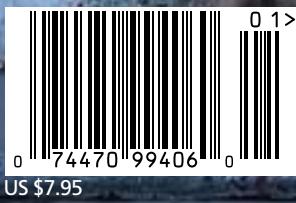


WACO

C A R I B B E A N L I V I N G



US \$7.95



at last, anguilla

EXPLORING COUPLE TRAVELS WORLD
BUT FINDS RESPITE IN ANGUILLA, AT BIRD OF PARADISE VILLA

IN THE CARIBBEAN THE BIRD OF PARADISE IS THAT SINGULAR PLANT WITH A SCULPTURAL FLOWER OF FANTASTIC ORANGE-YELLOWS, PINKS, REDS AND VIOLETS.

In Anguilla, it is also the name of a four-bedroom villa overlooking Sandy Beach. And the owners Jon Brooks and Melody Dill named it for the wildly-plumed birds of paradise found in abundance in one of their favourite places, the island nation of Papua New Guinea.

As a respite from their constant travels and globetrotting, Jon and Melody chose Anguilla. They have been resident vacationers on the island since the early 1980s, deciding to build the villa after their son was born.

Designed by Guy Courtney and Wilson Associates, the "Bird" demonstrates their combined expertise in premium resorts for the Four Seasons, Armani, Ritz Carlton (Puerto Rico), the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas, and a private-island resort in the Seychelles. The design team translated that scale of magnificent opulence into intimate luxury on the edge of a cliff overlooking a crescent bay.

Completed in 2005, the villa is off the beaten track, just a stairway from one of Anguilla's gorgeous beaches. "We chose Anguilla for both its fabulous beaches and its warm, friendly people," Melody said. "It's so easy to have a wonderful time, relaxing, swimming, diving, or delving into the delicious restaurants and plentiful bars along the beaches."

The villa is a fashionable east-meets-west oasis in the Caribbean. Both owners are relentless travellers

and explorers. Melody described some of the places they experienced. "We were enthralled by the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea, a place that takes three days to get to. Jon and I agree—Ethiopia and seeing the Hamer, Konso and Mursi people was the most amazing experience. Tough travelling, primitive living / tenting conditions, but so worthwhile."





ABOVE Stone table custom-carved in Bali for the owners

BELOW Carved crocodile table from Papua New Guinea

TOP RIGHT All doors open for panoramic views and indoor/outdoor living

RIGHT Gecko door stops from John Erdos Gallery in Singapore

FAR RIGHT Carved pair from Bali

Their journey is evidenced in the Indochine planters and furniture, and the Asian-styled portico, which leads down onto a walkway flanked by a multitude of kowtowing bird of paradise blooms, dipping and swaying in the Anguilla breeze.

It's all in the details—down to the door pulls fashioned into bronze geckos and mahogany Buddha princes.

The entire villa, including each of the four master suites and attendant office/reading room, is filled with personal art and artifacts collected from Indonesia, Africa, and the South Pacific, and the furnishings are pieces custom-designed from Bali. The Italians... they provide the beautifully combed bed linens and luxurious Bulgari bath products for the shower and generously deep bathtubs.

"Each artifact is purchased by us, and all have special memories attached. Many of the artifacts were purchased in small, town markets directly from the artisans, while others were found in remote villages, trading a T-shirt, or pen."

Jon shook his head at the memories. When forced to pick a favourite, he chose a six-foot-long carved crocodile table from Papua New Guinea, which serves as a cocktail table on the main veranda. Melody's choice—discovered in the hands of a master carver on the banks of the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea—is an ebony mask that greets visitors at the



JON SHOOK HIS HEAD AT THE MEMORIES. WHEN FORCED TO PICK A FAVOURITE, HE CHOSE A SIX-FOOT-LONG CARVED CROCODILE TABLE FROM PAPUA NEW GUINEA





CHRISTIAN GOMEZ

ABOVE Lagoon-style pool weaves among lush landscape. Mountains of St Martin in the background

TOP RIGHT One of four master suites, has its own private plunge pool

RIGHT Bridges cross pool from one of master suites to living area

FAR RIGHT One of master suites has an attached office, which often is used as a fifth bedroom.

Two-room suite is ideal for a nanny and three children

exterior foyer at the villa's entrance. "It's so clever," she exclaimed. "The closer you look, there is a face in every direction."

Many of the small artifacts at the "Bird" have been framed with photographs of the people who used the pieces as part of their everyday life. The pictures depict, for example, a Hamer woman wearing an iron phallic-designed necklace to show she is married, and a Mursi woman wearing a traditional four-inch clay lip plate. "That trek across Ethiopia was a blessing," Melody said, "to witness these quickly-disappearing cultures. Truly a blessing."

Privacy and warmth pervade the entire villa. The "wear" is bathing suits, sequinned tunics, soft sarongs, plush towels, and bare feet. Anything else and you're overdressed, "dahling."

What Melody and Jon got right is the Caribbean sky and Anguilla's beaches, descriptions of which have not been exaggerated. Every space in the villa is connected to the outdoors, with an open-plan living-dining room footprint. Notably, Melody and Jon decided to lower the verandas by three feet, to provide living and dining views across the ocean to St Barths and St Maarten.

Couples can happily exist in perfectly quiet isolation, even if friends should decide to drop in, or linger overnight. Each guestroom is "stand alone," with its own veranda and spectacular view of the ocean or either of the two pools that snake alongside the main pavilion.

The villa is thoughtfully appointed with all the patios sun splashed during the day, and still warm until sunset. Even so, there's an outdoor fireplace providing



MICHAEL WILSON

EACH GUESTROOM IS "STAND ALONE," WITH ITS OWN VERANDA AND SPECTACULAR VIEW OF THE OCEAN OR EITHER OF THE TWO POOLS THAT SNAKE ALONGSIDE THE MAIN PAVILION



CHRISTIAN GOMEZ



CHRISTIAN GOMEZ



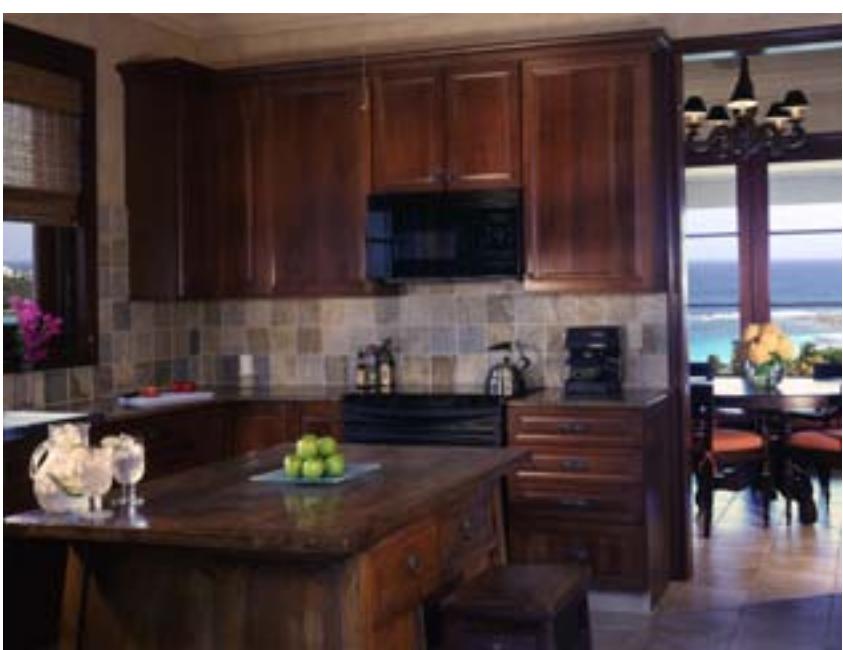
CHRISTIAN GOMEZ



CHRISTIAN GOMEZ

IN A WORLD OF FORMULAIC FIVE-STARS, THE "BIRD" TRUMPS THE EXPECTED.

THIS IS LUXURY IN THE CARIBBEAN, THE WAY WE DO NOT IMAGINE,
BUT OF WHICH WE DREAM



MICHAEL WILSON



CONRAD ERB

LEFT ABOVE Exterior living area with fireplace
FAR LEFT Kitchen

LEFT Children dancing at wedding held at the Bird of Paradise
ABOVE Hilltop deck with dominoes table and hammock

a cosy, relaxing space, just outside the swagged-out kitchen.

But the kitchen needs only be a rare sojourn. A sensational drive-through where one can taste the hand of Chef William Wilson, one of several chefs available to pamper and surprise a palate out of the everyday fare. The "Potato Wrapped Snapper" is the signature specialty of the house—fresh snapper artfully wrapped in lengths of thinly sliced potato, and flavoured with the chef's blend of paprika, thyme, and cracked black pepper, with asparagus stems for "crisp."

This place is an obvious choice for honeymooners and romantics. An event planner is on staff to organize bliss in Anguilla, including days out to the restaurant strip on Meade's Bay, or specific restaurants such as Blanchards, and Sandy Beach island, which is accessible only by boat. Ceremonies, receptions, sunset cocktails on the beach down the stairs from the villa—all is possible.

Children are catered through the villa's kids' club expeditions which include treasure hunts and fossil collecting.

Everything is anticipated, down to the "Bird's" tech manager there on arrival to ensure you're plugged into the villa's wi-fi.

The Bird of Paradise takes hospitality to the next level. Jon and Melody's care is genuine and constant. They attend to every detail, always with a ready gift for every visitor, including the most delicious coconut cookies, wrapped and festooned with a red ribbon and a fluttering Bird of Paradise card.

In a world of formulaic five-stars, the "Bird" trumps the expected. This is luxury in the Caribbean, the way we do not imagine, but of which we dream. **M**

Tel: 414-791-9461 (mobile) – Melody/Jon

E-mail: AnguillaBird@yahoo.com

Website: www.anguillabird.com