

The Buccaneer stands fast on St. Croix



A sugar mill from the early 1700s at the Buccaneer on St. Croix.

By Kristy Alpert

On Dec. 2, athletes from all over the world competed in the Beauty & the Beast Triathlon on St. Croix, where just one year earlier, crews were cleaning up debris from a Category 5 hurricane that tore through the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).

Amid the many athletes who proved their mettle that day, conquering a 15% grade climb along a pristine stretch of Caribbean coastline — the beast and beauty, respectively — a 71-year-old local legend stood proudly at the finish line as a testament to endurance.

The Buccaneer is the oldest family-run

resort in the Caribbean, opening as a hotel in 1947 but comprising buildings that date to 1653, when the Knights of Malta walked the shores of St. Croix. The resort has become a rock in its community, co-sponsoring events such as the triathlon and even acting as a shelter and stronghold during the many storms that have hit the island over the years.

“The hotel never truly closed after hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 because it actually weathered the storms quite well,” explained Rebecca Hensley, sales and marketing manager for the Buccaneer. “So well, in fact, that the Buccaneer acted as the headquarters for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers and other relief workers after Hurricane Maria.

“As one of the places that wasn’t tremendously affected by Maria, the hotel provided refuge for those who were affected and

also did a lot of fundraising,” Hensley said. “In fact, the triathlon in December was one more way the resort is helping with fundraising and also trying to raise awareness about the USVI as a travel destination.”

The Buccaneer recently enhanced its



Above, an aerial view of the Buccaneer. Right, a guestroom with ocean views at the resort.



Grotto Pool and has added a restaurant, Beaugard’s, serving small bites, salads and sandwiches.

The 138 guestrooms are spread throughout 340 acres, with hilltop villas and rooms with expansive terraces overlooking the ocean. An 18-hole golf course, eight tennis courts, three beaches, two pools and a fully stocked watersports center give guests plenty of ways to stay active while the full-service spa and seven restaurants and bars offer the chance to unwind and indulge.

A member of Historic Hotels of America, the property’s historical features include a sugar mill from the early 1700s, the Cotton House that was used in the early 1900s when cotton replaced sugar as the Virgin Islands’ primary crop and the Hamilton Wing, rumored to have been Alexander Hamilton’s home during his time on St. Croix.

“The Armstrong family has owned and managed the resort for three generations,” Hensley said, “and they are serious about supporting the entire tourism community, the island and its natural resources. Those things are at the foundation of the resort’s mission.”

Nightly rates begin at \$315. Visit www.thebuccaneer.com.

S Hotel Jamaica aims for South Beach vibe in Montego Bay

By Meagan Drilling

Christopher Issa, owner of the Spanish Court Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, is seeking to bring a chic, South Beach vibe to the shores of Montego Bay.

Slated for a soft open before Christmas

and officially opening on Jan. 27, the S Hotel Jamaica occupies a former apartment building that has been gutted and renovated to carry out Issa’s vision of what he describes as “South Beach goes *irie*.”

Guests will enter through a lobby bathed in coral stone. Issa has commis-

sioned local artists to contribute original work, which will be displayed in the hotel’s dining venues. Rooms, featuring white tiling and wooden accents, will include turntables, each with a copy of the Bob Marley album “Legend.”

The European Plan hotel will offer meal plan options. The signature S Hotel Restaurant will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner, which will be a fusion of Jamaican cuisine and international fare. There will be a menu of wines, Champagnes and specialty house cocktails, as well.

The Pool Bar will offer an all-day menu of snacks, sandwiches, salads and juices. Just in front of the hotel in St. James Plaza is the Tracks & Records restaurant, themed after Olympic gold medal sprinter and Jamaica native Usain Bolt.

Atop the resort is the sleek Sky Deck, with a pool with a glass wall overlooking the sea. This exclusive space will only be available for guests of the Sky Club Suites. But available to all guests will be an expansive, ground-level pool that overlooks

Doctor’s Cave Beach.

Beach chairs and cabanas will dot the wooden pool deck and spill onto the sand that leads down to the sea. And underneath the resort will be the Irie Baths and Spa featuring hydrotherapy pools reminiscent of ancient healing baths, four treatment rooms and a 24-hour fitness center.

Montego Bay base camp

Issa describes the hotel as a luxury base camp from which travelers can go off to explore the activities in the area.

“There is nothing like this in Jamaica,” Issa said. “Montego Bay is either all-inclusive hotels or older luxury. We want to attract a mixture of guests, from millennials to people who came to Jamaica as college students but are now older and want to experience Jamaica as still an ‘it’ island. It’s a cultural destination as well as a naturally beautiful one, and it is constantly evolving.”

Rates begin at \$200 per night. See www.shoteljamaica.com.



The main pool at the S Hotel Jamaica.