

Toronto HOME

DESIGN • ARCHITECTURE • LANDSCAPE

THE WINTER ISSUE

VILLA IN THE SUN

*A welcoming home in
Turks and Caicos*

SWEET DREAMS

This is where they begin

LAKESIDE LUXURY

*Flowing energy
by the water*



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ON THE COVER

Turks and Caicos beach house is inspired by the sea and a rock.
Photo by Eugen Sakhnenko/A-Frame, courtesy of Prototype Design Lab.



VILLA IN THE SUN

Turks and Caicos beach house is warm and welcoming.

70

ULTIMATE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

For her fortieth birthday, she gets a home makeover.

20





**THE GOOD LIFE,
ISLAND STYLE**

Turks and Caicos beach house is inspired by the sea and a rock

BY SUSAN KELLY
PHOTOGRAPHY EUGEN SAKHNEKO / A-FRAME, COURTESY OF PROTOTYPE DESIGN LAB



Let there be lightness: Sunlight streams through the open beachside façade, filtering through the custom cut-steel fireplace to create patterned shadows within. By night, its illuminated column serves as a beacon when viewed from the beach.

“I wanted to create a sense of anticipation, a gateway to something intriguing.”

TALK ABOUT A GRAND ENTRANCE – as in the dramatic doorway to Bella Vita Villa, a Turks and Caicos beach house.

Designed and built by Toronto firm Prototype Design Lab, the home’s entrance is the first thing to strike the eye. “I wanted to create a sense of anticipation,” Antonio Tadrissi said, “a gateway to something intriguing.”

When PDLab’s partner-in-charge first walked the once-barren site, he was inspired by an imposing rock face on the property’s south side. It was an unusual feature on an island that is relatively flat. And a welcome one, as it was positioned in a way that would provide a natural shield for the property, ensuring privacy.

“I decided to continue the same language,” he said, “to take the idea of the rock and make it fortress-like, with the great gate opening.” A succession of poured-in-place concrete door frames recedes to evoke a bastion, or perhaps a temple to architectural beauty. Against this stark and imposing aesthetic is inset a warm and welcoming door of hand-carved wood, a reclaimed piece sourced in India. 🏡



The villa's bathrooms incorporate floating fixtures of glass and chrome played against black Brazilian slate walls and floors.

“When in a vacation paradise, it’s all about being with your friends and family, about entertaining.”

It opens onto the grand staircase that cantilevers off the cool backdrop of a central wall made from board-formed concrete, which is molded in a wooden frame. Tadrissi designed the staircase’s lace-patterned panels of laser-cut steel, which were fabricated in-house at Prototype Design Lab. They were then shipped to the island along with reclaimed heavy-timber beams for the stairs.

Besides adding grandeur and drama, the intent was to continue the sense of places to go, things to discover, such as the two-storey great room directly behind the staircase with its soaring thirty-foot ceiling. Floating overhead is a giant flying fish of rattan, hand-woven in Thailand. It provides a touch of whimsy and a nod to the villa’s location on the world’s third-largest coral reef system.

To accentuate openness to the environment, the entire façade of the beach side is of sliding glass doors. “Since I had incorporated 3,500 square feet of deck space on the same level, I wanted to make an indoor-outdoor flow to take full advantage of the ocean view, the raison d’être for the house,” said Tadrissi. ☞





The grand staircase lives up to its name. The drama is created using laser-cut steel panels designed by the architect, fabricated in Toronto, and then shipped to the island along with reclaimed heavy-timber beams for the stairs.

“I wanted to make an indoor-outdoor flow to take full advantage of the ocean view...” —

It is broken only by a fireplace of the same laser-cut Corten steel as the staircase. By day, the sun filters through it to create patterned shadows within. By night, it is illuminated and when viewed from the beach resembles a lighthouse beacon.

Vying with the view for show-stopper status is the twenty-two-foot-long kitchen island, the centrepiece of the open-concept chef's kitchen. Tadrissi felt the colour and veining made the granite the ideal choice. Sourced in Brazil, its mammoth size and weight posed some challenges to get it onto the build site and installed in one piece.

Besides making a bold design statement, the behemoth island also reinforces the designer's intentions. “When in a vacation paradise, it's all about being with your friends and family, about entertaining,” he said. “You really only use the bedrooms to sleep.”

Which may explain why all seven of the villa's bedrooms have the same layout. And the same insistence on simple clean lines: the beds face outward to take full advantage of the view, with a vanity and storage integrated into the headboard, along with lighting and other controls. ☞



What morning looks like from one of the villa's seven bedrooms. All receive the same minimal design treatment, so that nothing detracts from the stunning views.



Left: Lighting helps nighttime visitors appreciate the full effect of the majestic doorway, with its receding concrete panels. Right: Lower-level beachfront bedrooms have the added benefit of direct access to the deck and pool areas.

“You could completely drench my house with water, and I am confident that no issues would arise from it.”

Four bedrooms face the sea, two upstairs and two downstairs, with another three on the opposite side of the house. One lower-level room serves as a full gym. The two beachfront bedrooms on the lower level have the advantage of a direct walkout to the pool.

The bathrooms also get the minimalist treatment. Fixtures float above the floors, inset into the walls of Brazilian black slate. The focus is on modern design, low maintenance and easy upkeep.

And what is behind the walls receives special attention as well. During his travels Tadrissi noted that even the most luxurious of tropical villas can develop unpleasant odours. So he insisted that water and mould-resistant drywall, the kind usually reserved only for the shower area, be used throughout the home.

Not an unreasonable precaution in a high-humidity environment that experiences the occasional hurricane. “You could completely drench my house with water, and I am confident that no issues would arise from it,” he said.

It took a scant one year to go from the drawing board to fully functioning beach house. It helps that he owns his own design and fabrication facility, and so can fully control the timeline and production, Tadrissi says. But then it was a labour of love, an ode to la bella vita. ☪

