

BEACHES EDGE

Anguilla

I had the pleasure of personally reviewing Beaches Edge and interviewing the owner and his wife, Neil and Wendy Freeman, on the beautiful island of Anguilla. Many people are unfamiliar with this hidden gem of the West Indies but fortunately for me as a recently married couple, my husband and I experienced first hand just how romantic Anguilla is. Anguilla is a small island, approximately 16 miles long and 3 miles wide with a population of about 16,000 people. The island offers the relaxing get away many seek without being saturated with tourists. It is an organic island that allows you to truly experience the beautiful serenity the island has to offer.

Anguilla is easily accessible both by ferry or plane. Once on the island you can find transportation via taxi or rentals. Even though you must drive on the left hand side of the road, we were able to easily adjust with the car provided, courtesy of Gumbsie World. One thing I really appreciate about Anguilla is the fact that everything on the island is a short distance away and easily accessible.

While on the island you are able to experience local cuisine - whether its food trucks or actual restaurants, neither will disappoint! For dinner, we had the pleasure of eating at Tasty's compliments of Chef Dale Carty, Picante compliments of Theron and Chloe Loizos, and Barrel Stay compliments of Chef Graham Belcher and Jill Shepherd. I highly recommend all three. Aside from cuisine, Anguilla boasts 33 beaches of which each beach has its own look and feel. For example, Shoal



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Wendy and Neil Freeman

- **In three words who is Neil Freeman?**

N: Lover of Life

- **What first attracted you to Anguilla and what kept you coming back?**

N: What attracted us to Anguilla is Wendy wanted to go on a vacation that was a little more adult. We had gone to more places that were family oriented since we had 3 children, this was 20 years ago in 1994. We did some research on the Caribbean islands 10 best resorts and there was only 1 island that had two and that was Anguilla. We talked to a friend of ours that had been to one of those resorts and had a great time. A lot of people come to Anguilla the first time because it has one of the best resorts in the Caribbean and then they get the bug and keep coming back.

W: We found Anguilla's beaches to be indescribably beautiful. More importantly the people were. We immediately made a connection with the locals. Even though it's just Neil and I right now, we have so many friends here. It's just the quality of life, everyone here has a great attitude about life. Also, the food is just unbelievable!

- **How often do you visit the island?**

N: We come here at least 4 times a year. When we were building Villa Alegria we were coming at least every 6 weeks.

- **What is your favorite time of year to visit?**

N: February & March we come here at least 4 weeks, next year it will be about 5 weeks. The weather here is always beautiful and one of the main reasons we stay here in Anguilla, in the winter it's 82 degrees and the summer its 88 degrees. You're always in shorts or bathing suits. You're also on the ocean so you are getting great breezes.



- **If you had to pick the top three restaurants on the island what would they be?**

W & N: Tasty's, Veya, and Jacala

- **What are your favorite activities on the island?**

N: I love to scuba dive and snorkel looking at fish. There is now a golf course on the island; I enjoy playing golf as well.

W: I'm a biker. Depending on the day I do my own tour and ride around the island. Usually on a Sunday because that is when there is the least amount of traffic. I also snorkel and I love to socialize and go listen to live music

- **Being that Anguilla is so close to two major islands, what sets it apart from others in your opinion?**

N: There is very low crime here. Many people don't lock their houses or cars. It's a very nice environment. Also, there are no major food chain restaurants.

W: They have rules to keep the island tranquil still. There's no jet skiing, speed boats, or big cruise ships docking here.

- **What sets your villas apart from others here on the island?**

N: Starting with Alegria there is a lot of design elements there which Wendy was in charge of. The tile work, the lighting, every little detail was thought out. We also don't have staff that is always in your face. Everything is cleaned daily and maintenance is handled right away. We also have the best landscaper on the island. We can arrange anything you need such as transportation, personal chefs and massages. At the same time, we make sure you don't have people in your face. You get the best of both worlds - you don't have to worry about doing your laundry or making your bed...it gets done without disturbance. Also, a lot of the villas don't have beach access. The guests have to drive to get to the beach. All of our villas have access to a private beach a short walk away. There are also a handful of villa's on the island that have over 8 bedrooms for a lot of money. Here at Beaches Edge we offer both villas as a package at half the price.

- **What is the history of Beaches Edge?**

N: A developer from Chicago was planning on building a large project with a couple of villas, and these were the model homes. He began a bigger project on another island and the villas went on the market. We obtained Beaches Edge earlier this year, 2014.

- **How has the vision/concept changed since you acquired it?**

N: We've added one more bedroom, making a total of 5 bedrooms. We are also thinking about turning the carports into a gym. We are attempting to bring the same management and level of services as provided at Alegria. We also made Beaches Edge handicap accessible with a bedroom on the first floor.

- **What do you think is the greatest feature Beaches Edge has to offer?**

N: The location: the view, beaches, restaurants, golf course, tennis academy, airport, and ferries to name examples are all accessible within 10 minutes. Also the feel that you are on a thousand acres by looking over the ocean.

Bay gives you the family scene, while Cove Bay boasts a more romantic feel. Another perk to Anguilla is that you can take day trips to the neighboring islands of St. Martin and St. Barts via ferry.

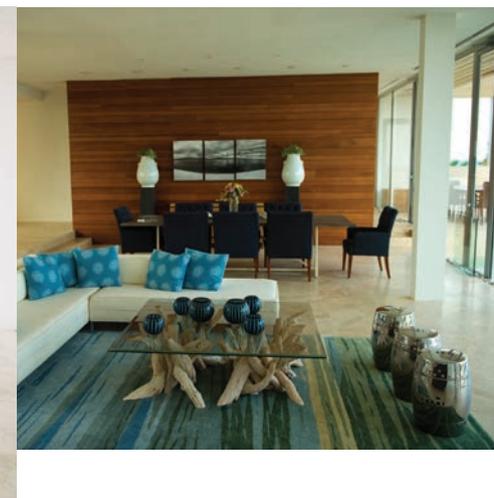
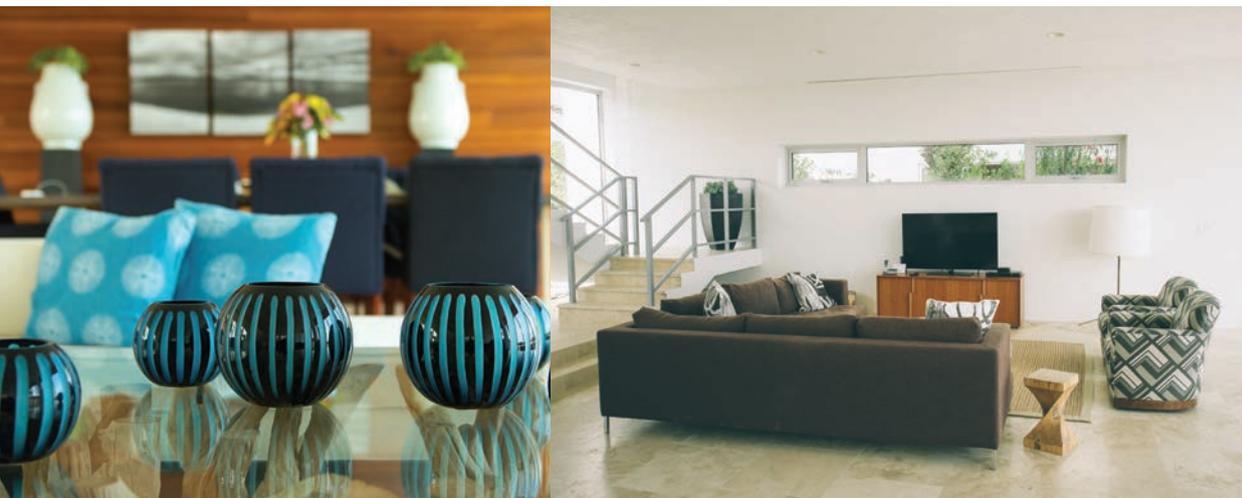
Aside from these activities, accommodations for lodging on the island range from luxury hotels to luxury villas like Beaches Edge. Beaches Edge is comprised of two twin adjacent villas - East Villa and West Villa. We had the luxury of staying in the East Villa.

During our stay at Beaches Edge we felt as if we were in our dream home away from home. Both villas are equipped with a pool and a Jacuzzi overlooking the turquoise water with St. Martin and it's mountains in the distance. The view was one of my favorite attractions during our stay. It offers a peaceful serenity and calmness.

During our stay we were fortunate enough to catch up with Neil Freeman and his wife Wendy Freeman. We grabbed a bite for lunch and I was able to ask a few questions about the island itself and their villas. Enjoy the interview!

RESOURCES

For more information on best times to travel, activities and rates visit www.beachedge.com





Aerial Photography courtesy of Beaches Edge Anguilla

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- **Are you partnered with companies that offer discount services for renting Beaches Edge?**

N: We have preferred access just about everywhere here on the island. If you mention you are a guest of the Freeman's they make it a priority to take care of you.

- **As shown on your website I see wedding and event packages are offered. Can you explain what the packages include?**

N: We have a relationship with the top wedding planners on the island. We can accommodate larger groups that want to do their own thing. One benefit compared to resorts is that we do not have a set curfew to end music or a party as the location is so secluded you won't disturb anyone. We also customize your needs so you can have rehearsal dinners here.

- **Who is the Beaches Edge bride?**

W: A combination of DIY and Adventurous bride. Someone who wants something more relaxed and organic.

- **What are the maximum amount of guests allowed for a wedding here?**

N: About 75 people

- **If you were to have a wedding here what would you suggest be the ideal set up?**

W: You can put a tent in the backyard. If the ceremony is done here the bride could even walk across the pool bridge as an aisle.

- **How long have you been married and is there any advice you could give to our brides-to-be?**

N: We'll be celebrating our 33rd

W: Enjoy yourself, go with the ups, go with the downs.

N: You have to compromise and don't take anything personally. The husband should always say "Yes dear".