

Rising from the ashes, Montserrat plans its grand comeback



BY JARED
MCCALLISTER

In the wake of Soufriere Volcano, the Caribbean territory plans a relocated, new capital and novel opportunities for developers, investors and tourists

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Sunday, July 13, 2014, 4:00 AM

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Rendering shows what Montserrat's new capital town on Carr's Bay might look like.

Phoenix is rising from the ashes! The island of Montserrat — which suffered from the Soufrière Hills volcano eruptions of the 1990s — has mapped out a redevelopment plan to bring a new capital, new port and a resurgence of tourism to the once-popular British territory.

Montserrat is making moves to regain its position as a sought-after, world-class tourism destination through a comprehensive development project. And investors and developers are being sought to make it happen, said Ayiesha de Coteau-Sammy, director of trade and investment promotion for the Montserrat Development Corp., which created the island's master plan for economic development and growth.

"We're getting Montserrat back on the map," said de Coteau-Sammy. "People have forgotten that the island exists, so we're trying to get the word out that Montserrat is open for business. We're ready to get people and get back to sustainability. What we're hoping to do is get back to 50% self-sustainability by 2016," de Coteau-Sammy said, noting that Britain is greatly aiding the island.

She said investors are being courted for a unique opportunity to finance and profit from the dramatic rebuilding and development that will take place on the island's lush, north side, which was not affected by the volcano.

"We are basically a clean slate, so we can do anything. Where else would you have the opportunity to build a new capital town? Those are the type of investors we're looking for: forward-thinking, looking for something new, something different."



MONTSERRAT DEVELOPMENT CORP.

"The port is one of our main focuses. Once the port comes in, it opens up everything else, cruise lines and cargo ships," she said, noting that the airport only supports small commercial planes — three flights daily from Antigua — and private craft.

The tourism industry is the next major part of its master plan, which calls for a hotel along with small residences, condominiums and other accommodations.

"My tourism message is: If you're looking for something less commercial, more laid-back, Montserrat is definitely the place to come. The people are friendly, the water is nice; we have hiking and nature trails, so it wouldn't be like going to a big amusement park. It's a small, quaint island where you can get away from everything."

For more information about investment opportunities on Montserrat, visit www.investmontserrat.com. And visit the Montserrat tourist board website, www.visitmontserrat.com, for information about vacationing on the island.