

From “COASTAL LIVING”

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Amazing Caribbean Homes

Steal some style cues from some of our favorite tropical homes.

Home on the Rocks Tranquility Villa

On the remote island of Bequia, in a community hand-sculpted out of stones and shells, John and Lusan Corbett live deeply connected to the sun, wind, and sea.



Photographer Bruce Hemming, Stylist Elizabeth Raines Beeler, , Writer David Hanson

Secluded Oasis

Fifteen years—and 40,000 tiles—later, the Corbetts have brought the 7,600-square-foot house back to life, adding a new master bedroom, wraparound porch, swimming pool, baths with hot and cold water, and a terraced garden—all on their own.



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Environmentally Conscious

The closest road ends at the beach a few hundred feet below the house. Footpaths shaded by the dense tropical forest canopy connect the Moonhole houses to one another and the road below. Moonhole began in the 1960s, long before green architecture became vogue. American photographer and conservationist Tom Johnston and his wife, Gladys, bought the 25-acre property with plans of building a few modest, low-impact dwelling



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Hand-Crafted

Tom, who had no architectural training, began sculpting their home with rocks, conch shells, and any other available materials he could recycle. With the help of a few island masons, he'd build a wall here, another there, depending on the direction of the trade winds (the prevailing weather pattern in the tropics near the equator) and Tom's perception of each owner's individuality. He ultimately built 16 houses: Four are the property of his business, The Moonhole Company, and 12 are privately owned.



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Following the Leader

John and Lusan have embraced the Moonhole founders' principles of sustainability. For water, they collect rain in tanks stored beneath the house. Supply is limited to what falls during the rainy season (typically 60 inches from June to November), so the Corbetts don't waste a drop on long showers or a dishwasher. They also recycle gray water from the sinks and showers to irrigate the garden.



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Sun Powered

While the community's other homes still have no electricity, the Corbett's home, Tranquility, utilizes power generated by solar panels and a windmill on the property. "Before we added the solar and wind power systems," says Lusan, "we had only kerosene lanterns, which are not very good to read by. Now we have lights and even recently got the Internet.



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Naturally Connected

But the Corbetts don't really need cyberspace, TVs, phones, or even roads to feel connected to the world. They rely instead on the elements, like the sun, the wind, the rain, and the sea. A typical day goes something like this: "We get up with the sun. We watch it rise from the bed. When the dogs start moving, we take them to the beach for their walk. We come back and have breakfast, whatever is there: papaya, mango, salsa. We hang out a lot at the beach or the pool. We collect fresh fish, lobster, or conch," says Lusan. "Not everybody wants to live so in tune with nature," adds John, "but we do."



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Smart Positioning

The house is positioned to take advantage of southeastern trade winds. John and Lusan hand-built the porch that wraps around the living room.



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Scenic Outlook

The pool deck looks out over Bequia's airstrip and tiny town.



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Stay Here

John and Lusan rent out two homes in the Moonhole community: Tranquility (tranquility-bequia.com) and the Burke house (burke-house.com).