

Projects

Hotels/Resorts/Wellness

## Going Places 2019: The Caribbean

Alissa Ponchione • Photography by Alex Herrera, Eric Laignel, and Christian Oth Studio and courtesy of Marriott International • March 5, 2019



After being hit by devastating back-to-back hurricanes, Irma and Maria, in 2017, the Caribbean was in near ruin. The infrastructures of various islands were decimated, leaving many people without power, access to clean water, or even homes. Tourism, the region’s most important economic driver, took an even bigger hit. Yet, recovery is in sight, with STR reporting hotel revenue reaching nearly \$12.5 billion in 2018. In addition, tourism is expected to see a 4.3 percent increase to the region this year, according to figures from tourism development agency One Caribbean. Here’s a look at three islands that are coming back from the brink and welcoming visitors once again.

**Puerto Rico** > The U.S. territory is still overcoming the effects of Hurricane Maria, yet hotel occupancy rates have remained steady, peaking at 80 percent in March 2018, a 4 percent increase from the year prior, according to STR. Most of the island’s hotels are up and running, including the El San Juan Hotel, which went through an extensive renovation by New York firm Jeffrey Beers International before the storm, where Beers’ focus “was to restore the historical and iconic elements of the property while layering in contemporary design elements,” he says. Joining the Curio Collection property is the historic Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, refreshed by Wilson Associates (SB Architects handled the architecture of the original). The palette was kept simple so “the eye is constantly led to the view,” says director and principal Michael Crosby. “You feel transported.”