

real life

CARIBBEAN LUXURY LIFESTYLE, PROPERTY AND DESIGN MAGAZINE

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TROPICAL LATITUDES

A masterful mix of glass, concrete and wood endows a distinctive new home in Cayman with outstanding light, texture and warmth

*Words by Natasha Were
Photography by www.heatherholt.com*

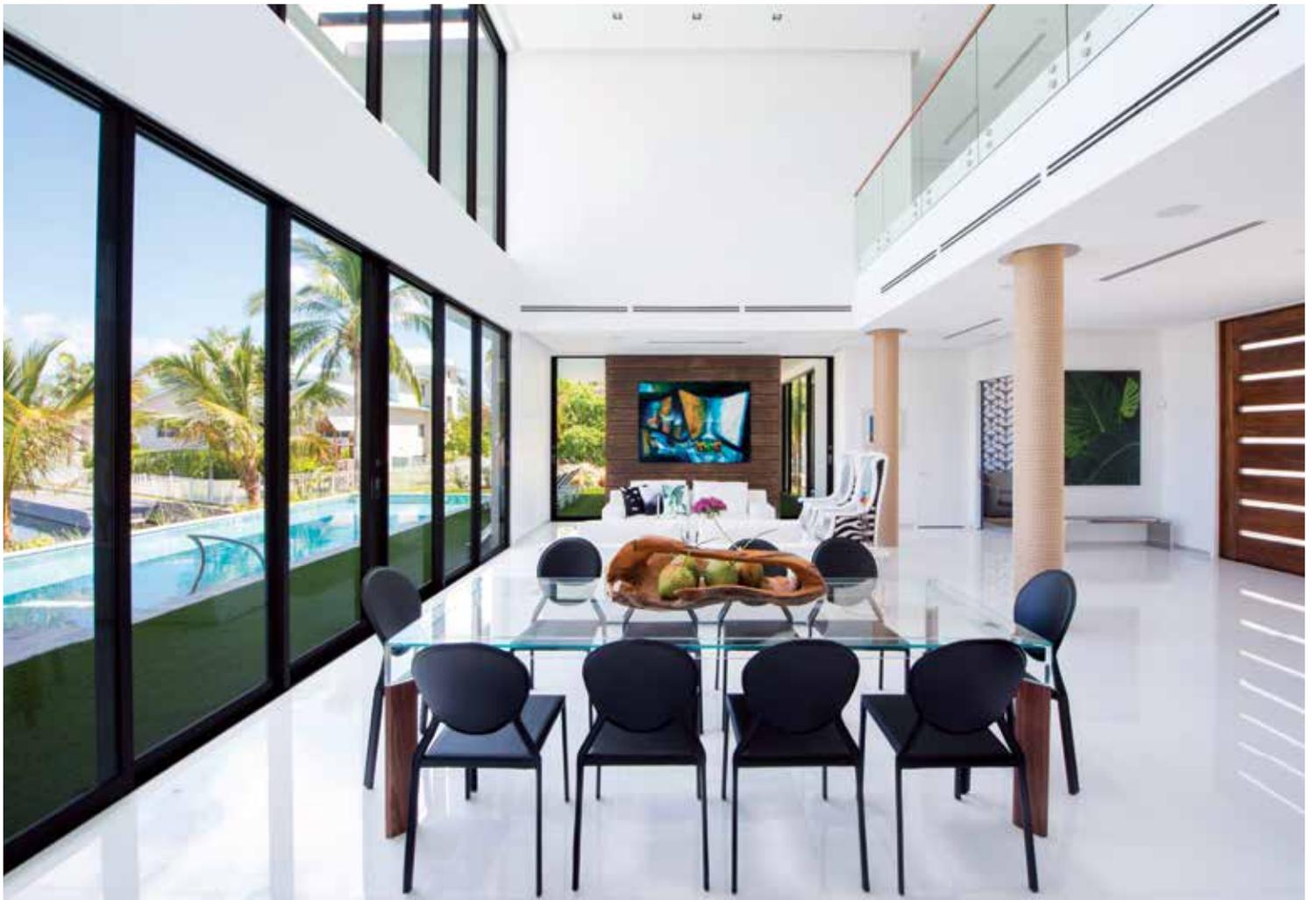
The ingenious architecture, outwardly suggestive of a series of boxes stacked almost haphazardly upon one another, conceals sensational white interiors, bathed in natural light and rich with visual interest.

Like many before them, the owners had visited the islands on vacation, loved them, and decided to relocate. But unlike others, they chose not to rent initially, or even to buy an existing property, opting instead to design and build right away.

"We looked at some houses for sale, but none were right. It would have meant adapting to something that was already there but that didn't really fit our needs," the owners explain. "We had a clear vision of the house we wanted for a long time and were just waiting for the right time and place. When we found the lot, it was ideal. There were few restrictions on what could be built, so we could be creative and not be limited by specific guidelines." →









Although the owners were living in the US during the design and construction phases, the dream team they assembled made the process easy. Mike Stroh of Trio Architecture had the island expertise they sought as well as the ability to put their vision on paper; Phoenix Construction had a flawless reputation and a willingness to innovate when needed, and interior decorator Carolina Hane had a flair for combining materials, fixtures and furniture that would inject character and fun into the ultra-modern family residence.

Other than five en suite bedrooms, the main 'must have' was a creative, modern design that hinged on a towering concrete wall at its centre. Rising up beside the sculptural wooden staircase and encased in three storeys of glass making it visible from outside as

well as inside, it ties the whole design together.

Although challenging to execute, this was a non-negotiable element of the design. "It's the most important feature of the house," Hane explains. "It exposes the materials in their purest form, showing the perfect balance of smooth, industrial and sophisticated. Everybody was apprehensive as the fast-drying concrete had to be poured in place, so there was no way to fix any mistakes." A series of samples were run ensuring the final result was everything they had hoped for.

With modern interiors, people often play it safe, Hane says, sticking to the same materials and colours throughout, something that can feel cold and characterless. "I like to mix it up and go bold – not too bold, but just bold enough," she says. →

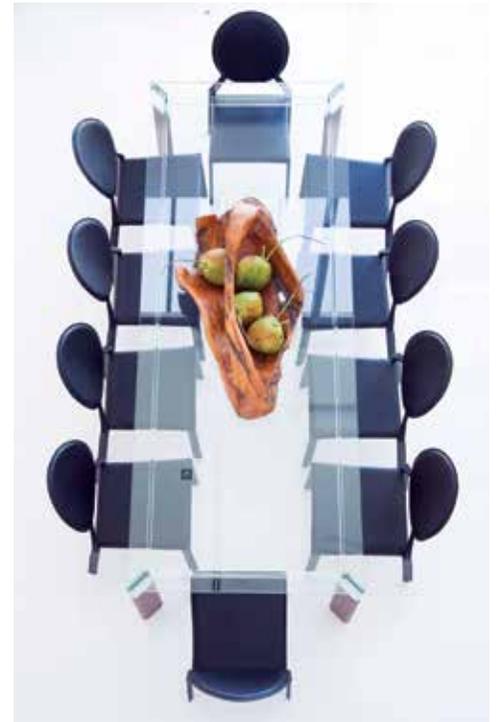


The basis is a clear, clean white canvas: glass doors and windows on every side and at varying heights allow natural light to pour in; this in turn is reflected off the crystal white porcelain floor tiles and amplified by the transparent railings, glass-topped dining table and acrylic stools in the living room. Essential fittings such as extractor hoods and power sockets were recessed and concealed to keep sightlines uncluttered. Against this unblemished background, Hane's signature 'selectively eclectic' choice of textures and tones really pop: the warm wood of the kitchen cabinetry is echoed in walnut table legs, carved wooden fruit bowls and the wood-look stucco wall at the end of the living room. Black dining chairs are balanced by the black of the iron and brass pendant lamps, zebra-print chairs and throw cushions, and large canvases create vibrant pockets of colour.

Hane searched near and far for the right materials and furniture: the raw edge wooden vanities were imported from Canada, whilst the living room rug was a fortunate find in local store Rugs Oriental. What she envisioned but could not find, she had custom made.

Lighting this cornucopia of treasures correctly was paramount and architect and interior designer spent countless hours ensuring every light had a purpose, whether to throw geometric patterns onto walls, illuminate specific features or accentuate lines. Lights along with AV, climate control and security systems were all linked on a single smart home automation system, installed by The Security Centre.

Beyond visual appeal though, Hane has introduced a subtle 'island' theme into the home, in a fresh and sophisticated way. The rope-wrapped pillars, brass details and buoy-shaped lamps all hint at the nautical, but steer clear of clichéd anchors and seashells.→





A similarly pared back style carries through the three children's bedrooms, allowing scope for each to put their personal mark on their domains as they grow up, whilst the master bedroom is a vast private pad. A masterpiece in black and white, it is complete with a huge dressing room and luxurious bathroom with twin floating vanities and an oversize marble-lined his and hers walk-in shower.

From every room, floor-to-ceiling glass provides a view onto the pool and outdoor kitchen – the chief recreational and entertainment area – where raw concrete comes into play again and the cement tiles, in the same blue as the media room, add just enough colour and pattern. As inside, geometric lines are →







offset by organic, curving shapes: sleek low profile sun loungers line one side of the pool, contrasting with the hanging wicker pods and moulded plastic chairs on the covered terrace.

By continuing the interior design themes through to the exterior, the effect of the walls of glass is multiplied, not only bringing outdoors in but extending the indoors to outside. Chic in the extreme, it is a triumph of symmetry, where every architectural line and furniture arrangement is perfectly proportioned and pleasing to the eye, and where new and old, sleek and bold, are richly blended. 

