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Anguilla authenticity at boutique Anacaona

By Gay Nagle Myers

On an island loaded with superstar resorts, a 27-room Anguilla property racked up some impressive occupancy figures in its first winter season.

At the Anacaona, occupancy ran in the 80%-plus range in February and March, and April numbers are estimated to follow the same course.

The property, whose name means flower or feather of gold in the language of the Taino/Arawak Indians, is owned and operated by Robin and Sue Ricketts, who have managed and marketed Caribbean hotels for more than 30 years, including the neighboring Malliouhana Hotel and Cap Juluca.

The Rickettses had a specific plan in mind when they took over the former La Sirena resort and closed it last fall for a six-week renovation and renaming.

"With Anacaona we want to go beyond the usual attractions of island resorts," said Sue Ricketts. "Guests not only can enjoy the pleasures of a beach hotel but also come face to face with authentic local culture.

"We have the Mayoumba folklore group on Thursdays," she noted. "We've added Sunshine Theatre, a local repertory company that performs a play during dinner every other Monday. We've got the dances and sounds of the old days with local musicians and dancers; dramas with actors; and island historians who can speak to the history of Anguillan racing boats."

Add to that the amenities of a resort that bills itself as "affordable chic," offering Frette linens, Melitta/Javapod coffeemakers, iPod docking stations, free WiFi, two pools, a poolside restaurant and bar called Firefly, a spa and the Petite Zazaaa boutique.

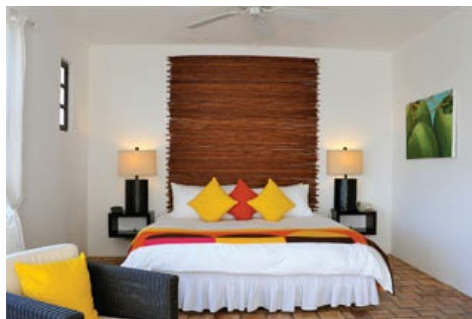
Rates through Dec. 16 start at \$150 per room, per night, double, in a standard room and go up to \$310 for a three-bedroom suite sleeping six. Winter season rates start at \$250 a night.

Up to two kids younger than 12 stay free in a junior suite with one or two adults; two kids stay free in a superior room when accompanied by one adult.

Specials include a Pay for 5, Stay for 7 plan available through mid-December for \$750 for two; a four-night getaway with two meals a day, massages, wine on arrival, transfers and taxes is \$1,340 for two.

Meal plans are available at \$70 per person, per day, for breakfast and dinner, and a breakfast-only plan is priced at \$16 for continental breakfast and \$22 for a West Indian-style meal.

"We're proud of our menu, a fusion of traditional Caribbean cuisine with a Eurasian slant," Ricketts said. "But when guests opt for the meal plan, we suggest they leave two or three days free to sample



Anacaona accommodations range from standard rooms to junior suites and villa suites with views of Meads Bay on the western end of Anguilla.

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said. But when guests opt for the meal plan, we suggest they leave two or three days free to sample some of the restaurants on Anguilla. We really do want guests to experience our island."

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 **SweetCaroline007** 4 hours ago

Excellent! WTG! I very much enjoy watching the Mayoumba Folklore Group performing and am so pleased they are back in action again. Anacaona is a great place to stay where the staff are friendly, the service good, the rooms comfortable, the management knowledgeable and all at an affordable price.

Guests staying in other resorts should try to see Mayoumba at least once during their stay. Any person interested in the performing arts will also enjoy the Sunshine Theatre plays. For such a small island there is a wealth of talent.

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