

Robb Report
Home & Style

LUXURY RESIDENCES AND FINE DESIGN

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Radiant Retreats

BRIGHT DESIGNS IN NEW ZEALAND,
VIRGIN GORDA, MEXICO, AND MORE



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FROM TOP, ROGER DAVIES; WERNER STRAUBE; JIM TANNOCK



Sailors' Choice

Seafaring relatives drop anchor in the British Virgin Islands, selecting a secluded development as the site for their stylish retreat.

BY MAIRI BEAUTYMAN > PHOTOGRAPHY BY WERNER STRAUBE



Testing the Waters

Several hundred years ago, the sandy coves and deep harbors of Virgin Gorda in the British Virgin Islands were rumored to hide a pirate or two. In 2012, these natural treasures, not to mention several marinas and yacht clubs, made the island of just 8.5 square miles the clear choice for a group of avid sailors seeking a tropical retreat. The seafarers, all members of the same extended family, agreed on Oil Nut Bay—a 300-acre residential development on the eastern tip of “the Fat Virgin,” which is accessible only by boat or helicopter—and purchased a 28,000-square-foot beachfront parcel for its proximity to the development’s yacht club and for the site’s sweeping Caribbean views.

Understandably, the panorama influenced every inch of the vacation home’s design, from the folding mahogany-and-glass doors that allow tropical breezes to pass through the facade (previous spread and below) to the calm, sand-toned color palette that guides the interiors, including the main living area (left and right).

“This is a house as much about living outdoors as indoors,” says Douglas A. Kulig, CEO of the Coral Gables, Fla., firm OBM International and the project’s lead architect. “The water and the lushness of the surroundings are so spectacular, we didn’t want to compete,” adds Martin Horner, coprincipal of Soucie Horner, the



Chicago-based firm that carried out the interior design.

Completed last February, the seaside estate encompasses three one-story structures totaling 5,300 square feet and lagoon-like grounds with a 1,100-square-foot swimming pool and two tiki-style pavilions. The traditional pitched shake roofs of the main, guest, and service houses are composed of wallaba shingles from Guyana, while cypress beams accent the stucco facades.





Sea and Be Seen

Positioning the residence 95 feet from the shoreline enabled the landscape architect Raymond Jungles to create a cohesive tropical oasis. The turquoise blue of the pool (below) is nearly indistinguishable from the sea, and the plantings around groupings of rocks are hearty natives.

The furnishings in the two tiki-style pavilions (one shown), which hug the pool and act as extended living rooms, suit the tropical climate. The Swell collection lounge chairs by Richard Schultz and the Pacific modular sofas from Janus et Cie are woven from synthetic fibers that resist ultraviolet light, moisture, and bacteria.

“The design goes through an architectural review process,” says OBM International’s Kulig, referring to Oil Nut Bay’s building requirements. “While there is some flexibility around materials, everything needs to be durable, natural looking. However, they’re really trying to control quality rather than aesthetic.”

Of course, guiding the aesthetics was the job of the design team, and for them, not everything was practical. An Indonesian wood chaise (left) in the great room is more sculptural than useful. But according to Horner, aesthetics, like the estate’s views, took precedence. “We said, ‘It’s not comfortable,’ and [the homeowners] said, ‘We don’t care—it’s beautiful.’” **HSS**

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