

The Goldfinger Caribbean by Myron Goldfinger Architect

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For my travel companions - June, Thira and Djerba,

For my grandparents - my dear grandfather Aaron Sass who lived with us until I was nine, and the others departed before my birth: Frieda Sass, and Hannah and Henry Goldfinger; and my parents Bertha Sass and William Goldfinger.

And for the future - granddaughter little Eva Goldfinger-Scalzo.

Comments by June Goldfinger

The odyssey of transforming a private villa on the beach for us and our two daughters into a world class resort started with our loss of my parents' "floating hotel". What may have started as a search for the perfect beach for the four of us quickly escalated when the government of Anguilla requested that we turn our one quarter mile of white sand beach into future tourist accommodations for what they projected was an upscale market. Considering that we had the perfect beach and were able to invite friends and clients to join us in this adventure, Myron and I were off and running, ready to create a truly boutique resort composed of villas and all in 1983, prior to the boom of boutique resorts created from a grouping of villas. In the years which have followed, we have been written about in many ways regarding Covecastles, but no one has ever said that we were boring. The first four villas were created to be editions of the perfect villa which we had envisioned for ourselves.

Today, we look back and remember the first and only bulldozer on the island which sank into a salt pond upon its arrival, or the road we had to build to even get to the site, again the salt pond. Luckily, Myron had a passion, commitment and communication with our all Angullian work force. We see and work with many of these same people today, some 20 plus years later. For my part, working with local craftsmen to create sheets and hand made linens designed by me was a source of much home made ginger beer consumption. I found and employed local artisans to create model boats, brooms, pottery, mats, hats, and even tomato pot holders. But the fun was just beginning when it came time to set in motion the training and actual function of a living resort. Since I knew that my grandfather had created and owned the Park Hotel on the Adriatic coast as a hobby, I did not give or process much thought except to set up schedules, ambiance, and as well as a thick operations book. What was unexpected was the joy and discovery of working with the women of Anguilla who for many are still our hostesses of good will and housekeeping for Covecastles some 20 years down the road. We are growing old together as women and yet Covecastles remains ever young, always inviting, and muchly appreciated for being the Brigadoon of so many people's lives.

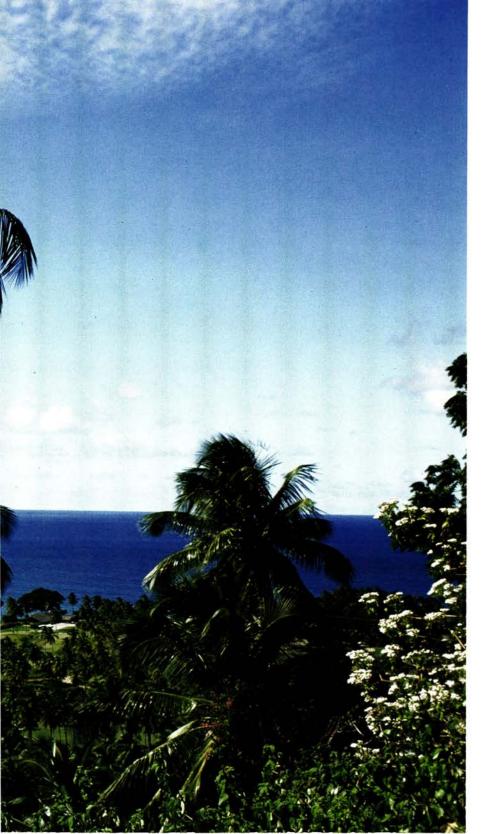


Introduction

Most people dream of traveling to a tropical isle with palm trees and white beaches, gentle breezes and calm warm seas. And so I did some thirty five years ago. Every winter early on I had a five week sabbatical as professor of architecture and flew off with my wife June and two very young children, Thira and Djerba, to visit the string of Caribbean islands from the coast of South America to the Virgin islands in the north. And this is the adventure story in pictures of our trips through the eyes of an architect by profession and a naturalist by choice. But the story does not end there. It continues with the search for a small parcel of beachland and the discovery of a magical undeveloped island some twenty years ago called Anguilla. It continues with our development of an unusual boutique resort named Covecastles and further with our carrying out the design of another very special resort called Altamer.

I would hope that those who have not yet had the opportunity to travel to many of these islands and have not seen some of these structures, many of which are gone forever, will appreciate the specialness of the architecture and the people who live, work and build there. And I hope you will also appreciate the contribution of the Goldfinger architecture to the island of Anguilla.





Landscape

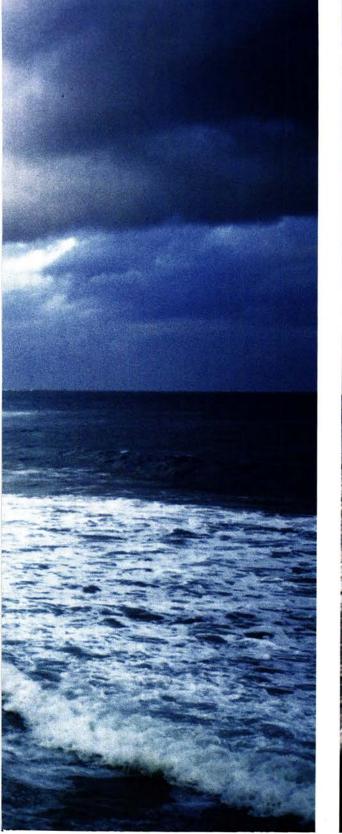
There are thousands of islands in the Caribbean chain from the northern coast of the continent of South America to the large island nations of Puerto Rico, Hispanola, jamaica, and Cuba. Most of the chain are peaks of submersed mountains mostly volcanic with occasional coral atolls. Specific climatic as well as geological conditions have influenced the architecture over the centuries as well as that brought by the Europeans. Freezing conditions such as in temperate climates are absent since the temperature range is in the sixties to the nineties fahrenheit. Trade winds often protect from extreme heat such as experienced in the northern subtropical areas as south Florida. However the total surround of water generally flowing east to west, the Atlantic to the Caribbean, creates windward and leeward experiences on almost every island in the chain. The dominant concern apart from the rare volcanic outbursts are the tropical storms and hurricanes which generally originate in the Atlantic off the African coasts from June to October.

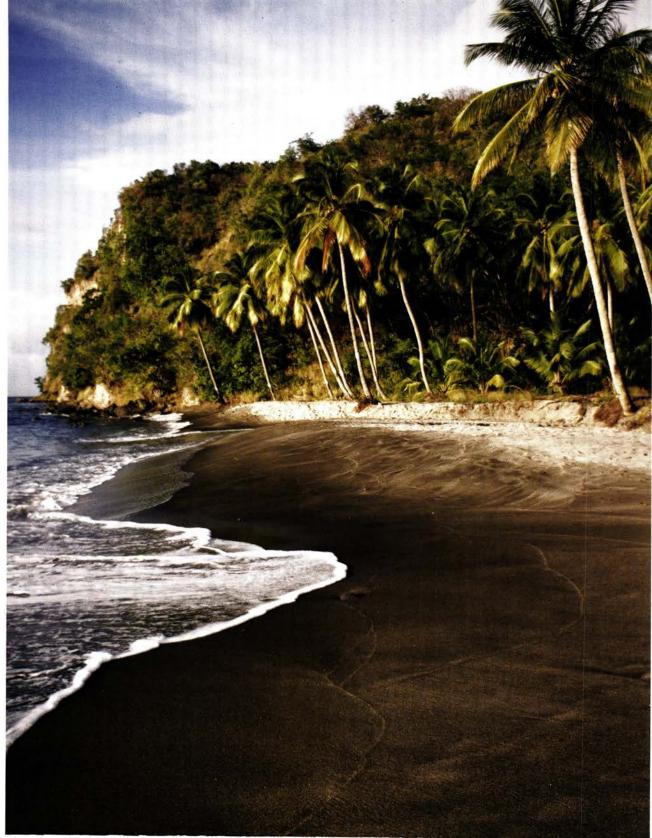
Some of these islands are flat and others are mountainous. Some are wet while others are dry. Vegetation ranges from exotic lush to cacti and succulent species. There are flat plains and hilly terrains. Some beaches are of black sand, others glistening white. But every island large and small is surrounded by sea which is the dominant feature of the environment. The following photographs illustrate the variety of visual landscapes within the Caribbean chain.











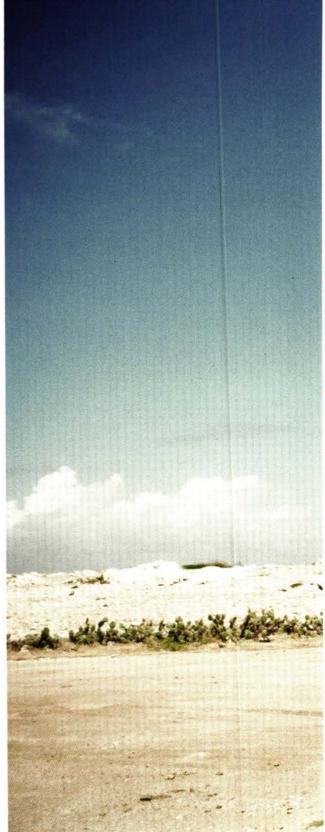


















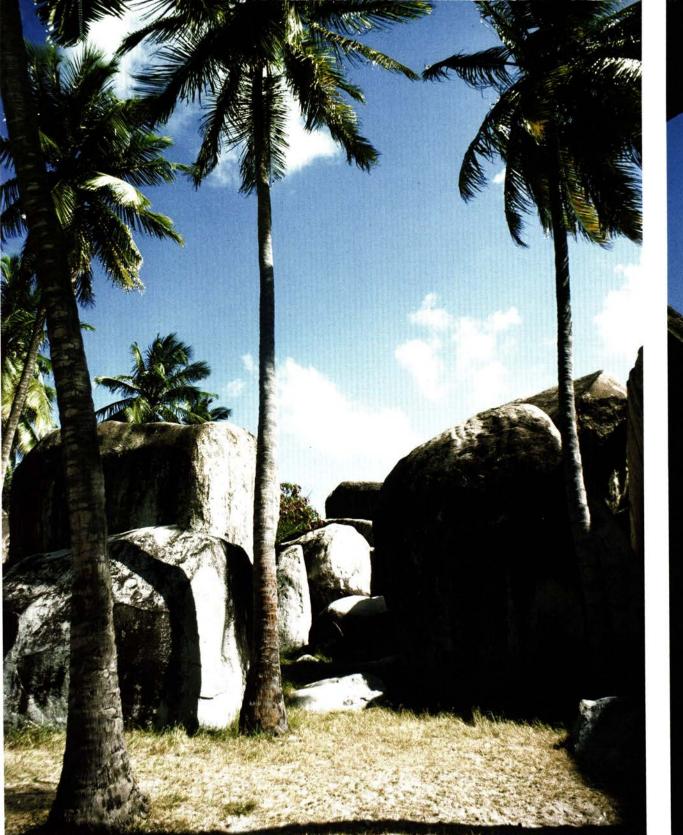


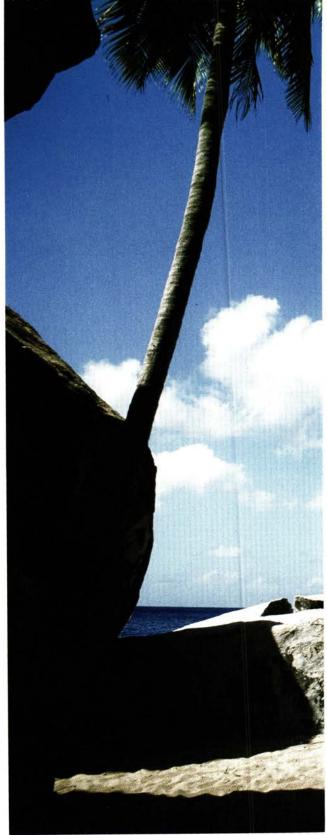










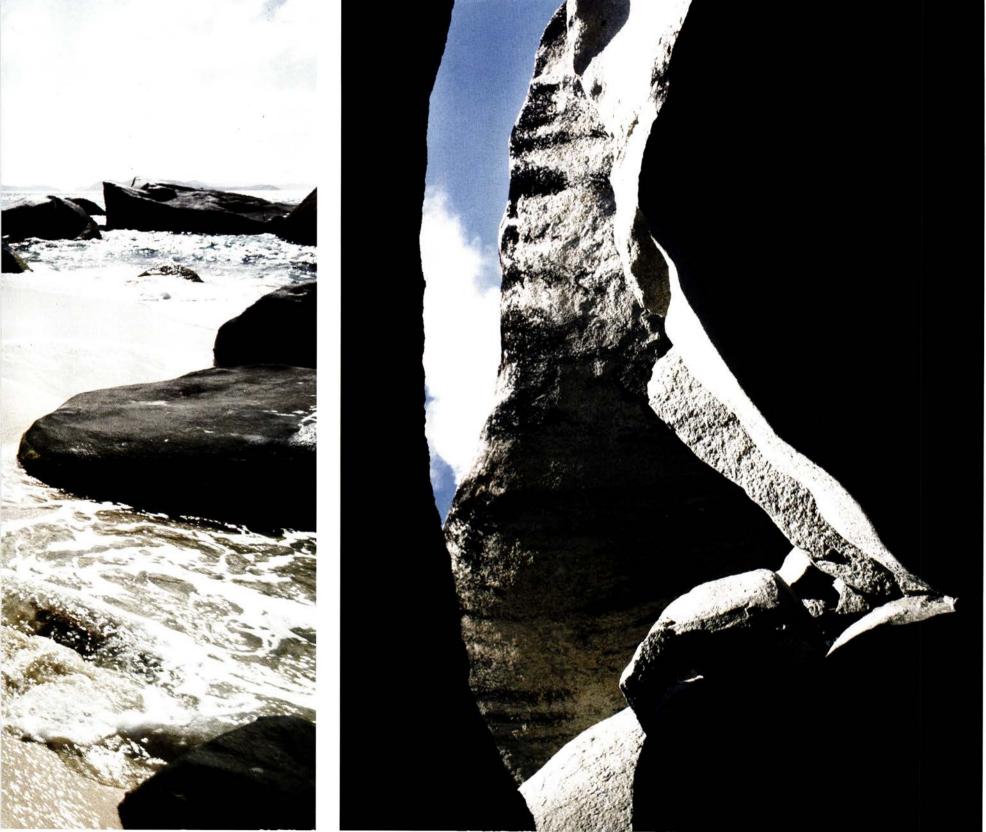




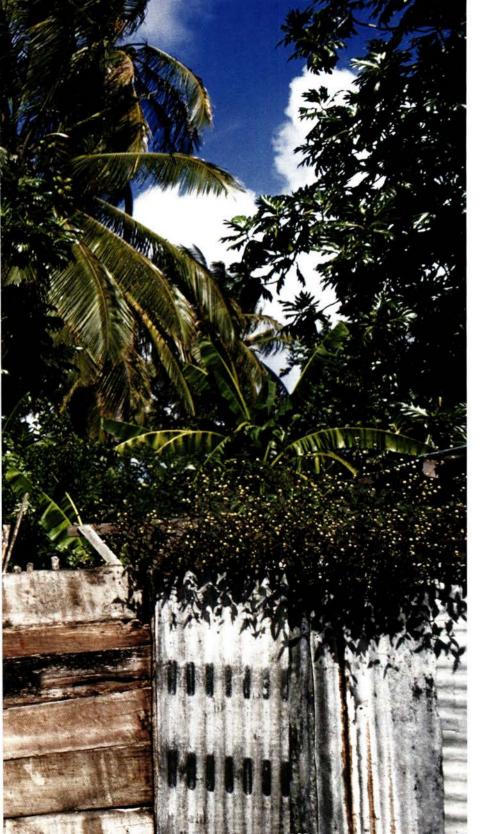












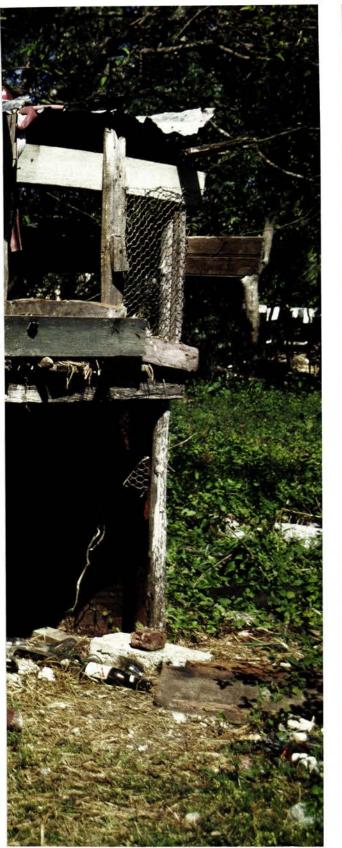
Primitive Structures

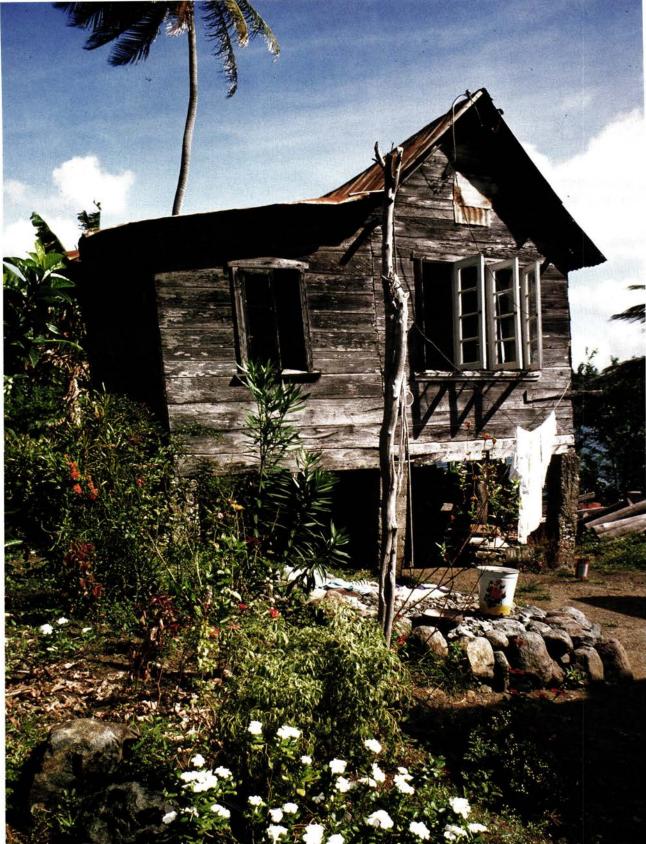
Most of the structures that the average visitor to the Caribbean sees are of concrete and substantially built as constructed during the last fifty years. But for those below the poverty level there is no choice but to have put together buildings of locally available hardwoods in the past, or in more recent years scrap lumber and other found discarded materials. Fortunately the hardwoods of old may last hundreds of years and although they may appear to be worn can stand up to strong winds and heavy rains if properly constructed. In regards to more recently used materials such as manufactured woods and corrugated aluminum sheets the structures are weaker and temporary. But they offer shelter and storage and the inhabitants are resourceful in putting together odd combinations of things. In general I find that these islanders at the lowest economic level have constructed their minimal dwellings and structures to the best of their abilities and I respect their efforts to build within their means.







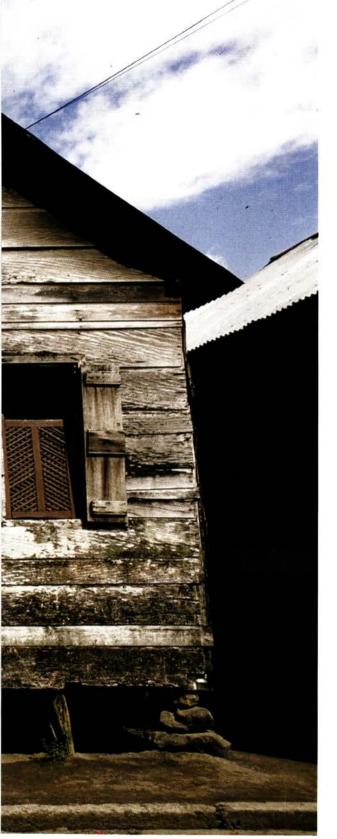


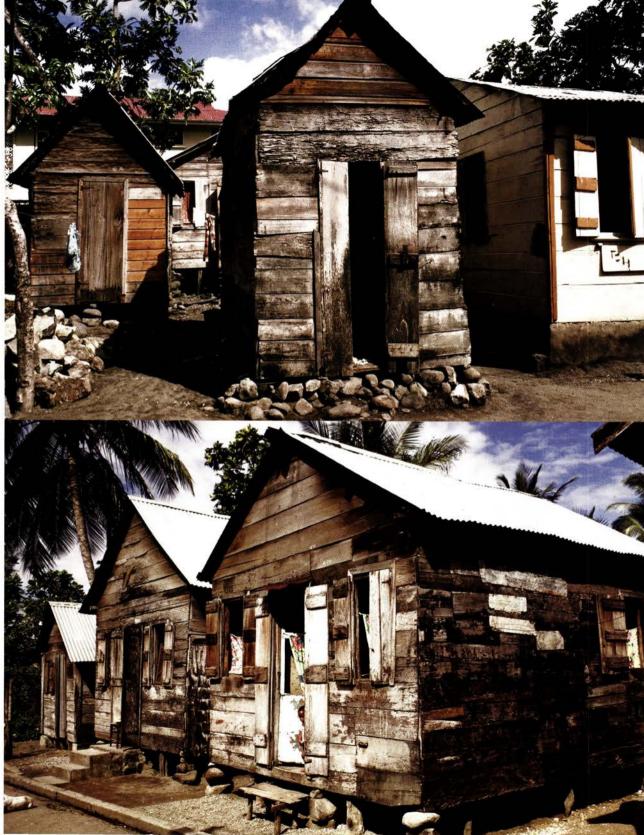






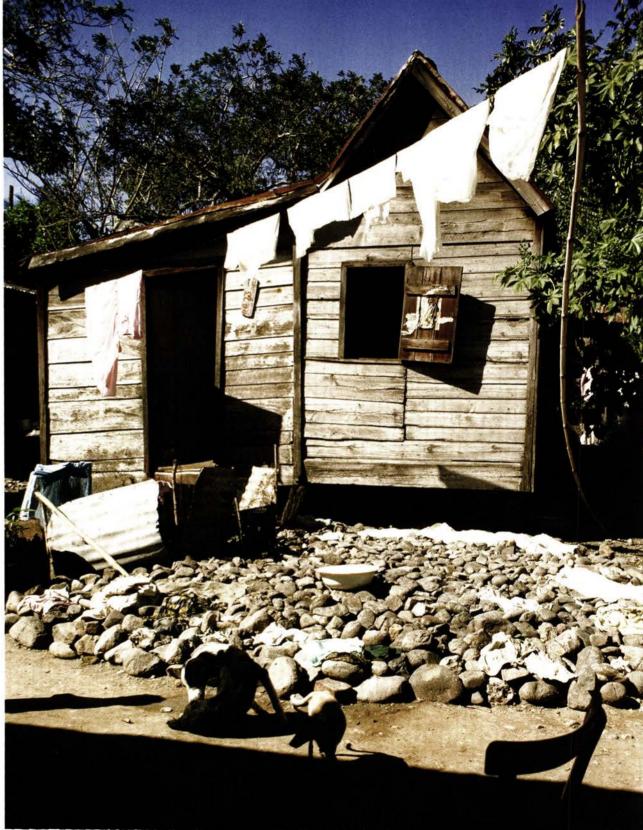








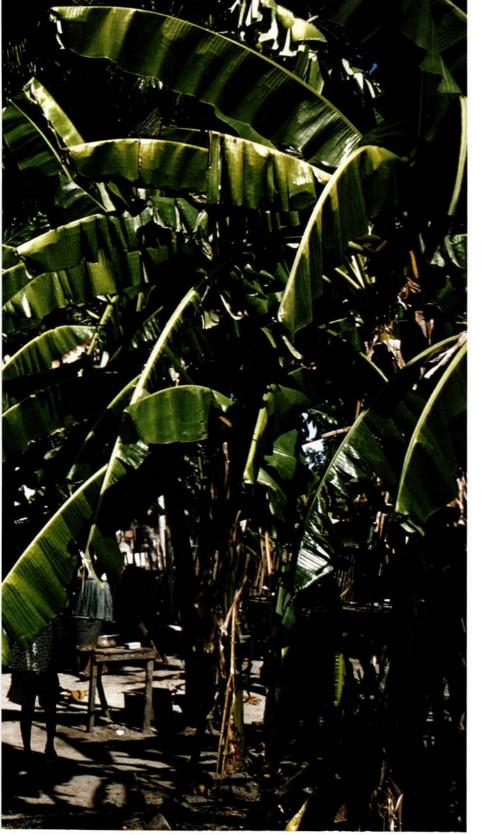












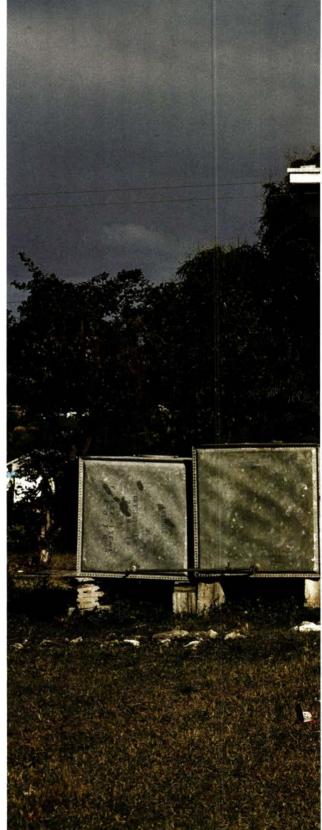
Basic Building Blocks

Although many of these small island homes are neat and well cared for, some may view the following buildings as poor, sad, unkempt, homely, unsanitary structures - modest dwellings uncomfortable for living or storage sheds crudely constructed - all surrounded by discarded cans, barrels and assorted junk.

I look upon the same images as ingenuous devices by a humble and unsophisticated people exploring economical methods within their means to create acceptable accommodations and storage facilities utilizing in many instances discarded lumber and other materials. Sloping roofs or gutters collect rainwater and metal or wood troughs carry it to large drums or cisterns for storage. Ironwood posts, rocks or concrete blocks raise buildings above the earth protecting the floors from heavy rainstorms and flooding. And various devices were developed for items such as sun control, ventilation and water protection.

There is much to learn form these humble dwellings and related outbuildings. Some of the photographs illustrate all these devices in the same structures and others highlight certain aspects special to each building. They present to us various architectural and aesthetic solutions which solve their needs and in addition present interesting visual effects.















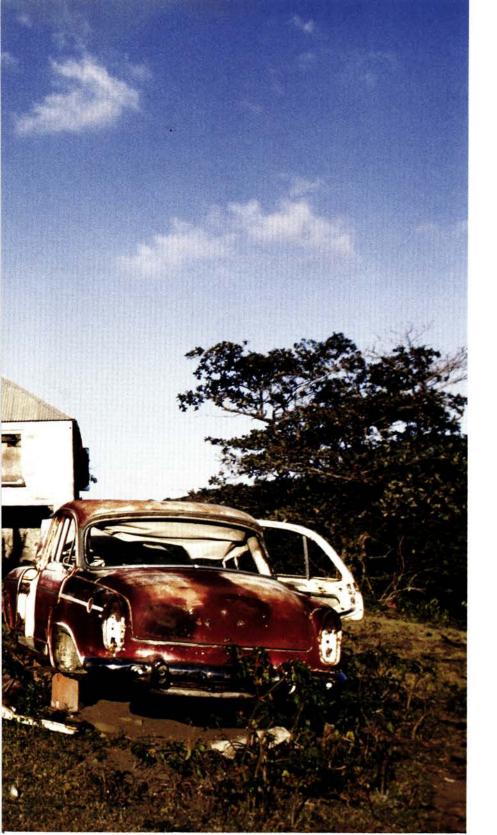








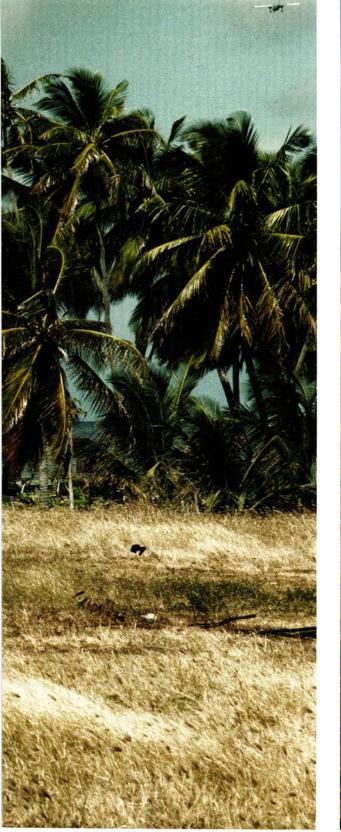


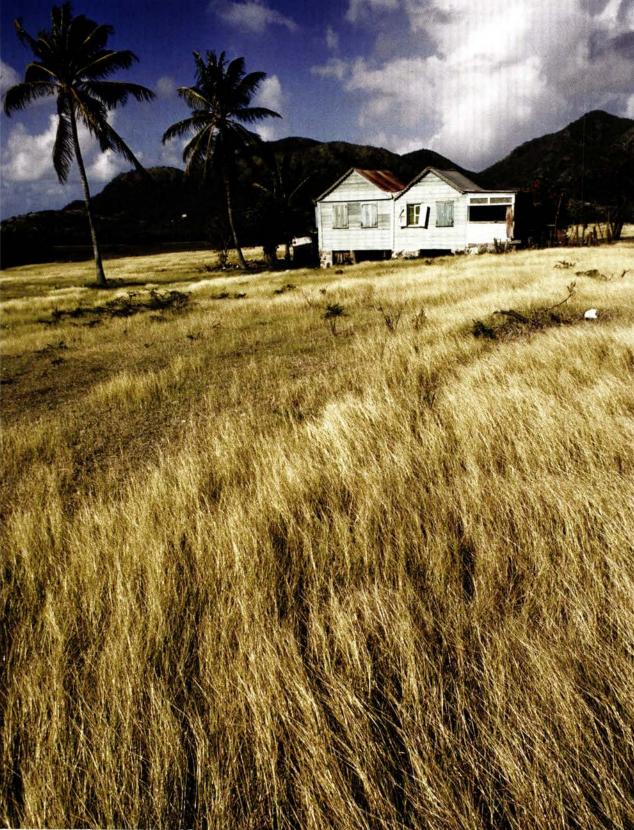


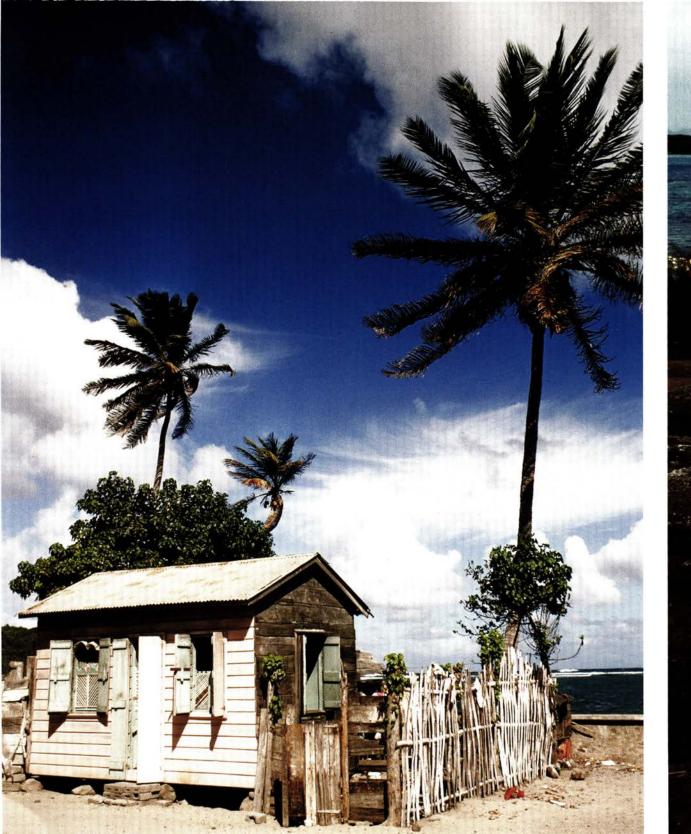
Building as Art

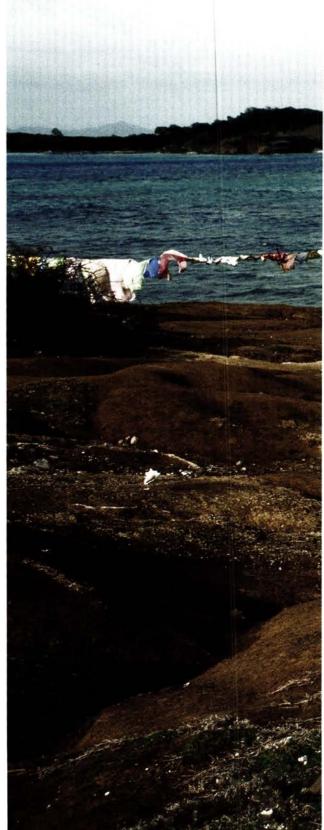
As I traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean, occasionally I was struck by a special building form, a shocking color, a unique pattern, a striking detail, or a powerful combination of landscape and building. These images were more than pleasant, romantic symbols of travel, but images raised to a higher level which I consider art. Through accident or intent they stand out. The following photographs are some of the finest examples which I experienced.





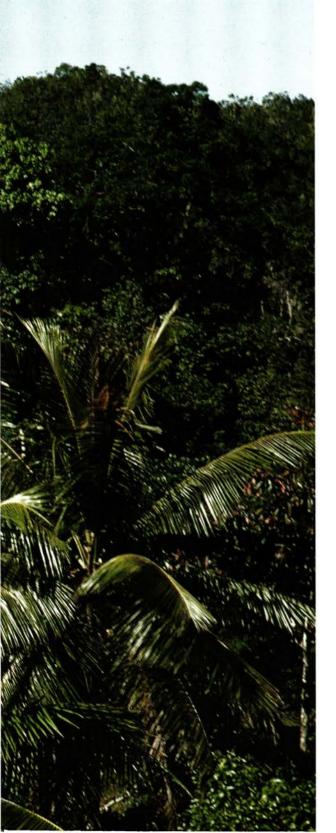


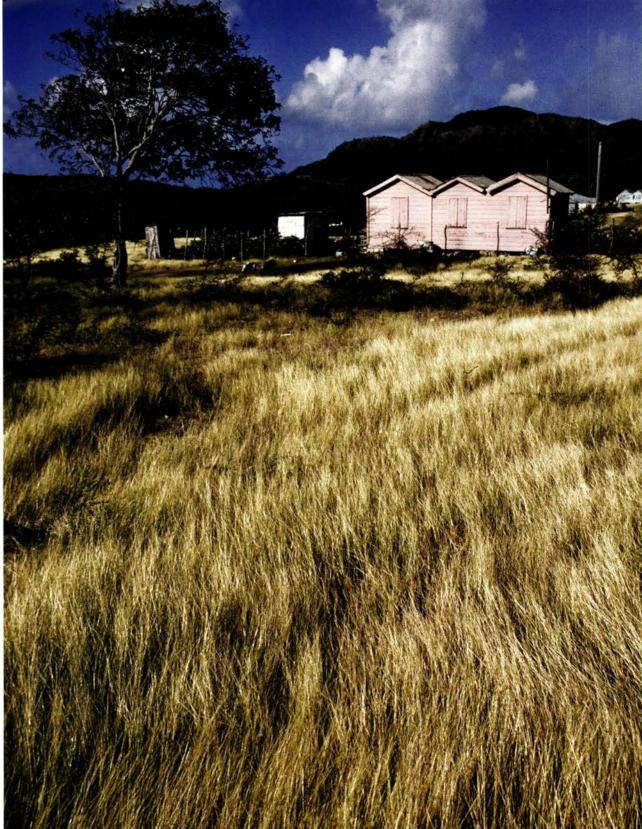






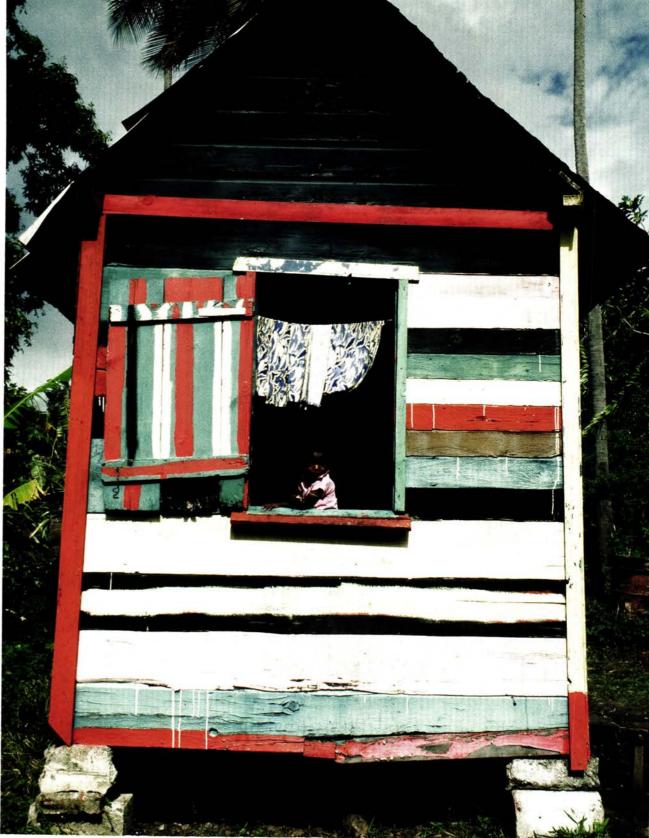




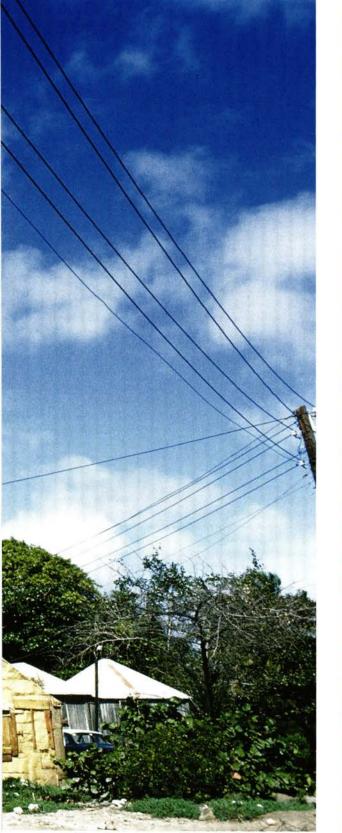


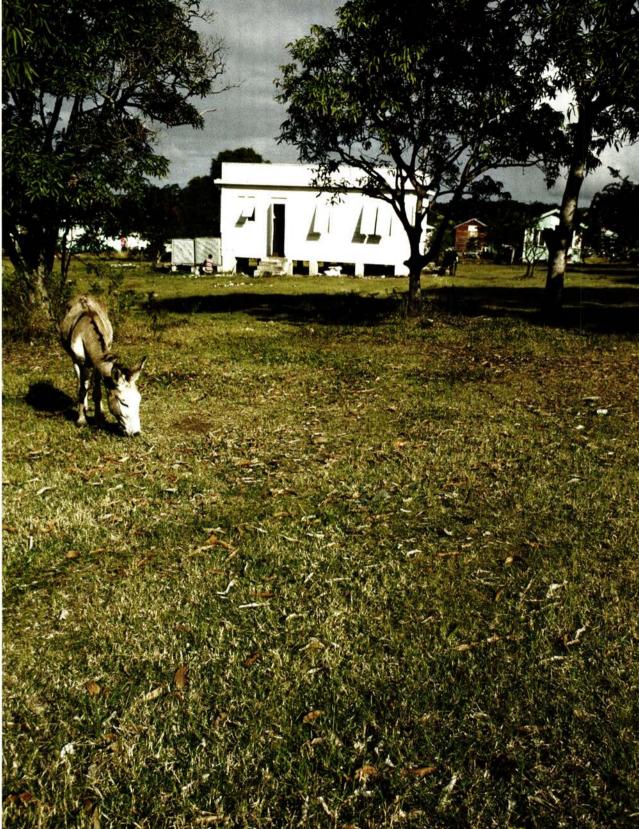


















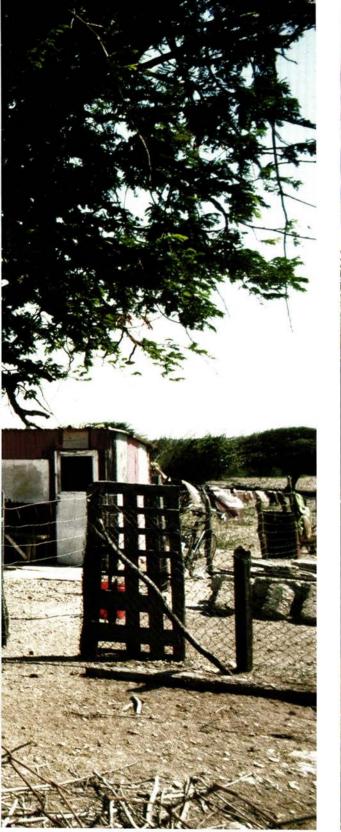


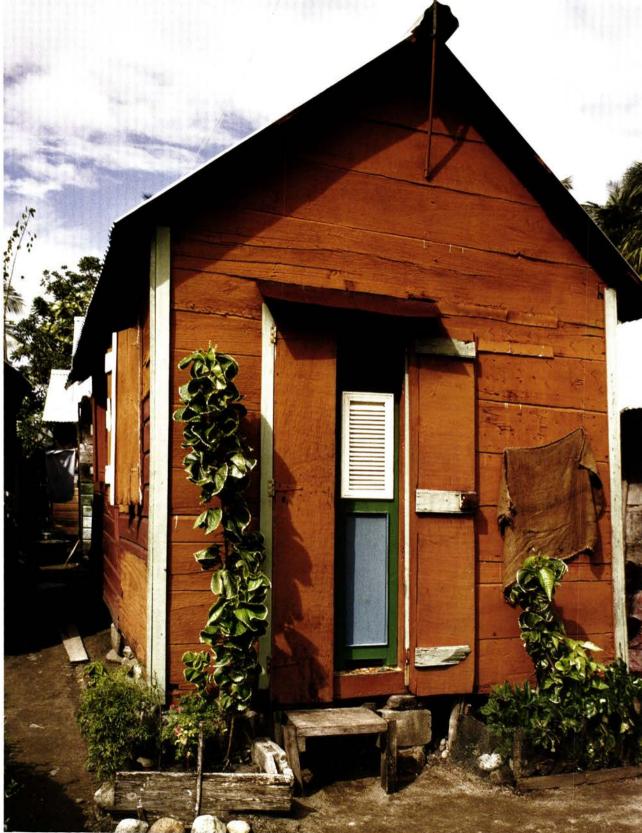








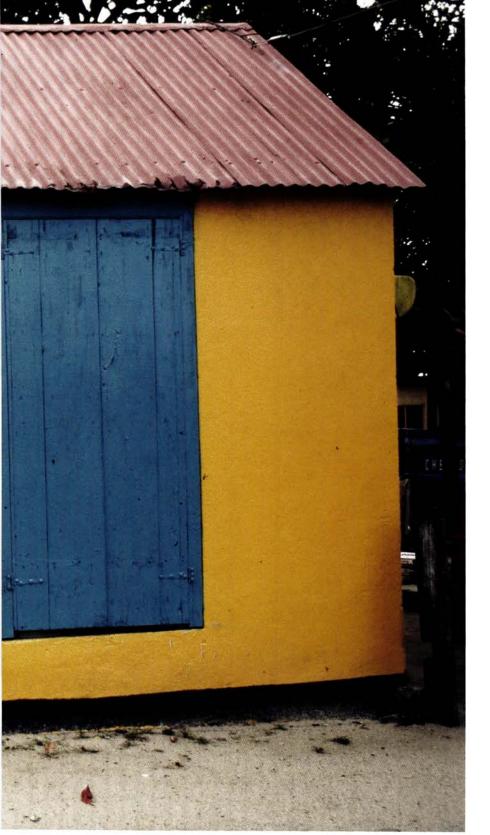












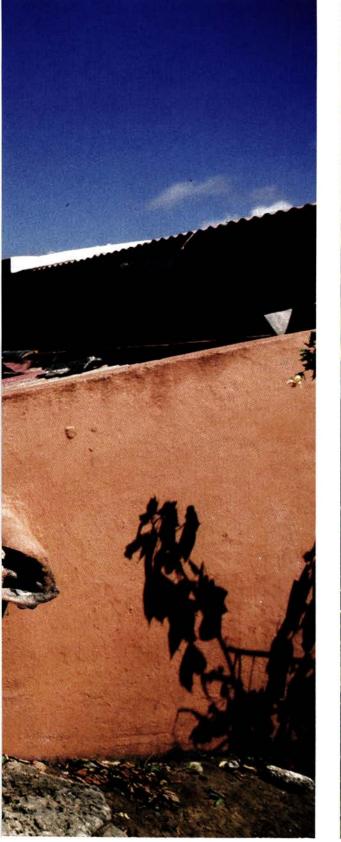
Color, Form and Pattern

One of the remarkable features which emphasize the individual expression of the inhabitants is the variety and use of color and texture in the facades of these structures. In some instances bold colors create a positive assertion - a declaration of pride of ownership. and in some cases strong contrasting hues between the building walls and the doors and shutters further emphasize the power of the use of color.

Many buildings have the monolithic surface treatment of facades, shutters and doors creating a homogeneous image emphasizing the totality of the whole form rather than the expression of the individual components. Other folk artist inhabitants have painted over the frames of door and window shutters a contrasting color creating a fine line expression liberating the flatness of the building wall.

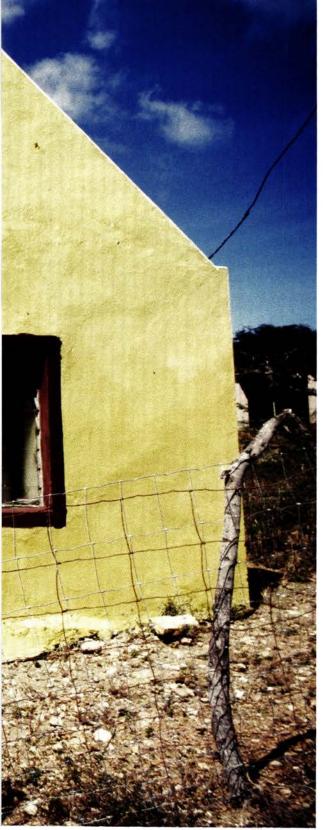
In some of the more primitive structures where obviously the cost or availability of paint materials mandates an economical approach, the use of natural wood boards and shingles create an interest of texture which contrasts with the aesthetics of the painted surfaces. These associations of buildings are generally more uniform than the individualists' colorist structures and form a common dialogue among the community of buildings.





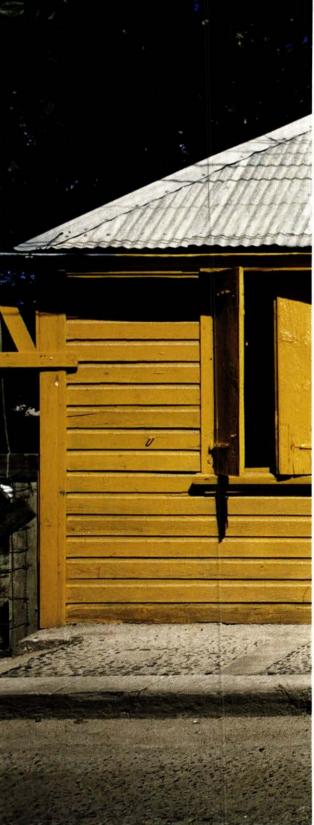












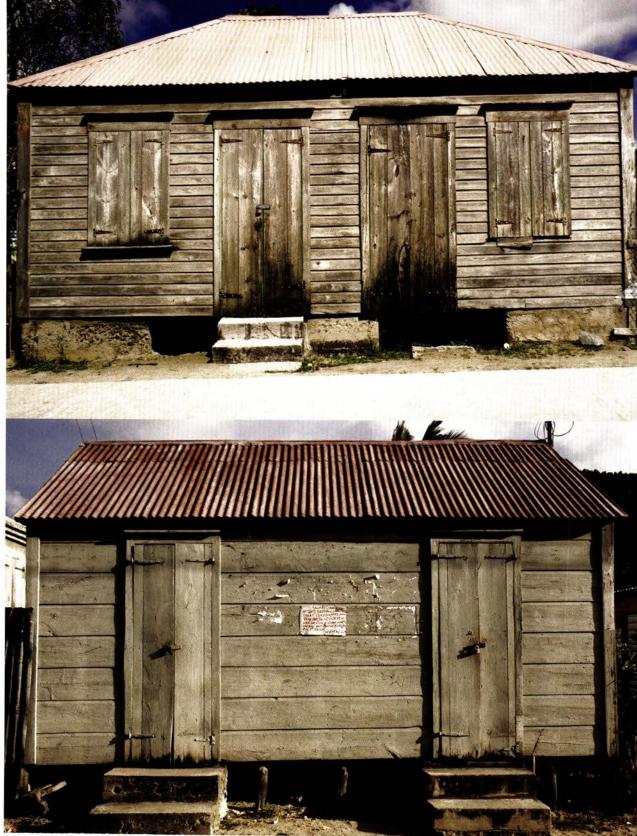






















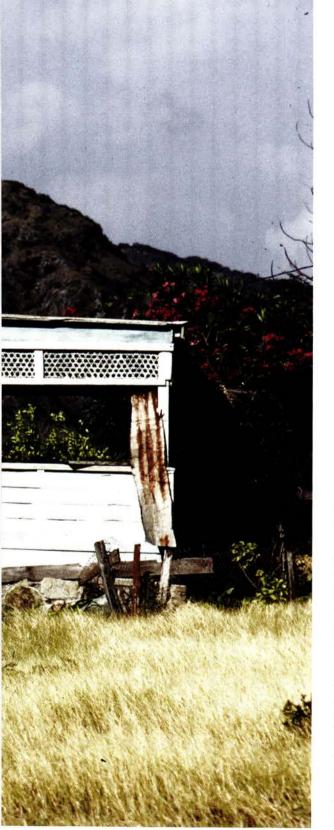
Additive Structures

Just as the suburban builder communities in the United States have added on in time elements and additions to the original structures, so have the inhabitants of the Caribbean.

This takes generally three forms - multiple repetition of the original structure, aesthetic fusion with the earlier facades, or the free form additive type, completely separating the architectural distinction of the various changes.

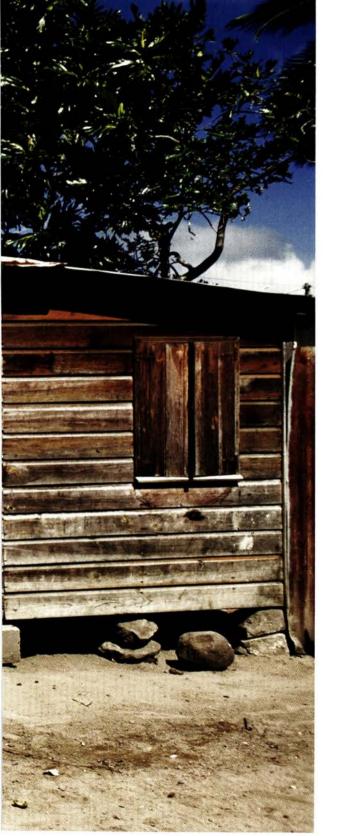
In all these cases there is the development of a complexity of form leading to a more interesting building shape as well as increasing the spatial livability of the inhabitants.

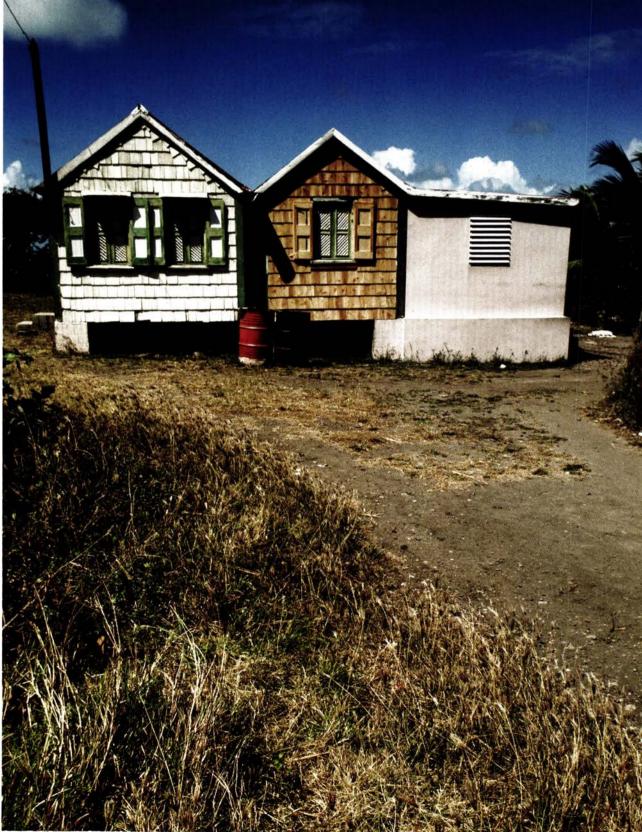


















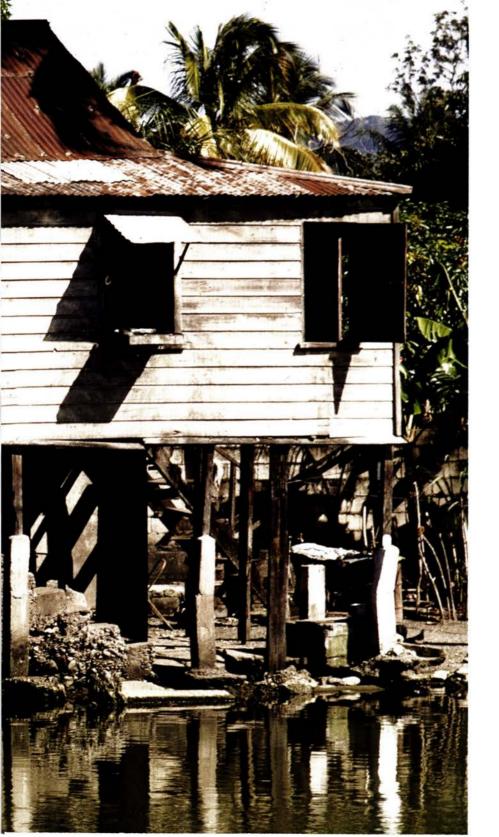








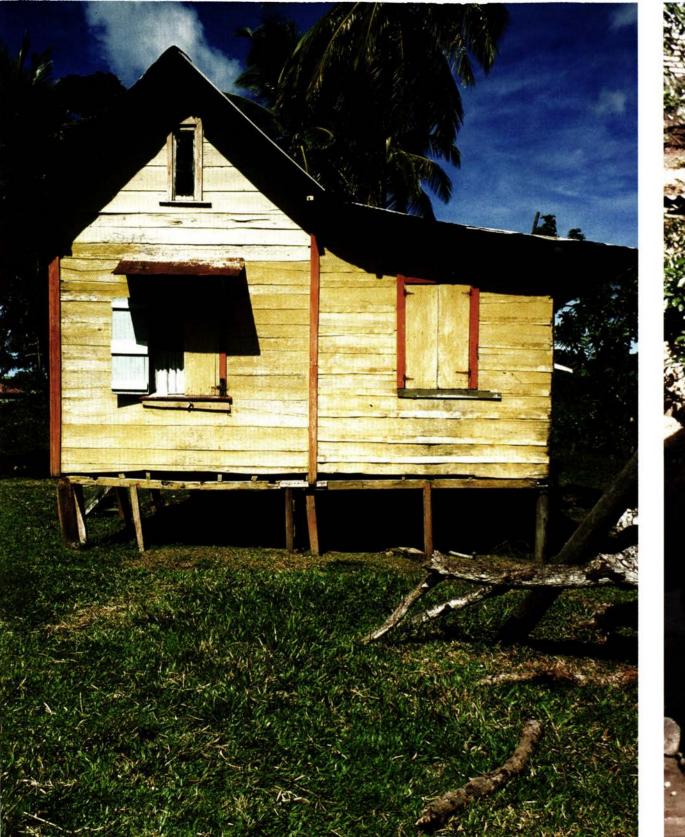




Building On Pilotis

Since all the Caribbean islands are surrounded sometimes by hostile seas and many of them have towering mountains pouring at times vast amounts of water into rivers and streams, there is a constant concern about the well-being particularly of coastal and waterfront structures. In addition occasional strong seasonal rainfall can be a problem in low lying areas.

Therefore most structures in these area are built in some manner with wood, stone or concrete block supports, raising the building above the grade. They are known as pilotis, similar to building types along beachfront areas in the United States. This affords water to move under the building without damaging or flooding of the interior.



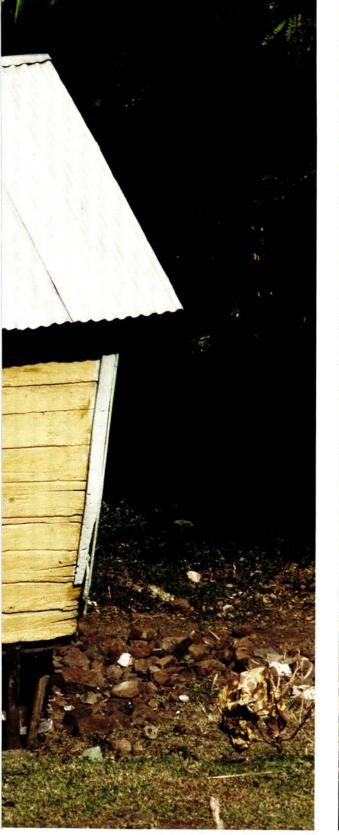










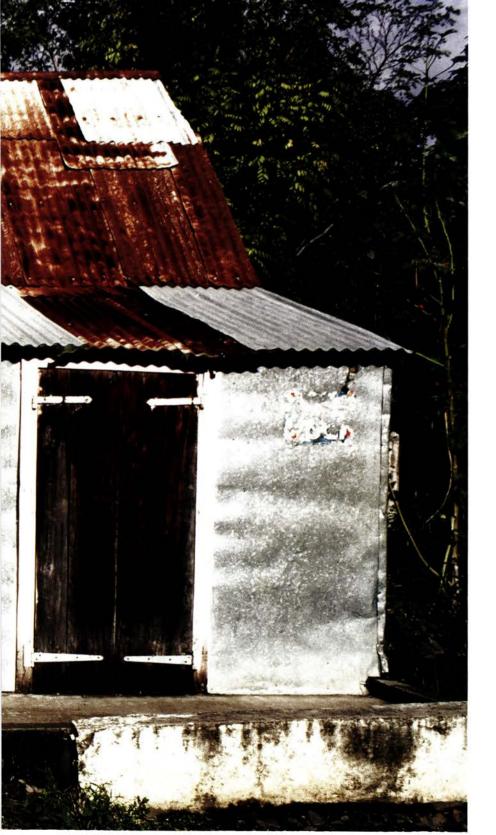












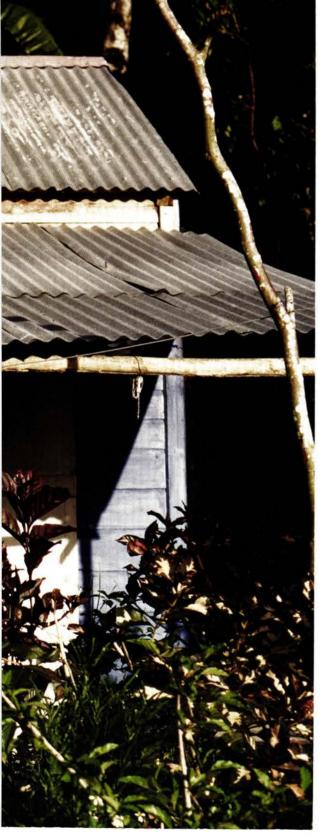
Sun Control and Ventilation

Sun control and ventilation devices are particularly essential for buildings in a tropical climate. Overhanging eaves which control rainwater also provide sun protection and exterior spaces carved out of the building facade provide protected outdoor covered sitting areas. Windows are situated on all sides of the modest buildings to ventilate the interiors and most have shutters for storm protection. Many doors are divided into upper and lower sections and serve to ventilate as well as provide access.











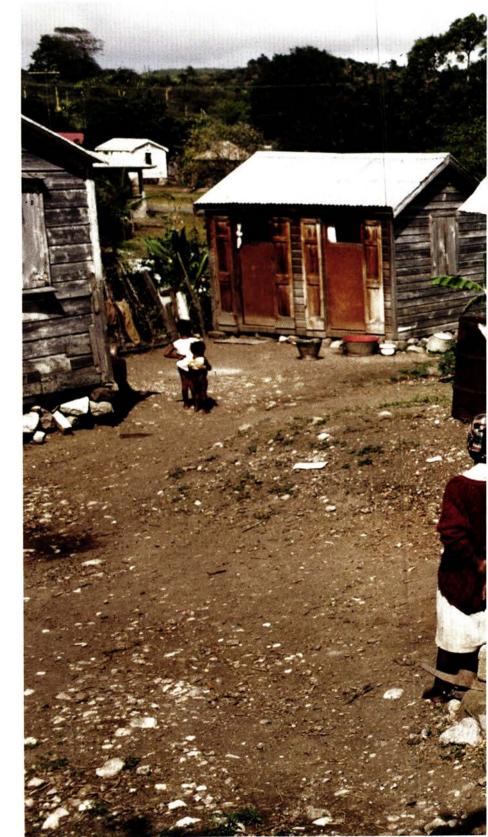




Rainwater Collection Systems

Fresh water is the precious necessity for life in the islands. Although some of the mountainous islands with considerable rainfall have fresh water underground springs, others mostly flat have only brackish water beneath the earth. In modern times desalinization plants, large and small, deliver reasonably fresh water from the salty surrounding seas. However, traditionally water has been collected from the roofs of buildings and stored in cisterns under or above ground or in simple containers such as barrels.

The following photographs illustrate various roof systems for collection of water, systems for carrying it and containers for storage.









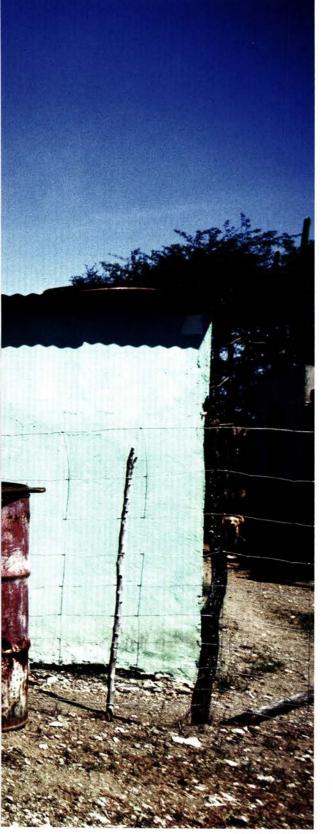


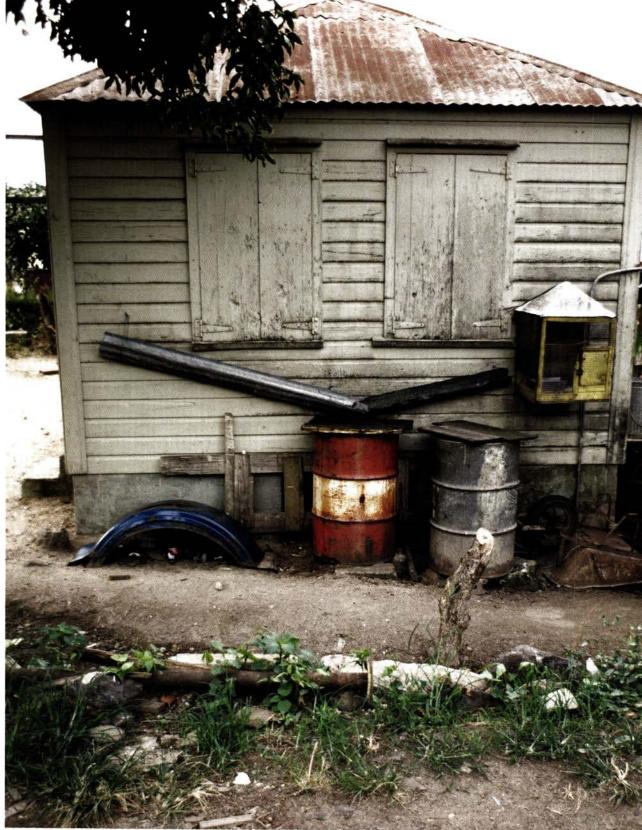




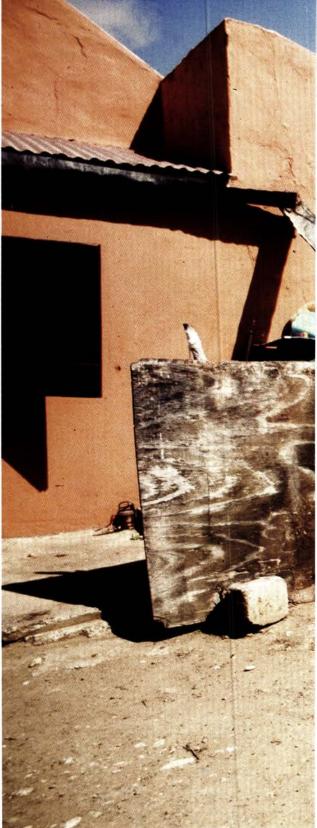














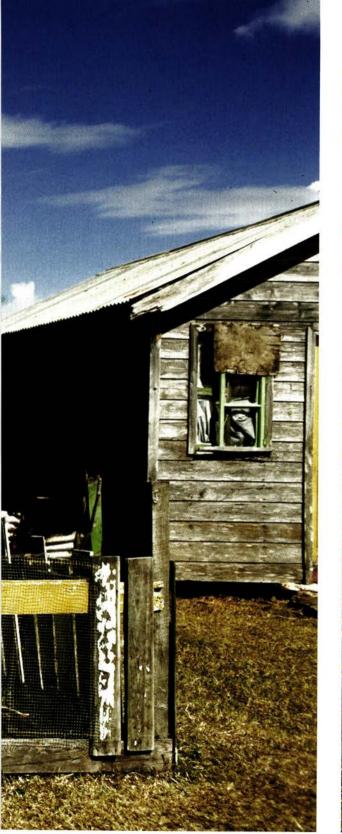
Outdoor Space Enclosures

For centuries mankind has defined personal property by barriers of planting, fencing, and walls. This in turn created the need for movable egress elements of various widths depending upon personal or vehicular access. The combination of elements in such a setting defines outdoor space enclosures. The following photographs illustrate a variety of enclosures of modest and found materials creating interesting and varied linear forms.





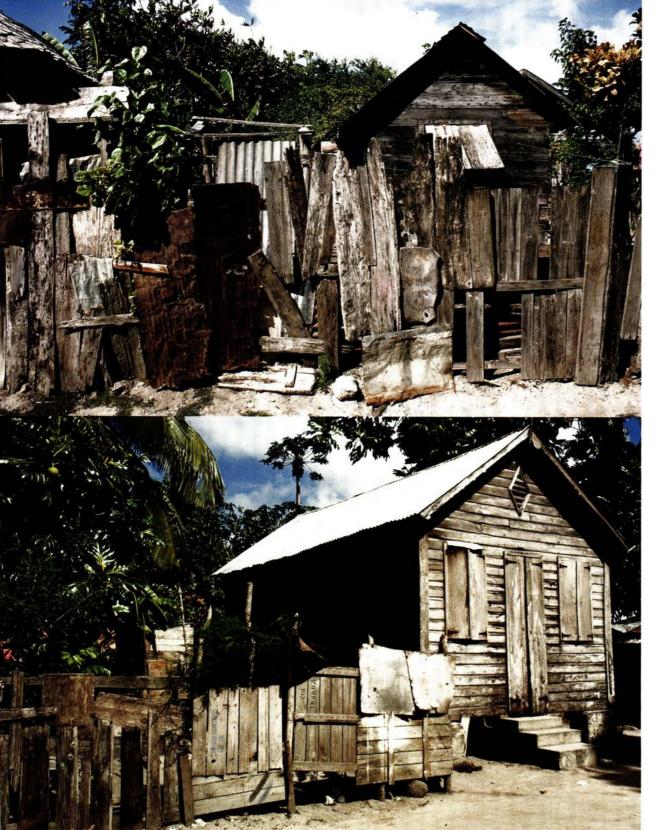


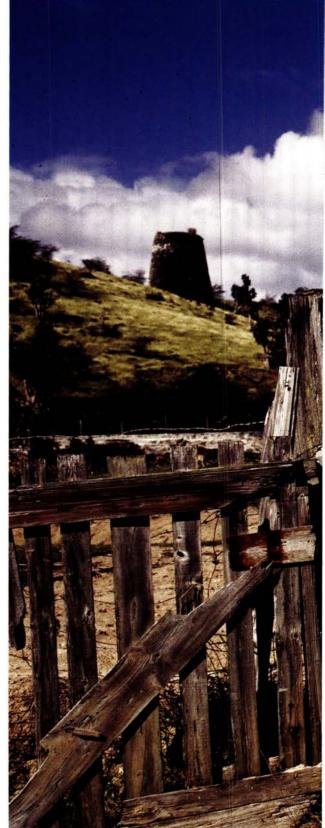






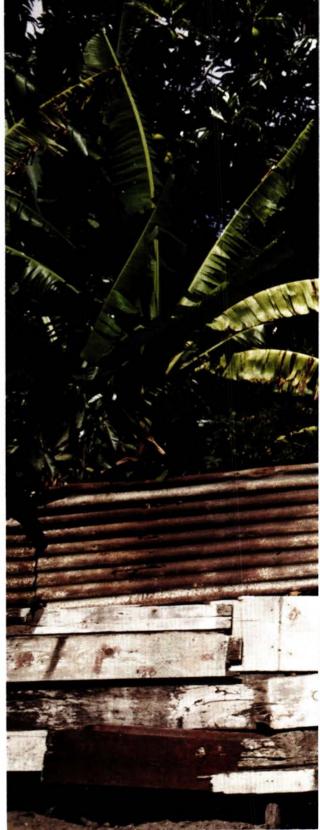






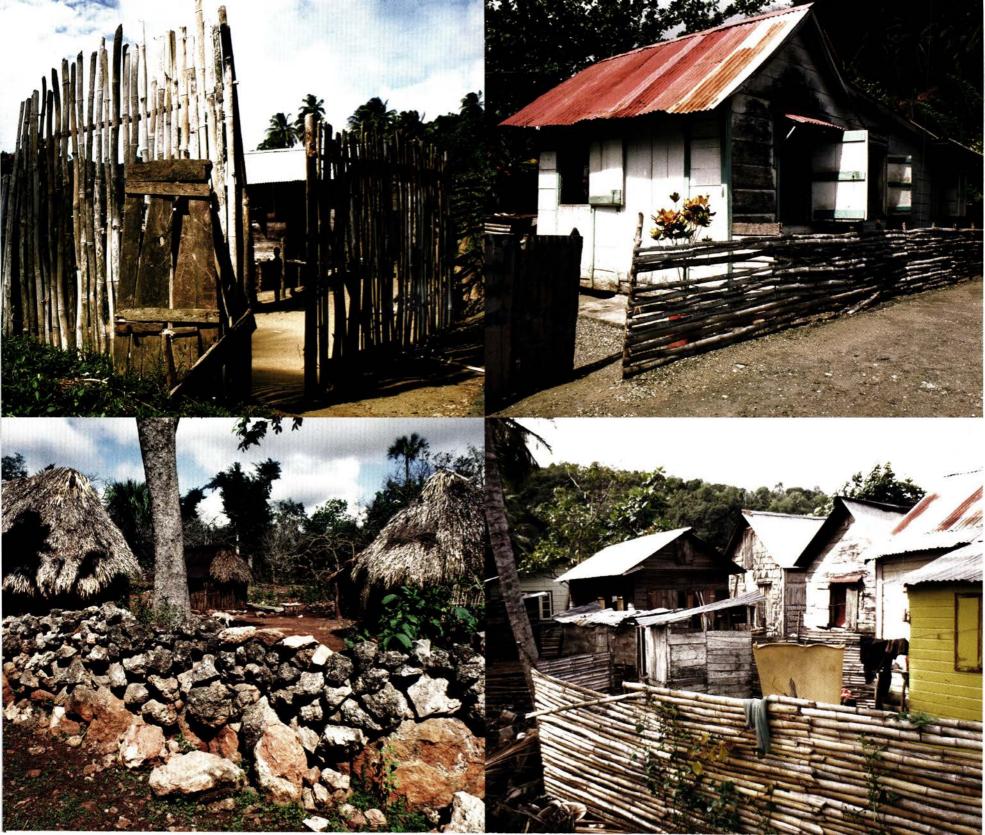




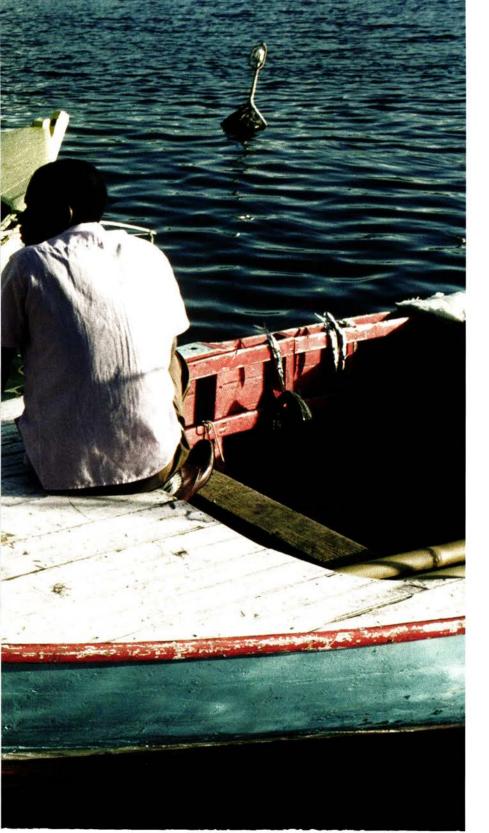








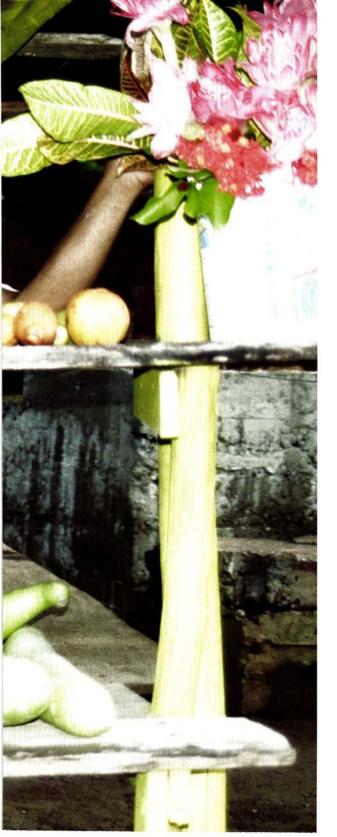




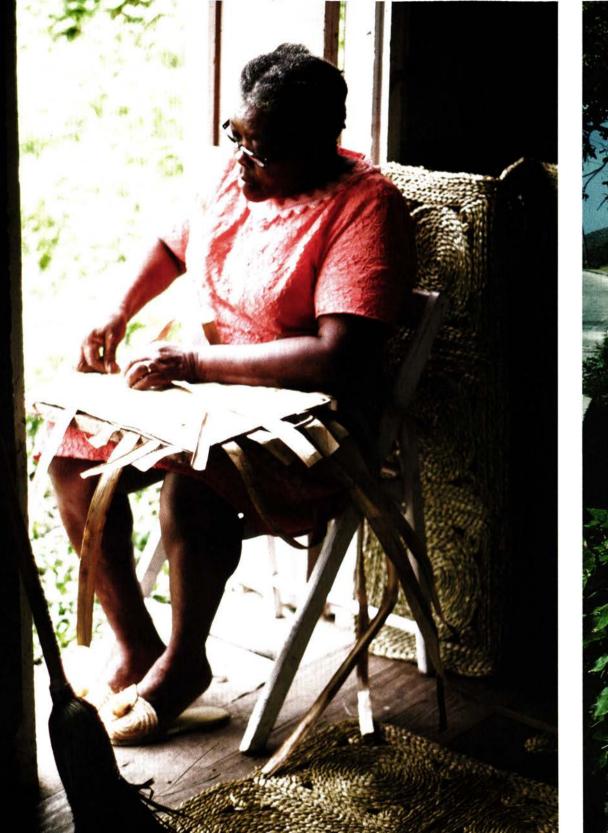
Peoples of the Caribbean

The peoples of the Caribbean are a varied mixture, primarily from Africa, England, Ireland, France, Holland, Spain, and Denmark as well as some trace of the original Arawaks and Caribs who once ruled the area. They range from the well educated sophisticated professionals to the rising middle class to poor hardworking individuals struggling for their survival. On all levels there is a proud stature and dignity as well as the joy of living in their faces. I have tried to capture that in the following portraits and in a later chapter of the contruction workers in Anguilla.





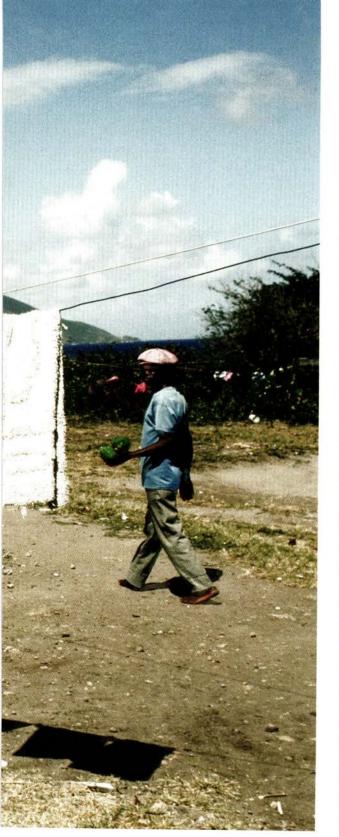








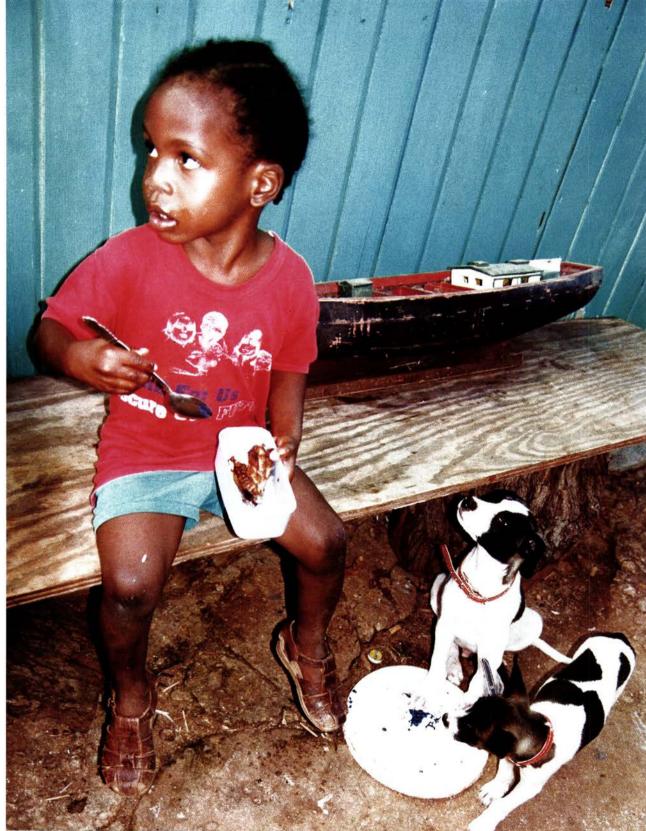


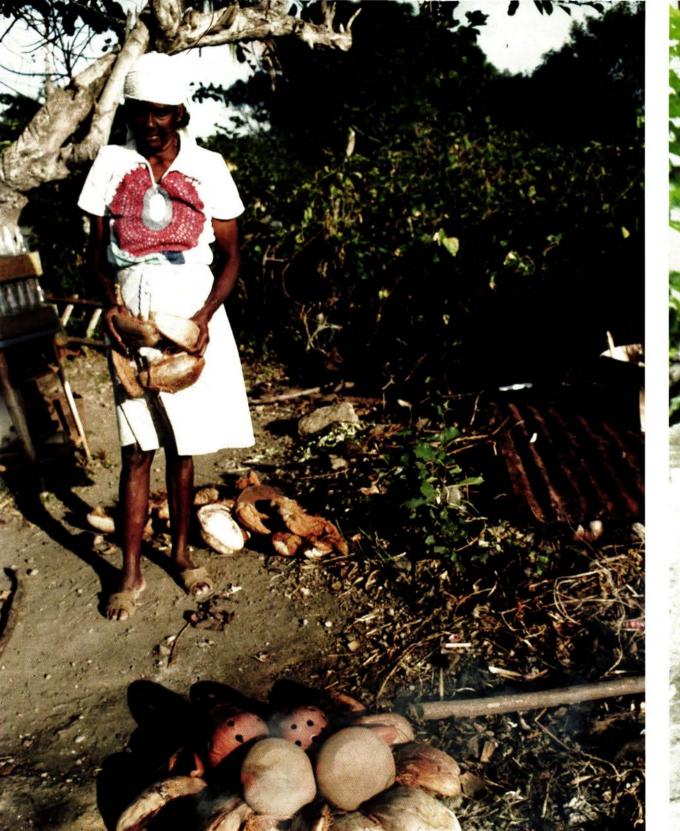














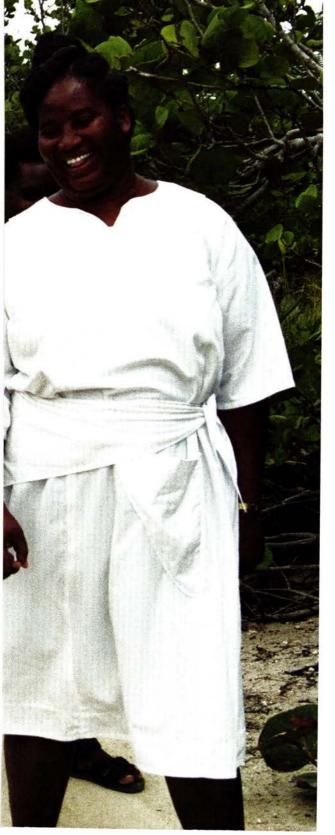














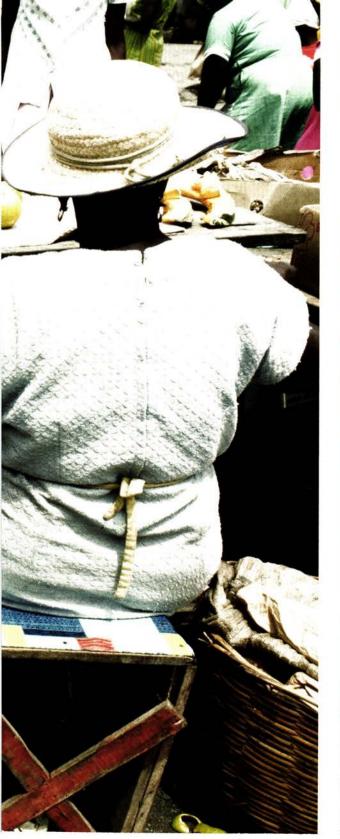


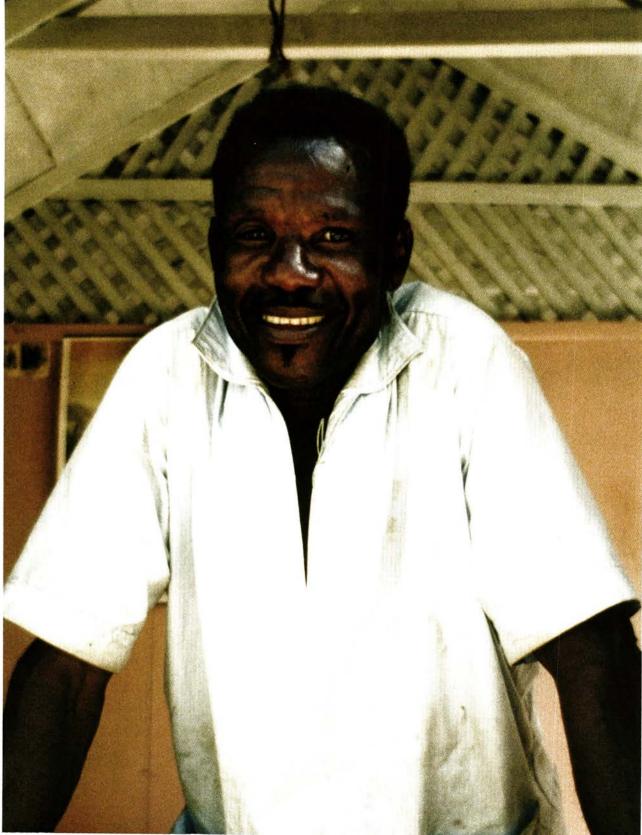






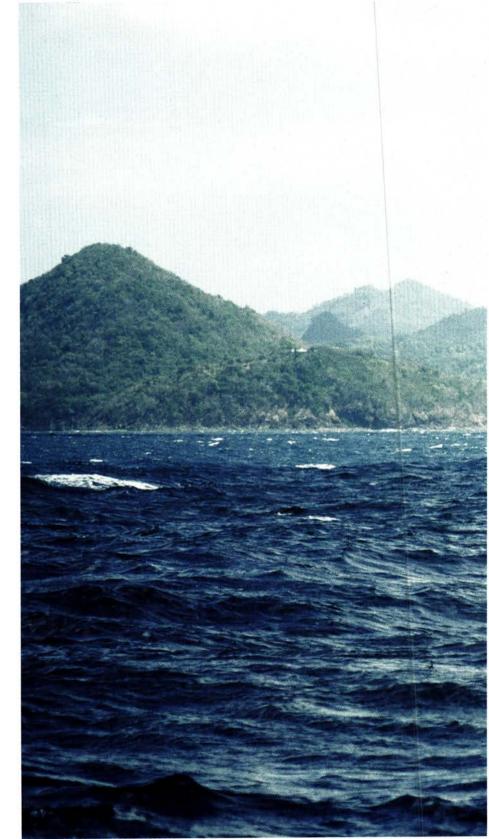




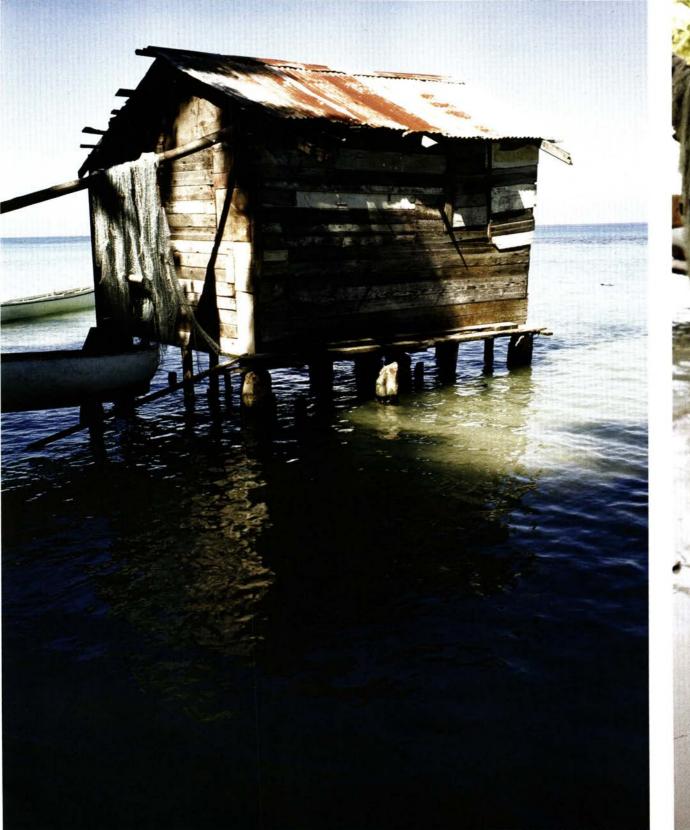


Boats and Fishing Shacks

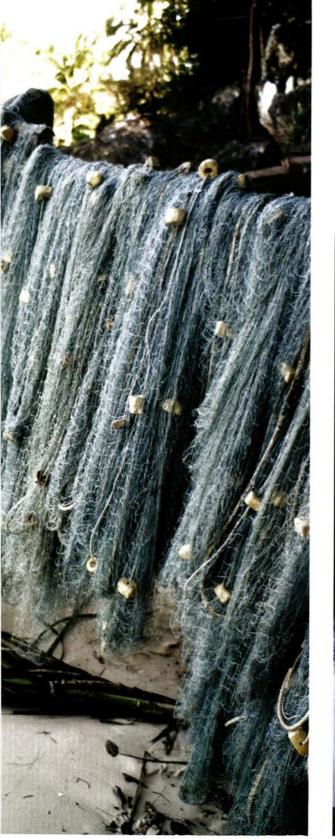
Although some of the larger islands have extensive fruit and spice production, the predominant food supply comes from the sea. Small boats with local fishermen are always fishing or collecting crustaceans in the surrounding seas when weather permits. The great excitement comes when the boats arrive with the catch of the day, and locals spar with the restaurant chefs for the best of the lot. In addition to the colorful boats and oufits of the fisherman are the colorful shacks that dot the beaches for their storage as well as the palm fronds that offer shade.















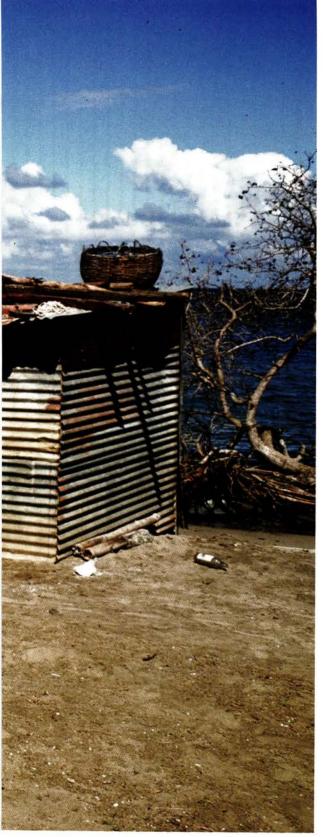




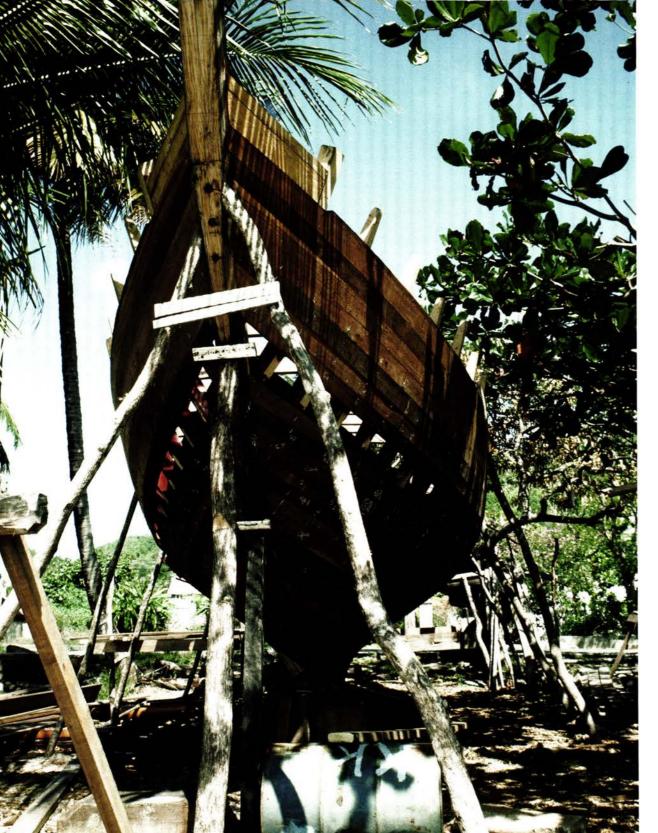


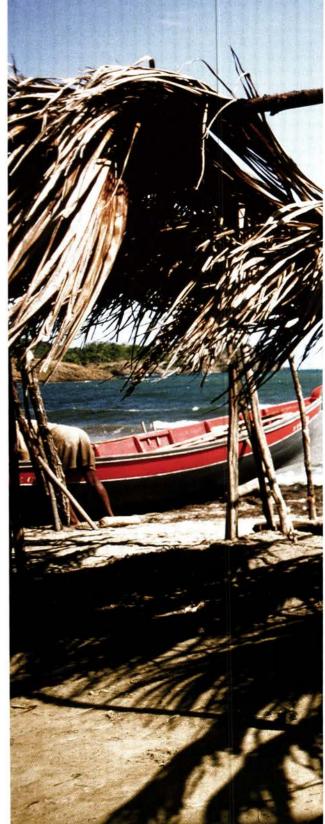






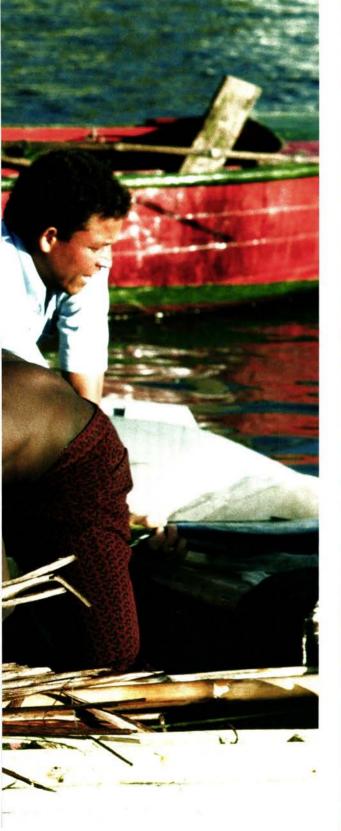


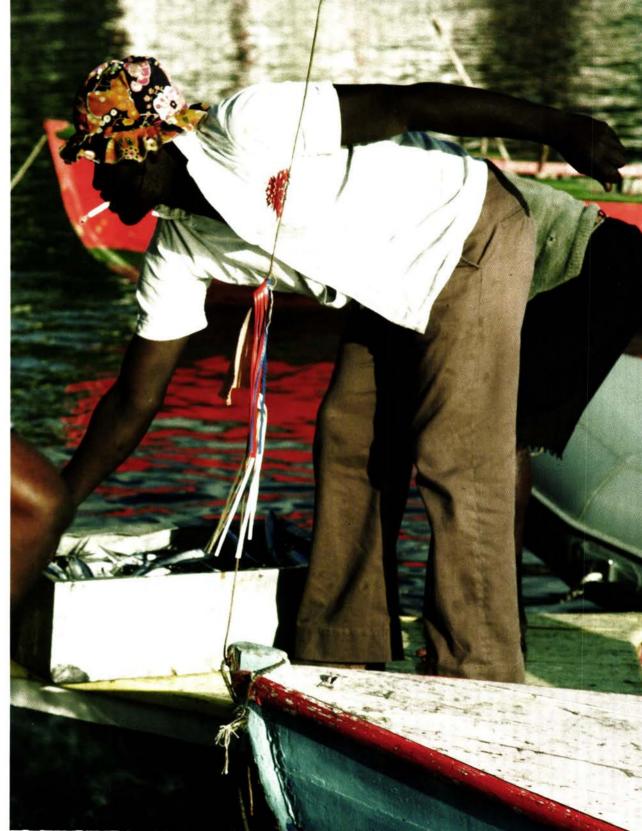








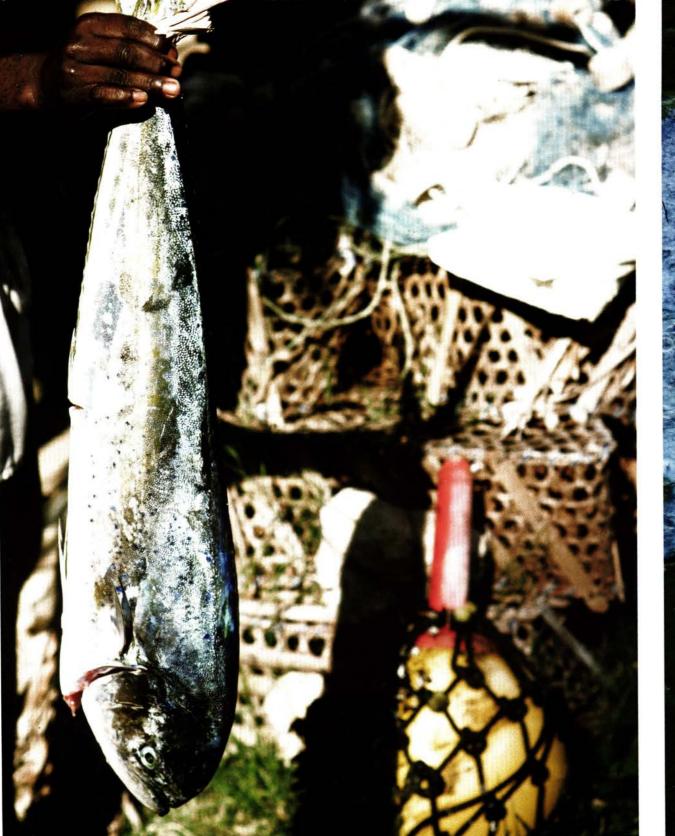








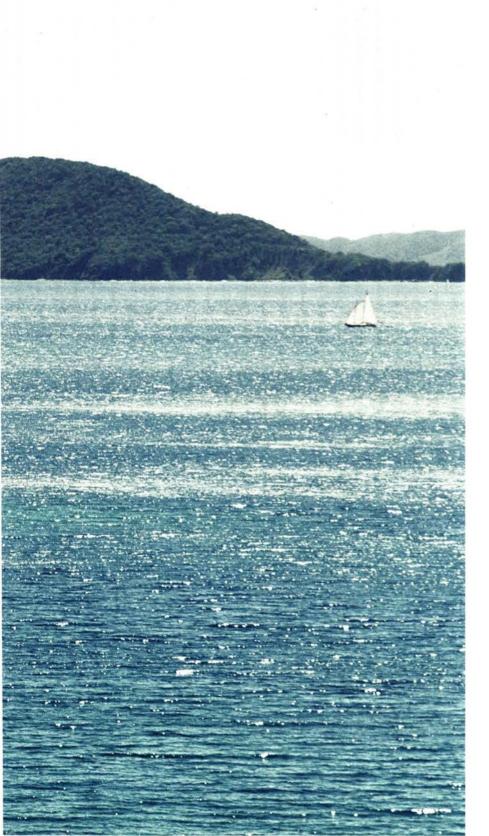










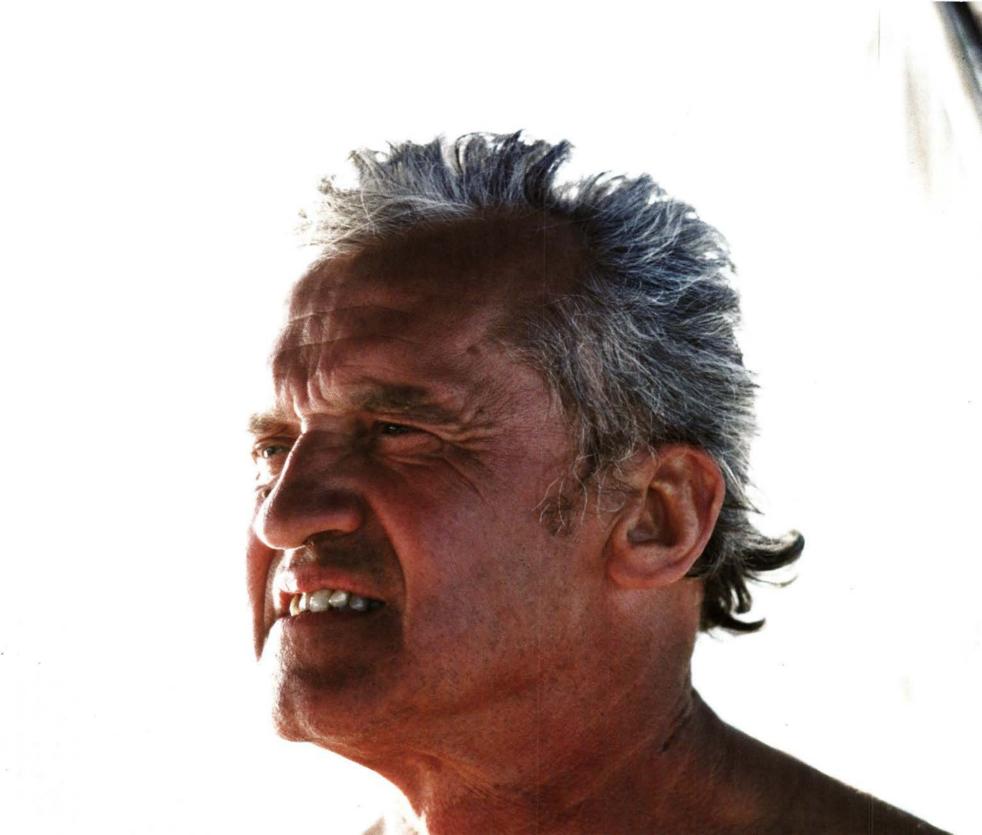


The Goldfinger Travels

The best way to experience the Caribbean islands in order to get a true picture of the variety and differentiation that exist is to sail. We were fortunate to travel on many occasions on June's family seventy-two foot yacht which enabled us to visit some of the smaller islands, such as the uniqueness of tying up to palm trees by the towering pitons of St. Lucia where there is an almost bottomless sea. There is that sense of adventure and discovery, and the approach to a new harbor is always a thrill.

In addition we traveled to many islands by small plane. Dive bombing into the tiny airport of St. Barts, landing in the almost aircraft carrier thousand foot high runway on Saba, and the cross wind approach paralleling the mountains to the seaside airstrip in Dominica. In fact once we were caught in a violent thunderstorm midway between Nevis and Antigua but somehow survived.

In general, journeys through the island interiors in 4-wheel drive vehicles and sometimes non 4-wheel drive vehicles on sometimes difficult roads gave us the opportunity to see places and people most pleasure tourists never see. And there were accommodations almost unbearable and habitations very charming. There were peoples sometimes unfriendly and people mostly friendly and helpful. In all, what a pleasure to see, observe, and photograph buildings and sites some no longer with us.

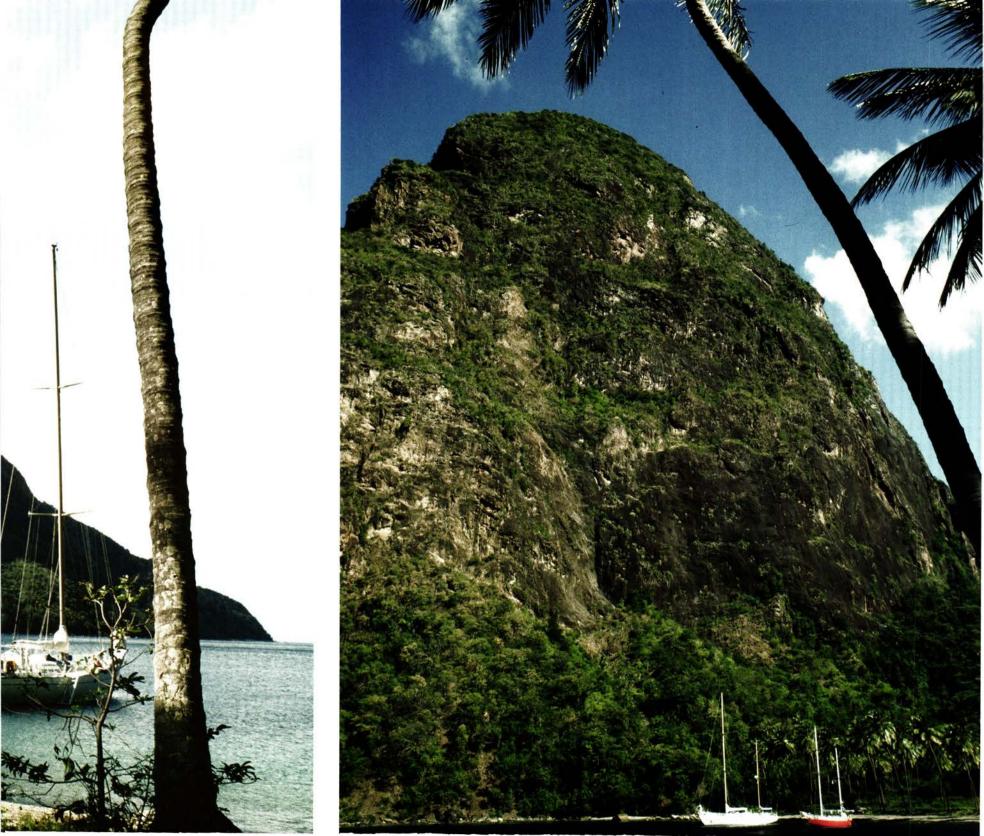




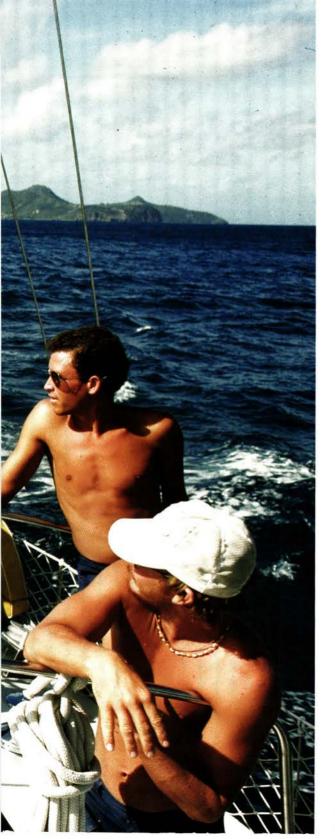












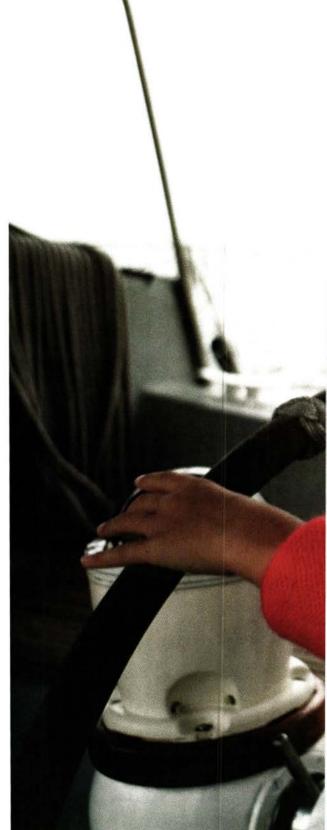










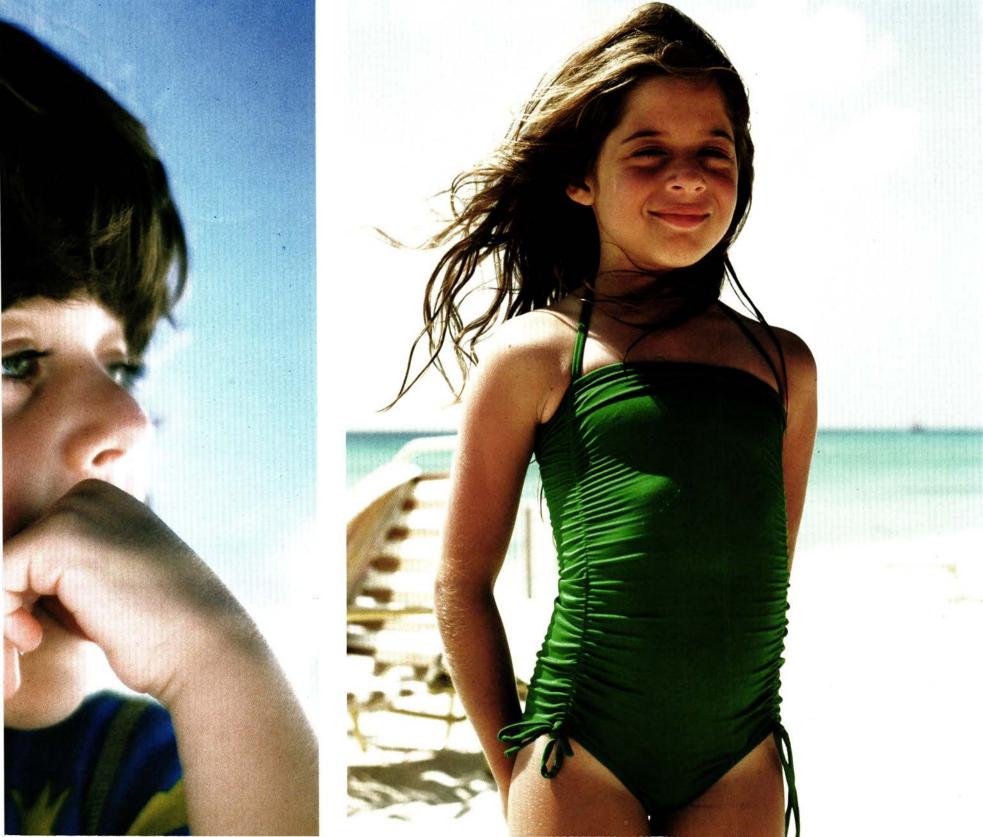












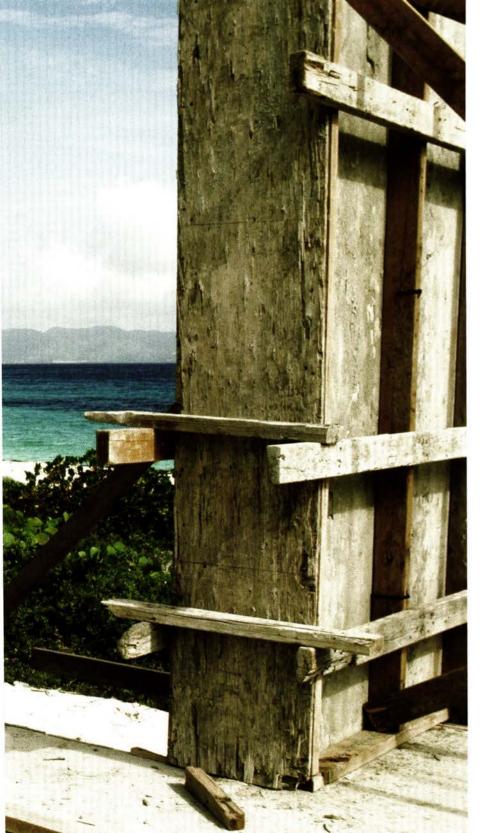












The Building Team

Some twenty years ago our real adventure began - the risk of building in an unfamiliar environment; a new experience with an unknown workforce; the need to import everything from the basic building materials to manufactured products.

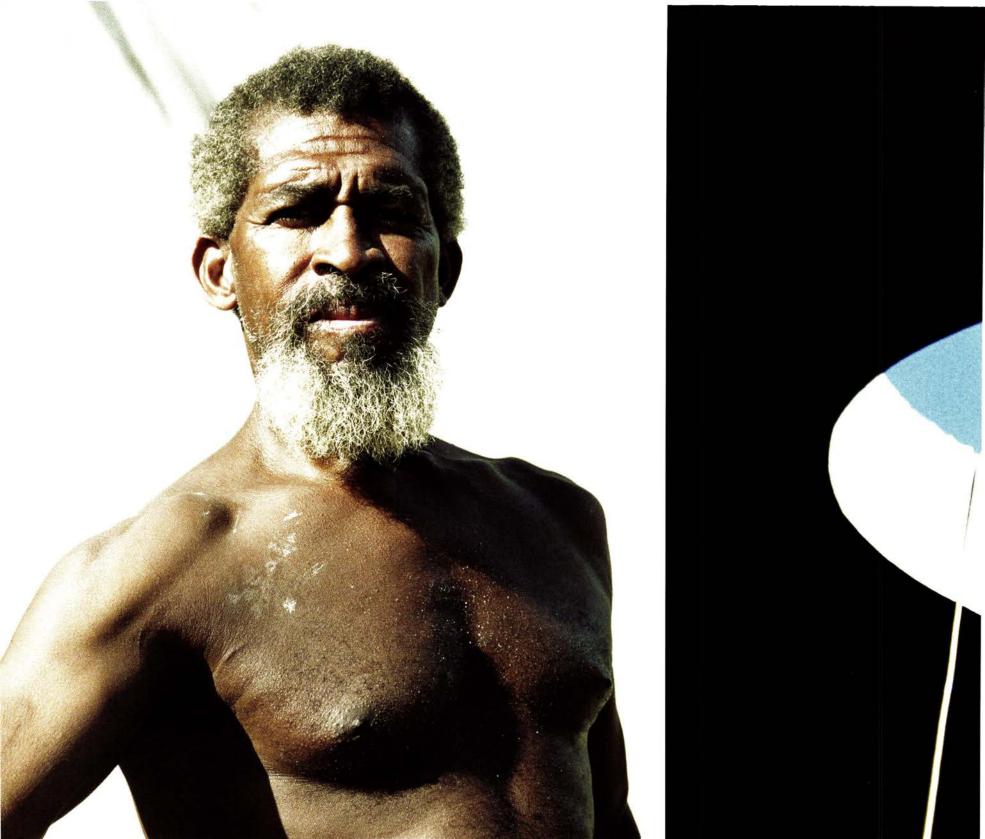
And, in addition, unlike the construction force of other resorts who employed considerable foreign workers, we were determined to build with a total Anguillan workforce from the contractor in charge to all local individuals carrying out the site work, structure, plumbing, electrical, landscape, and all the elements of the building process.

The two primary contractors, Audley Carty and Geoffrey Richardson, who are still carrying out projects for me today, did a great job of translating my ideas into reality, directing the building of those unusual structures of round walls and roof forms - all of unforgiving reinforced concrete - which have withstood two of the most powerful hurricanes in the Caribbean in grand style.

These are the portraits of the men and women who are the proud and accomplished builders of Anguilla.













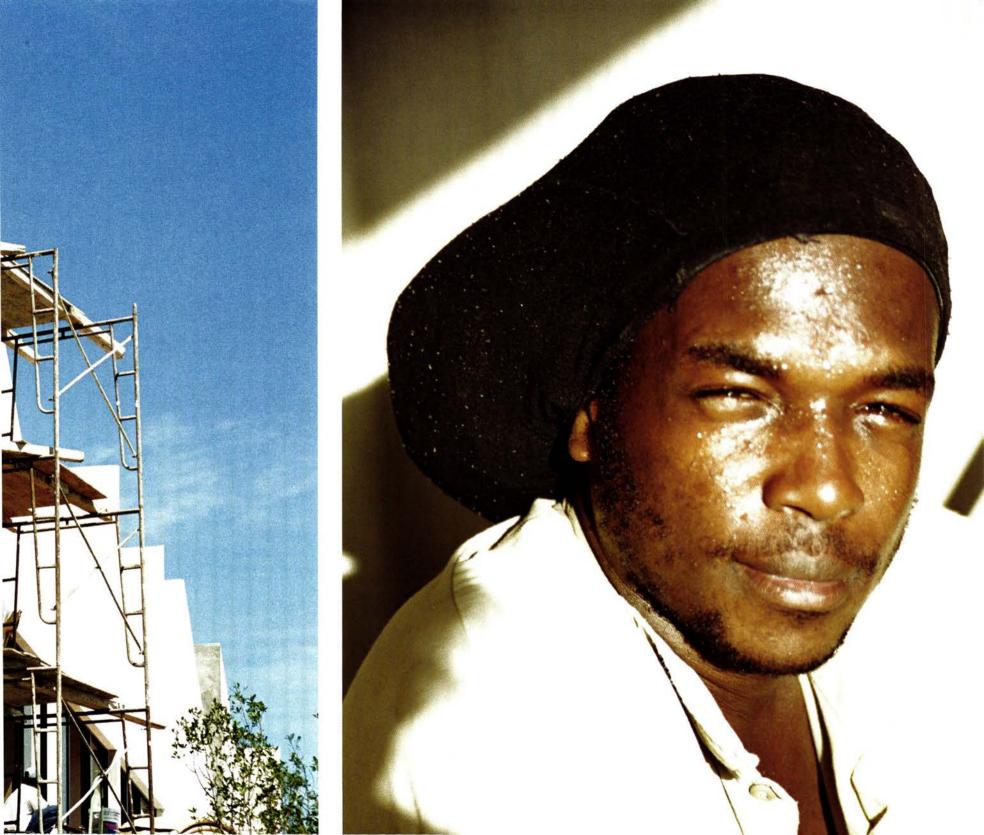






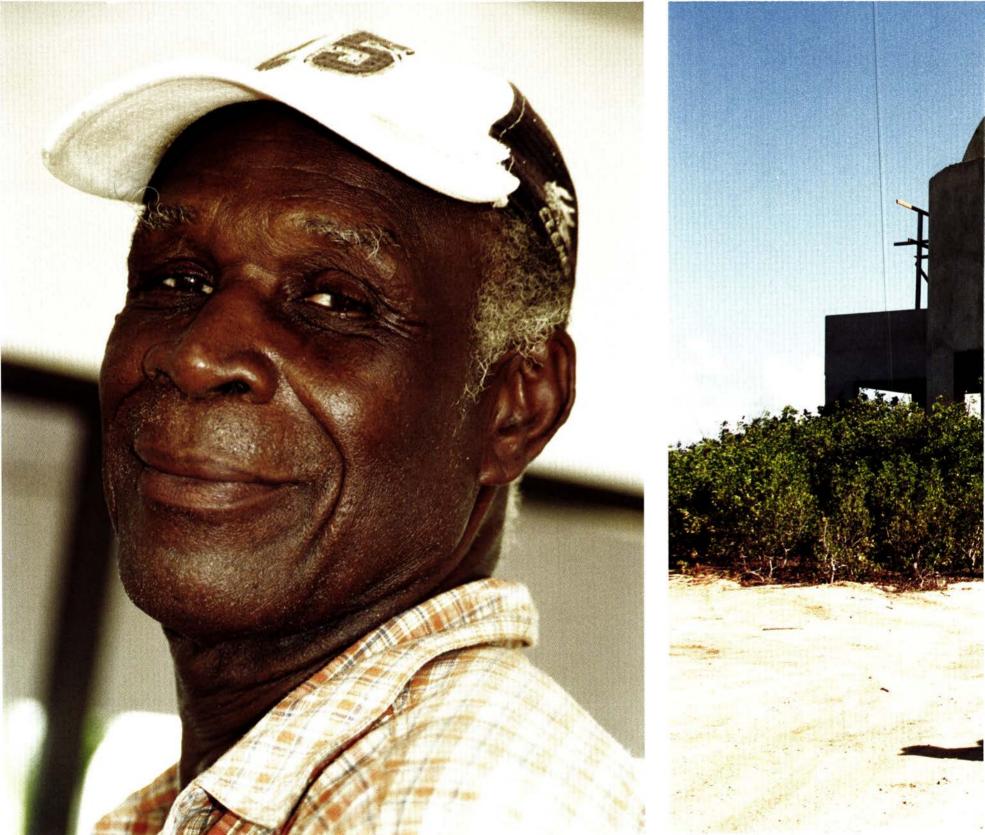




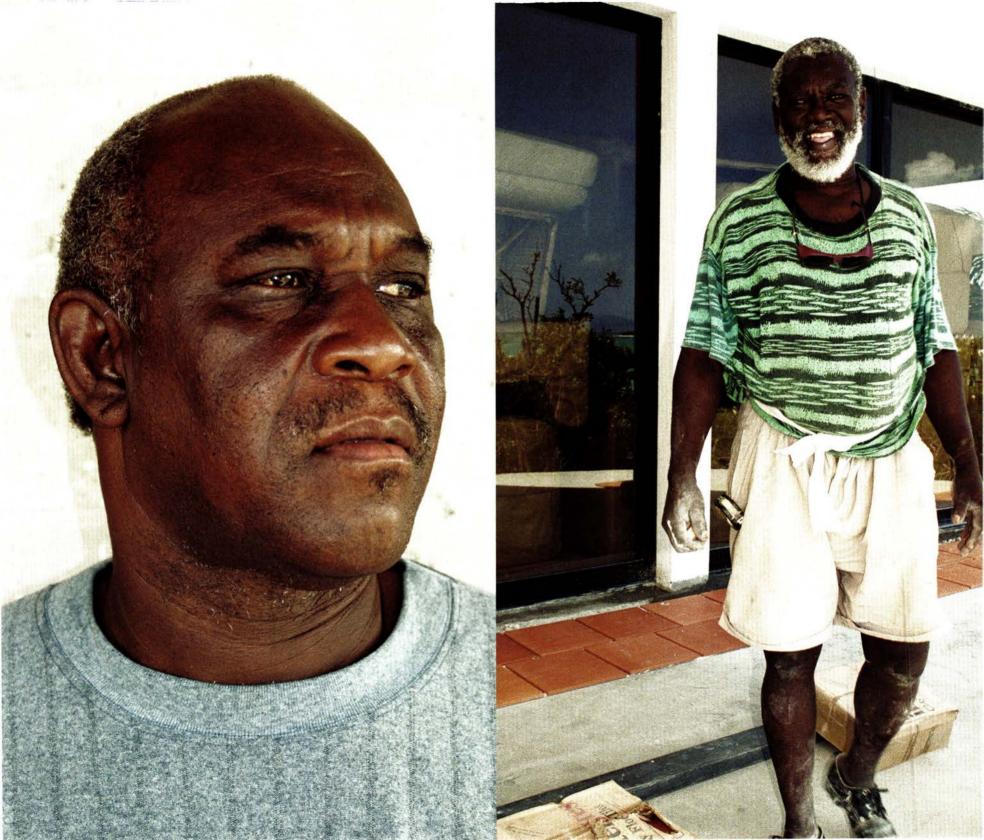


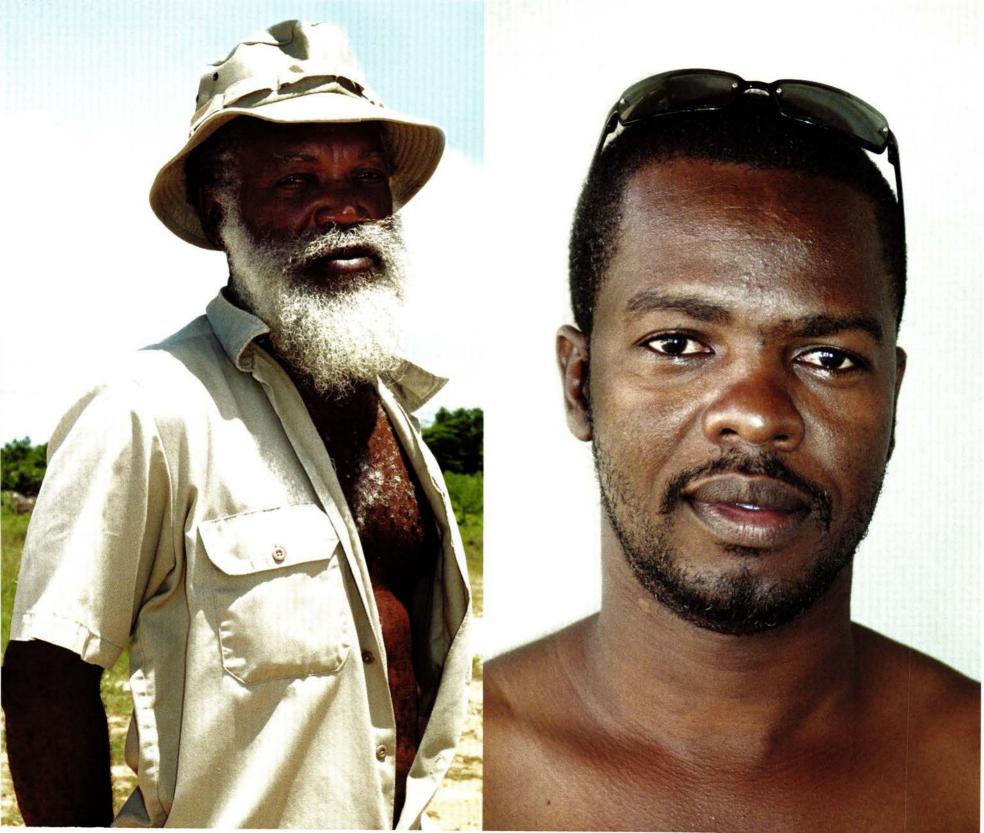






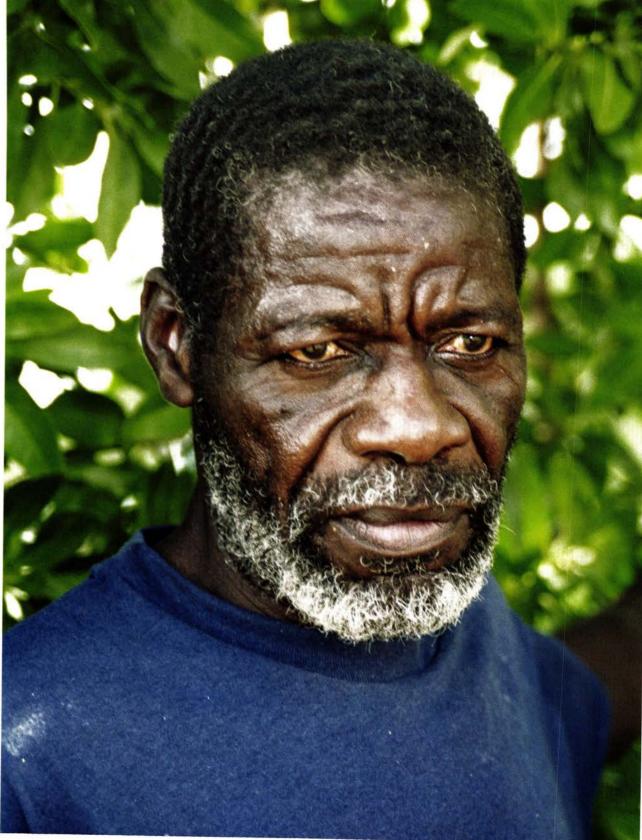


















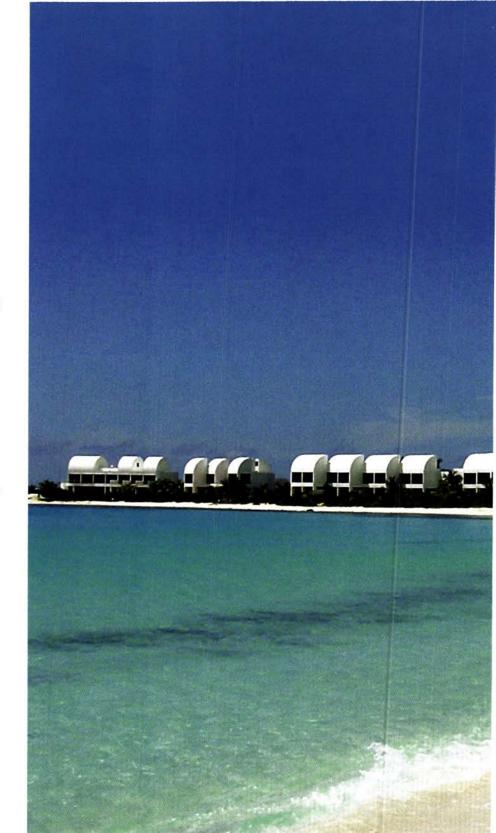
Covecastles Villa Resort

Covecastles is the original boutique resort complex on the Caribbean island of Anguilla, British West Indies, consisting of a village cluster of eight villas and eight beach houses with a centrally located restaurant, on 8 1/2 acres along a magnificent quarter-mile stretch of fine white sand beach. The resort had been developed for an upscale clientele who demand privacy and top quality, and many celebrities have vacationed there.

In the design of the complex, special considerations were given to storm protection, water collection, natural ventilation, solar energy, and ease of maintenance. All buildings were constructed of concrete frame and reinforced concrete block infill. Water is collected on the roofs and deposited in cisterns under each terrace. The cisterns in turn form a solid deep structural foundation along the water side of all the buildings. There is a constant breeze, and all the spaces have through-ventilation. Solar roof panels provide all hot water needs. Finish materials consist of white-washed stucco, quarry tile, hardwood louvered doors and sliding doors with solar glass.

The furnishings consist primarily of overscaled custom designed rattan furniture by June Goldfinger with natural raw silk upholstery, providing extreme comfort for casual living. In addition to the restaurant facilities, kitchens were provided in each unit for guests to indulge in their own culinary experiences.

Covecastles was recently honored by the Anguillan government with the issuance of a postage stamp featuring the resort.





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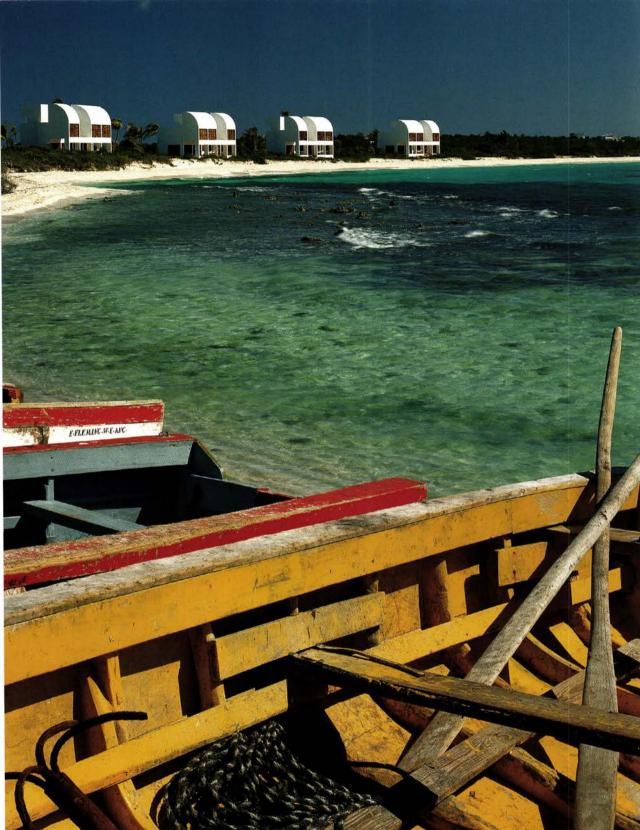
The Original Villas and Beach Houses

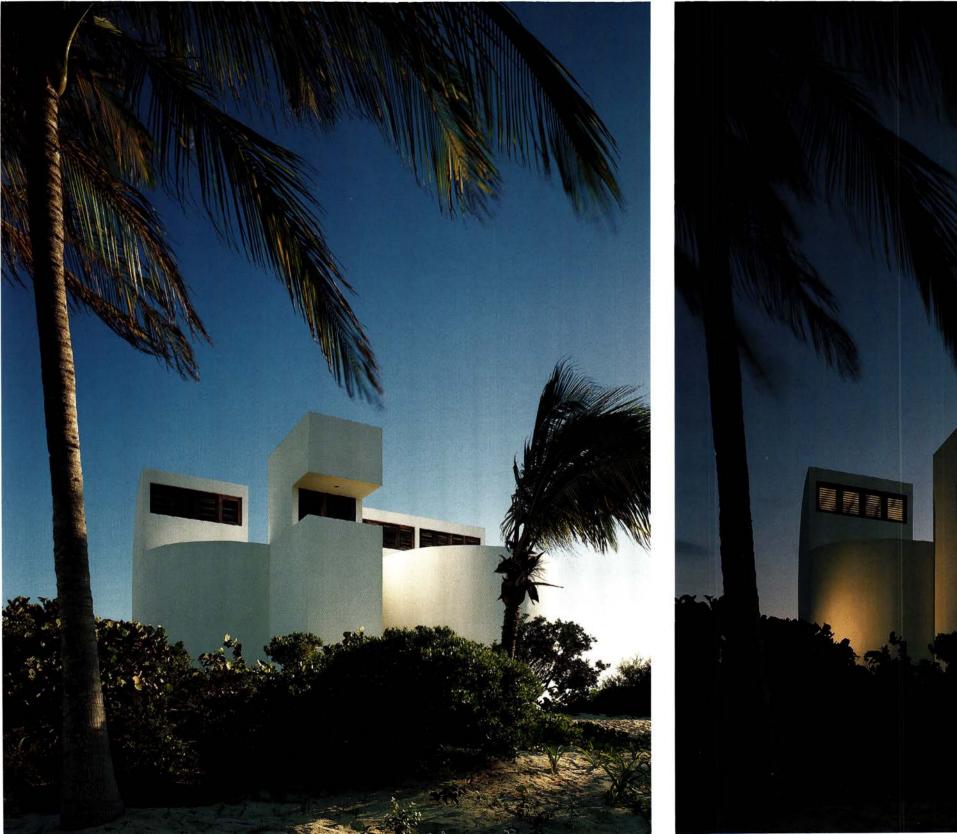
The original villas and beach houses of some twenty years are in perfect shape due to the selection of materials, solid construction and proper maintenance and are virtually indistinguishable from the four grand villas constructed in recent years. All have been built by an Anguillan work force as a credit to their skill and workmanship. As landscape designer in addition to architect and planner, I first of all wanted to preserve the various original native species on the property. In addition, I brought in palms and yuccas, and other indigenous trees and plants to compliment the existing plantings—all selected to be tolerant of wind and salt air spray. The original shrubs were no more than three feet tall on the property twenty years ago. They now have grown thick and as tall as thirty feet due to proper care and architectural massing which has served as a windbreak.

The original building materials have held up well in spite of two major hurricanes in twenty years which caused relatively minor damage to the property. The concrete structure, top quality sliding doors, hardwood louvered doors with brass hardware, and aluminum light fixtures have served well. In addition the white laminate cabinets and custom rattan furniture with raw silk upholstery designed by June Goldfinger have held up well in this tropical environment.





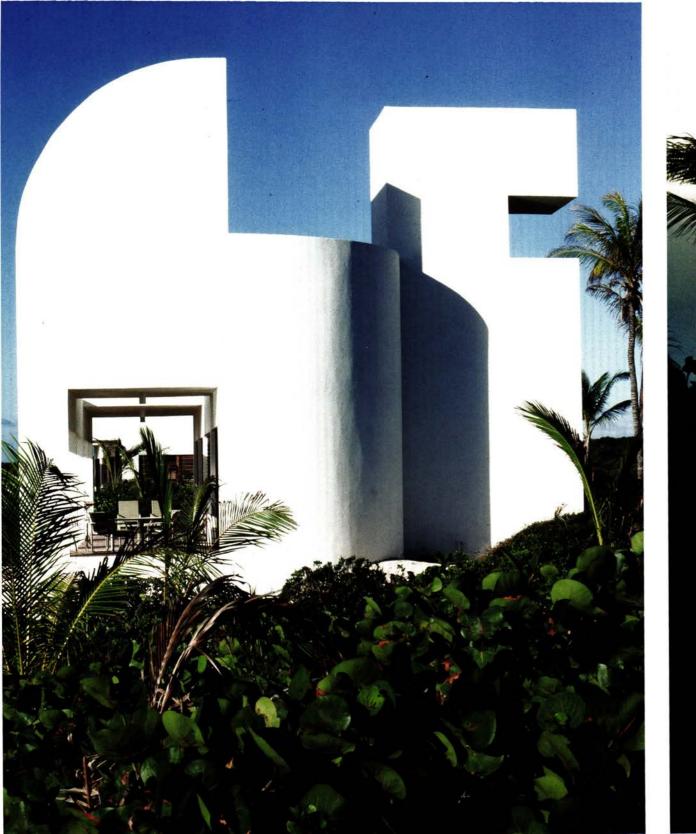


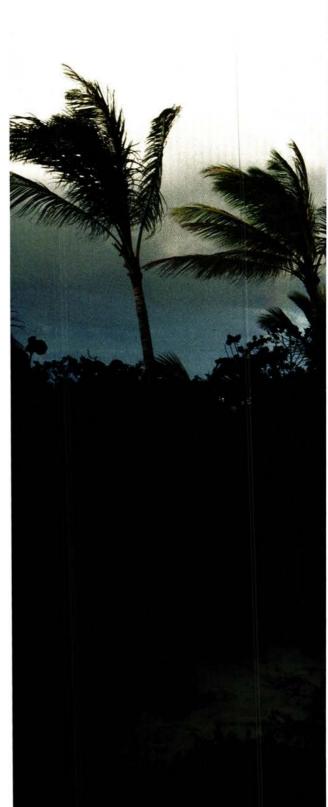






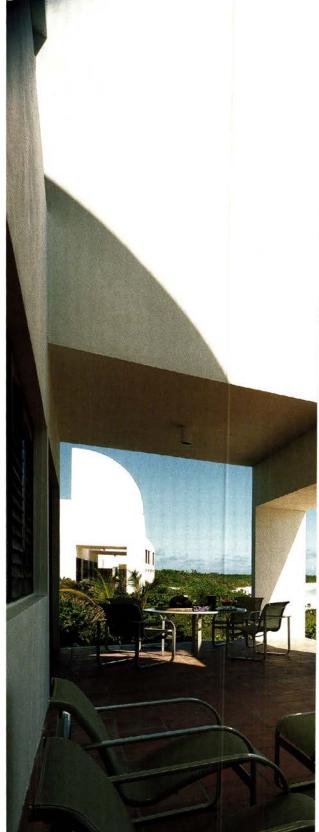




















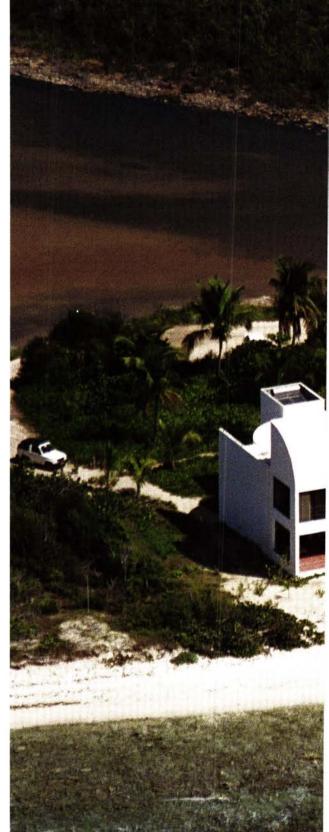








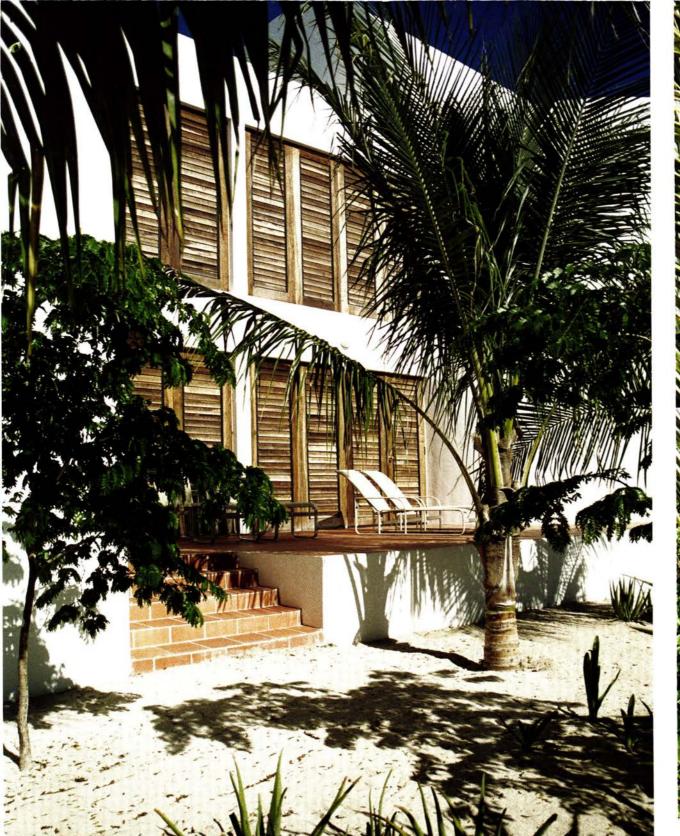


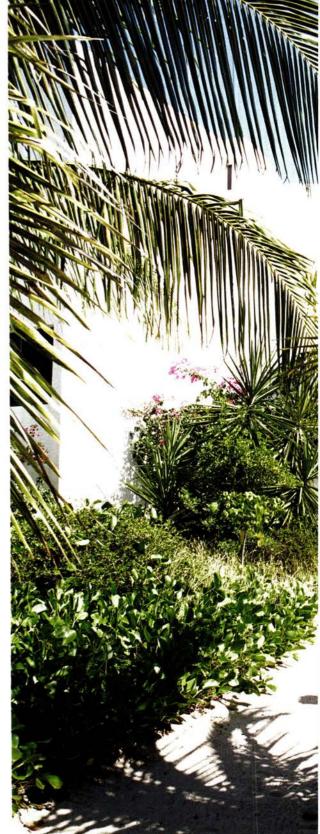








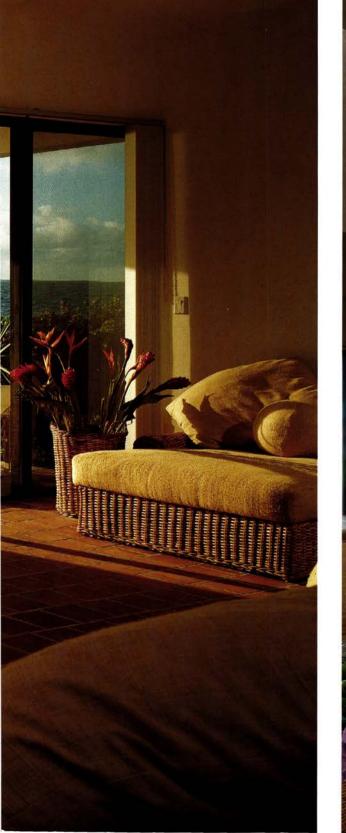




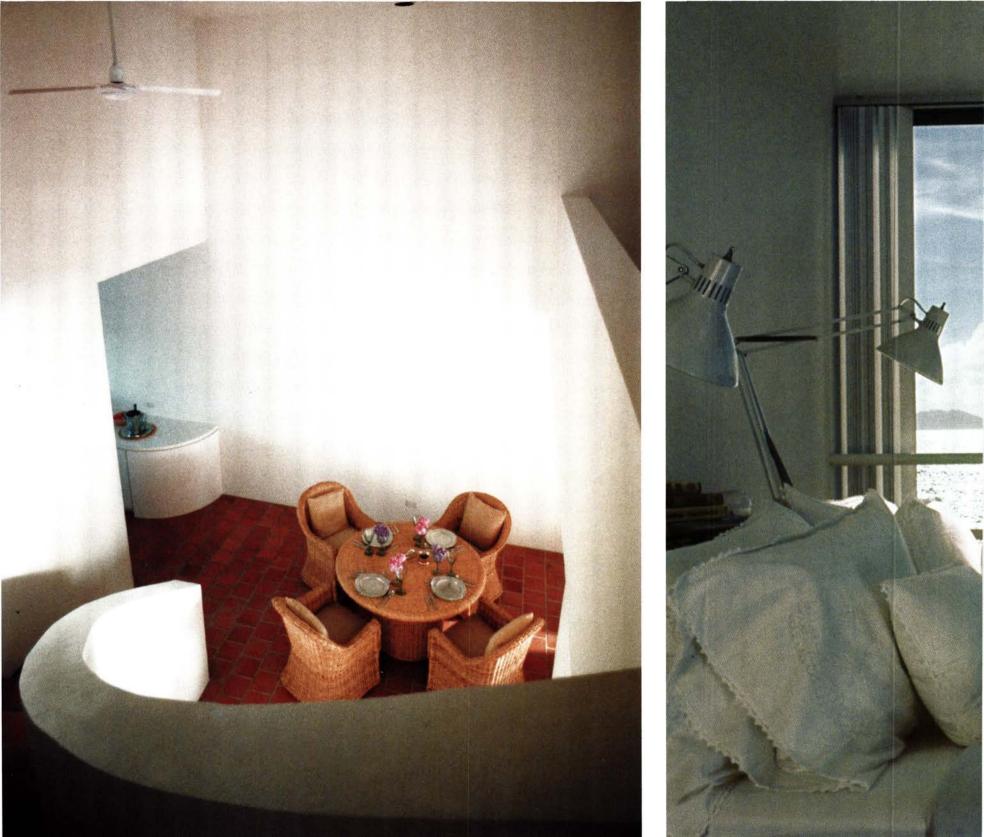
















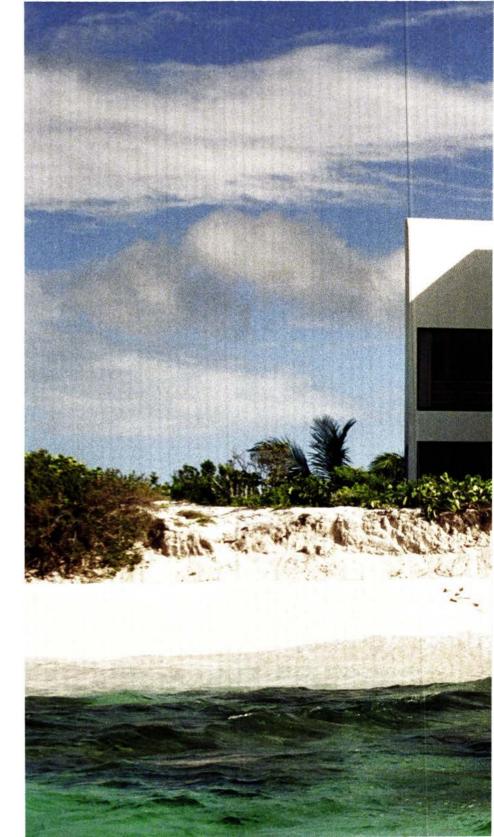




The Grand Villas of Covecastles

As part of the original overall linear plan of villas along the one thousand foot beach, spaces were left for future villas, and in more recent years we have constructed four very special and very private grand villas to compliment the original buildings. Carrying through with the same construction and materials which have succeeded over the years, the newer buildings are a grander more spacious interpretation of the early designs and fit in with perfect harmony. With our own desalination plant and generators we are completely self sufficient as a resort complex, small enough for privacy and seclusion and grand enough for a flexible communal experience, and efficient service and personalized attention.

Bronfman VILLA 264-271





















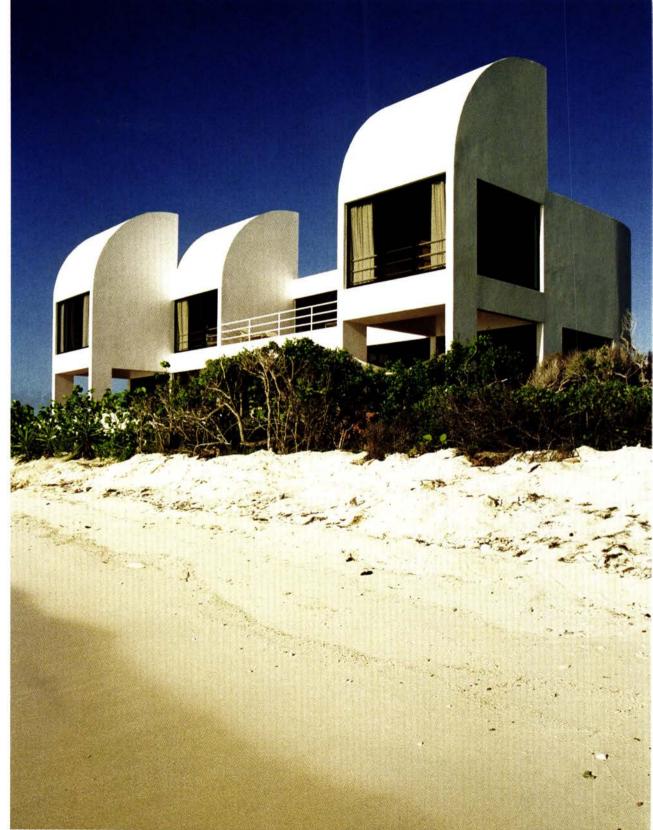
















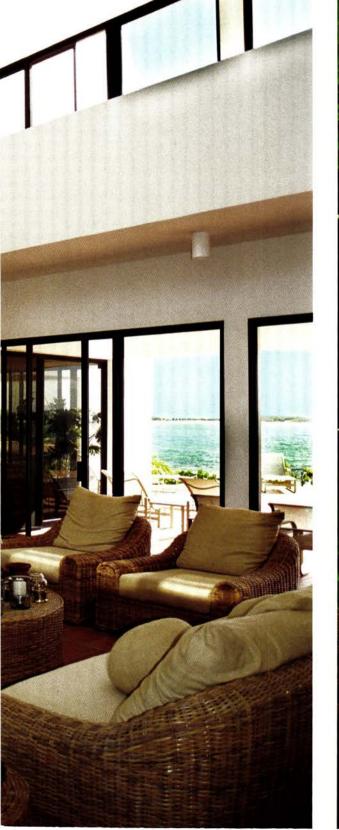














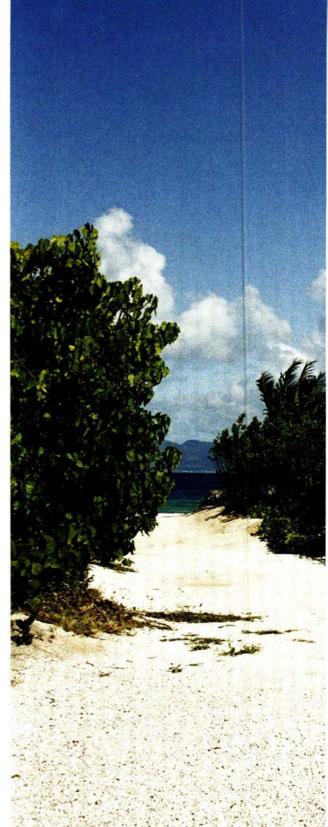










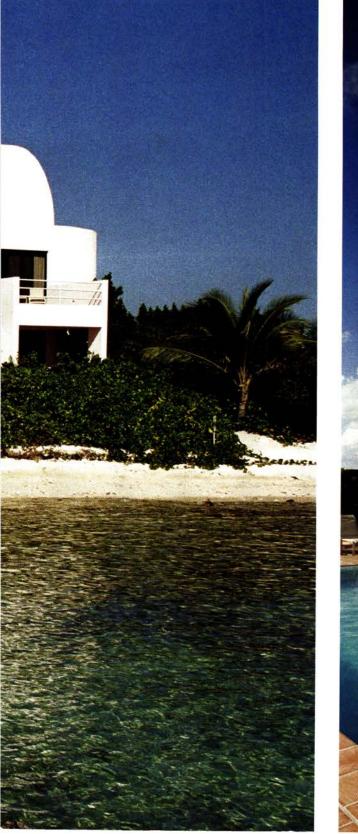




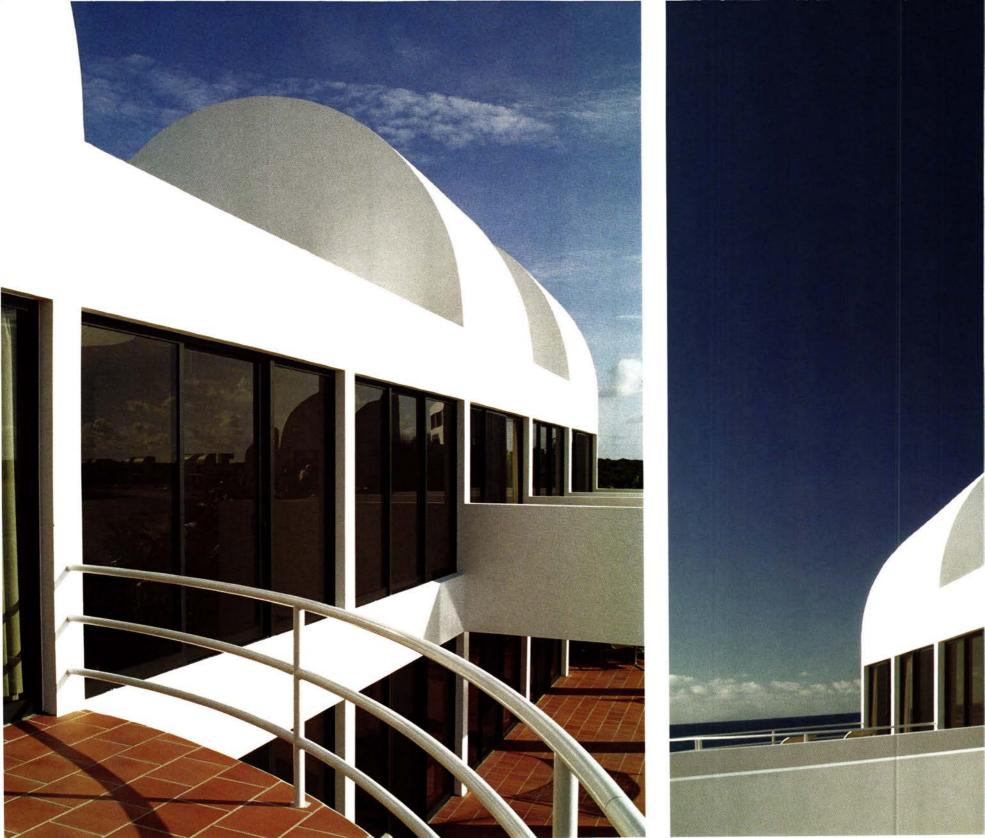














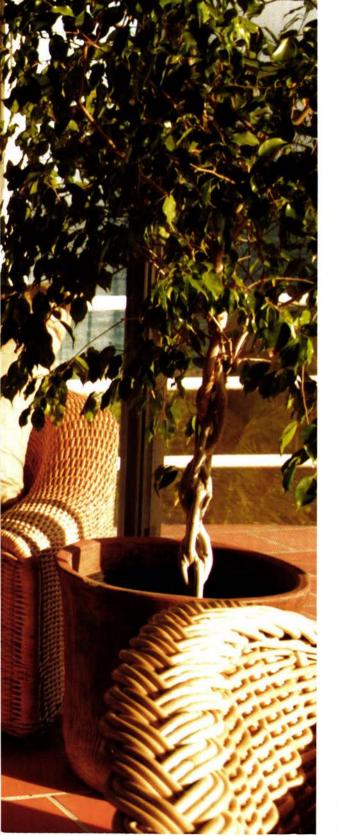






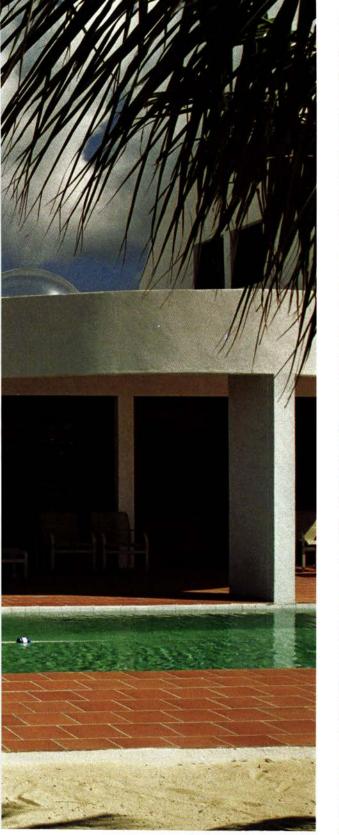


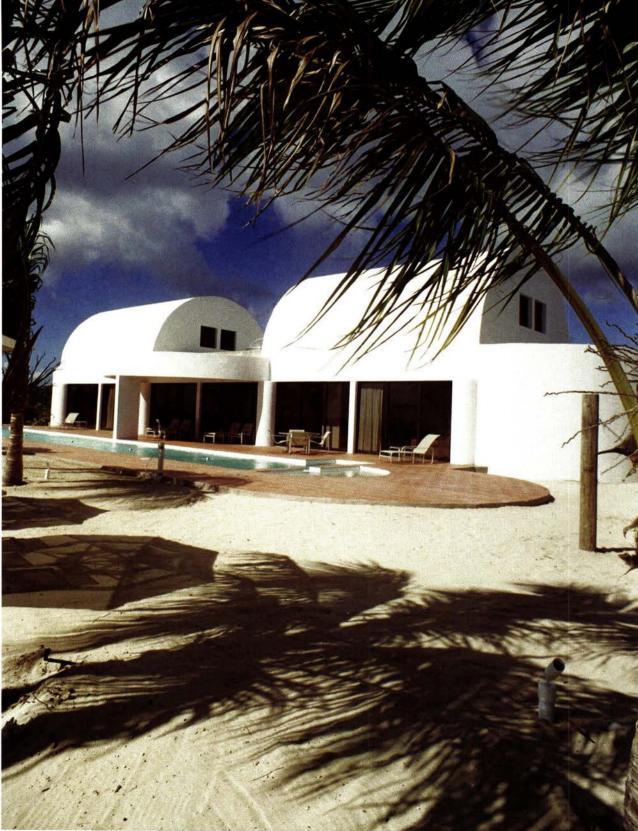








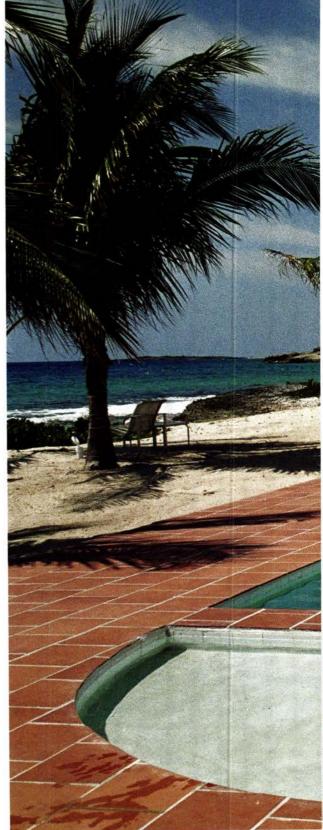












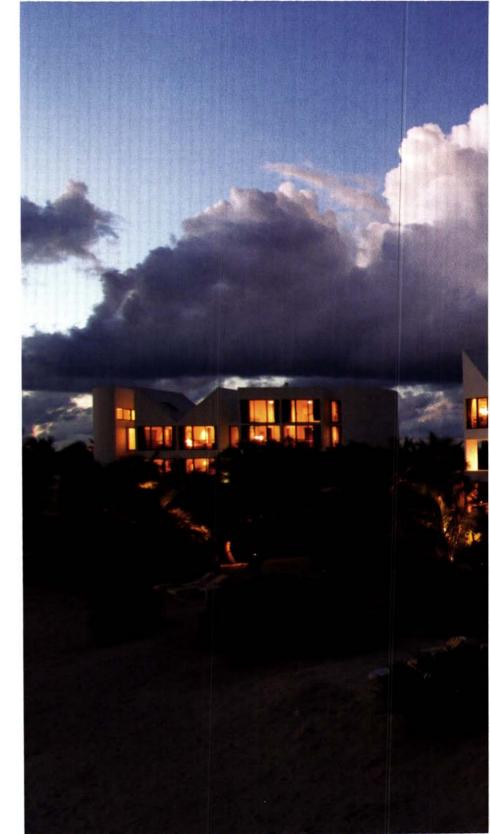


Altamer Villa Resort

In November 1998 when the Goldfingers were in residence at Covecastles, they met a young American couple, Michael and Rebecca Eggleton, who were guests at Covecastles and had bought property at the other end of the beach. They engaged the Goldfingers to design first a unique residence and ultimately the Altamer Villa Resort which has become the standard of luxury anywhere in the world. Phase one has just been completed and future plans include a marina and many additional grand villas.

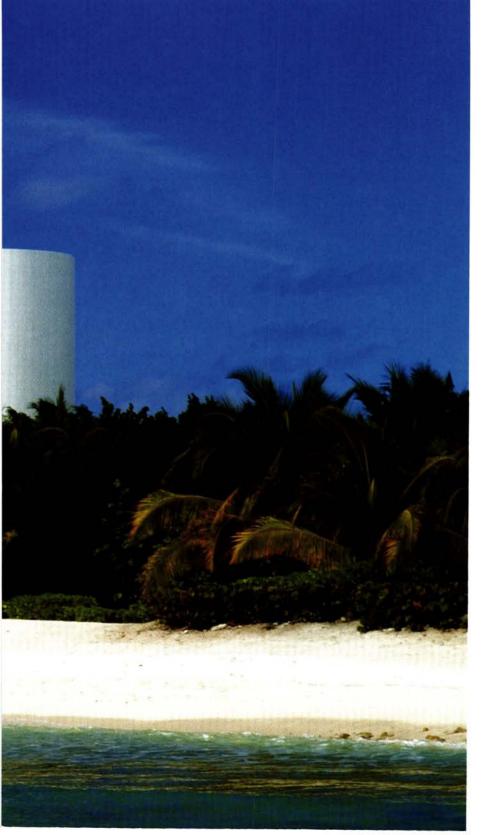
The overall concept of the resort in an interrelated series of geometric structures of varying sizes and functions from the tennis pavilions to the gate house to the grand villas and the public buildings—each with its own distinctive character.

Although the geometric designs vary considerably from Covecastles Resort, the concrete construction, white stucco walls, floor tile, hardwood doors and sliding glass units are similar. The interiors, custom furniture and accessories designed and selected by June Goldfinger, vary considerably in all the buildings. They provide rich and colorful accents against the white walls. The buildings are fully air conditioned and the entertainment centers and music systems are all state of the art. Luxury materials such as marble, granite and fine woods are used extensively. The bathrooms are elaborate designs and the kitchens are stainless steel.









Altamer Villa 1: The Russian Amethyst

The Russian Amethyst was the initial villa created at the Altamer Resort. The villa features generous living and dining spaces, a state of the art entertainment room, a grand master bedroom suite with a twenty-foot-high ceiling and curved study balcony, and four guest bedrooms. Luxurious amenities include multiple terraces and balconies, a large swimming pool and spa, an observatory bridge projecting towards the sea, and a rooftop terrace with 360 degree views of the island and the Caribbean Sea. A very private pied-a-terre guest house with fitness center, a private garden and spa is situated in a lush tropical setting nearby.

Interior designer June Goldfinger traveled to Russia, Turkey and Italy to select artifacts and furnishings to enrich her custom designed rattan furniture.





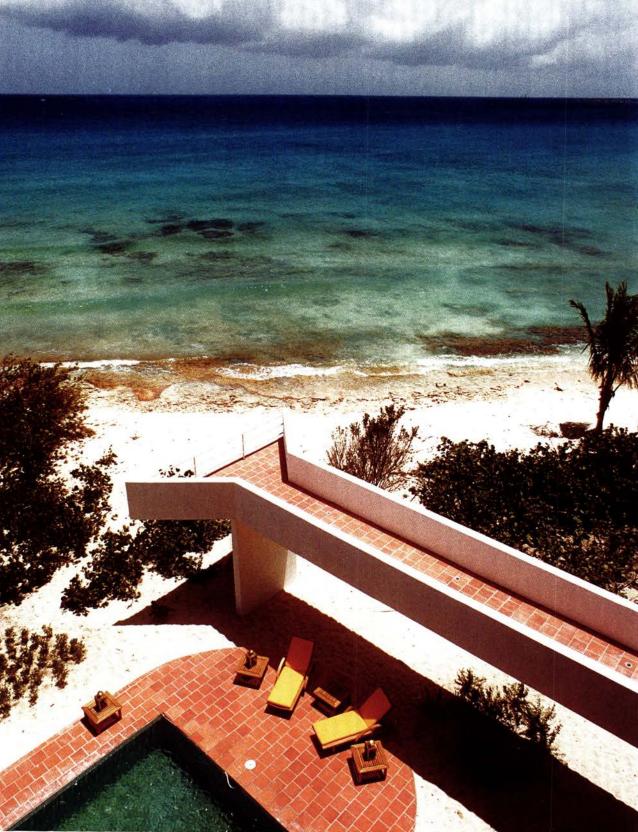




















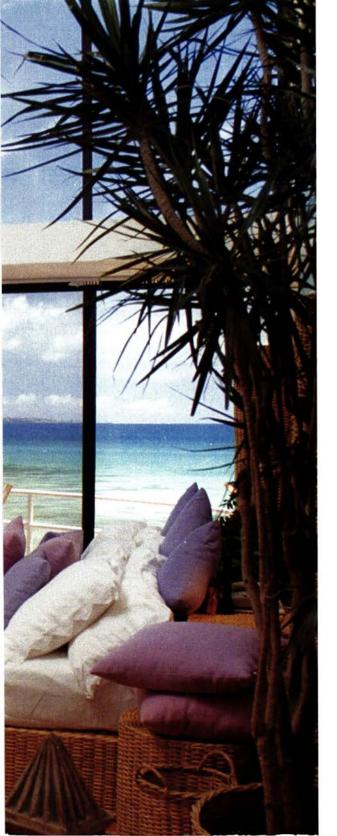






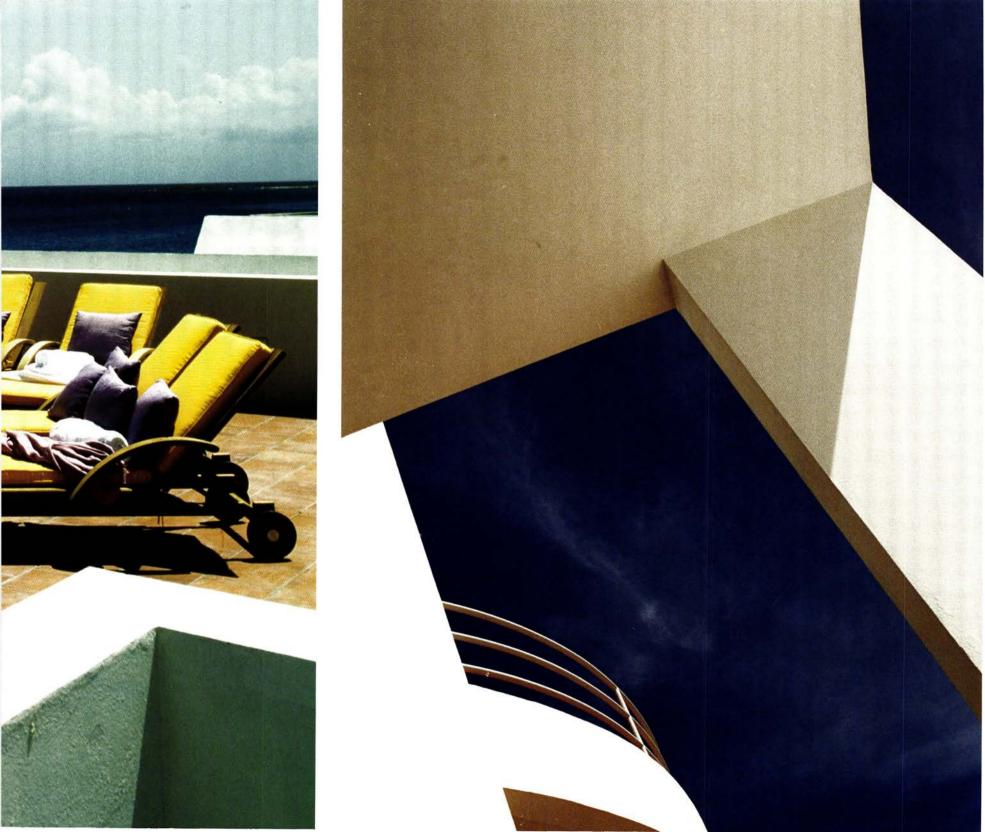










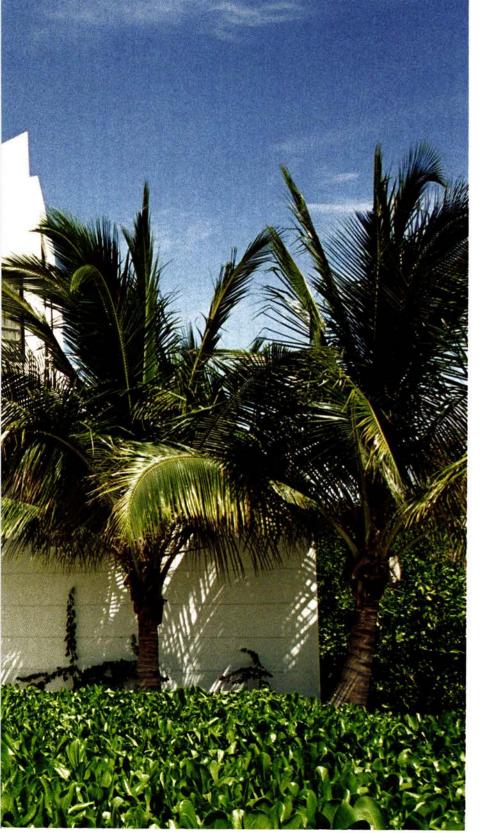












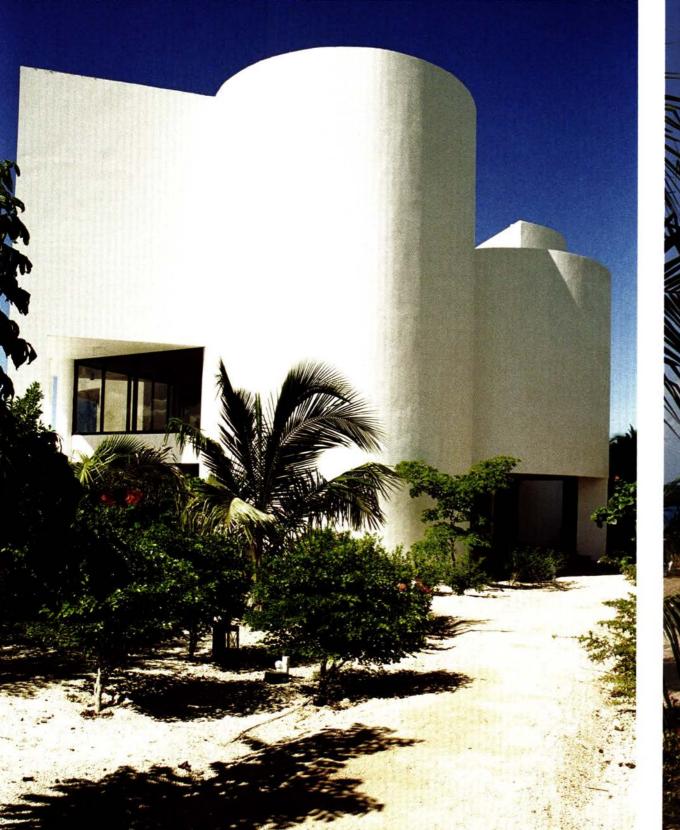
Altamer Villa 2: The Brazilian Emerald

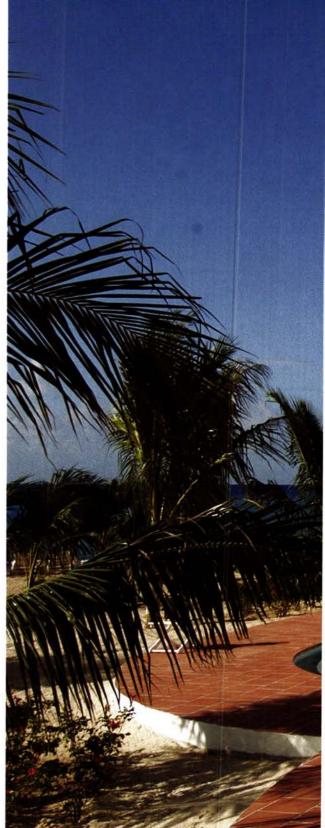
The Brazilian Emerald villa consists of two spacious entertainment floors with accommodations for large parties and events. The grand two level spaces offer multiple sitting areas. A large central semicirclular bar opens onto the great room on the first floor. The game areas on the second floor overlook the floor below as well as the 180 degree view of the Caribbean Sea with a private screening room in the rear. The third floor consists of a grand master bedroom suite at the center with two guest bedrooms convertible into suites on projecting pods at either side, with a fitness center at the rear. Outdoor facilities include large sweeping terraces with a swimming pool and spa facing the sea.

June Goldfinger selected and curated artwork and furnishings from various cities and villages in Brazil. The bright fabric colors for her custom rattan furniture were based upon the spirit of her travel experiences there.

































Altamer Villa 3: The African Sapphire

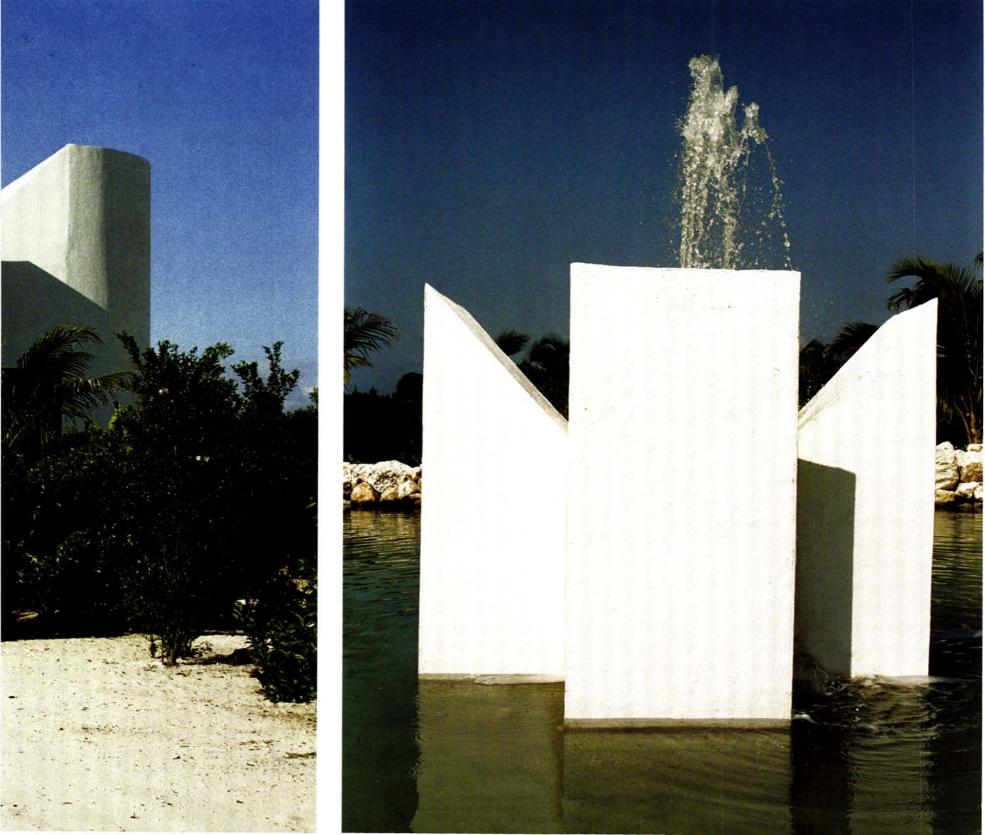
The African Sapphire is the largest villa with two master bedroom suites and four additional guest bedrooms. The first floor is divided into three major areas, a unique ceremonial center with unusual artifacts with the sitting room and the dining room at opposite sides. There is a large sweeping terrace with swimming pool bisected by a second story observation bridge. A lower terrace which contains a large spa continues to a private lagoon with architectural fountain and waterfall.

The African Sapphire brings the history and heritage of the Caribbean to Altamer and this is dramatically emphasized through the tribal and urbane art and artifacts selected and curated by June Goldfinger based on her travels throughout South Africa.











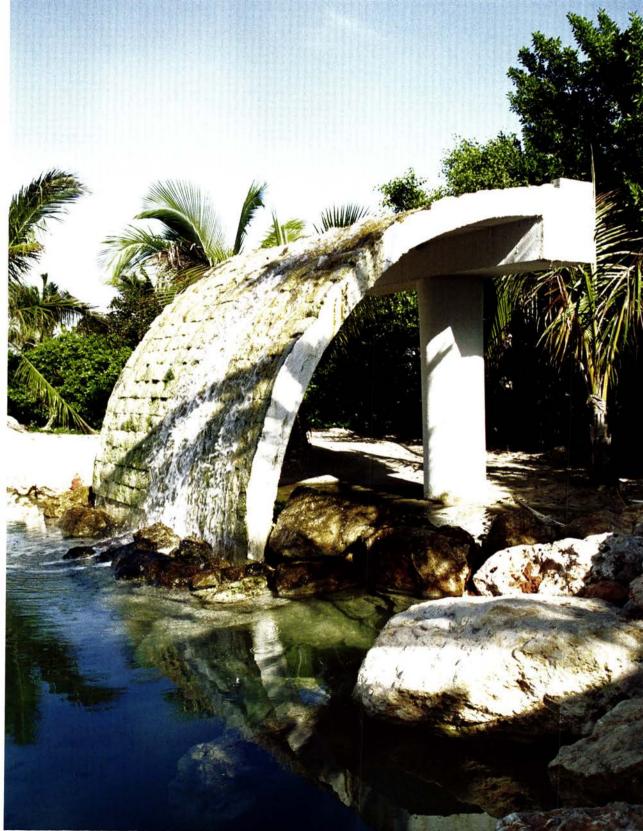






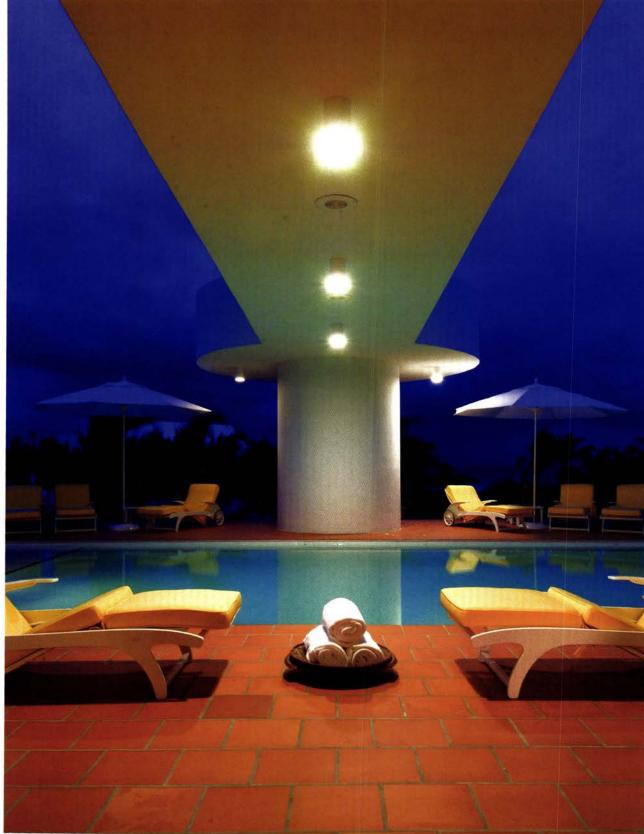






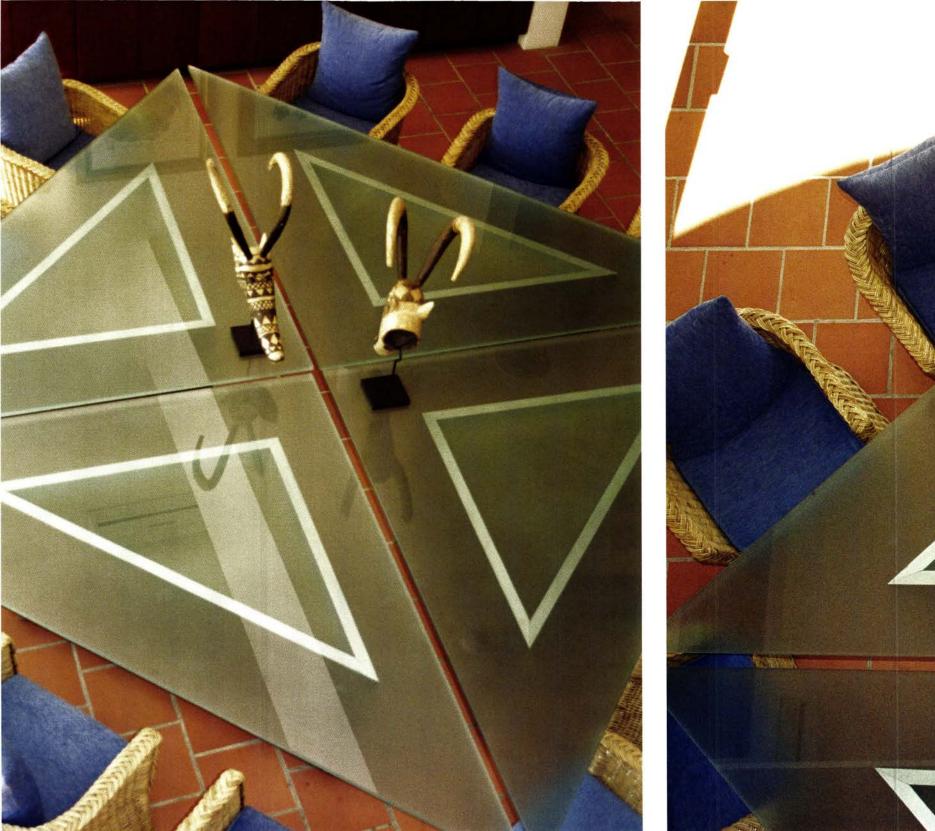


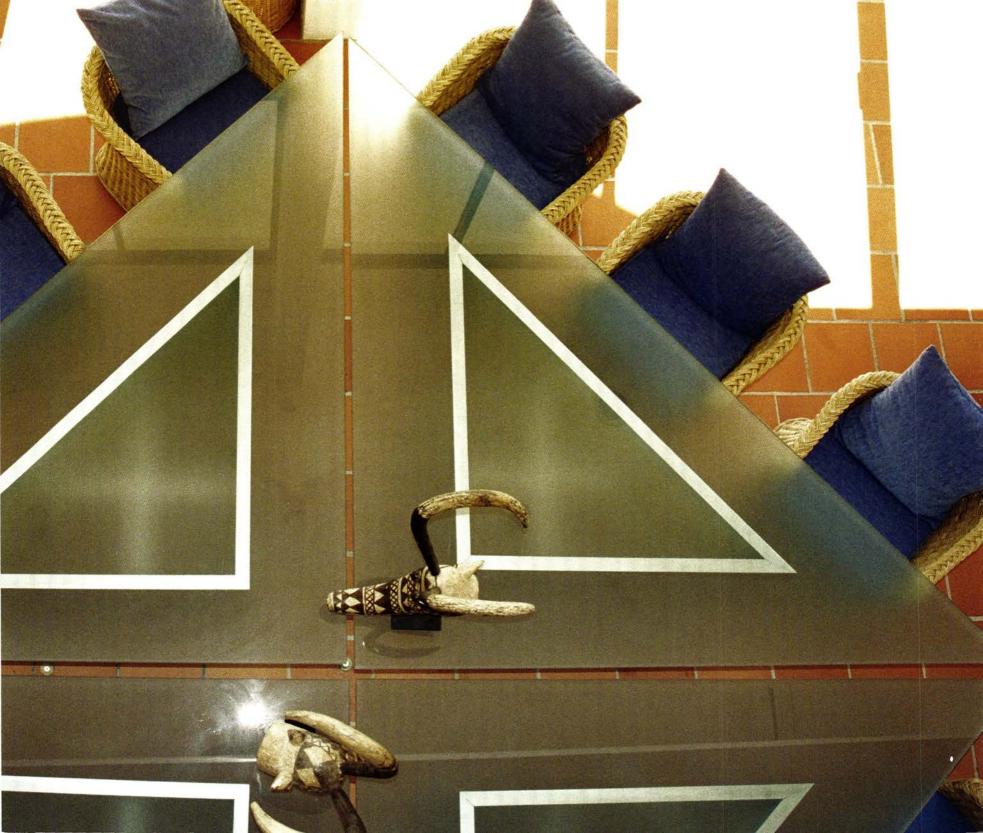






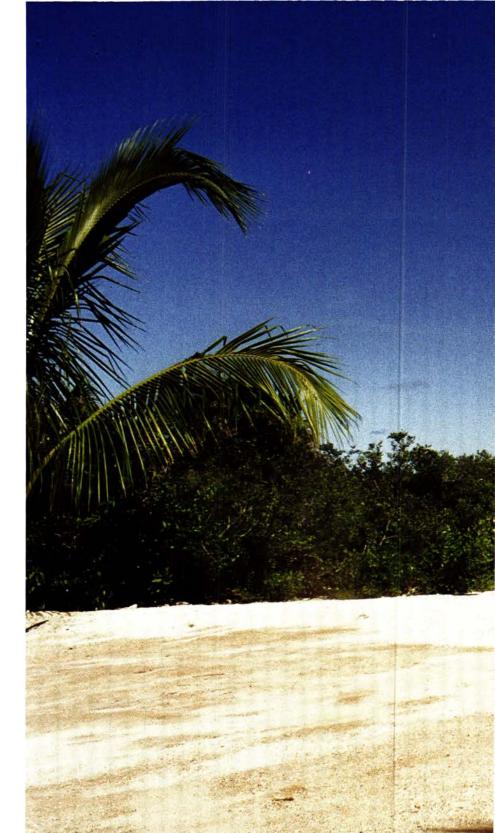






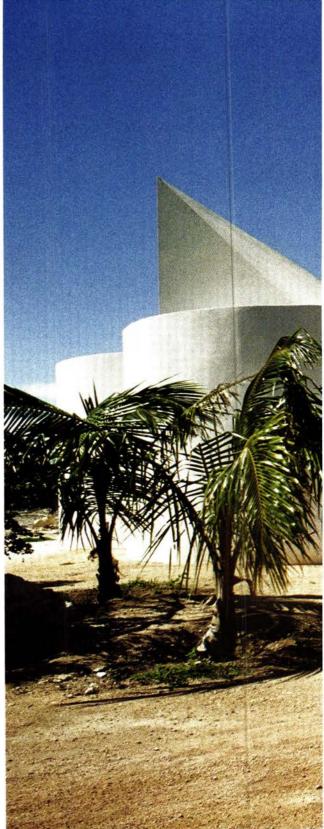
The Altamer Conference Center

The form of the combined reception building and conference center expresses an open invitation within its grand entranceway which welcomes visitors, guests and business executives alike. This is a horizontal one-story structure illuminated by multiple skylights in the half round private offices as well as linear architectural lighting and high windows within the triangular roof forms of the main conference center.

















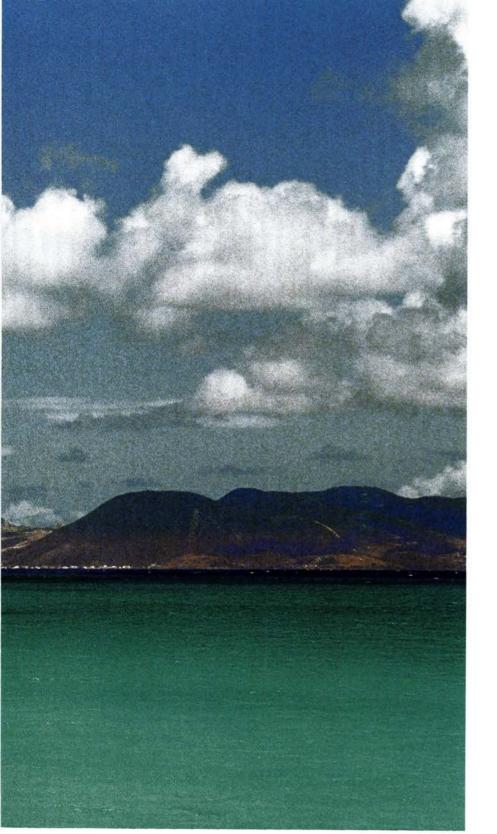












The Altamer Restaurant

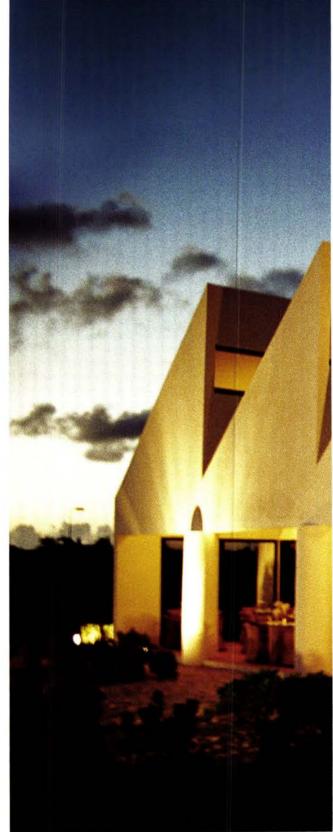
The spirit of the restaurant building relates symbolically to a four masted schooner as it is sited along the beach closest to the sea. The varying roof rhythms give a repetitive vertical height experience within the main dining room which emits light from the horizontal bands of high windows. The four opposing interior wall surfaces each serve as a unique visual experience. The wall of glass on the opposite side highlights the custom stainless steel kitchen beyond. The wine bottles within the glass wine coolers serve as a decorative wall surface at one end, while the marble and stainless steel bar at the round far end looks at the island of St. Maarten in the distance.

The dining tables of azure tinted glass illuminated from below were designed by June Goldfinger, as well as all the china, sterling, crystal and linens as part of the Altamer Collection.











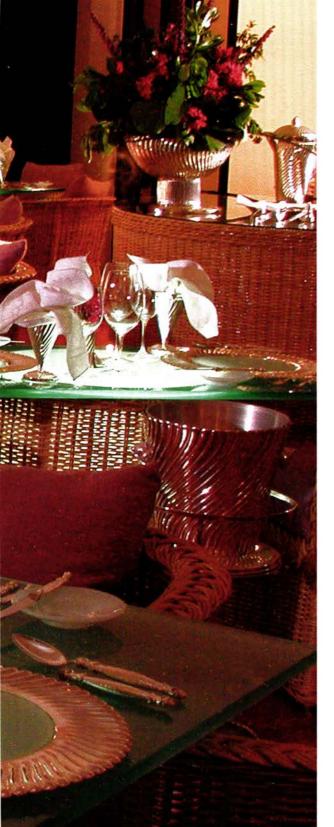














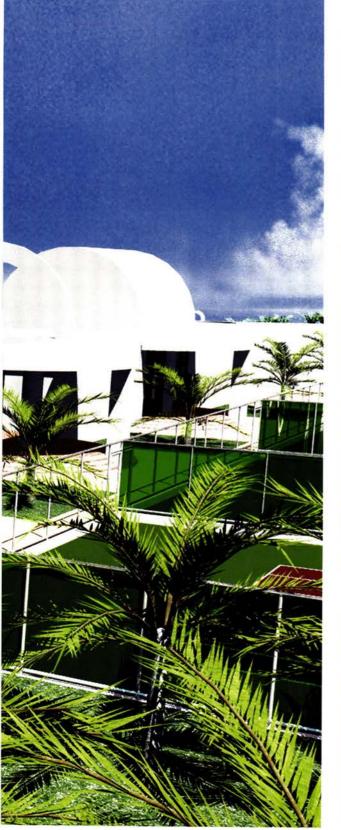


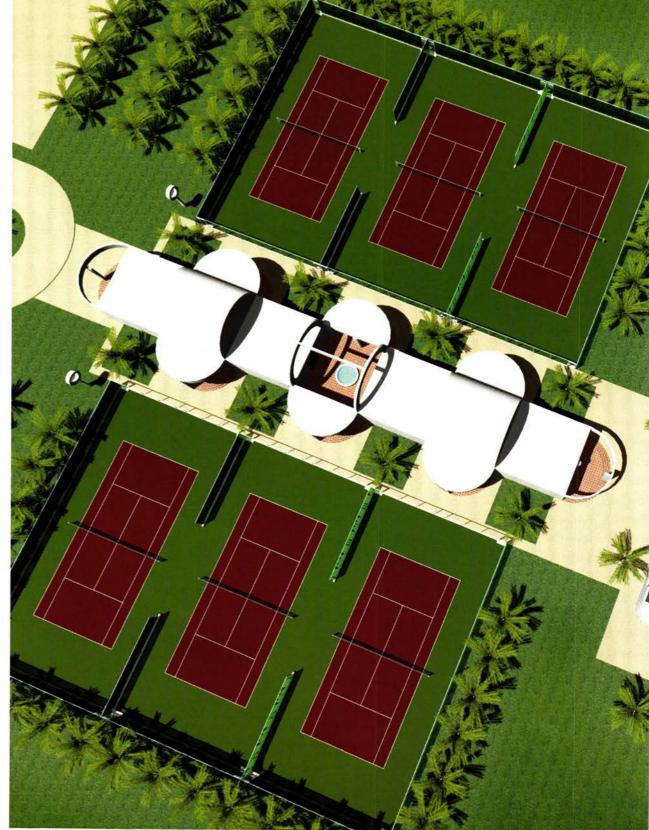


Anguilla Tennis Academy

It was a great honor three years ago when a young Anguillan tennis pro asked me to design a building for the Anguilla Tennis Academy. Michelle Lake had for ten years devoted tremendous time and energy to develop in the young people of Anguilla an interest in tennis as he traveled back and forth to the United States for his college education. He has more than achieved that goal, the building will be completed in early 2006 and i wish to present the drawings in conclusion since i am extremely proud of doing something for the young people of Anguilla. I hope this building will be a permanent powerful symbol of pride and accomplishment for Anguillans of all ages.



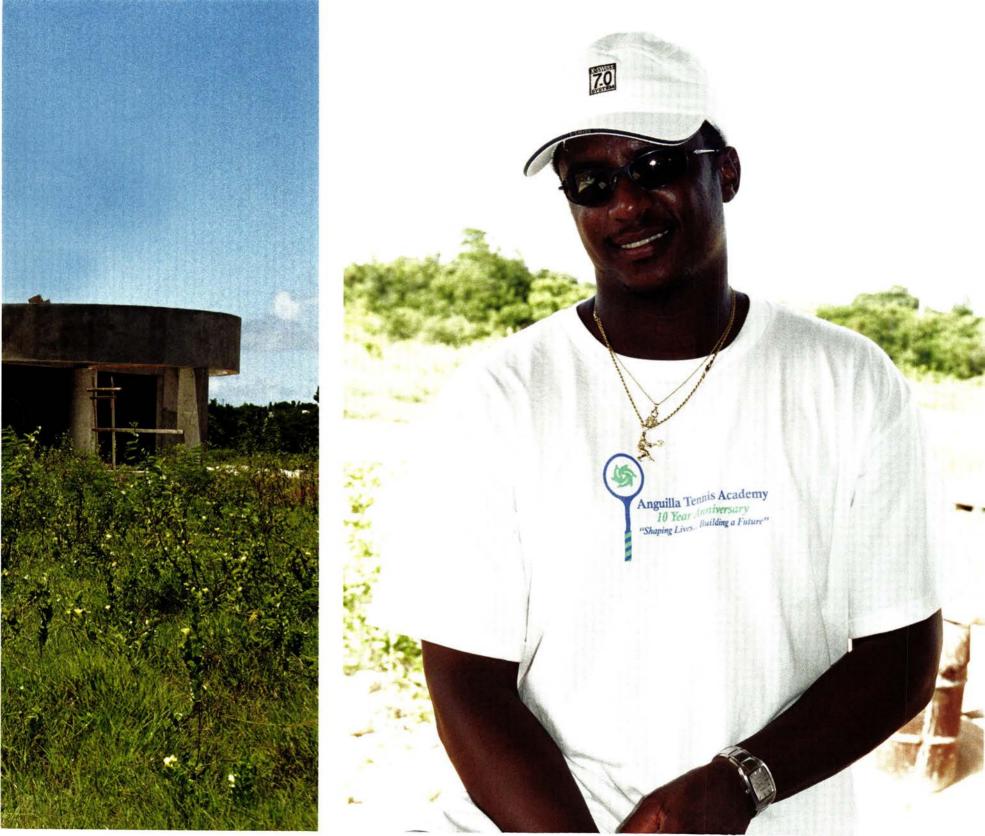












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