

TURKS & CAICOS

MAGAZINE

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WINTER 2014/15

Ruthie Davis

the shoe designer who's not afraid to *stand out*

Distance swimmer
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Situated on an elevated bluff on the north shore of Providenciales, International Drive offers spectacular views that exemplify why the Caribbean is a premier vacation spot.

“It’s all about the outlook.”

Joe Zahm



beachfront and waterfront properties around the world,” said Sotheby’s International Realty Broker/Owner Joe Zahm. “And the Turks & Caicos brand is burning brighter than it ever has.”

That’s due in part to the ongoing comeback of the worldwide luxury market. But Turks & Caicos is benefiting in particular thanks to years spent positioning the country to provide exactly what that segment of the market desires, Zahm said.

The result? An increase in the number of new ultra-luxury villas and enclave villa projects under development and construction. And unlike many previous development trends on Providenciales, this isn’t limited to any one area of the island.

Take International Drive, located atop an elevated bluff fronted by a white sand beach on the northern shores of Provo, just to the west of the Turtle Cove Marina. The first homes built there went up during the island’s first development boom in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

“The area was the first high-end address on (Providenciales) for a lot of reasons,” explains Vasco Borges, developer of the Beach Enclave, a nine-villa development that launched on International Drive in February 2014. “In addition to the first hotel on the island being nearby, it had that combination of elevation and the beach,

outlook

Providenciales’ high ground offers rare views



In the Pierce Brosnan remake of the Steve McQueen classic *The Thomas Crown Affair*, sly art thief Crown sweeps his love interest – international art expert Catherine Banning – off to a hilltop villa on an island in the Caribbean. The aesthetically overwhelmed Banning, played by Rene Russo, takes a deep breath of salty air as she absorbs the stunning view from the balcony and shouts “This is beautiful!”

Therein lies the seed of many an executive daydream.

Building unique island escapes for the global high-end real estate market has become a growth industry in Turks & Caicos of late, with single-family home and villa sales driving the local real estate market during the first half of 2014.

“High-net-worth people and ultra-high-net-worth people are drawn to great

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Impressive estates and villas in the Turks & Caicos, such as those at Beach Enclave (above and right), offer world-class amenities for discerning buyers.

which is simply beautiful.”

The success of Grace Bay created a new image for Turks & Caicos lifestyle and luxury, with high-rise resorts and residences built among the dunes at beach level. But the timeless romance of the classic hilltop Caribbean villa never really went out of style.

“Villas in the Caribbean were historically built on elevation,” Zahm said. “That was the romantic notion of being elevated, with the cool breeze and having the spectacular panoramic views. International Drive provides that. The Beach Enclave provides the beach too, but people love the outlooks from International Drive.”

Architect Ron Shaw, principle of RA Shaw Designs, demonstrates the principle from the terrace of Samsara, a recently completed 15,000-square-foot villa – one of several villas he’s designed for the area.

Shaw created a seamless indoor-outdoor living experience, making the focal point of the remarkable Samsara estate the heavenly views. “Look at what we have here,” Shaw says as he walks along the cascading salt water swimming pool facing the ocean.

It’s a clear day, and Shaw scans a horizon that includes boats making their way in and out of the protected inlet that serves the marina. Hands resting on a balustrade, eyes fixed outward he takes in a deep breath of



sea air, “I totally get this.”

International Drive is marked by impressive estates that perch atop the undulating landscape. The first development is Beach Enclave, which sits on 10 acres between the drive and the beach. Borges remembers the development process fondly.

“We worked with the natural typography,” he said. “We did the typographical surveys and spent a great amount of time working to understand it. But above all we walked the site many times with the architect and the team.”

The six beachfront villas are planned for the first ridge at an elevation of 40 feet, with three additional villas planned for an elevation of 65 feet. Either choice offers unobstructed ocean views and direct beach access. “That is something that can only be

done on International Drive,” Borges said.

Desire for the island villa lifestyle can drive international homebuyers to many islands across the West Indies, but Zahm stresses that TCI has earned an unusual opportunity to capitalize on the trend.

“The ultra-luxury buyer has accepted TCI as a luxury destination due to improved infrastructure, management services and amenities,” Zahm said. “We have ease of use, access, US currency and an English-speaking population that makes a lot of people comfortable.

“People have a lot of confidence in the jurisdiction. They’re looking to have a great vacation home and still have asset protection.”

It’s a kind of security that makes it a great deal easier to gaze out from your private balcony and shout “This is beautiful!”

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