EAST COAST HOME+DESIGN

Seaclusion

A Greenwich Couple Designs a Family Retreat in Jamaica

Story by Christine Benton | Photography by Nigel Lord

The turquoise waters of the infinity pool surrounded by tropical greenery.

Seaclusion is an enchanting villa with its own beach, situated on three acres of oceanfront on the grounds of the Tryall Club resort in Jamaica. This dream house belongs to a Connecticut couple with children who enjoy travelling and love everything about the ocean: the sight of it, the breathing of salt-laden air and the sound of lapping waves, all of which provide an instant feeling of peace. At Seaclusion the family doesn't have to try to relax; relaxing requires no effort at all.

When looking for a getaway home outside the U.S., the family wanted to be able to escape to a world that would change the beat of their everyday lives. As they considered different locations, they found that Jamaica had immediate appeal. Beginning their search when they had one young child, the couple discovered there were many flight options to this Caribbean paradise that would accommodate their youngster's schedule. They could quickly and easily escape the humidity of an East Coast summer or the colder climes of winter, and soon be basking in the fabulous, balmy Jamaican climate.

The island proved to be the perfect location for enjoying real family time together. It is a place to relax and not spend time running about, trying to fit all they wish to do in one trip, because everything they want is in one unique place. "We have time to keep dipping our feet in different ponds," said the wife. They can also enjoy a different cultural experience, including authentic Jamaican food.

Friends who visited Jamaica regularly highly recommended that the family check out the Tryall Club, located west of Montego Bay in Hanover Parish. Established in 1959, the club blends world-class sporting facilities for golf and tennis with a stylish lifestyle on 2,200 acres of a beautiful natural environment.

The heart of the property, which extends from the ocean to the Hanover Hills, is an early 19th-century "Great House." The beach is right there, a golf course is within walking distance, and a short ride in a golf cart leads to the spa, gym, boutique, tennis courts and kids' club, which offers activities for children.

On their first visit to the Tryall, the couple discovered that the resort also provides sweet, well-trained child-care personnel. They were able to enjoy a relaxing vacation with their child without worry or scheduling concerns. It was an easy decision for them to buy a home on the

The home is a continuous flow of open space with high-pitched ceilings that continually help circulate the ocean breeze, yet the arrangement of bedrooms provides space for privacy.

The interior designer was Sue Williams, a native and resident of Jamaica, who was completely in sync with what the family wanted to achieve.

grounds of the club.

After purchasing the villa, the owners stayed faithful to the beautiful existing Jamaican architecture but expanded it so they could see the beautiful turquoise water of the Caribbean from almost anywhere in the house. And though the sea invades the home, it does not flood it—it's the Jamaican light that accomplishes that. And the quality of that light is stunning—pure and clear by day, bathed in honey by late afternoon and glittery at cocktail hour when the sun sets.

Seaclusion is the perfect name for this residence, situated in a beautiful environment and the epitome of a place to wind down. The home is a continuous flow of open space with high-pitched ceilings that continually help circulate the ocean breeze, yet the arrangement of bedrooms provides space for privacy. Outside are two swimming pools (one of which is heated) and an herb garden. Just across the lane from Seaclusion is Rum Punch, a small, self-contained oasis that mirrors the architecture and décor of the main house and is bordered by a garden in many variations of green. Here, guests can enjoy privacy yet also join the family for beach living, meals and entertainment.

Upon entering Seaclusion, you are immediately struck by the expansive flow of living space. A media room is to the right, and straight ahead is a perfect-square sitting room. Fold back the louvered doors, and you can dine on the covered veranda. The dining room table sits beneath two white coral chandeliers. Behind the table is a small sitting space with a bar, the rear wall of which is glass that magically bounces the sea's reflection around the room. The ambience is tranquil, celebrating Jamaican craftsmanship and the creative blending of house, sky and ocean.

The house features seven crisp white air-conditioned bedrooms (including two in Rum Punch), with bed linen that invites a comfortable night's sleep. Inside the main house is a master suite with a large bedroom containing a king-size bed, an indoor sitting room that extends outdoors, and a smaller bedroom with twin beds to accommodate children. All the bedrooms have louvered doors that can be folded back to bring the ocean, pool and garden inside.

The interior designer was Sue Williams, a native and resident of Ja-

Jamaican-style dining and the ocean are both on the menu.

maica, who was completely in sync with what the family wanted to achieve. She was able to work closely with the wonderful local artisans while adding her own invaluable twists of creativity.

Williams and her design team felt that a house in such a setting deserved nothing less than clean, fresh lines with no clutter. There are no busy, distracting visual areas: your eyes and your mind are at peace. The walls are unadorned and the furniture is comfortable with easy-on-the-eye fabrics. To stay true to local Jamaican design, as many island artisans as possible were used, but there was also a nod to contemporary life, with comfortable, livable spaces and en suite bathrooms in all the bedrooms. And, in spite of the get-away-from-it-all ambience, it was important for the family to have all modern amenities, including flat-screen cable TV, Wi-Fi, iPod docks and a state-of-the-art music system.

Natural stone was used in the simply designed en suite bathrooms, which contain showers, white porcelain tubs and foldable louvered doors. Outside the master bedroom is an outdoor shower enabling a beachcomber to simply stroll across the lawn and rinse off accumulated sand and salt.

The colors of nature suffuse the open design of the house—blues and greens from the sky, sea and plants. The ocean is the natural source of the design and color scheme. A clean, relaxed feeling was created with soft and comforting blues and greens, and a lot of soothing color overlay adds some complexity and interest. Some rooms even have a little "pop" of color to provide a great contrast to the color of the ocean.

Williams felt the furniture should reflect the style of the country, so much of it—such as tables, lamps and rugs—was made by Jamaican artisans. But rather than rely only on tradition and repetition from years past, designers worked closely with local craftspeople to create a whole new exciting furnishing vocabulary.

Woods are variations of washed whites, creams and warm grays. Silvered coral lamp bases are framed in cedar, and support square linen shades or shades of beaten amethyst. Copper and jute are played with as well.

Outside, the courtyard leads seamlessly to the infinity pool with its blue-green waters, which in turn merges smoothly with the sea. (You almost expect to see a Botticelli Aphrodite rising from the turquoise waters.) This pool is safely enjoyed by the children, who can also play on the private beach. Adults can swim or snorkel in the ocean and paddle out in a kayak. And, when time out is needed, a hammock is conveniently strung in the shade of a large tree.

The property is maintained in tip-top condition by a staff of two housekeepers, two gardeners, a laundress and a chef, who cooks in a custom-built kitchen to supply gourmet meals for indoor and outdoor dining.

The owners can imagine they're bathing in the sea while soaking in the tub

Though the owners visit annually, the number of times per year varies: one year they went six times for lengthy stays and long weekends. Having a home away from home provides them with spontaneity—they can just pick up and get on a plane. They especially like going in the summer months when there is no school and the weather is perfect for both activities and naps.

At this utopian oceanfront haven, the outdoors is indoors, and the only "disturbing" sounds are the lapping of the sea, the rustling of the trees in the wind, the songs of the birds and the piping of the tree frogs. "We started with a Jamaican home and created an even better one," said the wife. "All of it began and ended with Jamaica in mind."

Resources

Interior Designer
Sue Williams
SW Interior Design
swinteriordesign.com

Tryall Club
Sandy Bay, Montego Bay, Jamaica
+1 876-956-5660
tryallclub.com