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at Cap Juluca.

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INSIDER

Anguilla Heats Up

With endless beaches and some of the Caribbean's best hotels and restaurants, this laid-back enclave remains the height of island luxury. **RICHARD ALLEMAN** hits the sands

AS FAR AS THE CARIBBEAN goes, Anguilla, the British West Indian island just north of St. Martin, has been very fortunate—it managed to duck the brutal batch of hurricanes last autumn. But its most serendipitous moment came back in 1980, when the government of the virtually hotel-free island decided to limit development to discreet, small hotels

and elegant, upscale resorts. A quarter of a century later, the 16-mile-long territory known for its pristine beaches has stuck to this policy (which means there are no casinos, large cruise ships, or shopping malls) and is now home to what is arguably the Caribbean's highest concentration of luxury properties. Most of them are on the western half, which encompasses Shoal Bay West, Rendezvous Bay. (Continued on page 66)

(Continued from page 61) and Meads Bay; the eastern portion is more residential. Although still a long way from being overdeveloped, Anguilla is becoming decidedly more sophisticated with each season. The island is buzzing with recent and imminent openings of new hotels, restaurants, and "super villas" (an Anguillian specialty); its airport runway has just been expanded to accommodate larger commercial planes in addition to private jets. And here's more good news: the English-speaking Anguillians have remained unpretentious, and their island is still the West Indian charmer it always has been.



A Moorish lantern at Cap Juluca, above. Right: A room at the hotel.

WHERE TO STAY Clutching the cliffs above Meads Bay, **Malliouhana Hotel & Spa** (800/835-0796 or 264/497-6111; www.malliouhana.com; doubles from \$620) seduces all the right travelers (and the shelter magazines) with its enormous Haitian art-filled rooms and suites; sexy, jungly terraces and dining areas; and the island's most sophisticated French cuisine.

Over the years, Malliouhana has fine-tuned its attractions, adding posh new suites, pool areas, and one of the top spas in the Caribbean. • **Cap Juluca** (888/858-5822 or 264/497-6666; www.capjuluca.com; doubles from \$780, including breakfast, water sports, and afternoon tea), on mile-long Maundays Bay Beach, has continued to raise the bar for luxury since it first



cuisinartresort.com; doubles from \$550) is home to a hydroponic farm that enables the resort to grow much of its own produce. Chef Daniel Orr, formerly of Guastavino's in New York, was brought in last year to oversee the resort's three restaurants, which feature Mediterranean cuisine and, naturally, the best salads in the region. This season, guests can learn to cook in a stadium kitchen and then feast on a five-course dinner.

THE SUPER VILLAS Smart travelers know the unbeatable luxury and privacy of renting an entire house. But visionary architect Myron Goldfinger is responsible for upping the ante with his bold, monolithic mansions on the southwestern tip of Anguilla. Called **Covecastles** (Shoel Bay West; 800/225-1108 or 264/497-6801; >

FAST FACT

33

Number of stunning white beaches on this small island



Inside CuisinArt Resort & Spa's hydroponic farm.

opened in 1988. The Caribbean had never seen any place quite like this Moorish fantasy: most of the domed, whitewashed buildings are appointed with traditional Moroccan rugs and lanterns; glamorous marble bathrooms have tall glass walls overlooking plant-filled private solaria. For a little more privacy, opt for one of the multi- (up to five) bedroom villas, each with a pool and private butler. • Besides its eye-grabbing Greek island architecture, **CuisinArt Resort & Spa** (Rendezvous Bay; 800/943-3210 or 264/498-2000; www.

EXPERT ADVICE

George Reid STAR CHEF, MASTER CHEESEMAKER

Anguilla-born Reid reigns over Cap Juluca's three restaurants but still finds time to tend his herd of more than 80 goats and to produce first-rate chèvre. **TOP TABLE** "My favorite restaurant on Anguilla is **Hibernia** [264/497-4290], a small [11-table] French-Asian place up at the east end of the island, where I always order the *tom jamm pla*, various Caribbean fishes cooked in a spicy Thai broth and served with wild rice." **SNAP IT UP** "For a light lunch, **Johanna's** [264/497-2728] is a casual, fun spot on the beach at Sandy Ground—order the snapper. It's also a hot spot at night, with jazz, dancing, local bands." **WEEKEND BEAT** "Check out the conga drums on Sundays at St. Gerard's Roman Catholic Church in the Valley—but only when the drummers show up! At the Christian Fellowship Church in Blowing Point, the band (tambourines, drums, keyboard, guitar) plays through the service every Sunday." **SUITE DREAMS** "If I could stay any place on Anguilla besides Cap Juluca I'd pick one of the villas at **Altamer** [see page 68], for their size and their unique modern architecture."



www.covecastles.com; from \$1,095 per day), these two- to five-bedroom houses feature enormous rooms with tropical minimalist interiors, the latest electronics, and full hotel amenities (concierge, 24/7 room service). The super-villa concept has flourished on Anguilla, as has Covecastles, which now includes 15 villas; the most recent, the Point, is a five-bedroom extravaganza that rents for a cool \$4,295 a night. • Just up the beach, **Altamer** (Shoal Bay West; 888/652-6888 or 264/498-4000; www.altamer.com; \$35,000 per week) is another impressive compound with three towering five- and six-bedroom residences, also designed by Goldfinger, each with a private gym, a 45-foot swimming pool, and a staff that includes a butler, a concierge, and, by request, a personal chef. • Big-name celebrities seeking total seclusion book

Cerulean (264/497-8840 or 212/285-2070; www.cerulean-villa.com; \$39,000 a week, including butler, private chef, and spa services) on Barnes Bay; a seven-bedroom, multi-domed villa designed by Modernist architect Deborah Berke, with

handcrafted Moroccan and Mexican furnishings, limestone floors, a pool and gardens, and in-room spa treatments. • The newest member of the super-villa set is **Temenos Anguilla, a St. Regis Retreat** (Long Bay; 264/222-9000; www.temenosvillas.com; from \$35,053 a week, including personal butler). Each of its three two-story units resembles a mini-Aman resort, wrapping around a spectacular infinity pool above a palmy beach. Architectural surprises abound—from Santorini-style terraces to secret alcoves, perfect for meditating or napping. Scheduled to open this summer is the island's first 18-hole golf course, which was designed by Greg Norman without disrupting the seaside setting. Also on the horizon (in 2006): a 97-bungalow hotel on the 4,400-foot-long Merrywing beach, just five minutes away.

Grilled spiny lobster at CuisineArt.

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WHERE TO EAT It used to be that serious foodies heading for the Caribbean went to St. Bart's, feeling that it was the only place to find really memorable cuisine. Anguilla has more than met the challenge

Island Values Despite Anguilla's \$40,000-a-week villas and \$800-a-night hotel rooms, you don't have to rob a bank to stay here. A favorite among Anguilla's earliest fans and still going strong, **Skiffles Villas** (264/497-6110; www.skiffles.com; doubles from \$220) offers attractive cliffside accommodations with kitchens, in pretty pastel houses at Long Bay. (Most romantic: See Grapes, a tiny pink cottage set apart from the others with a view of the sea.) The only thing missing at Skiffles is its own beach—the nearest one is a half-mile down the hill. • That's not the case at **Blue Waters Beach Apartments** (Shoal Bay West; 264/497-6292; one-bedrooms from \$275), where cool little efficiencies in bright-white buildings are right on the sand. • Anguilla's oldest beach resort, **Rendezvous Bay Hotel & Villas** (800/274-4893 or 264/497-6549; www.rendezvousbay.com; doubles from \$130) has a stellar beachside setting, 45 spotless rooms and suites, and a large veranda that winds around the main plantation-style house. On southwestern Anguilla, Rendezvous Bay has the funky feel of a big B&B—it's not for everyone, but devotees won't stay anywhere else.

posed by its French neighbor and has become a culinary destination in its own right. At **Blanchard's** (Meads Bay; 264/497-6100; dinner for two \$120), a palm tree grows through the roof and teal shutters open to tropical gardens that resemble a 3-D Rousseau painting. The food also resembles a work of art (and

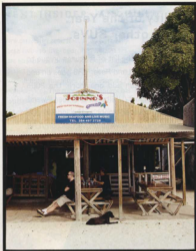
it tastes as good as it looks): creamless corn chowder and filet mignon of tuna are just two of the chef's signature dishes. • **Altamer** (Shoal Bay West; 264/498-4040; dinner for two \$100), the centerpiece of the villa complex of the same name, is a sleek, streamlined dining room by the sea. Here, French chef Maurice G. Leduc prepares decadent lobster-chicken-truffle sausage and orange-ginger roast duck. • You're almost sitting in the ocean

at **Mango's Seaside Grill** (Bernes Bay; 264/497-6479; dinner for two \$110), a casual seafood standby with a great wine list (350 choices) and sublime just-caught yellowfin tuna sashimi. • Jamaican chef Deon Thomas has been perfecting Caribbean »

FAST FACT
100+
Restaurants
on Anguilla
(more per
acre than
in New
York City)

The pool and sanctuary at Temenos, below. Right: Shoal Bay Beach.





Johnno's, left, a hot spot for music and seafood. Above: Inside at the bar.

cooking in Anguilla for 14 seasons at **Deon's Overlook** (South Hill; 264/497-4488; dinner for two \$110). While his devout followers know to order his lobster pancakes or pan-seared crayfish with coconut sauce, dessert—chocolate rum cake, mango Key lime pie, rum raisin rice pudding—can be a more difficult

choice. ● At **Tasty's Restaurant** (South Hill; 264/497-7737; dinner for two \$80), a pastel roadhouse run by Malliouhana-trained Anguillian chef Dale Carty, conch salad and coconut-crusted parrotfish with spicy banana rum sauce are among the standouts.

● For a dose of trendy St. Bart's without leaving Anguilla, simply head to **Le Bar** (264/497-0099; lunch for two \$50) on Shoal Bay East. This tris cool barefoot bistro (think lobster *salele nîsoix*, strains of Pinaf and Josephine Baker) serves to-die-for mango and banana daiquiris. ● Excellent northern Italian pasta and seafood dishes make everyone—especially kids—happy at **Trattoria Tramonto** (264/497-8819; lunch for two \$50), a pretty white beach shack on Shoal Bay West. Lounge chairs are provided for guests who want to catch some rays before or after lunch. ● Closed for 2 1/2 years due to damage caused by Hurricane Lenny, one of the island's most celebrated establishments,

KoalKeel (264/497-2930; dinner for two \$175), reopened this winter in the same lovely, albeit newly decorated, plantation house in Anguilla's main village, the Valley. A new chef (Scott Gerow) is on board, promising sophisticated Caribbean cuisine.

● A 4 x 4 is helpful when trying to reach **Palm Grove Bar & Grill** (264/497-4224; lunch for two \$70), but it's worth the trek. Owner Nat Richardson

serves up the most wonderful crayfish and snapper in his shack that sits between Junk's Hole and Savannah Bay.

SPA SCENE Prompted by the ever-increasing popularity of spas and restorative retreats on other islands, Anguilla has reinvented itself as an island of wellness, recently unveiling innovative new fitness programs and facilities. Leader of the pack: the **Spa at Malliouhana** (264/497-6111). Its 15,000-square-foot building is virtually a resort within a resort, offering an array of aromatherapies, facials, polishes, wraps, scrubs, and rubs from around the world.

● The specialty is personal training at CuisinArt's **Venus Spa**, with everything from Killer Abs to Fitness Over 50 programs (\$75 an hour for one person, \$115 per couple).

Yoga sessions are held in a thatched pavilion hidden among the palms. ● **Cap Juluca** is making wellness a priority this season with its soon-to-open fitness center, a yoga and

Pilates studio, and six spa treatment rooms—plus three newly arrived masseurs from Bali. The resort's highly popular five-day Mind, Body & Spirit program features a new-millennium mix of massage,

yoga, bioenergetics, aromatherapy, and astrology readings. (\$6,175 for one person, \$7,690 per couple, including accommodations and meals).

WHERE TO SHOP If you're a serious shopper, Anguilla is not your island. But with great boutiques just a 30-minute ferry ride away (264/497-2231; \$25 round-trip) on French/Dutch St. Martin, shopaholics can get their duty-free fix. On Anguilla itself, **Anguilla Rums, Ltd.** (Road Bay; 264/497-5003; factory tours by appointment) ages, blends, and bottles premium Caribbean rums. The ultimate take-home: super-smooth Pyrat Cask 23 sipping rum in a handsome handblown decanter and cedar gift box (\$180). ♦

RICHARD ALLEMAN is a frequent contributor to *Travel + Leisure*.

Anguilla's Best Beaches

MOST BEAUTIFUL
Shoal Bay East
Endless white sand backed by palm trees; top-notch snorkeling.

MOST SECLUDED
Captain's Bay
On the northeastern tip of the island, but beware the undertow.

BEACHCOMBING
Barnes Bay
Just less than a mile of superb strolling. Stop for lunch at a resort edging the sands.

WIND SURFING
Rendezvous Bay
One of the breeziest spots on the island's Atlantic side.

MOST ROMANTIC
Cove Bay
Enchanting "secret" beach between Maundays Bay and Rendezvous Bay.

SUNSET SMITH
Meads Bay
Afterward, have a drink on the top deck of nearby Olivier's Seaside Grill.



Malliouhana Hotel & Spa, overlooking Meads Bay.