

T H E S T Y L E I S S U E

DEPARTURES

SEPTEMBER 2005 \$10



ANGUILLA

HOME TO
MOVIE STARS,
LONG DOGS,
AND EXPAT
ENGLISHMEN,
ANGUILLA IS SO
PRIVATE AND
SO EXCLUSIVE
THAT IT'S, WELL,
PRACTICALLY
SHOCKING.
TAMA JANOWITZ
REPORTS.

Each of Cap Juluca's 18 Moorish-style villas faces the calm waters of Anguilla's southwest coast (opposite).

RISING



LATITUDE 18°, LONGITUDE 63°, or is it the other way round? Anyway, dateline: Anguilla.

My trip begins before I even get there. For weeks I seem to be surrounded by this tiny island in the Caribbean Sea. A morning talk show sponsors a wedding there; the papers are full of the details of Brad and Jen's visit and mentions of Beyoncé and Jay-Z sightings at Cap Juluca. One friend recommends Shoal Bay East beach, another a cove just to the right of the Malliouhana Hotel. Others rave about the villas for rent at Altamer with names like Russian Amethyst and Brazilian Emerald. They'd gotten tired, they told me, of Saint Barths. Oh, they all sighed, how lucky you are to be going to Anguilla.

I knew very little about the place—only, in fact, that Christopher Columbus landed here in 1493 and that he took one look at its long and skinny shape and christened it with the Spanish word for cel. (Today the island is a British Overseas Territory.)

After a three-hour flight from New York to Saint Martin, a quick ferry to Anguilla, and five days on the island's 33 fabulous beaches, I think I've got it. This place, so chic, so hot, with its beautiful white

Moorish-style hotels and phone book-thick wine lists and menus, has managed to preserve a healthy dose of original island character (not to mention fantastic roadside barbecue). There is no duty-free shopping in Anguilla, no chain hotels, no casinos, no cruise ships in sight. This is a place where the elusive Anguillian "long dog"—a wild canine descended from pups who reportedly made it to shore after a shipwreck long ago—shares the white sandy beaches with leggy blonde celebrities and their potentially estranged husbands. My mission for this piece was to decode the secret of Anguilla's au courant status as Destination: Most Wanted.

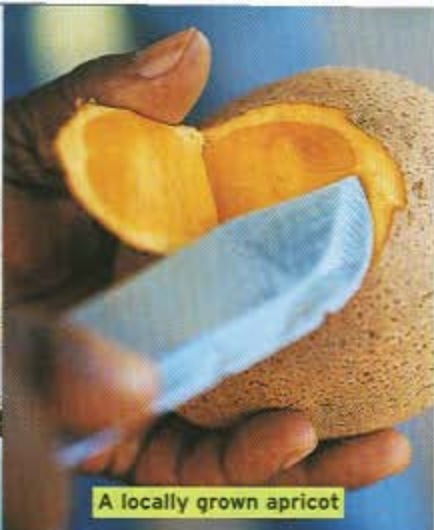
I began my research, believe it or not, by staying at the Malliouhana Hotel & Spa (*maliouhana* is the pre-Columbian name for the island). My terrace faces some kind of turquoise lapping water, possibly the sea, possibly shark infested. I am told by several reliable sources, however, that there are no sharks and no jellyfish. A lack of danger lurks everywhere in Anguilla.

Dawn, day one (okay, so it's maybe ten in the morning). I wake. The Malliouhana was built more than 20 years ago and was the first

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FREDERIC LAGRANGE



Tama at Temenos Sea Villa



A locally grown apricot



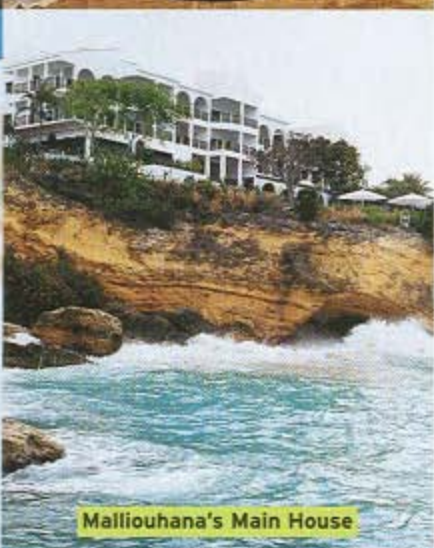
The lounge at the Malliouhana



The African Sapphire Villa at Altamer



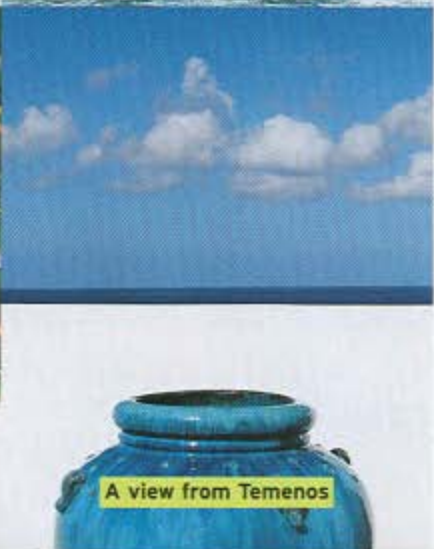
Tama in paradise



Malliouhana's Main House



Table settings at Scilly Cay



A view from Temenos

top-of-the-line Anguillian resort (now sharing the mantle with Cap Juluca and CuisinArt, it will soon have to compete with the latest venture from the Los Angeles-based Kor hotel group, the team behind the überstylish Viceroy in Santa Monica). The Malliouhana is the kind of place that people come back to year after year, usually in late December and anytime private schools take a holiday. It is also one of those blissful hotels where no matter how many people are staying in its 55 rooms, it always seems as though you have the place to yourself. The two-story guest villas dotted throughout the 26-acre compound are situated at the end of a long row of royal palms. Each is done up with Haitian art from owner Leon Roydon's personal collection.

The cottages fulfill everyone's fantasy of a Caribbean house, with wooden blinds and ceiling fans and pastel-hued bedding that makes you think about nap time from the moment you wake up. The reception hall is in the main building, as is the restaurant (you dine and breakfast perched atop the amazing cliffs, where the waves look to be about 20 feet high as they break over the rocks). There is a swimming pool just off the perfect little bar, where they serve perfect little homemade potato chips made in an old-fashioned potato chip machine along with your drink. Everywhere are open walls and windows. Amazingly, there are no insects. Since things that sting or drink blood usually adore me, I find their absence most charming.

Roydon came here from Britain in 1982 and had the foresight to find and develop this piece of land long before Anguilla became a who's who type of place. Though his son Nigel has taken over the day-to-day management, Leon still greets each guest personally on arrival. He has a kind of David Niven quality—suave and unassuming. He is part of a large expat community on the island—people who came here from somewhere else and found themselves...unable to leave. Tanya Clark, for example, the delightful director of the recently built spa at the Malliouhana, hails from Vancouver Island, B.C. All that Vancouver and Anguilla have in common is that they are both long and narrow.

The new spa is located in a two-story building right on the beach, with three private suites on the second floor. Each suite has its own balcony (where you can have the open-air Ocean Chair Terrace massage) and one has its own Jacuzzi. The staff comes from Thailand, India, and those corners of the world where massage techniques are ingrained in daily life. It has been decided that before setting off on my exploration of Anguilla, I must prepare by receiving the signature massage, which consists of hot stones being placed between my toes by a wonderful woman named Tang.

I am then lulled into sleep on the beach and thus almost a full day is lost as I lounge on the amazing white sands. After waking, I fortify myself with a frozen daiquiri made with local limes. Sour, icy cold, and so, so refreshing.

Not that there aren't other things to do here: early-morning oceanside workouts with a local former cricket champion, tennis on clay courts, morning golf on the curiously named People's Golf Course. There's a place to swim with the dolphins (not for

Cap Juluca's three- and five-bedroom villas and suites come with a private pool and a butler.



free, of course, unless you get lucky and bump into one while swimming on your own), snorkel, and scuba dive. Sunday afternoons people chill at Gwen's Reggae Grill; Friday and Saturday nights there is dancing and reggae bands at The Pumphouse and Johnno's. (Tip: In season—late November through April—Friday night is mostly tourists, Saturday night is more of a local scene and much more fun.)

Or you can get married: Anguilla is known for making it super easy to get a license—and a JP—in two days. If you're desperate to shop, there is a ferry to duty-free Saint Martin. But I don't think you are going to want to do these other things.

On perfectly still evenings, when there isn't a cloud in the sky, groups gather at the Malliouhana bar or on the beach. They wait and they wait to see the green flash. This takes place for only one split second, when the tropical sun dips below the horizon. At that exact moment the yellow sun and blue water collide, creating an electric flash of neon-intense green. The whole event is over, almost, before you know it. And if instead of staring at the horizon you are lulled into a trance by the view of the empty beach and the ceaseless drama of the waves, you will miss the flash completely. It won't matter to you.

This is life on Anguilla's West End, the side with magnificent hotels and some of the world's most beautiful rental properties (villas that can go from upwards of 35 grand a week). On the more residential East End, the roads are rougher and goats wander freely. In my search to find the secrets behind Anguilla's chicness and to satisfy my newfound obsession with the long dog, I head there with Mimi Gratton, the ever helpful executive director of the Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association. Mimi has been on the island—she's from Montreal—for more than 11 years and has a four-year-old daughter with an Anguillian father.

We drive from the Malliouhana to the home of Jo-Anne Mason, who lives up a steeply pitched (by local standards; to anyone else it's flat) dirt road in a house surrounded by loblolly trees and coral outcroppings overrun with the most amazing crabs. "Oh geez," Mimi says.

"I have a crab sanctuary!" says Jo-Anne—sounding slightly defensive—as we enter the compound.

"Of course you do..." Mimi says soothingly.

Toto, I've a feeling we're not at the Malliouhana anymore.

The crabs are called soldier crabs, and they are among the most peculiar and enchanting creatures I have ever seen. Each has selected a beautiful seashell in which to live and prances about, clicking lightly, like a tiny ballerina.

We sit at a picnic table under a gazebo. A large group of crabs are waving their claws at the sliding glass door, apparently trying to break in. "They dream about getting into the house," Jo-Anne explains, seconds before she releases the dogs. They are a pack of five—all mixed breed and rescued. In an instant I recognize that two are the elusive and exclusively Anguillian long dogs I have yet to spot. Slightly shaggy, with a distinctive fluffy area similar to a saddle, they have medium-length plumed tails, spaniel ears,

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PRIVATE PARADISE

For those seeking complete privacy, even a suite at the Malliouhana won't do. "Supervillas" are built with these guests in mind. Mansions by any definition (the smallest is about 6,500 square feet), supervillas rent for \$40,000 to \$75,000 a week in the high season and almost double that between Christmas and New Year's.

CERULEAN was designed by Deborah Berke, the architect behind the exquisite minimalism of the Calvin Klein stores. The seven-bedroom compound has a 3,000-square-foot pool deck. Aestheticians trained by Susan Ciminelli, of the spa at Bergdorf Goodman, are on hand to administer massages and facials. **■** From \$42,000 per week; 212-285-2070

THE ST. REGIS TEMENOS villas look as though they were plucked off the caldera rim at Santorini. Dubbed Sand, Sea, and Sky after their respective orientations to the beach, the villas each feature a St. Regis-trained staff (translation: flawless service). From \$40,000 per week; 264-222-9000

ALTAMER has more of a traditional resort setup, with a reception area, restaurant, and conference center. The three residences—Brazilian Emerald, Russian Amethyst, and African Sapphire—come with a pool table, a screening room, a volleyball court, and an MP3 system loaded with 30,000 songs. From \$38,500 per week; 264-498-4000

EXCLUSIVITY is a five-bedroom behemoth that has its own helicopter pad, a beach difficult to access from the road, and landscaping so thick even telephoto lens-wielding paparazzi don't stand a chance. Owner Remi Brooke accepts guests, who range from ex-royals to NBA players, as she sees fit—and only a few times a year. Lucky selectees eat meals prepared by Prince Rainier's former personal chef and swim in a pool just short of Olympic size. **■** From \$60,000 per week; 860-379-9052

—TARA MANDY



The private pool at Altamer's African Sapphire Villa



A bathroom at Temenos's Sea Villa

ANGUILLA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 230 »

and very short legs. "Someday I want to see the Anguillian long dog be part of the Westminster Dog Show," Jo-Anne says.

Next we take a short ferry ride to meet "Gorgeous" Eudoxie Wallace, an Anguillian who presides over a small island adjacent to Anguilla known as Scilly Cay. Eudoxie, I learn, is presently building a house there. To get to Scilly Cay takes about three minutes by boat from Island Harbor. As soon as you arrive you are offered rum punch, and your choice of lobster, crayfish, or chicken is barbecued while you wait—and listen to a group of six men sing calypso.

You can see why the lanky and debonair Wallace is nicknamed Gorgeous. He has the looks and charm of a movie actor from an earlier era. "You want to rent out the island?" Eudoxie asks immediately. "You can have it on the days we're not open: \$4,000 a day." I sit down and just listen. "That's nothing. Just down the road I'm building a house out of a material that I don't think anyone has ever used to make a house before." He lowers his voice and glances around. "I've taken pieces of coral that have washed ashore and sliced them with a diamond saw. It's not finished, but I have already been offered six million dollars for it!" Eudoxie presents me with three coral tiles to take home to Brooklyn.

His is only the first of my gifts from Anguilla. Eustace "Guish" Guishard is the general manager of Cap Juluca, and it is he who presents me with a bottle of Pyrat rum. Blended from rums made all over the world and aged for a varying number of years, the XO comes in a handblown flask placed inside a cedar box. Normally I'm not a drinker of spirits, but I change my mind after one sip: like Cognac but with an amazing burnt-sugar taste. An intoxicating maple-syrup candy for grown-ups.

My Pyrat rum is already in my suitcase when I arrive at Cap Juluca. I am swiftly ushered from the main desk into a room called the library, where you are plied with rum punch. (An unfortunate reminder of reality comes in the form of a large air-conditioned business center opposite.)

Though the Malliouhana seemed empty even when it was fully booked, Cap Juluca is a prime spot for people watching. There are clean-scrubbed Hamptons types in polo shirts and tennis shorts and many glamorous Russian women jangling with jewelry and (it seemed to me, anyway) wearing invisible fur coats.

The fantastic two-story Moorish-style castles—well, not really, but the individual buildings that resemble castles and house the guest rooms—are spread out along the sands. Some are so far from the main reception area that golf carts speed guests back and forth to their quarters or to the hotel's George's restaurant, which serves a kind of contemporary Caribbean cuisine.

Anguilla suffered greatly after the hurricanes of 1995 and 1999. The damage may have been significant, but for the tourists it means that besides everything being very new, each detail has been rethought to make things all the more convenient. In my room at Cap Juluca I have my own interior staircase, leading up to a terrace. The beach is right outside the door, and a path alongside is lined with chairs and hammocks, in case even the quick walk back to the main building proves exhausting.

On my last day, as Cap Juluca's private ferry whisks me to Saint Martin's airport for the trip home, I reflect on my week:

Hanging out at Gwen's Reggae Grill on a Sunday afternoon. The wine list, seemingly hundreds of pages long, at the Malliouhana. The lime daiquiris and rum punch. Sunset at Shoal Bay West. The silent-auction night at Wallblake House, the island's only plantation, built in the 1700s and now a historical society. Primary auction offerings: dried bouquets of flowers, decorated picture frames. Primary attendees: members of the expat community, still called expats though their ancestry and history on the island in some cases goes back many generations. The empty beaches. Jo-Anne and her Anguillian long dogs. The old ladies at the market selling mangoes and papayas, bananas and pineapples, and weighing all of it on vintage scales while holding very tiny cell phones.

This is an island 16 miles long, three miles wide, full of eccentrics who until recently were, amazingly enough, left in relative peace. And although the Wallblake Airport has just been upgraded with a longer runway, Anguilla seems destined to stay above the mass-market fray. Despite the white tents at Cap Juluca, the Malliouhana's Ocean Chair Terrace massage, the \$40,000-a-week villas at Altamer, the island itself remains as pure as its untouched, unspoiled beaches. Here's a rum punch to hoping it stays that way. ■

Malliouhana Hotel & Spa, from \$640 to \$3,030; 800-835-0796; www.malliouhana.com. Cap Juluca, from \$750 to \$2,615; 888-858-5822; www.capjuluca.com.



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