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24-hour room service

High style on offer at a low-key retreat

Viceroy Anguilla
Leeward Islands

"Let's just hope there hasn't been some dreadful murder by the time we get back from dinner." I know I watch too much television, but as we wandered around one of the oceanfront villas at the Viceroy Anguilla the image that flashed across my mind was: poolside party turned crime scene, detectives in mirrored shades...

I'm sure *CSI: Miami* wasn't the look the architect of this sleek resort was going for, but it had Horatio and his team written all over it. From the entrance – a pale, drawbridge-style path over a pool of water – to the open-plan, neutral-toned interior with floor-to-ceiling windows, it oozes designer party pad or Hollywood mogul's Malibu beach house.

The starkly angular, contemporary design has wow factor. The elegance is understated. A calm, cream palette is accented with

funky sculpture, driftwood lamps and original artwork courtesy of interior designer Kelly Wearstler. The bottom line: jaw-dropping luxury.

Outside, the taupe-hued terrace is the perfect party space, with loungers and umbrellas, a dark green oblong lap and plunge pool and a cabana surrounded by palm trees. Down a sandy path through the bushes is the beach, an arc of powder-soft sand lapped by a warm turquoise sea. Grabbing beach towels from the stack of rolled bundles, we kicked off our flip-flops and ran whooping into the waves.

The Viceroy opened last year. It represents a dramatic departure for the Anguilla hotel scene. This Caribbean island has a reputation for barefoot luxury: sandy tracks, beach shacks and a low-key atmosphere. This, however, is an all-American stylised resort. Viceroy has properties in Florida, California and Colorado, and plans resort openings in Abu Dhabi this autumn, the Maldives in 2012 and Bodrum in 2014.

Regal bearing: jaw-dropping luxury awaits at the Viceroy



Viceroy Anguilla
Barnes Bay, West End, Anguilla
(001 264 497 7000;
viceroyhotelsandresorts.com).

Rooms

★★★★

Value

★★★

Service

★★★★

Double rooms start at US\$752 (£501), room only. ITC Classics (01244 355 527; itcclassics.co.uk) offers a week at the Viceroy from £1,949 per person including breakfast, BA flights from Gatwick and transfers.

Here in Anguilla, everything is on a grand scale – although in a tasteful rather than flashy way, with only the subtlest hint of bling. Think Christy Turlington in a kaftan wafting along the cool stone corridors, rather than boho-chic Kate Moss.

There isn't so much as a nod or a wink to colonial clapboard Caribbean – the

design here is American with a capital A, complete with golf buggies. These come in handy finding your way around the 35-acre resort. Trundling along the pathways, I felt as if I was in *Desperate Housewives* territory: the perfectly manicured gardens had a whiff of expensive suburbia about them. The main hotel

is also starkly modern but softened by palm trees and trimmed lawns.

The place is huge, which is probably the appeal for guests looking for anonymity: Sandra Bullock and Orlando Bloom have already checked in. There are also five restaurants, from the signature seaview *Coba* to *Half Shell*, a rustic beach

bar, and the open-air sunset lounge for cocktails. In fact, nearly everything you could possibly want.

If you hanker after a reality check, the Viceroy can organise boat trips out to Sandy Island, a tiny patch of sand topped with a brightly coloured wooden beach shack. Here, one afternoon, we drank Ting (sparkling grapefruit) and rum and tucked into plates of fresh crayfish at a rough wooden table, old-school Caribbean style.

Location

The Viceroy sprawls across a patch of the west coast of this tiny Caribbean island, between Barnes and Meads Bay. Anguilla is just 16 miles long and three miles wide, and located five miles north of St Maarten and 20 miles north-west of St Barts.

The main approach from the UK is Gatwick to Antigua on BA or Virgin, then a 40-minute hop on LIAT.

Comfort

There are 166 rooms split between oceanfront villas, beachfront suites and cliff-top rooms. All are spacious with stone floors, neutral tones accented with a stylish mix of furniture, metal sculptures on the wall and tarnished mirrors.

The bed in the master suite of Villa 5 – a contemporary, skinny-posted four-poster – was heavenly and like sleeping in a fluffy cloud. The huge balcony had a double day-bed swinging from chains. In the marble bathroom was a deep tub, double rain shower plus outside shower and delicious Neil George products in large bottles. Complimentary Wi-Fi is provided throughout.

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