

## Anguilla's Laid-Back Luxury

St. Martin's sleepy neighbor has a handful of luxury surprises up its sleeve.

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Even as Caribbean islands go, Anguilla is one laid-back place. Driving through its hilly, trade wind-kissed terrain, you'll find ultra-casual local restaurants, family-owned villas and small hotels, and more than a few goats along the side of the road. The island is many things—friendly, serene, remote—but glamorous? Luxurious?

Yes, actually. Anguilla won't jump out as an obvious luxury destination to the untrained eye, but there are more than a few pockets of upscale indulgence—including three **Leading Small Hotels of the World**—hidden amidst its casual ambiance.

"**Malliouhana** was the first one to come in 1984," explains Amelia Vanterpool-Kubish, director of the **Anguilla Tourist Board**. "They opened two villas down on the beach. Then came **Cap Juluca**, and then **CuisinArt**. [At that time] we were positioning Anguilla as an up-market destination, with a concept of low volume, high yield."

That "low volume, high yield" strategy encouraged all three resorts—Malliouhana, Cap Juluca, and CuisinArt—to raise their accommodations and amenities to the standards of The Leading Hotels of the World, giving Anguilla more LHW properties than any other island in the Caribbean. "And we use that concept still today," Vanterpool-Kubish says. "Anguilla is a small island with a small population, and the idea is that we would not be able to support mass tourism. So we're developing quality accommodations across all levels."

### Leading Hotels of Anguilla

The one that started it all, Malliouhana, is still one of the island's biggest draws. With bright white exteriors and terracotta tile roofs, the resort has the look and feel of a private Italian villa looking out onto the Mediterranean Sea—if the Mediterranean were blessed with the clear turquoise water that's the Caribbean's signature. Inside, accommodations range from double rooms with cov-

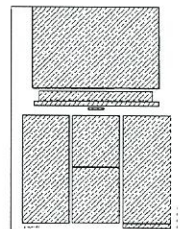
ered patios and marble bathrooms, to 1- and 2-bedroom suites, all the way up to jacuzzi suites with private terraces and outdoor hot tubs. But the jewel in the crown is the pool suite, whose bathroom alone comprises 300 sq. ft. and which, of course, comes with its own 35-ft. freeform pool and private access to the beach at Turtle Cove.

As spas in Anguilla go, Malliouhana's is one of the most established, offering spa cuisine and dedicated spa suites with balconies for half- or full-day packages. The 5-night *Spa Embrace* package gives clients a carefully structured combination of fitness activities like yoga and guided "power stretching" and treatments from aromatherapy massages to a *Traveler's Recovery Bath*, all designed to guide clients to a better state of mind and body by the end of their stay.

*Spa Embrace* rates start at \$3,325 with a companion rate of \$1,635; regular room rates start at \$385 per night. Call (800) 835-0796 or visit [malliouhana.com](http://malliouhana.com).

It's just a short hop across the island's southern tip to Cap Juluca, another resort with European-influenced architecture—Moorish, in this case, with white dome roofs standing out brilliantly against blue skies. The rooms themselves are designed for comfort and familiarity: louvered doors and windows to let in ocean breezes, private covered terraces and marble bathrooms. Every room looks out to sea, be it a luxury 6-room villa or a jr. suite...or the casual dining restaurant George's, or the breezy private spa tents set up for beachfront treatments. Indeed, Cap Juluca really knows how to capitalize on its most attractive asset—the ocean—with water-centric activities like kayaking and a *Golf Aqua* driving range.

Cap Juluca offers all the spa treatments you'd expect, performed either in-room or in various spa facilities, but what really sets the resort apart are its fitness offerings. After all, you can find yoga, tai chi, and circuit training at any self-respecting spa resort these days, but what about lessons in astrol-



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ogy, a "soul awakening" treatment using crystals, gemstones and essential oils, and intuitive therapeutics, which combines clinical psychology and somatic psychotherapy with yoga and meditation to "realign [clients'] creative vitality"?

Room rates start at \$490 Nov. 11-Dec. 15. Call (888) 8JULUCA or visit [capjuluca.com](http://capjuluca.com).

As you'd expect, food has a lot to do with the CuisinArt experience. In addition to its "botanical oasis" landscaping, featuring gardenia, lavender and jasmine, the resort also houses an onsite herb garden and the first ever hydroponic farm at a resort, both of which feed guests in CuisinArt's restaurants. Because of the limitations of the Caribbean's environment for farming, plants like lettuce, tomatoes, broccoli, cucumber, papayas, peppers and more are grown in a water and fertilizer solution, producing some of the freshest fruits and veggies you'll find in the islands.

Dining on these delicacies at the gourmet Santorini Restaurant or casual Cafe Mediterraneo is just part of the culinary experience. Clients can also take cooking classes or engage in a dinner show in CuisinArt's kitchen stadium, where they can watch top chefs prepare the meal they're about to eat, start to finish.

It's not your average resort, but it does come with all the amenities clients love to find in the Caribbean: a spa (in this case, an 8,000-sq.-ft. spa center with five indoor treatment rooms); swimming pool and jacuzzi; activities like windsurfing, deep-sea fishing and croquet; and accommodations outfitted with private solariums and Italian marble bathrooms.

Rack rates start at \$435 per night. Call (800) 943-3210 or visit [cuisinartresort.com](http://cuisinartresort.com).

## What's Next

There's more luxury on the way for Anguilla, most notably in the form of **Temenos Anguilla**, a **St. Regis Retreat**, which is scheduled to open its doors in 2008. In addition to adding a hotel, a beachfront full of luxury villas and residences, and a spa to the existing three villas currently under the St. Regis flag, the resort will also open the island's first

golf course next month.

"The golf course will have a positive impact; we feel that will definitely add to [our luxury market]," Vanterpool-Kubish says. "The golf course will raise the profile of the island in the market."

Anguilla's luxury profile is also bolstered by a new spa program at **Charming Escapes** properties, a collection of small boutique-style properties. "In addition to [the spas at our luxury hotels], there are independent spa operators with whom the Charming Escapes properties work. When we have guests on island, we offer spa treatments by those independent operators. They will actually go to the property, or will set up on the beach so guests can go there if they desire."

With so much recent growth in the luxury niche in Anguilla, you'd think the tourist board would be anxious to keep the ball rolling. But once the St. Regis construction dies down, Vanterpool-Kubish says, Anguilla will return to the sleepy, serene state that attracted all the luxury properties in the first place.

"Quite honestly, at this moment we are not looking for more development because the government has placed a moratorium on development. Right now we do have quite a bit going on—Temenos is being constructed...CuisinArt is looking to add villas to their product.

"I don't think we want to lose [the natural ambiance of Anguilla]," she continues. "That's part of the appeal of the island. Our laid-back atmosphere is part of the appeal."

Call (877) 4-ANGUILLA or [anguilla-vacation.com](http://anguilla-vacation.com) for more information.



