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inside:

Cerulean
Villa

REBIRTH

AFTER EXTENSIVE RENOVATIONS, CERULEAN VILLA IS RE-ENVISIONED EVEN MORE STUNNING THAN BEFORE.

Words: Orrett H. Wynter | Photos: Thierry Dehove

“The original spoke to another time... Transforming it with a more expansive vision of how one could live on Anguilla, was exhilarating.”

—DEBORAH BERKE

THIS IMAGE The pool deck is the property's centerpiece, with all the main interior spaces encircling, as well as opening onto, or overlooking it.

TOP RIGHT Outdoor living is a major feature with numerous spaces, such as this outdoor lounging and dining area to the East, created for relaxing and entertaining.



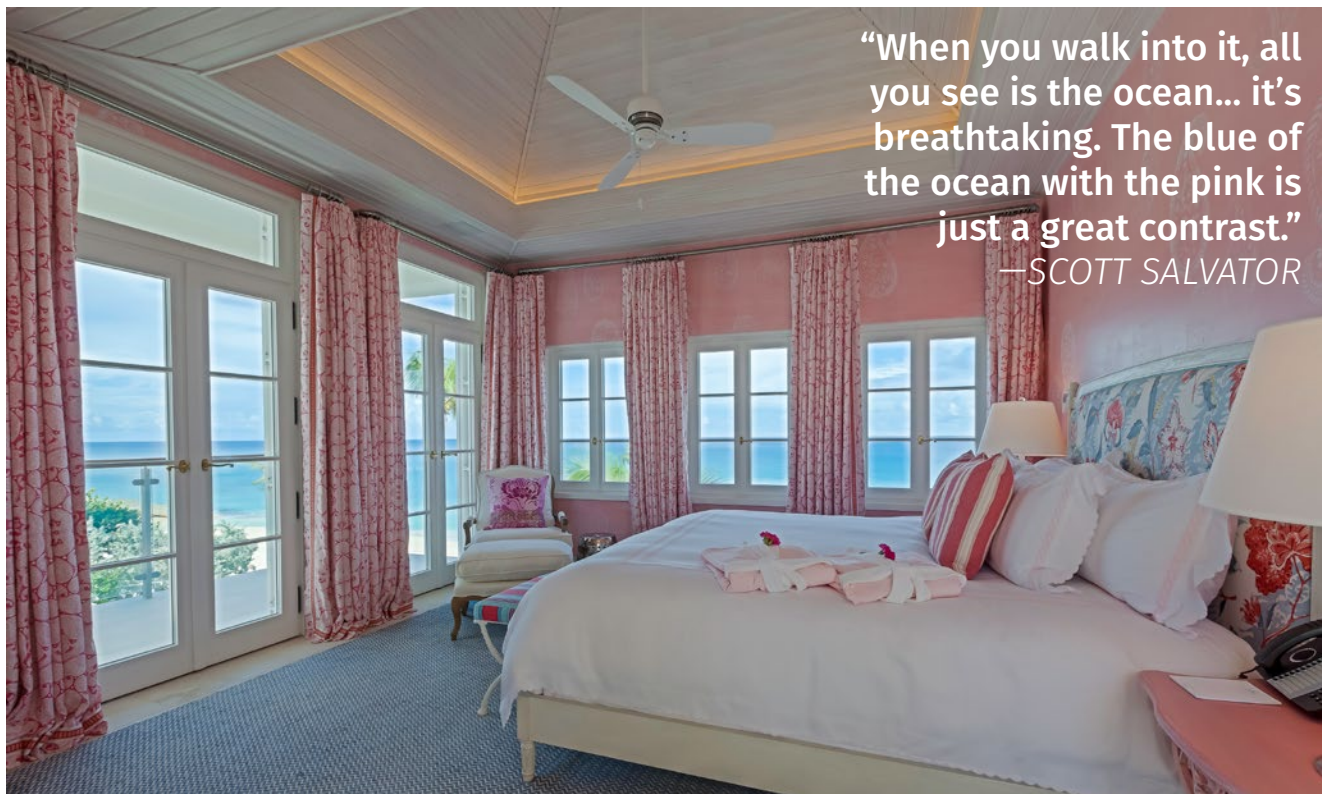
First built in 1996, Cerulean Villa has been regarded by many as the original Anguilla luxury beachfront villa. When it finally went on the market, a long-time repeat guest couldn't resist purchasing, and immediately start remaking it. The task of re-envisioning Cerulean fell to its original creator, New York architect Deborah Berke, who was again called on to reimagine her idea of Anguillian beachfront living. She relished the opportunity. “The original spoke to another time, as Anguilla was a different place,” Berke explains. “Transforming it for the 21st Century, with a more expansive vision of how one could live on Anguilla, was exhilarating.”

Berke continues, “Being an architect, involves listening to people. I listened to my first clients and gave them what they wanted and then listened to my new clients and did the same.”

What her new client wanted was to significantly transform the original. Entire rooms were gutted, and completely redone, to go along with significant new construction along the western boundary of the property. With such an expansive design brief, Berke's challenge was to create what would be a much larger building, but still maintain a sense of intimacy in each space. “We had to make sure that while it felt grand and glorious, it was also intimate enough that you could relax,” she explains. “This meant having spaces that are small and cozy, gardens that are lush and provide shade and privacy, and even having lighting at night that felt intimate.”

With the plans just about finished and demolition work beginning in earnest, interior designer Scott Salvator joined the design team. Salvator's previous experience with the owners proved invaluable from the start, with some fine-tuning done to create a vision he thought was true to the owners' personalities. “From an architectural point of view, my job was to explain to the team ‘this is how the owners live, and how they feel comfortable. Can we make a few additions to accomplish this?’”

continued on page 4



“When you walk into it, all you see is the ocean... it's breathtaking. The blue of the ocean with the pink is just a great contrast.”
—SCOTT SALVATOR

continued from page 3

Many of the ideas that defined the original were critical in creating the new Cerulean – most notably, the interplay of indoor and outdoor living. There are no internal hallways, with each space opening up to the outdoors, either directly, or onto a terrace. “The strength of the original included shaded outdoor spaces, so that you could enjoy the superb Anguilla weather, but still be comfortable,” Berke explains. “We built on that experience by adding even more shaded outdoor spaces for relaxing, dining and entertaining.”

With the main concept in place, the next phase involved fleshing out the spaces with colour and texture. In stark contrast to the previous all-white colour scheme the owners, with the help of Salvator, created an intricate mélange of colour, texture and patterns including some beautiful, painstakingly hand-painted wall designs. There was no template – each room was envisioned and executed with its own unique design scheme, as well as custom-designed furniture. This provided its own set of challenges, as Salvator found out. “It was a considerable amount of work,” he confesses. “We designed every headboard, every sofa and every chair. We also did different sinks and faucets for the bathrooms, as well as custom floors. Thank God we didn’t do a different doorknob on every door!”

Logistically, getting all these materials into Anguilla was also demanding. Managing inventory, coordinating shipping and import duties and storage almost became a full-time job. Even

seemingly minor things gave Salvator a few more gray hairs. “Some of the rugs were made in Thailand who are on the metric system,” he explains. “But, the orders are supplied in inches. I’d find myself holding my breath, hoping that the conversion was correct, and that these rugs are the right size and right colour.”

To minimize these wildcards, Salvator opted to stick, as much as possible, to vendors in the New York area where his office is based. “If I want to have a look at the furniture before it shipped, for example, this would be the logical place,” he says.

Stylistically, the finished house is an amalgam of many different influences – from all parts of the world. Asian-inspired rugs share floor space with contemporary furnishings, light and airy fabrics and drapes, as well as high-tech gadgets. Each bedroom, 12 in all – 9 in the main house, plus an “entourage” room closer to the entry, as well as a two-bed guest apartment in one of the service buildings – has its own character.

From a light turquoise pastel in the master suite, to a playful nautical-themed kid’s bedroom on the ground floor, or the adjoining bedroom with deep navy walls, painted in a linen-style wash, each bedroom is a different shade of blue – mimicking the ocean. The one exception is a striking, pink bedroom, with hand-painted paisley patterns. It is Salvator’s favourite. “When you walk into it, all you see is the ocean,” he smiles. “It’s breathtaking. The blue of the ocean with the pink is just a great contrast.”

Outside, aptly named landscape architect Raymond Jungles’ carefully executed landscape plan compliments Berke and

RIGHT, FROM TOP In contrast to the stark white exterior, shades of blue dominate all the interior spaces from the rugs and drapes of the Master suite (top), to the mosaic tiles of the shared bathroom (second from top) on the ground floor; subtle hints of blue are also to be found in the bedding in most of the bedrooms (third from top), as well as the stunning, hand-painted wall art in the media room (bottom).

OPPOSITE PAGE The only one not painted blue, this striking pink bedroom has panoramic views out to the ocean.

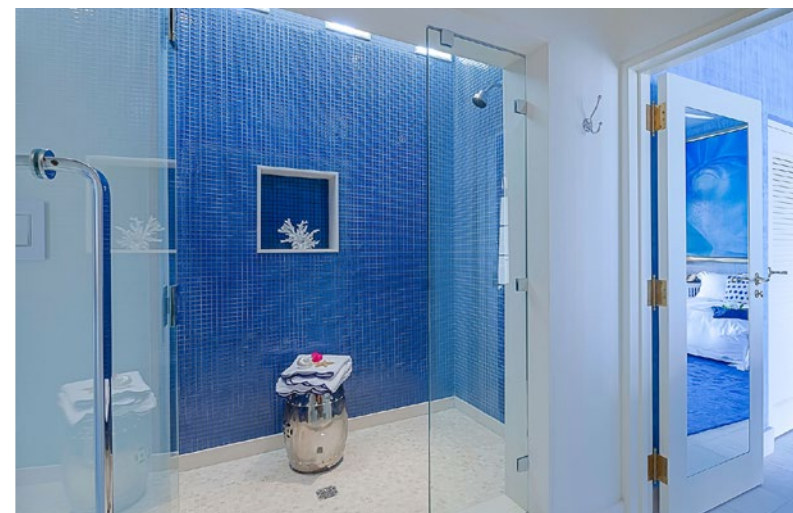
Salvator’s efforts well. Lush, tropical foliage camouflage the sheer size of the property, restricting the experience to human proportions. Stone pillars framing massive wooden gates form the entry to the property’s courtyard, where large coral slabs imported from the Dominican Republic terrace down toward the entrance of the main building. Here, enormous, custom wooden doors give way to a curved, open patio, immediately opening up the expansive views across the large pool deck and on to Barnes Bay beyond. Berke’s vision of creating intimate spaces becomes readily apparent. “We kept the slightly curving centre of the building, which is really about being embraced by the building,” she says. The new addition to the west, which houses a master suite upstairs and a large, eat-in kitchen, with adjoining indoor, and outdoor dining rooms complete this embrace.

The additions also showcase a focus towards improving the house’s function, with extensive back-of-house provisions including a larger, industrial kitchen, complete with walk-in refrigerator, as well as a large residential laundry, staff lounge and extensive storage. Also added was a service building, with a commercial laundry and more storage. Three additional “entourage” bedrooms, a full-service gym, spa room, along with tennis court and a putting green complete the amenities of the property.

The villa is managed by 7 full-time staff, under the watchful eyes of Estate Manager Bruce Hearn of Properties in Paradise who managed the original Cerulean. These staff members are trained in all service areas, maintaining continuity regardless of who happens to be on site. When guests are in, the staff complement can rise to as much as 18, ensuring that the villa operates as a well-oiled machine. While the villa was being rebuilt Hearn who already holds a masters degree in hotel administration from Cornell University, went back to school to become a Certified Household Manager at Starkey International – a service management institute – with an eye toward being able to provide a high level of service once it reopened. “In terms of our service, we treat it like a yacht,” Bruce explains. “Guests are catered to in a very personal way, starting long before they arrive. We focus on creating an experience just for them.”

Berke doesn’t conceal her pleasure at the completed project. “It was called a villa before, and now it’s really an estate,” she says. “I took some friends for a tour and everybody loved it, so I’m very proud of it.” She laughs at the thought of being asked to redesign it again in another 20 years.

continued on page 6





“Guests are catered to in a very personal way... We create an experience just for them”
—BRUCE HEARN

continued from page 5

“I’d have to say no,” Berke says. “Hopefully I’ll get a phone call in 5 years, and somebody will say, ‘I love Cerulean, can you make a new house for me in Anguilla?’”

Salvator has been equally impressed, “I think everything sort of functioned, and there were no horrifying moments of ‘no, this doesn’t work’ or ‘we’re very unhappy with this,’” he says.

Both are also in agreement that the outdoor spaces are the highlight of the home. “I have to say in terms of public rooms, the outdoor space is always a winner,” Salvator finishes. “I love being there.” **AXA**

You, too, can enjoy Cerulean Villa. For inquiries, and to learn more contact:
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Website: www.ceruleanvilla.com

TOP ROW An overview of the property reveals its expansiveness, as well as its overwhelming orientation to the ocean.

BOTTOM ROW Inside, care was taken to create spaces that felt cosy and more to a human scale. A couple of real, wood-burning fireplaces, such as in the living room (left), and dining room (right) literally add to this warmth.