

real life

CARIBBEAN LUXURY LIFESTYLE, PROPERTY AND DESIGN MAGAZINE

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SIMPLY SUBLIME

Leonardo da Vinci called simplicity “the ultimate form of sophistication,” and never was this more so than at Grand Cayman’s newest beach abode. Visually anchored by dreamy ocean views, clean, well thought out design principles define this home’s understated style. Devoid of trickery, its balanced proportions and pared-back chic beget elegantly uncontrived living. Refined and contemporary, most definitely, but above all else, a modern island family home that pays homage to the ultimate designer of them all – Mother Nature.

Words by Juliet Austin. Photography by Heather Holt Photography.

Conceived by Design Cayman and constructed by Core Construction on a picturesque coastal site surveyed by Abernethy and Associates, the long, rectangular façade spans the entire 155-foot width of the property. Cleverly articulated architectural details – shutters, recesses, overhangs, and tinted glass – and the interplay of ephemeral shadows that change with the sun’s passing punctuate the exterior, delivering a combination of contemporary clean and welcoming warmth while maintaining quintessential Caribbean appeal. Fastidiously proportioned to ensure harmony of design, the flattened-out pitch of the signature standing-seam black roof is a defining feature, a counterpoint to the landscaped terraces of lush tropical flora designed by Vigoro that encase the home.

The approach is elegant as the driveway rises regally, affording privacy to the main house. As architect Brian Macdonald notes, “The house looks like it emerges from the ground, comfortably like it is meant to be there.”

Living areas are elevated for storm surge protection with a sea wall buried deep in the subsoil of the water’s edge to provide first-line defence against wave action during a hurricane. Aesthetically, this enhanced height and vantage create commanding ocean views that energise the home from within, giving each space a spectacular vista and lively, beachy hues. →



Indoors, the sense of space is liberating. Here is a place to grow, room to evolve and gather with friends and loved ones. The 10-foot-high ceilings add skyward dimensionality, and a trio of natural fibre pendants, custom made in Indonesia, hung at different heights in the entryway stairwell, embody the coastal theme. “We paired them with colourful cords and fixtures – teal, brass and hot pink – at night they create beautiful shadows,” explains the owner.

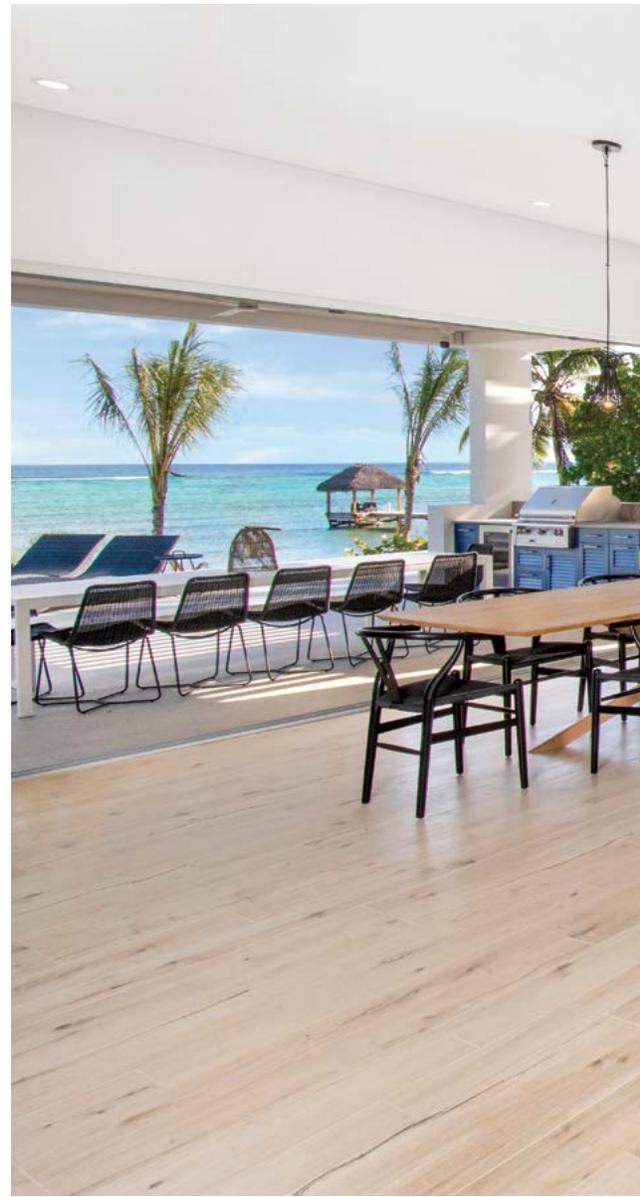
The airy ambience is one of ease and modern beach chic. While the scale and scope of the interior architecture amplify the entryway’s light-filled narrative, the dramatic, sunlit foyer leads directly into the heart of the home’s open-concept living areas. Muted daylight washes across crisp, whitewashed walls to present a fresh, modern feel, and the wood-look flooring injects a cosiness – so perfect for barefoot living. Furnishings boast monochromatic neutral tones, selected for comfort over show. Interiors are characterised by subtlety and restraint, forever presided over by the scene-stealing moody blues of the ocean swells and a hypnotic vanishing-point horizon that draw the eye forever outward.

Intriguing collections of unique artefacts, family keepsakes, and artwork, collected across miles and millennia, inject personality onto the elemental palette. With accent furnishings and rugs locally procured from Sticks & Stones, Living.ky and Rugs Oriental, an eclectic selection of patterned cushions reflect the bespoke style, a perfect alchemy marrying texture and colour to achieve a collected feel that is timeless, unique, and ever evolving. Meticulously sequenced in keeping with their clients’ mandate, the interiors manage to be simultaneously open, generous, and intimate.

A wide corridor off the great room leads to a powder room where a pair of intricate filigree Moroccan copper pendant lanterns cast enchanting shadow patterns on the plain white walls and rustic wooden vanity. Further along, an oversized sliding cobalt blue door conceals the tranquil family snug where sumptuous sofas invite one to sink into them in front of a movie. At the end, a ‘far from the madding crowd’ light, airy guest room offers visitors a pure, uncontrived refuge with its blend of modern minimalism and classic Caribbean comfort. Interconnected rooms are afforded sumptuous sea views and seamless access to the great outdoors courtesy of shady patios.➔









The kitchen's open aesthetic is augmented by the absence of upper cabinetry. In its place, a tall, centred seafoam pantry adds a punch of colour. Kitchen appliances from Bon Vivant are tucked beneath pristine white countertops and a vast island created by ITC. Stools lined up alongside it, and a pair of pendant lights with brass interiors that cast a warm glow creates an informal dining space.

A stylish Ethnicraft Mikado wooden dining table from Living.ky, ideal for entertaining, sits under looped wire pendant lamps that create spirographic silhouettes. An original David Bridgman painting at the head of the table adds a rich burst of colour – the palette of paradise.

Mirroring this, an outdoor kitchen and dining area are shaded by the second storey balcony, with a wooden ceiling introducing warm notes to the exterior space. This blending and dissolving of boundaries result in a palpable sense of unconstrained freedom.→





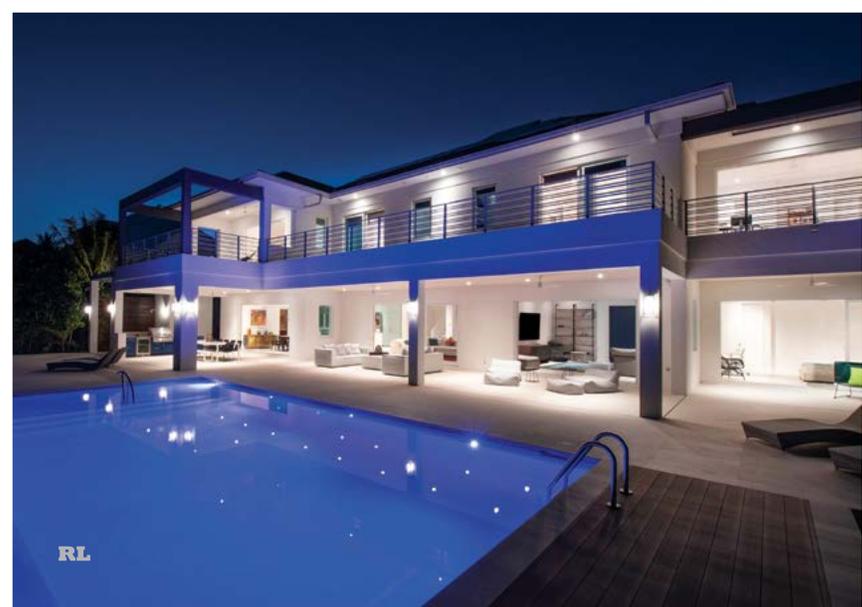
Along the south façade, vast glass doors retract, transforming inside to out, distinct yet connected in butterfly symmetry. Floor levels remain consistent to support seamless transitions, and the expansive patio harbours a wealth of seating areas and a sensational infinity-edge pool designed by Pool Patrol. Lit up at night, it becomes a magical mirror to the starry skies above, a precursor to the ocean beyond. Terraced planters screen a further sunken deck where, at night, the flickering flames of a fire pit create an intimate nocturnal nook.

Upstairs, in the sun-kissed upper gallery, a hand-woven pod is suspended within arm's reach of well-stocked bookshelves – a perfect spot to hide out and lose oneself in a novel. In the bedrooms, unabashed simplicity is enhanced by natural wood flooring by Stafford Surfaces, and feature walls of glass that lead onto a fringing balcony, framed by metallic railings. Built-in nooks with picture windows that look out over the ocean in the children's rooms give each a cosy space to relax, socialise and add their own style. As architect Alan Brown explains, "Everything was designed to give every room a sea view."

In contrast to the vibrance of the colours outside, pure white walls and a pitched ceiling frame a scene of serenity and order in the sleek master suite. A bright built-in dressing area and walk-through closets lead to an equally calm bathroom, fitted with a deep soaking tub, a spacious standing shower, double sinks and streamlined fittings from A. L. Thompson's. Here, half-frosted windows soften the sunlight that streams in and afford bathers privacy, whilst the Knotwood metal screen on the upper portion allow views of treetops while showering.→









Poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, wrote, "If you will stay close to nature, to its simplicity, to the small things hardly noticeable, those things can unexpectedly become great and immeasurable." Resolute and authentic, what this home succeeds wildly in doing is fusing relaxed, breezy beach living with honest intentionality and cutting-edge design. Well edited and modern without feeling cold or boxlike, it allows nature's voice to be heard, and in doing so, becomes a vision of the simply sublime. 

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