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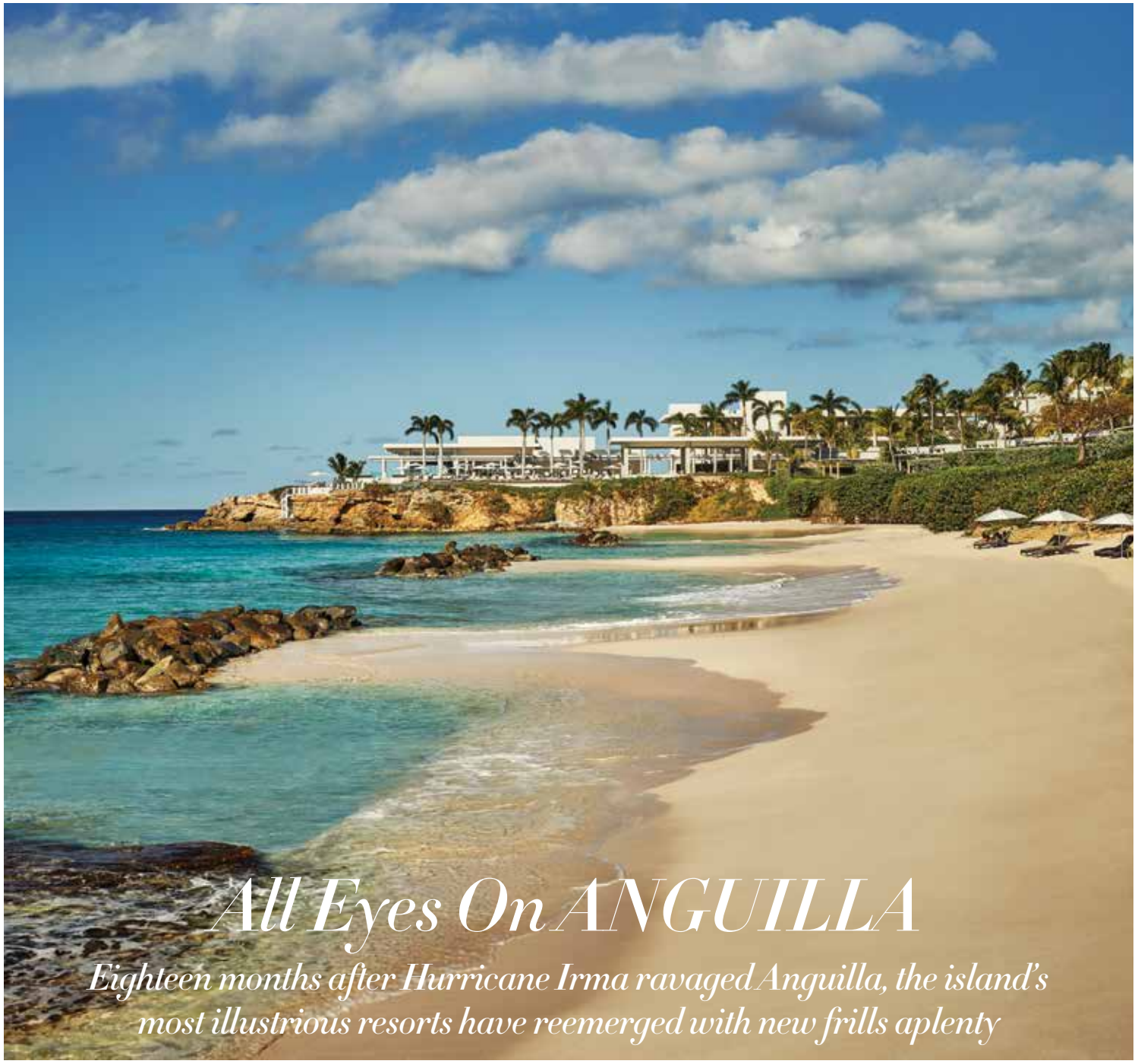

All Eyes On ANGUILLA

Eighteen months after Hurricane Irma ravaged Anguilla, the island's most illustrious resorts have reemerged with new frills aplenty

By Paul Rubio

FOUR SEASONS RESORT AND RESIDENCES ANGUILLA

Hurricane Irma's path of destruction was far from equal across Anguilla's 35.14 square miles, and pockets of the West End, home to the Four Seasons Resort and Residences Anguilla, sustained comparatively less damage. Consequently, this grouping of suites, residences, and villas adding up to 181 accommodations was ready for its close-up by March 2018.

Rewind to the months prior to Irma, when the property had shuttered to transition from a Viceroy-flagged resort to one of Four Seasons pedigree, a change that resulted in most turn-key inventory becoming available for private ownership. During that time, the Kelly Wearstler–designed enclave—and all its infinity-edged, silver travertine–laced excess—was polished and perfected to embody the current state of Caribbean cool.

THE FOUR SEASONS FEATURES INTERIORS BY KELLY WEARSTLER, WHO BROUGHT HER RAW YET REFINED AESTHETIC TO THE COMMUNAL AND PERSONAL SPACES.

This made the post-hurricane goal simple: Turn back the hands of time to when the resort had re-debuted. Damaged elements, such as the low-rise glass balconies framing each unit, plentiful fire pits added in late 2016, and towering date palms at the Aleta pool, were replaced to appear as they did pre-Irma. Thankfully, interiors stood unscathed. (We were relieved to hear our favorite petrified-wood tables, olive-tinted armoires, and carved-alabaster ornaments all survived.)

Storm stress notwithstanding, Irma did bestow a major gift upon the Four Seasons; she unearthed and repositioned mounds and mounds of fine-quartz sand, dramatically expanding the resort's beaches. To be sure, the property had always occupied prime Anguillan real estate on Meads Bay and Barnes Bay. (A rocky promontory, which houses amenities like the 8,100-square-foot spa, seafood-centric Cobà restaurant, and the stunning Sunset pool and lounge, separates the two dreamscapes.) But nowadays, there's even more room to amble, splash, sunbathe, and ogle the spellbinding turquoise waters.

Combine that with superb service, a smart and sophisticated vibe, fabulous programming that includes the island's best live music and fitness classes, and excellent, Instagram-worthy food and drink offerings—like tuna tartare served in a coconut shell and the Soya's Thyme cocktail presented in a pineapple—and you'll see why a Category 5 was no match for this bastion of West Indian glamour. *(fourseasons.com/anguilla)*

LAUDED FIRM ROTTET STUDIO REINVIGORATED THE LOOK OF BELMOND CAP JULUCA WITH A DESIGN THAT HONORS THE RESORT'S SURROUNDS WHILE ALSO ADDING A DOSE OF SLEEK ISLAND STYLE.

BELMOND CAP JULUCA

In the wake of Hurricane Irma, Anguilla's grande dame, Cap Juluca, transformed tragedy into opportunity—for an epic facelift, that is. Some $40 million dollars later, the icon re-emerged in December 2018 as the got-to-see-it-to-believe-it flagship Caribbean property of the esteemed Belmond brand.

While the famed white-washed, Greco-Moorish exteriors and sparkling mile-long Maundays Bay beach remain, nothing else is the same. Rottet Studio's redesign reveals an exciting departure from Cap Juluca's long-standing classic style. The 108 oceanfront guest suites now ooze contemporary barefoot luxury, as seen in flowing natural fabrics, abundant sunlight, intricate patterned tiling, oversized bathrooms enveloped by walled botanical courtyards, and colossal terraces and balconies accessorized with conversation-inducing furnishings. A newly constructed infinity pool area segues to the main house by way of a staircase leading to a second decorative pool bejeweled in deep-green tiles and framed with a variety of seating alcoves overlooking surreal ocean blues.