



Le Bleu sits in 2 1/2 half acres of beautifully manicured grounds that roll down to Little Harbour. The accommodation is split into 2 parts, The Main House (above) is easily recognizable from sea or land with its two pointed shingle clad roofs. Petit Le Bleu sits at the top of the 2.5 acre property and links to the main house via the immaculate gardens.

Enjoy! Le Bleu...Anguilla's Newest 'Super Villa' by Trudy Nixon

When I asked John Barker what he liked best about Le Bleu he said with typical self depreciation - *Just standing on the upstairs deck, enjoying the breeze and taking in the panoramic views—well that's quite good isn't it?* "Quite Good" being a typically British understatement for something that is actually, extraordinarily good.

John and Val Barker, the owners of Little Harbour Estates, a collection of properties that includes Le Bleu and Indigo in Anguilla and Mas Del Souleou in the South of France, are a British couple who first came to Anguilla over 25 years ago. They noticed Anguilla during a Caribbean sailing holiday, when they moored offshore from the recently opened Cap Juluca. They liked what they saw and decided to return a year later for a short break. A few days after they arrived in Anguilla - despite swearing to themselves that they wouldn't buy another 'holiday home' - they found themselves negotiating on some beautiful land in Little Harbour and their 25 year plus building and vacationing odyssey in Anguilla began - with the first of the Little Harbour Estates properties, Turquaz.

John and Val were amongst the first to dip their toes into Anguilla's burgeoning luxury villa market and Turquaz was one of the first houses to be built in the Little Harbour area. They recollect that they had to create the gardens out of rock and have roads cut to gain access to the seafront property - which opened the way for further properties. When Turquaz was completed they used it as their holiday home for many years - but they also decided to rent it out. The close proximity to the fledgling resort Cinnamon Reef

meant that much loved hotel was one of their children's favorite places as they grew up holidaying in Anguilla and they have many happy memories of the friends made that they still have today.

Using the experience gained building Turquaz, they followed it with Indigo and Little Indigo, which quickly became popular because of their secluded charm and old colonial style comfort. A number of years of family vacations were enjoyed in the properties until they sold Turquaz. Around that time they decided to upgrade and combine Indigo and Little Indigo to keep abreast with the changing taste of Anguilla's discerning clientele. They also commenced construction on the neighboring plot - the site of Le Bleu.

Le Bleu is the culmination of the Barkers 20+ year's experience of building homes that people love to rent in Anguilla. The couple have a real gift for designing properties that are not only incredibly luxurious, spacious and well appointed but that are also terribly comfortable - allowing guests to completely relax and feel at home.

I first met the Barkers when they hosted a party for the Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association at Indigo. They had just completed a major refurbishment and extension of the property with the help of Sunset Homes and wanted to re-introduce it to the tourism community. I fell in love with Indigo on first sight. John and Val were relaxed and gracious hosts and the party was a huge success. In fact I remember that we had to really 'encourage' the last few guests to leave as it was so comfortable dancing and hanging out on the extensive balconies. A year or so later, the Barkers invited me to see the close to completion Le Bleu. I



The heart of Le Bleu is enjoyment typified by the large infinity pool (above) with spectacular views and a second large pool at Petit Le Bleu. Two private beaches provide safe, easy swimming and snorkeling in Little Harbour's protected waters, and feature a Jacuzzi big enough for the whole family as well as a beachside pavilion for dining or simply relaxing.



All 10 spacious, luxurious bedrooms (each named a different shade of blue!) have large travertine bathrooms and many huge free form stone baths. Each is furnished differently but qualities that run throughout are Frette linens, colourful

cushions, French comforters, chaise lounges and specially made dark wood items - including beds with concealed, pop up flat screen TV's. A state of the art gleaming white 'chefs' kitchen has 3 'SubZero' fridges and a huge 'Wolf' range.

was quietly skeptical it could match up to Indigo despite being told it was 'really something' by Janine Edwards, a lady whose opinion I trust. Le Bleu exceeded my expectations. I was blown away by its spectacular views and the sheer scale and quality of its accommodations, gardens and facilities. And, I can confidently say – after watching the reaction of guests and agents who have visited the property with me – that my initial feeling of 'Wow – this is the best large villa in Anguilla' has been echoed by everyone who has seen it.

I think it's true to say that John and Val Barker have been successful in making Le Bleu and Indigo such beautiful, comfortable homes because they are such a formidable team. Both bring great experience and insight to their property designs, admitting that they have learned a lot on previous builds which Le Bleu has benefited from. John insists that Val is the creative one and that his role is to facilitate and drive for a quality end product. Val modestly admits to having some idea how to create and design a home. As a team, they have relentless energy and attention to detail. To build Le Bleu the Barkers worked with another husband and wife team – Ian 'Sugar' George and Janine Edwards of Sunset Homes – and have enjoyed an ongoing partnership with them, on "Signature Villas" projects.

Asked how they came about the unique design for the property, the Barkers explained, *We looked at many designs for this fantastic plot over quite a long period. The main criteria were to maximize the unbelievable panoramic views and take advantage of the unique private location and beaches. When people arrive, they enter the main house through water gardens leading to a master staircase. Drawn by the view through the lounge onto the pool deck area, I love to see people's reaction when they first arrive. Sometimes we have to pinch ourselves that it's not a dream... we really are seeing that view and feeling that lovely sea breeze."*

Val Barker has furnished Le Bleu with her signature style - combining classic good taste, with contemporary accents and keeping comfort as a priority. The property has many unique features because John and Val are of the mind that just because it isn't easily available or hasn't been done before that's not going to stop them. Other really innovative touches include a large shady balcony on the top floor with no visible means of support as they didn't want pillars affecting the views and oversized 'louvered' Caribbean style wooden doors to make the most of the trade

breezes and to ventilate the house naturally.

There are lots of great activities like kayaks and boats;



The indoor/outdoor lounge boasts luxurious, cushiony white furniture, plenty of plants, orchids, mirrors and quirky designer objects. The centre piece of the spectacular formal dining room is a table for 20 made of dark wood and slate, which with other treasures, was commissioned and made in the South of France



a floodlit tennis court with 'club house'; a cinema with reclining leather seats; a fully fitted gym; children's play area and loads of places to barbeque, eat, drink, relax and make merry. But the icing on the cake for me and many other visitors are the best lawns and gardens found in a private home in Anguilla...lush and immaculate, they roll right down to the sea.

The property also has a 'secret weapon' in the likeable and efficient form of Estate Manager, Lester Sing. Both knowledgeable and practical, he is on hand for guests 24/7 providing excellent, discreet service along with his committed team of house-keeping and gardening staff.

I asked John and Val what was the best thing about building and owning properties in Anguilla and they told me how after all the hard work they were now happy to be able to 'just enjoy it!' Last October they were lucky enough to have all of their children and grandchildren for a glorious 2 week family vacation spread across Le Bleu and Indigo. It was the first time Le Bleu welcomed guests and they all had an amazing time.

Le Bleu is a stunning contemporary 'Super Villa' that will not disappoint visitors looking for the ultimate Anguilla Villa. It has already been enjoyed by some high profile (even famous) visitors. It offers world class accommodation and outstanding facilities in one of the worlds most desirable destinations. But to my mind, the most special thing about Le Bleu is that it is a beautiful, comfortable, luxurious family home – that you just can't help but enjoy.

A special introductory rate (\$21,300 plus taxes per week) is valid until November 2010. Email: info@littleharbourestates.com; Tel. 1 (264) 584-8783. (photos by Chris Mason and the Barker family.)

Trudy Nixon first came to Anguilla 9 years ago and fell in love (with the Island!). She was privileged to run the AHTA from 2006 to 2009 and now runs True Communications a PR and communications consultancy, email: truecommunications@live.com.