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TRAVEL | By JILL FERGUS | JANUARY 25, 2010, 4:29 PM



Courtesy of Viceroy Anguilla

The Viceroy Anguilla's modern decor was created by Kelly Wearstler.

Despite a still tricky, if rebounding, real-estate market, several luxury hotel brands are throwing caution to the tradewinds with splashy new Caribbean resorts. After a long delay, the Viceroy Anguilla finally made its debut last month, joining the sleepy little island's outsize collection of high-end hotels. (The Moorish-inspired Cap Juluca still reigns supreme, while the much-touted developments of Temenos and Rendezvous Bay have stalled.) At this latest Viceroy, situated on Mead and Barnes Bays, Kelly Wearstler has created ultracadenant penthouses suites, cabana-lined infinity pools and multiple lounges, among them the Half Shell, carved out of the side of a cliff.

In the Turks and Caicos, where construction seems to continue unabated on Grace Bay Beach (for better or worse), the new Veranda Resort, managed by the company that owns the chic Grace Bay Club, begins accepting guests Feb. 1. It might siphon off some of the jet set who've been holing up at the nearby Gansevoort Hotel, but probably just a little — the chainlet's third outpost after New York and Miami has been going strong since last spring.

Westin is hoping to make similar waves when its opens its much-delayed 147-room W on Vieques. The erstwhile scruffy Puerto Rican island has until now been overlooked by the Caribbean's big-fish hoteliers, but come March you'll be able to dine on Alain Ducasse's cuisine and get a body wrap while looking out to sea.



The region has had its share of face-lifts, too. In December, Jumby Bay on Antigua reopened after a \$28 million overhaul — the better to dazzle guests like Paul McCartney and Mariah Carey. In the Bahamas, the beloved eco-resort Tiamo on Andros is back after shutting down for a year to install new amenities like a holistic spa and an organic vegetable garden. And over on Great Exhuma, in what isn't so much a face-lift as a head transplant, the former Four Seasons Resort reopens this month as Sandals Emerald Bay. The rebranded property inherits a mile-long stretch of sugar-soft beach, a Greg Norman-designed golf course and a private marina — which might just make it the nicest Sandals ever.



Courtesy of Scrub Island

Scrub Island is set to open its doors next month.

The smart money these days might be on midlevel development, but the region's ultra-high-end private-island projects are still plugging along. Well, more or less. Dellis Cay and Ritz Carlton's Molasses Reef are on hold for now, but the Turks and Caicos Sporting Club on Ambergris Cay, a 1,100-acre residential island where Campion Platt is the lead architect, is still attracting high-profile buyers. (It's rumored that Tom Cruise flew down to look at houses.) And Necker Island and Peter Island, the posh private atolls in the British Virgin Islands, will get some competition when the long-awaited Scrub Island, the first resort to open in the BVI in over a decade, makes its debut next month.

If Jude and Sienna can't get in there, they could try the brand new Nandana, a Thai-style gated compound on Grand Bahama. It has just five one-bedroom suites, a full staff (including chef and masseuse), a 120-foot-long infinity pool and its own landing strip.