

Making Time Stand Still

Jan and Alex Klingen - Frangipani Resort on Meads Bay in Anguilla
By Tim Cotroneo



Houston's Jan Klingen found a new calling on the pristine shores of Anguilla's Meads Bay.

Caribbean culture believes that the shedding of the frangipani leaf is the ultimate symbol of the passage of time. For vacationers at the Frangipani Resort on Mead's Bay in Anguilla, the setting is so beautiful that one can only hope that time stands still.

For Jan and Alex Klingen, life amidst this pastel existence is a mixture of work and pleasure. In August of 2009, the couple put their version of the American dream on hold to take on the challenge of running a resort on one of the most stunning beaches in the Caribbean.

To say business is good is an understatement. Yes, the Frangipani and the island of Anguilla are feeling the economic pinch that is a recurring headline around the world. But as of January of 2010, Frangipani's commitment to clients arriving as guests and leaving as friends has paid off handsomely. Frangipani is currently ranked the number one hotel in all of Anguilla on the Trip Advisor website. Trip Advisor is the travel industry bible for hotel guest reviews.

When asked how their new hotel endeavor is perceived back in their hometown of Houston, Jan Klingen smiled and arched her eyebrows skyward. “Family and friends back home are all envious of what we are doing, but running a hotel, no matter where it is located, sounds a lot more glamorous than it is,” Klingen said.

Klingen is quick to credit Frangipani’s heady success to her cohorts. “Our staff is incredible. When we read the reviews from our guests, they always mention a particular staff member who has gone the extra mile,” Klingen said.



The Frangipani Resort is a Caribbean home away from home.

The past several months have been a whirlwind chapter in the Klingens’ lives. “My sister and brother-in-law purchased this property in 2008. We sold our Houston home in April of 2009 and made the leap to run Frangipani in August. My husband, Alex, has adapted to the laid back Caribbean pace a little better than me. I guess I’m more type A.” Klingen said.

Patience is a virtue in Anguilla. When a problem arises at Frangipani, the issue of shipping a product to the tiny island inevitably leads to down time. What helps is to have a backup plan in place. “When one of our laundry dryers shut down last week, it’s not like you can drive down the road and buy another one the same day. The Cuisinart hotel on Rendezvous Bay came to our rescue. The hotels on the island really help each other out,” Klingen said.

Another valuable Anguillan resource is simply family and friends. “On an island this small, everyone knows someone. We turn to our staff members for guidance when we encounter a problem. It seems that everyone has a family member who is a plumber, a pool repair person, cook, or landscaper,” Klingen said.

The Frangipani is favored with a location that is second to none for sheer beauty. The Meads Bay beach stretches to the left with miles of white sand. On the right there is a rocky cove that provides a gorgeous photo opportunity.



Frangipani’s infinity pool gives new meaning to the word “blue.”

Frangipani’s breathtaking beachfront setting is an asset that Jan Klingen sees as a way to market the property further. “We are currently developing a marketing strategy to make Frangipani the perfect choice for a destination wedding. With our 19 suites, it’s possible for a family to basically take over the property. We also have two boats for private excursions. We’re excited about presenting Frangipani as an awesome *wedding on the beach* experience and as a destination worth returning to in the future,” Klingen said.

Repetition is a good thing in the hotel business. “About 35 to 40 percent of our guests are repeat customers. A repeat customer makes life easy for us. They know exactly what they want before they get here. In a lot of cases, they know

which of our 19 oceanfront rooms they desire, and which of the islands' restaurants we should book when they arrive," Kligen said.

No one exemplifies Frangipani satisfaction more than Karen and Jeffrey Wien of New York City. "We've been coming to Frangipani since it first opened in 1992. We love Meads Bay Beach and we love the Frangipani. My wife and I always look forward to our time in Anguilla," Jeffrey Wien said.

Frangipani's reputation is growing by the day. The hotel registry reveals a significant number of guests from Canada, Britain, and the east coast of the United States. They also recently received guests from Italy and Scotland. With each new visitor, the Kligen's team garners feedback on what has worked and what hasn't. Like most hotel managers, the Kligen's wish there was more time in the day to accomplish all the tasks necessary to make a Frangipani stay an extraordinary one.

"It's hard to believe we've been here in Anguilla for seven months already. Where did the time go?" Kligen asked out loud. In Anguilla, not even the Frangipani hotel manager can make time stand still. The good news is that the frangipani leaf sheds a bit more slowly when on island time.

www.frangipaniresort.com

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