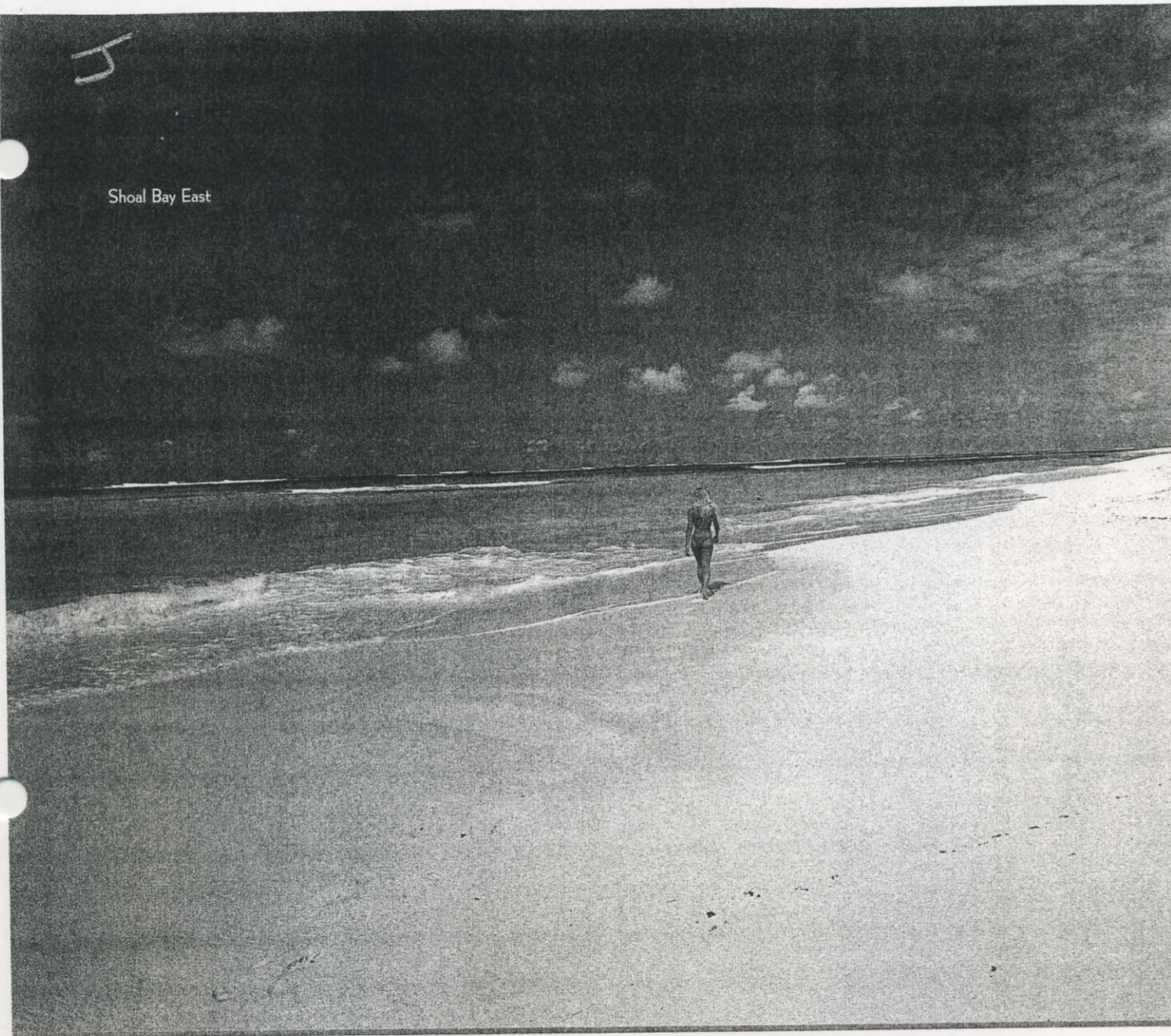
STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB FRIEL



Little Bay

Anguilla is the quintessential beach destination for *CT&L* readers — as well as its editors. We're not big fans of blaring boomboxes, buzzing waterbikes and naked volleyball. We want a soft beach to walk and lie on, clear water to swim and snorkel in and an authentic beach bar with icy rum drinks and fish sandwiches for lunch, grilled lobster for dinner. And when we're done for the day, we want to walk a few steps to a comfortable resort. • Anguilla more than fits the bill. The water, filled with Crayola-colored tropical fish, is often so transparent it's like floating in air. The resorts range from clean, simple and on the sand to some of the world's best. As for the restaurants, you'd have to be a shark to get fresher seafood. And the beaches? Merely the finest collection you'll find on any single island in the Caribbean.

4
Shoal Bay East



BEACH BY BEACH

SHOAL BAY EAST

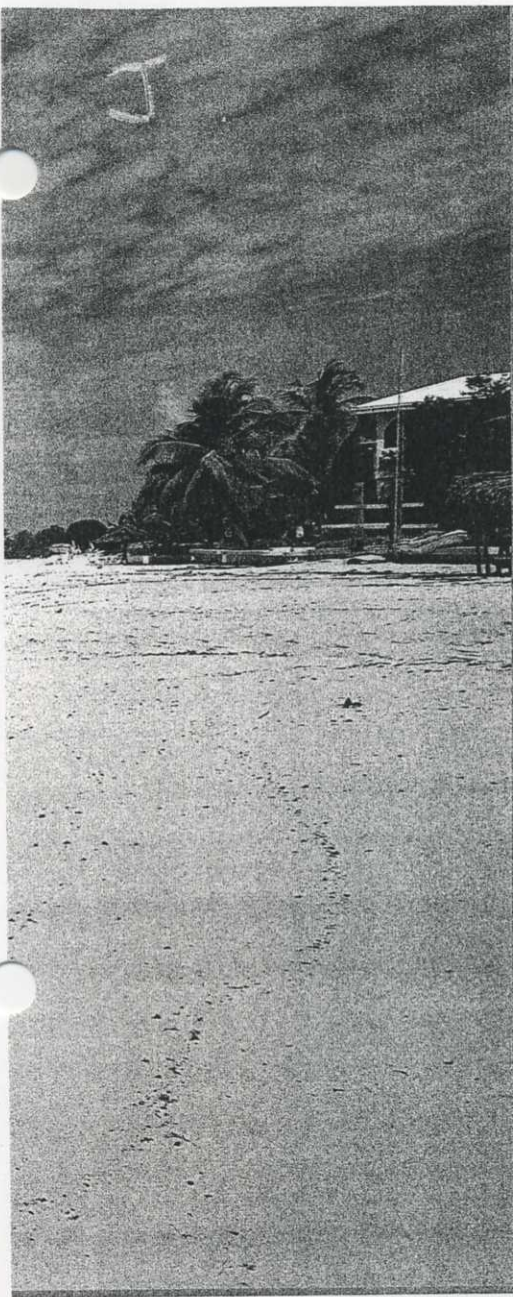
Anguilla's most famous beach, Shoal Bay East, has it all: a wide swath of creamy soft sand over a mile long; the island's most extensive buffet of beach bars and restaurants; a comfortable collection of small beach resorts; and an offshore reef that attracts colorful tropicals along with snorkelers, divers and glass-bottom boaters. It's also the only beach that, during high season, draws enough barefoot traffic to keep it interesting for devoted people-watchers.

The main road into Shoal Bay East dead-ends at Uncle Ernie's beach bar and barbecue, epicenter of all the action. In the shade between beach shacks, local entrepreneurs play dominos when they're not helping visitors arrange lounge chairs, umbrellas, snorkel trips, etc. Pick one place to plant your towel and then spend the day walking a few steps into the blue water and then a few the other way for fresh drinks. Or you can see it like a sea turtle, crawling from one beach bar to the next, maybe stopping to hook

up with a water-sports operator for an offshore snorkeling excursion.

Day-trippers from St. Martin descend on the beach most afternoons, but anytime you're feeling cramped, simply walk east or west to find plenty of sandy space. Sundays are the biggest beach days, when most of the bars serve up live-music.

Where to Stay: Madeariman Beach Club (\$175 to \$225*; 264-498-3833; www.madeariman.com) tucks four suites and one studio into a garden just steps from



CT&L BEACH REPORT

■ **Barefoot Factor:** Anguilla's beaches are mainly composed of sugar-fine coral sand. Colors range from Shoal Bay West's foraminifera-tinted pink to Upper Shoal Bay's bleach-white mix of halimeda flakes and coral, with most beaches a light shade of gold.

■ **Access:** All beaches are open to the public. Chairs and umbrellas in front of resorts are for guest use only; at Shoal Bay East, they are available for rent.

■ **Getting Around:** If you don't want to rent a car, pick a resort on Shoal Bay East, Upper Shoal Bay or Mead's Bay, where you'll get a great beach and a choice of beach bars and restaurants. A car, though, will give you access to all the beaches. Definitely pick up a copy of the *Road Map & Guide*. There are very few road signs, and there are more dirt roads than paved ones; but it's impossible to get too lost, and with this good map, you can use dead reckoning to get where you're going.

■ **Undress Code:** Nude sunbathing is illegal. Even on beaches adjacent to the most exclusive resorts staff will remind visitors

to stay strategically clad. Tan-line terminators can either stick to private villas or chance it along secluded stretches of Savannah Bay, Windward Point Bay, Mimi's Bay or Captain's Bay.

■ **Best Snorkeling Beaches:** Upper Shoal Bay, Shoal Bay East, Savannah Bay and Little Bay.

■ **Best Beach Sunsets:** Mead's Bay, Barnes Bay, Limestone Bay.

■ **Best People-Watching:** Shoal Bay East. Maunday's Bay for celebrities.

■ **Best Beachy Day Trips:** Boat trips for snorkeling and lunch at Prickly Pear Island and for the lobster lunch at Scilly Cay.

■ **Best Beach Bars:** Gwen's Reggae Grill, Upper Shoal Bay; Dune Preserve, Rendezvous Bay.

■ **Best Beach Parties:** Moon splash at Dune Preserve (April 1-4); Summer Festival (August 1-10)

the beach. Only palms stand between the beach and Shoal Bay Villas' (\$270 to \$360; 264-497-2051; www.sbvillas.ai) studios, apartments and suite.

Where to Play: Uncle Ernie's (\$\$**); 264-497-3907) classic spot serves up everything from burgers to lobster; Elodias Beach Bar & Grill (\$\$; 264-497-3363) is great for West Indian beach barbecue.

* All prices for winter season 2004-2005.

** Average main course; each \$=\$10.

