

01



# CARIBBEAN REBUILT & READY

IF LAST YEAR'S HURRICANES HAVE GIVEN YOU PAUSE FOR THOUGHT BEFORE BOOKING YOUR WINTER CHARTER, THINK AGAIN. ALMOST A YEAR AFTER THE STORMS, THE CARIBBEAN IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS. NAVIGATOR VISITS A HANDFUL OF THE ARCHIPELAGO'S MUCH-LOVED ISLANDS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT COMEBACK

WORDS MIRIAM CAIN

In 2017, the back-to-back hurricanes that hit a large portion of the Caribbean archipelago did of course negatively affect a number of the most popular winter cruising grounds. But the good news is that, although some of the favorite yachting hot spots suffered some serious damage, the storms actually missed more than 70 percent of the region, which stretches across one million square miles, entirely.

Unfortunately, it was primarily the British Virgin Islands, Barbuda, St. Barth's, St. Martin and Anguilla that took the brunt of the hit; but their recoveries have been strong and the majority of the resorts, marinas and restaurants have benefitted from top-to-toe renovations and are in some ways better than ever. The forthcoming winter season welcomes back many old favorites, and also a handful of newcomers.





## ANGUILLA

The tiny island of Anguilla is the place to head if you really want to get away from it all. The flattest island in the entire archipelago, it was badly hit by the hurricanes, but the island has been steadily bouncing back and is now better than ever and ready for the winter season. The best way to experience Anguilla's tranquil shores is, of course, by yacht. Step ashore for the island's creative culinary scene, spectacular beaches (33 of them) and some of the Caribbean's top resorts.

The rebranded **Four Seasons Resort & Residences Anguilla** (formerly known as the Viceroy Anguilla) opened earlier this year. Set atop coralline bluffs, this is the place to head for the ultimate sundowner overlooking the convergence of Barnes and Meads bays.

One of the first high-end resorts to open in Anguilla, the **CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa** (03) has won many awards during its 20 years. Located in the famed Rendezvous Bay, plans are now afoot to reopen in November 2018 following a multimillion-dollar refit. In the meantime, sister property **The Reef by CuisinArt** (01) is already up and running and 100 percent ready to welcome superyacht guests to enjoy its many culinary scenes, including the aptly named **Yacht Club**.

**The Malliouhana Hotel & Spa** is another of Anguilla's original luxury resorts. This boutique property will re-open in November 2018 with new owners and extensive changes. The resort's restaurants are still to be fully confirmed, but the hotel's new owners hope to carry forward its reputation for gastronomy and for having the best wine cellar on the island. The brand-new **Belmond Cap Juluca** also opens in November 2018 with fabulous rooms and guest areas, a beachfront infinity edge pool, a spa, rustic beach bar, and restaurants. Expect old-world charm with new-world comforts.

Punching above its weight in terms of facilities is the intimate, nine-suite **Quintessence Hotel** (02) on Anguilla's Long Bay Beach. One of the latest luxury boutique hotels to open in the Caribbean, this tropical grand mansion in colonial style is the place to head for an indulging custom spa treatment. The property also boasts a restaurant, two bars, a pool, a yoga pavilion and lush tropical gardens, all set on the white sands of Long Bay Beach.

Much of Anguilla's best cuisine is served up in the aforementioned resorts, but a few stand-alone, independent restaurants also can offer a little Caribbean flair. Head to **Veya** (ray of sunlight in Carib Indian) for its under-the-radar, low-key vibe and fabulous vegan menu.

It is worth heading ashore to the family owned **Da'Vida**, not only for its idyllic location on the beach at Crocus Bay, but also for the array of dining options, including a fusion of Asian and Caribbean menu at the Main House, live music at the Bayside on a Sunday, or tapas and cocktails at the Tamarind Lounge.

And for the best bars? The legendary Pumphouse was unfortunately a casualty of Irma and blew away; but the island's other institution, **Bankie Banx Dune Preserve**, although destroyed, has been rebuilt and is back better than ever with enhanced dining and bar areas.

02



01

03







## BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Virgin Gorda, Anegada, Jost van Dyke, Tortola, Peter Island, to name just a few, are part the 50-plus islands that make up the British Virgin Islands (BVI), which took a very heavy beating in back-to-back hurricanes. Reclining to the east of the British Virgin Islands, Virgin Gorda, which is arguably the most popular of the archipelago among the yachting crowd, was especially hard hit. Two of the most popular and well-known resorts, the **Bitter End Yacht Club** and **Little Dix Bay**, are being restored with the aim of welcoming guests back onto their shores in late 2019, but it is taking some time as a large extent the devastation has meant starting entirely from scratch.

Those looking to cruise the BVI this coming season should still not, however, be deterred. The beautiful waters teem with resilient sea life, and the white sand beaches have been cleaned up and restored to their previous stunning condition.

Those wishing to step ashore also will find a number of resorts that have been renovated and are ready to welcome guests, including the **Anegada Beach Club**, **Cooper Island**, **Guana Island**, and **Scrub Island Resort (05)**, **Spa & Marina**. A handful of other favorites also plan to open for the winter cruising season, including **Biras Creek** on Virgin Gorda, **Necker Island Resort (04)**, and **The Sugar Mill Hotel & Restaurant** on Tortola. The most famous rum shack in the BVI, **Foxy's Tamarind Bar** on Jost Van Dyke has long been popular with the sailing crowd. Its New Year's Eve parties are legendary, and this year is set to be the best as the bar has been rebuilt for the season. Pre-hurricanes, the schooner **Willy T** was another place to head for a strong dose of Caribbean revelry. Destroyed in the storms, an entirely new and purpose-built Willy T's is located at Peter Island and promises even more fun-fueled party action than before.



04



05



## ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Just 28 miles separate the dual-island nation of Antigua and Barbuda, but the islands had two very different experiences during the storms last September. Antigua sustained only minor damage while Barbuda, which is the smaller island of the two, was almost entirely decimated and many of the island's homes were destroyed. Plans are stirring for a vast new resort on the island in 2020. Currently known as the **Paradise Found Resort**, it has the backing of some significant A-listers, including Robert De Niro, James Packer and Nobu Matsuhisa, all of whom have an affinity for the island. The planned resort is one of the biggest stories for the entire region, let alone the tiny island, which has relatively few resorts.

Those planning to cruise the Leeward Islands anytime soon should steer a course for Barbuda. One property well worth stepping ashore to is the award-winning **Barbuda Belle**, which reopens in November 2018. Located in the almost uninhabited northern tip of the island at Cedar Point, this is the place to head for pampered isolation in the most stunning of settings. If you're just anchoring, you can still get a taste of what the island has to offer with a kayak through the mangroves or a hike along the near-endless beaches on both the Caribbean and Atlantic sides.





## ST. BARTH'S

Unfeasibly stylish with great spirit, St. Barth's is the epitome of Caribbean chic — it is, after all, the St. Tropez of the tropics, and never more so than when enjoyed from the decks of a superyacht. Hurricane Irma hit the small French overseas island hard, but the island was well prepared for a hurricane and the clean up has been swift. The yachts have been flooding back in droves to support the island (between 40 and 50 yachts were moored around the island over the festive season just a few months after the storms hit); and all were warmly welcomed by the chic boutiques, bars and a handful of restaurants.

All the best-known restaurants — **L'Isola**, **La Guérite**, **Shellona**, **Orega**, **Black Ginger**, and the **François Plantation**, to name but a few — were ready for the fabled St. Barth's Bucket, which took place in March, and welcomed superyacht owners from far and wide to enjoy the island's "vie de bohème," and with great success.

Several resorts are up and running and the rest are planning to open for the 2018 holiday season, if not before. **Villa Marie Saint-Barth (06)**, the Caribbean outpost of what some consider to be St. Tropez's best hotel also reopened in early March. Located high up on a hill overlooking Anse des Flamands, the property was spared the storm surge and flooding that hit many of the island's best hotels and the damage was therefore confined to mostly cosmetic wind damage.

It was the first five-star hotel to re-open and has been welcoming guests who enjoy its low-key vibe (and aforementioned restaurant, François Plantation) throughout the year.

Further around the island, LVMH's **Cheval Blanc** reopens towards the end of the year and is set to welcome superyacht guests ashore to enjoy its culinary scene and Guerlain spa. The stellar hotel of **Eden Rock**, which suffered severe flooding, is set to open in time for Christmas, when it will unveil a huge transformation. Other favorites, including **Le Sereno**, **Le Guanahani**, **Le Barthelemy Hotel & Spa**, and **Hotel Le Toiny**, are set to open in Fall 2018. ●

**Nicholas Air provides private jet solutions to the Caribbean. Contact an N&J charter broker for details.**



## Caribbean at a Glance

From the Leewards to the BVIs to the Windwards, every Caribbean group has its hero islands, and many were unaffected, while others bore minimal damage and were welcoming superyachts back to their shores within weeks. Several of the islands that were left untouched were prompt in their response to help neighbors in need and the efforts of all these individual nations combined have helped to rebuild the archipelagos even better than before. The Leeward islands chain counts Antigua and St. Barth's as the jewels in their crown. Poles apart in style, their differences perfectly complement one another; combined they offer the best of everything. Despite their proximity, Antigua was merely hit by heavy winds and rain rather than the full force of the hurricanes, whereas St. Barth's suffered severe damage.

Over in the Windward chain, which was only minimally affected by the storms, St. Lucia and Mustique are the most popular of the islands dotted down the eastern Caribbean. One large, one small (and very exclusive) between them, they offer a plethora of activities for superyacht guests. Located at the northern tip of the West Indies, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the BVI both suffered severe damage. St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands is often referred to as the New York City of the Caribbean due to its bustling vibe. It is the perfect place to start a cruise through the Virgin Islands chain. Virgin Gorda, meanwhile, is most widely known by the yachting crowd for its combination of seafaring tradition and glamour. Combined together with a cruise through the Sir Francis Drake Passage, these opposite islands make for the perfect cruising itinerary.

**The Fashion Set** St. Barths  
**The Rock'n'roll Crowd** Mustique  
**The Hip Crowd** Anguilla  
**Old-School Yacht Crowd** Antigua  
**The Social Set** St. Lucia  
**The Solitude Seeker** Barbuda  
**The Chic Crowd** Grenada  
**The Explorers** Canouan  
**Discreet Hide Away** Turks & Caicos

