

# LUXURY RETREATS

The islands of the Turks and Caicos are a series of alluring gems scattered along the edge of the Caribbean Sea. 344 days of sun per year, a stable economy based on the US dollar, friendly English-speaking local population, and a well-developed infrastructure complete with a modern healthcare facility make the Turks and Caicos Islands a perfect destination for anyone interested in true paradise.

Once the domain of celebrities, intrepid explorers, and eccentric trust-funders, these islands are now more accessible than ever. Eight of the 40 islands are inhabited on a year-round basis, though thanks to a careful approach to development many are so sparsely populated that much of the year you may feel like the only soul present.

Providenciales is the most well known of the islands and is the centre for tourism and business, it is home to the international airport which receives daily direct flights from many cities in the North America as well as a regular direct flight from Heathrow. Just a 90-minute hop from Miami, Provo (as those lucky enough to be 'in the know' call it) is an idyllic spot for a vacation. But... it's an even better spot for a vacation home; because the real secret to enjoying paradise is in knowing you don't have to leave after the standard 'six-days, seven-nights' holiday.

Ron Shaw knows this better than anyone. Shaw and his wife made their home in the Turks and Caicos, building his architectural design practice, RA Shaw Designs, on Providenciales. The business has since expanded out to several other tropical islands in the Caribbean and beyond and although he's been to many destinations, Shaw maintains his home and business base in the Turks and Caicos, and he understands why so many of his clients choose to build their dream getaway on Provo, *"It becomes very familiar and personal. When you fly back to the Turks and Caicos and you catch the first glimpse of Provo out of the window, it's more than coming home. It's like the island is a part of your soul."*

Next to the stunning location, the best thing about a vacation home on Providenciales is the investment opportunity. When you're not able to tear yourself away from reality, your home can become the destination of choice for other travellers eager to spend some time soaking up the sun on those beaches. From the perspective of a smart investor, the Turks and Caicos is almost too good to be true, not only are property values on a steady increase but the short-term rental market is booming with many Shaw designed villas renting well in 2016. *"Managed properly, your investment can bring very attractive returns, but with the added benefit of personal use opportunities."* Says Shaw, *"Most other investments, you get no pleasure other than financial gain. Investing in real estate in TCI allows you to enjoy paradise at someone else's expense."*

So what do you do if you want to make Provo a more permanent part of your life?

*"Our company name is Turks and Caicos Property,"* says island resident and real estate agent Bernadette Hunt, *"We incorporated in 2000 and I worked as an Agent and Attorney from 2000 to 2007 when I retired from law to focus on my real estate business. I continue to be the top performing sales agent in volume for the past 8 years."*

Hunt tells me that the biggest appeal to investors looking to buy into real estate is the island's stability. *"We have no capitals gains taxes, property taxes or income taxes payable on island."* She goes on to advise that investors should work with an experienced attorney and investigate their tax liability in their home jurisdiction prior to making a purchase.

Shaw's advice is before purchasing land, seek opinions on alternative sites from someone who has lived and designed in this environment for a long time. *"Check out the available sites extensively. Each shore of Provo is dramatically different. An experienced designer can quickly assess the differences and point out the features and benefits of particular sites and how they may suit the client's ideals."*





Although he acknowledges that building on a small Caribbean island can be challenging, Shaw reminds us he's been building award-winning luxury homes for discerning clients in the Turks and Caicos for a number of years. His experience in the region means he can navigate easily for his clients. *"For me Provo is manageable in that it is a small market and you easily develop relationships in the community."*

Shaw's homes are each unique to the client for whom they were built, but like the work of any artist, they share some hallmarks of his style. The seamless transition from interior to exterior living space is something his clients and fans are passionate about. *"When creating a home here it's important to take advantage of the beauty and climate of the Turks and Caicos."* When you move through an RA Shaw Designs home you may not immediately notice whether you are indoors or out. The blending of nature and structure, and Shaw's ability to create intimate spaces that capitalize on the gorgeous turquoise sea, pure white sand and the clear skies is mesmerizing.

From concept to completion many of Shaw's clients find themselves standing inside the home of their dreams after just 12 months, this is astonishing considering the attention to detail exhibited in each of his designs. With the strength of the investment opportunity, the allure of the location, and the experienced professionals available to work with you, why not visit the Turks and Caicos Islands and find out how to make paradise work for you. ■

*"Our average home is in the 3,000 to 6,000-square-foot range. Our largest is the Emerald Cay project at 30,000 square feet. I discovered that maintaining a reasonable level of quality construction is very difficult on a small island, so I created Design Build Associates Ltd. We have a staff of 8 in the design office, but many of our detailers serve as site managers overseeing the construction. Aside from the benefits of continuity, this instills tremendous pride and dedication from the staff."* - Ron Shaw, RA Shaw Designs



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