

# real life

CARIBBEAN LUXURY LIFESTYLE, PROPERTY AND DESIGN MAGAZINE

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# EAST SIDE STORY

Held in the palm of nature, true happiness reveals itself in the transparent appeal of an open house on Cayman's windswept east coast.

*Words by Juliet Austin. Photography by [www.heatherholt.com](http://www.heatherholt.com) and [www.rmstudiocorp.com](http://www.rmstudiocorp.com)*



If you are lucky, happiness just blows in on the wind. Such was the case for adventurer and kite board enthusiast, John Rost, owner of one of Cayman's newest and most striking seaside sanctuaries. Captivated by the peace and windswept beauty of remote East End, little did he know that the bay where he once played would one day become his own private oasis – a place to take refuge from the stresses of big city life; a place he describes as his “happiest place on Earth.”

From the roadside, an iconic double storey 'Grand Arch' of continuous glass and stone announces your arrival. Architect Mike Stroh of Trio Architecture observes, “The space planning was envisioned to take residents through a journey of discovery, where beauty and elegance await at every turn of every corner. No matter where you find yourself in the house, you experience views of endless blue ocean, lush green vegetation and white sand.” Yet crucially, in the spirit of the design's artful narrative, every volume, every wall, every solid and void evolve from and lead back to the arch.➔





Unique in design and elemental in nature, the four-bedroom, four-full and two-half bathroom family abode presents a modern take on the isolated island getaway. Working symbiotically with every aspect of the surrounding environment, natural conditions like strong prevailing winds lend the ocean-facing façade year-round natural ventilation, while the high elevation allows for sublime views from upstairs and down and provides privacy from the eyes of wandering beachcombers.

What Stroh calls “the new vernacular of Cayman architecture,” juxtaposes natural materials and traditional colour schemes with a contemporary aesthetic. Exterior Dorado stone cladding references sand while white Marmoran with dark bronze accents that pay homage to a Colonial past accentuate the sleekness of the design. Stone, glass, wood and concrete maintain their authenticity in the transition between inside and out as seen in the recessed window frames where hardware is hidden as stone and glass meet seamlessly. Ceilings vary from smooth white to cedar wood tongue and groove, delivering shots of warmth, while continuous oversized porcelain floor tiles maintain an uninterrupted flow.→

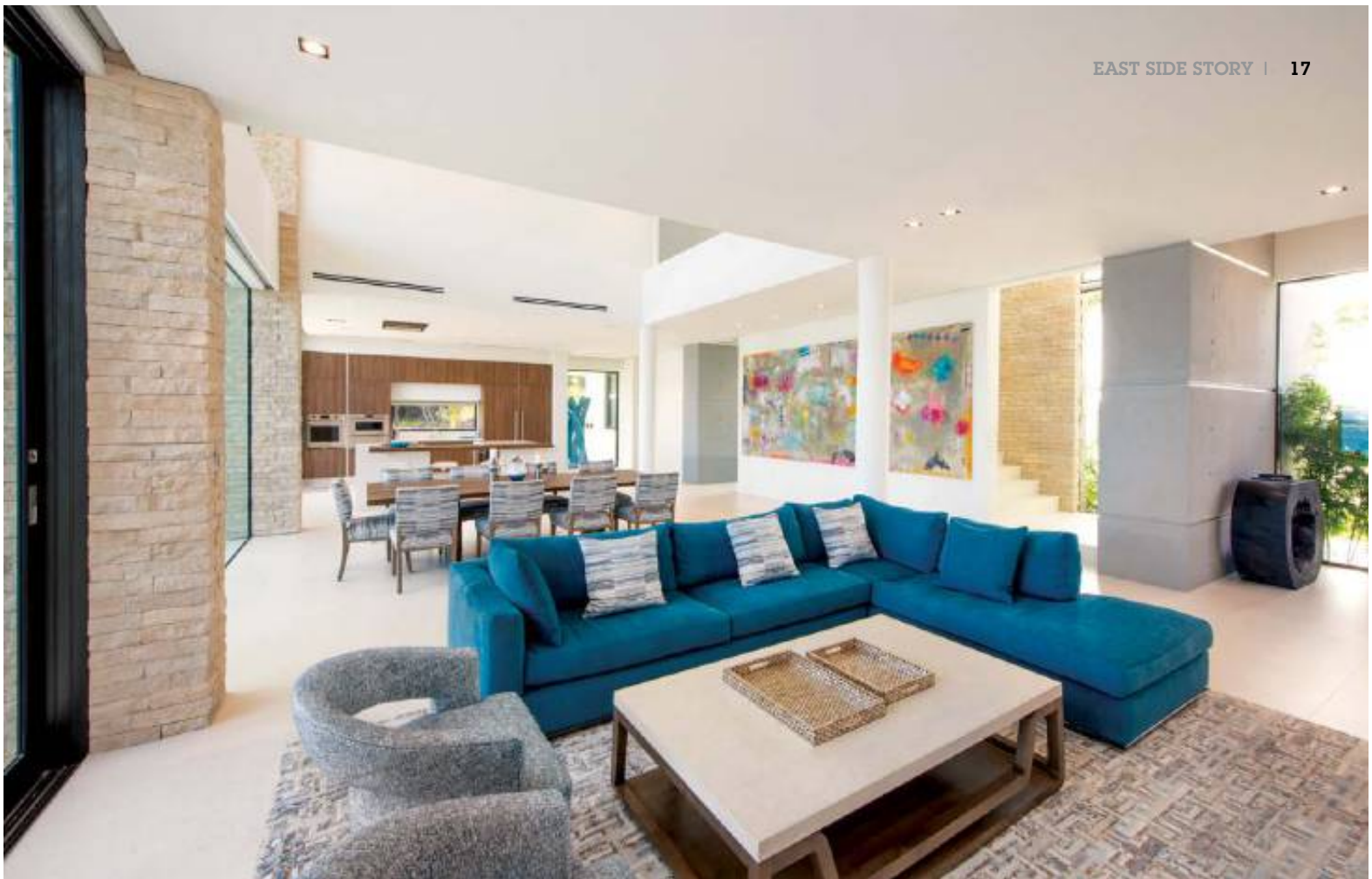












“The house itself is very linear and orthogonal; by using organic materials, we provide warmth to the starkness that these strong lines can create,” explains Stroh.

Yet it is the home’s transparency – the interplay between light, shadow and reflection – that is its masterstroke. “The transparency of the structure invites both sunrise and sunset to flood the interior and travel through, unobstructed, to the opposite exterior horizon,” says Stroh. Low-e film on the windows reflects ocean views to the exterior giving the impression of an open structure. Positioned beyond the window, an outdoor sculpture by Matt Levine, inspired by the movement of waves, draws the eye outward, adding intrigue from every angle. Expanses of floor-to-ceiling glass capture nature’s beauty, with clean lines framing blue-drenched vistas and lush tropical flora, implemented by Vigoro.

Stepping through the hidden entry door has a revelatory quality. Bathed in light, the eye travels hypnotically through the vast, high ceilinged, open-plan great room, dining and kitchen areas, out past the aqua pool to sand, sea and sky. Bisected with a first-of-its-kind frameless, impact-resistant glass bridge from one end of the upper gallery to the other, indoor spaces possess a sense of weightlessness and freedom as the barely-there structure offers up the glory of nature’s riches. Clearstory windows are positioned meticulously to allow light to permeate the entirety of the home, augmenting the sun’s movements and adding whimsical shadows with the passage of time. →





"From the beachside, you can look through to the setting sun on the other side, lightning storms in all directions or blowing palm trees. At night the moon rising from the sea creates evening magic along with the pool lighting. Walk a few steps to the beach and sit gazing at the stars... it's simply spectacular," enthuses Rost.

Besides communing with nature, this home is intended for connecting with family and friends. Cooking is a social affair in an open kitchen characterised by top-of-the-line propane appliances powered by Home Gas, smooth countertops by ITC and an overall simplicity. Sleek, flush cabinetry door panels eschew ornamental detail giving the materials the spotlight. "The goal was to create interior environments with a straightforward, deliberate approach; to compliment spaces, not compete or distract from them," explains Gary Finley of California-based Gary Finley Interiors. Adjacent, overlooked by the enormous graffiti-inspired canvas by artist Jane Booth, a stunning 120" live-edge Brazilian Walnut dining table – created from a single, hand-selected gem-in-the-raw plank – and ten upholstered chairs, invite the collective act of breaking bread.

Downstairs, three guest rooms with en-suite bathrooms, each offset with ocean views, are purposely compact. "They are not meant as a retreat," explains Rost, and with a home where all views lead to the sea, it is easy to see his point.→












Outdoors, the simple, rectilinear pool and water features designed by Oasis Pool and Spa, mirror the sky, while the outdoor kitchen feeds the soul with balmy Caribbean breezes and endless horizons.

Up a broad, low-lit flight of steps, textured stone brickwork reveals clever glass cut-throughs that offer downward sight-lines as one ascends, coquettishly blurring boundaries. Upstairs, planters bring the garden up, while the vast windows maintain the constant visual connection between upstairs and down, outside and in. On the landing, concrete cladding adds an intriguing counterpoint before entering the minimalist master suite. Dominated by a wall of glass that allows colours from nature's ever-evolving work of art to flood the room, here, as elsewhere in the interior scheme, neutrals and shades of white support subtle blue and teal accents. State-of-the-art motorised roller blinds control privacy and sun exposure, yet the overall feel is one of fluidity and a deep connection with nature.







Here, in the nexus of the native landscape, sea and sky, stands a rare place where togetherness, as much as anything else, is part of the adventure; a home designed, at every twist and turn, to reveal to all who enter the secret to true happiness. 







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