



## A SUSTAINABLE PLACE IN THE FUTURE

Of all the places in the world that can offer themselves as a sanctuary and haven, Antigua & Barbuda ranks amongst the most desirable. And with the increasingly substantive cracks we are seeing in our societies, becoming a residential haven for the world's elite offers a real and sustainable pathway to ever-increasing prosperity for the twin islands.

Indeed, the Antigua & Barbuda Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programme has been attracting these "gold-collar" immigrants since 2014, and the beneficial effect of having these types of people as residents is being profoundly felt today. And while resorts and all-inclusive hotels have long been seen as economic drivers, given their direct employment numbers, the longer-term impact of residential tourism on local entrepreneurship yields rewards that sustain themselves more profoundly.

So, what then can Antigua do to keep attracting elite international residents and reap the positive influences for its society that follow?

Since the CIP programme offers a real lure to discover the country, and with a natural pressure on it from the world's largest tax collectors, it needs to be guarded with a feverish zeal. There is no doubt that residential tourism is a good thing and should be encouraged. In this vein, luxury villa developments provide the infrastructure to incentivise this class of international citizen to stay for a while and really enjoy the delights of Antigua.

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And promotion is absolutely key. Antigua & Barbuda has the right ingredients to truly distinguish itself internationally as a coveted place to spend time. This means focusing on the high-end in its promotion as well as attaching the twin-island brand to quality names and events.

In fact, all of this is known having been in action for some time, and is absolutely the right path to follow. Strategies like having Robert De Niro as the Economic Ambassador for the country has assisted every one of us who have been out in the world selling the twin islands for both investment and visitation.

So, this is neither a critique nor a call to arms, rather a ringing endorsement of the right things that have been done, and are being done, to create a truly sustainable future for the islands. As the world heaves and strains from rapid globalisation in the social media age, I am increasingly optimistic about where we are in Antigua & Barbuda as well as where we can get to.

*By Brian Dobbin*