

The cool summer living issue



INSIDEOUT

Cayman's Home & Living Magazine



The colour purple

House with vibrant hues

Tropical beach garden

Plants in the sand

Bertrand Marson house

Historic Brac home

Competition

Win a luxury washer & dryer from A. L. Thompson's

COMPLIMENTARY



Photo courtesy of John Doak Architecture

The colour purple

Words: CATHERINE MACGILLIVRAY
Photos: JUSTIN UZZELL

On the spot where one of the first houses at Rum Point stood previously is a contemporary beach bungalow called Purple Haze.

"It was one of the earliest houses in the Rum Point area back in the days of (singer) Jimi Hendrix," recalls architect John Doak who was responsible for the residence's design.

Purple Haze is the name of a Hendrix hit from 1967, which in 2005 was ranked by Q Magazine at number one on its list of the 100 Greatest Guitar Tracks.

Rolling Stone magazine also placed the song at number 17 in its 500 Greatest Songs of All Time and at number two on its list of the 100 Greatest Guitar Songs of All Time.

However, the phrase Purple Haze was known long before then, appearing in the Charles Dickens novel *Great Expectations* in the sentence: "There was the red sun, on the low level of the shore, in a purple haze, fast deepening into black."

The Dickens description has perhaps the more apt connection with the Rum Point house which is literally positioned on the

edge of the beach and enjoys mesmerising views over the sea.

"The floor level is set to respect high tides and storm times, but it is also at a level where passers-by will not intrude on the panoramic ocean views from the verandah and sundeck," says Doak. "Purple Haze is perfectly square in plan. The diagonal of the square orientates the living room and is set to view directly towards the setting sun each evening."

The owners originally purchased the adjacent property called Villa Azure, which they knocked down and replaced with a three-bedroom beach home architecturally designed by John Doak.

Then in 2010, to connect the two properties, Doak began building a similar residence next door where the earlier Purple Haze constructed in the 1960s had stood.

"Both homes have a common deck area where the family-sized thatched cabana is built under the shade of some extraordinary coconut palms," says Doak. "I don't recall seeing such tall palms anywhere in Cayman."

Architecturally speaking, Purple Haze is







a beach bungalow with a verandah all the way around its perimeter.

“The continuous verandah roof allows the entire house to be opened up to the elements, even on days when it is pouring with rain, to welcome the breezes and fresh air,” Doak explains. “Rain or shine, guests can sit out and enjoy views to the ocean, sundeck or the quietness and privacy of the tropical gardens which surround the villa.”

In line with its name, the house’s exterior walls are painted a vibrant purple, with accents of the colour throughout the interior.

“The colour purple actually was a dominant theme in the design, from the exterior colour to the kitchen backsplash to the cushions in the bedrooms,” says Michelle Butler of The Design Studio, who was responsible for the interiors along with her husband and business partner David Wilson.

It is also very much an indoor-outdoor house with 20-foot wide sliding doors that disappear from view allowing a truly seamless transition from interior to exterior.

“The house is a quintessential beach house and, as such, the design had to be in keeping with the owners’ lifestyle,” Michelle explains. “The key balance for us was to maintain a modern feel while playing with the beach house aspect and a nod to the original Purple Haze. To this end, we worked with minimal, beautiful finishes to keep a clean

palette and then introduced playful elements such as the purple glass backsplash.

“To maintain the crisp, modern feeling in the house we kept the dominant finishes in light, grey or washed tones and always used very natural products. The flooring throughout is a white washed oak in a very wide plank, and the wall colour is our current favourite grey, Benjamin Moore Grey Owl. This provided a perfect backdrop to introduce the more playful elements without becoming overwhelming.”

As the essence of this house is its inside-out ambience, it’s not surprising that the main living spaces and master bedroom face the beach, with huge glass windows and doors to frame the vista.

“This house has what I would consider to be Cayman’s best view,” says Michelle. “The house was designed to open up almost completely to the outdoors and

the effect of it is breathtaking. The interior design was about complementing this view and enhancing it where we could.”

In the living room, a huge sofa is positioned to capture the views, in which the stunning seascape presents an ever-changing panorama.

“The sofa absolutely defines the social centre of the house,” says Michelle. “It was customised to be made with extra long, deep seat cushions and is made from an indoor/outdoor fabric that it is practical when the glass wall is opened to the sea.”

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The open-plan Downsview kitchen features teak, and the tile is a hand-blown glass in multiple hues of purple.

The master bedroom also features the colour purple and has an eclectic approach to furnishings.

“We wanted to make sure that the furniture was orientated to the view so the bed was custom built to float in the room,” says Michelle. “The hanging lanterns are reminiscent of fishermen’s baskets and add a nice texture to the room.”

The master bathroom is completely indulgent with a huge, free-standing tub as well as a shower, offering a spa-like experience.

There are two guest rooms, more or less the same in size and layout, completing the downstairs floor plan.

“I feel that this house eludes a one-line description of style because each room really has its own character,” says Michelle. “For example, the living room has a modern feel with a hint of retro styling, while the main guest bedroom is extremely polished and sophisticated.”

There is one last surprise, however, after climbing a spiral staircase to a loft area with cupola ceiling. This is the owners’ office which sports a large, sleek purple desk and has windows spanning each wall, with captivating 360-degree views.

Michelle’s favourite touch in the house is the collection of lantern pendants in the living room.

“We really wanted to achieve a cloud in the vault of the living room so that when the doors are all open you feel that the house is open to both the ocean and the sky,” she says. “It was quite tricky, as all of the lanterns are different shapes and sizes, so the whole team was on site with ladders, holding the lights up to determine how they should hang... it was a real bonding moment.”

The Design Studio was also involved with the landscaping for the house, working with Purple Haze’s modern theme to incorporate grasses and natural plantings along the beach sides of the house and creating dunes as feature areas.

The front beds were given over to mass planting with, of course, a special place for purple flowers. 

Contractors

Architect – John Doak

Builder – BCQS

Interior design, furnishings and landscape architecture

– The Design Studio

Custom master bed – John Bird with Marlet Design

Custom entertainment unit in the living room

– Ron Moser, The Machine Shop

Custom desk in the loft/office – Garrison Industries

Plantings and installation – Cayman Growers