

Resilience in paradise

The Caribbean was dealt a monumental blow in 2017 when hurricanes Irma and Maria ripped through central America and wreaked US\$140 billion-worth of damage. Now luxury resorts are reopening bigger and better than ever

CUISINART GOLF RESORT AND SPA, ANGUILLA

Anguilla, a little-known island just 20 minutes by boat from St. Martin or a connecting flight from St Barths, is the chosen destination for A-listers Beyonce, Jay-Z, LeBron James, Justin Bieber and Hailey Baldwin.

It's one of the few Caribbean islands that doesn't play home to all-inclusive resorts, and so isn't overrun with visitors, and the extra effort is rewarded with exclusivity and the ability basque undisturbed in the luxury that this island has to offer. But the damage caused by Irma is still there for all to see, with battered buildings and sheets of metal wrapped around trees after horrifying wind and rain

pummelled the island at 180mph. Anguilla was battered by Hurricane Irma in 2017, with the damage still very much in line of sight.

Locals historically build their properties in stages and so it can seem like parts of the island are abandoned, or unfinished, making it appear a little rougher than visitors might be used to on more commercial islands with palm tree-lined streets and 'fresh paint

jobs on front-facing stores'. Instead, what you get outside of the hotels, is a more gritty Caribbean island, especially in The Valley, the island's capital.

Being a Caribbean island, it's always fun to enjoy a festival as no one can throw a festival like West Indians, with the eclectic Festival del Mar (20-21 April) coming up soon.

cuisinartresort.com

ST. REGIS BAHIA BEACH RESORT, PUERTO RICO

This five-star stunner returned to grace after a \$60m renovation in December 2018. Boasting 139 refreshed guest rooms in a contemporary blue-and-white colour palette, two new casual eateries (Beach Shak and Beach Club by Jose Enrique) and a re-envisioned Iridium Spa, all structures have been built below the tree line, affording unspoiled views along the resort's two-mile beach.

Located on a former coconut plantation between the El Yunque National Forest and Espíritu Santo River State Preserve, the

Below: The mesmerising Cuisinart Beach on Anguilla

St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort is set on 483 acres and is the only Gold-certified Audubon Signature Sanctuary in Puerto Rico.

The St. Regis Suite works well for both couples and families. It has a king bedroom, two bathrooms, a living space, ocean views and more. For families, it connects to adjacent rooms and beachfront dinner can be easily arranged.

The Iridium Couple's Retreat, which includes a couple's massage and coconut or guava body polish, is divine.

For guests looking to explore the island, General Manager Jose Torres can arrange customised activities such as kayaking, nature walks with the resident naturalist, biking, fishing, paddle boarding,

canoeing, trips to El Yunque jungle and more. For guests interested in volunteer opportunities, the St. Regis is working in collaboration with the Bahia Beach Resort Golf Club and its non-profit organization, Alma de Bahia, on several initiatives to support the affected communities in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

The stunning golf course is carved out of the the last section of an ecological corridor that extends from the high elevations (more than 900m) at El Yunque Rain Forest down to the coast in Rio Grande.

For private events, contact geraldine.farrulla@stregis.com (Gerry), director of catering and event management.

bahiabeachpuertorico.com

LE BARTHÉLEMY HOTEL ST BARTHS

The famous Le Barthélemy Hotel and Spa completely re-opened with full spa, restaurant and hotel services in October 2018 with the same "chic style, bespoke service and genuine island hospitality" that made its original debut so successful, according to General Manager Marc Dobbels.

Taking meticulous care to replicate the understated yet supremely luxurious interiors of the original St. Barth's inspired design, Le Spa, the hotel's haven of holistic healing, has been improved with the addition of hot and cold baths, sauna and soothing hammam, and a tea salon.

The hotel has also amplified its culinary experience, with ➤



Aux Amis, now expanding its service beyond the restaurant during lunch so that guests can keep their toes in the sand all day long should they wish.

With so many Le Barthélemy guests seeking respite to focus on health, wellness and deep relaxation, the hotel debuts advancements to its holistic spa. Introducing hydrotherapy – a therapeutic detox in hot and cold baths, a traditional Hamman, peaceful beach yoga and an advanced fitness center with state-of-the-art equipment.

Other new offerings for guests who love to socialise and embrace active lifestyle, include the creation of a late night rooftop bar featuring a DJ or live music Friday and Saturday nights, a beach grill for all day light fare, and exciting water sports, such as swimming with the turtles in the nature's reserve, and boat outings – setting sail right in front of the hotel.

www.lebarthelemyhotel.com

Above: Dominica's Secret Bay
Right: Le Barthélemy Hotel
Below: Belmond La Samanna



BELMOND LA SAMANNA ST. MARTIN

Following a \$25m renovation in December, this four-star 83-room beauty has made a resounding return to the white sands of St. Martin. London design firm Muza Lab retained the luxe island identity through playful pastels and the beautiful Beach Bar, but it's all done with a sophisticated sway. Even more remarkable, the kitchen in the just-debuted L'Oursin restaurant shows off a world-class culinary finesse, executed with delicious local Caribbean ingredients.

La Samanna was the first luxury hotel on the island and it is Belmond's commitment to maintain this pioneering spirit and offer new levels of luxury to global travellers. Overlooking Baie Longue's mile-long white sands; the resort is a place to indulge in elegant European cuisine, sip Champagne at sunset and explore the vibrant coastline's designer boutiques and restaurants.

La Samanna's twin resort, Cap Juluca, has also re-opened since hurricane destruction and is looking sumptuous.

www.belmond.com



SECRET BAY DOMINICA

This secluded Caribbean eco-luxury boutique hotel welcomed guests back from 1 November, just over a year after Hurricane Maria made landfall on Dominica. The seven-year-old hotel reopened with upgraded villas, one new villa and a host of new amenities.

The six freestanding villas were thoughtfully restored to reflect their original designs, each with its own private plunge pool.

A new, two-story Ti-Féry Villa I is a nature-meets-luxury architectural masterpiece, perched high atop the resort's cliffside. Sustainably-built with Guyanese Greenheart hardwood, the 1,356-square-foot retreat boasts one bedroom and two bathrooms, gourmet kitchen, floor-to-ceiling glass doors and a vast array of amenities.

www.secretbay.dm ■