

island innovation

Bryan Bullen, director of COCOA, shares the inspiration behind his latest project on the island of Grenada which seamlessly blends green technology with luxurious design. Edited by Tania Jacobs.

When renting in the Caribbean, location is vital, but an equally important consideration is property architecture and build that not only complements the surroundings but also the luxury lifestyle that's on offer.

For two decades, the Caribbean Office of Co-operative Architecture (COCOA) has honed its practice of tropical contemporary architecture. Their latest project in Grenada delivers this by making a bold design statement yet all the while relating to its serene setting.

The property, located at La Sagesse in the parish of St David, spans an impressive 16,000 square feet on a sloping site that culminates in two open plan luxury residences. Constructed using local materials, both homes are strategically positioned on the upper portion of the site, to maximise the views of the spectacular mountain range and the expansive turquoise ocean beyond.

The lower section of the plot is reserved for planting fruit trees and the fostering of a lush, tropical garden.

Water is an important feature. The entrance of one of the properties is cantilevered over a substantial Koi pond visible through glass flooring panels in both the kitchen and bathroom. This fresh water pond flows to a lower basin in the garden, which can be seen from the interior.

Continuing the aquatic vibe, the first property has a private lap pool, while the second boasts an intimate plunge pool.

Sun decks extend from the roof of each house offering the perfect location for sunset viewing or an indulgent sun bath. The houses take their cue from traditional Caribbean home design with the living areas doubling as verandas.

Each space is open, offering maximum air flow, yet is protected from the elements by vertical operable louvre blinds.

With Grenada located 12 degrees to the north above the equator, and the potential to experience devastating weather effects, as it did with Hurricane Ivan in 2004, the building was constructed with protection in mind.

Robust cast in-situ concrete walls built and finished with an earth-toned oxide, give character to the property; while reflecting the colour of the large boulders excavated during the construction phase that now form the front wall of the property.

'Green building technology' has also been deployed, with rainwater collected in cisterns for garden irrigation. Solar water heaters and energy efficient fixtures and appliances have also been incorporated while glass windows and doors coated with low-E film provides protection from hurricane force winds and heat from the sun, while adding privacy and security.

The properties are single bed and bath houses, geared for couples, and available for combined rental or separately.

To find out more visit www.cocoa.gd or call +1 (473) 405 0537

