

just back from



Anguilla

Strong Island Vibes

Ashlea Halpern, Editor at Large

● “Life is too short to sink completely.”

I glimpsed this phrase spray-painted on the overturned hull of a half-sunken fishing vessel on my speedboat ride between St. Maarten’s Princess Juliana International Airport and the Caribbean island of Anguilla. The wreck was one of several in the harbor, reminders of devastating back-to-back hurricanes in 2017.

But amid that lingering destruction, I also saw the unbreakable spirit of Anguilla. At dinner with Jeff and Susan Goldstein, owners

of the reopened five-star hotel Zemi Beach House, I learned how they rallied with others to form the Anguilla Stronger campaign, raising nearly \$2 million for schools, hospitals, and local families. Today the hotel is a picture of elegance, with a tropical landscape, a rum bar, and a Thai spa.

During my stay at Altamer, a quartet of high-end villas designed by architect Myron Goldfinger, I learned that the staff stayed on payroll and helped rebuild during the 14 months the property was fully shuttered.

Now, two villas are reconstructed, a comfy hammock flanks the swimming pool, guests do yoga on the beach or sway to steel drum rhythms, and it’s hard to imagine this place was ever anything but dreamy.

Resilience also showed when I visited three of Anguilla’s 33 beaches. They looked perfect—thanks largely to volunteers. Now the roads are decent, and most restaurants and shops have reopened. Taken altogether, the message for travelers is clear: We haven’t sunk, and we can’t wait to see you.