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Nearly Half of St. Barts' Villa Product Is Open for Business

by [Joe Pike](#) | Mar 15, 2018 12:40pm



St. Barts // Photo by SeanPavonePhoto/iStock/Getty Images Plus/Getty Images

Travel Agent recently chatted with Nils Dufau, president of the St. Barts Tourism Committee, and learned that almost half of the island's villa product is open, with the remaining villas expected to welcome travelers by the end of the year.

Following the destruction caused by **Hurricane Irma**, Dufau told us that about 40 percent of the total villa product is currently welcoming tourists and that number is expected to grow to 50 percent by April.

And that's terrific news for a destination that depends so much on its villa business.

“**St. Barts**’ villas are responsible for about 3/4 of our total capacity to the island,” says Dufau, noting that there are about 800 total villas located throughout the destination. “So, the fact that many of our impressive villas are now open for business means St. Barts as a whole is now open for business.”

Perhaps one of the more notable villa companies on island, **WIMCO Villas**, [reported back in November that it was open for business](#) for the holiday season. WIMCO’s 370 private villas in St. Barts will be available for rent following the reopening of key facilities on its property and the surrounding area.

It has been a steady road to recovery for the **French Caribbean** island, which has been restoring essential services, cleaning up roads and beaches, and repairing homes and businesses since the hurricane passed through.

To declare St. Barts “open for business,” WIMCO established five milestones required to ensure a safe and comfortable vacation for guests.

Essential services like electricity and water had to be restored to private villas and businesses, and grocery stores, gas stations, and pharmacies had to be reopened. On October 2, these requirements were met.

The beaches had to be cleaned up and reopened for swimming. On October 6, **The Collectivite of St. Barts** announced that swimming was allowed at public bays, **Lorient**, **Shell Beach**, and the western part of **St. Jean Bay**.

A critical number of restaurants had to declare they would reopen by December 15, including at least two beach-front restaurants. The Collectivite reports that 49 restaurants have declared they will be open for the holidays, including two beach-front properties - **Shellona** and **La Plage**.

The “feeder” airports for St. Barts in **San Juan** and **St. Martin** had to be reopened, along with the resumption of inter-island service from **Tradewind Aviation**, **Win-Air** and **St. Bart Commuter**. Those milestones were met in early October. A critical number of private villas had to be scheduled to reopen and fully operational by Dec. 15, which WIMCO has since confirmed.

All Villas Currently Accepting Guests

The following is a complete list of the villa companies on St. Barts that are currently welcoming guests: WIMCO; So Barts Home; Sibarth Real Estate; Agence Barnes; Ici et La; St Barth Properties; Eden Rock; Merci Sophie; Elan Immo; Premier Properties St Barth; Unique properties; Re/Max and Real St Barth.

As far as traditional hotel product goes, Travel Agent was told that 18 of the destination's 28 total hotels, most of which are less than 50 rooms, are now open. All shops and beaches are open. Also, roughly 60 of a total 80 restaurants on island are now open.

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