



Nassau and the Bahamas

Long a favorite tourist destination, the tropical archipelago is seeing a wave of new, style-savvy vacation homes. [BY PAUL RUBIO]

✧ **Though several islands** in the Bahamian chain sit less than 60 miles off the Florida coast, the entire archipelago seems to lie an ocean apart from the hustle and bustle Stateside. A laid-back lifestyle and a sense of joie de vivre, not to mention crystalline waters, white sand beaches, fish-rich mangroves, and lush low-rise terrain, have long drawn tourists to the 700-island nation's shores. Today, thanks to a flurry of newly opened or forthcoming real estate developments and refurbishments, the region is also a viable vacation-home option for design-minded buyers.

Demand is strong for such real estate offerings and proximity has something to do with that, according to George Damianos, president of Sotheby's International Realty, Bahamas. He cites the short travel time between the States and the western Bahamas—including the Abacos, Andros, Grand Bahama, and New

The Bahamas' proximity to the mainland is appealing to U.S.-based vacationers, who now have more second-home options in the region thanks to the massive new Baha Mar resort complex (page 88) and familiar spots such as Deep Water Cay (right, top and bottom) and Baker's Bay Club (right, middle).





Providence—as a major factor in this market’s appeal. Moreover, he says, Stateside buyers get “U.S. customs and immigration preclearance in Nassau and Grand Bahama—a major time-saving situation.”

Architectural options range from chic interpretations of traditional, multihued Bahamian cottages to modern penthouses within high-rises. What they have in common—and what Damiano describes as the key to the region’s real estate market—is access to the best of the Bahamian outdoors and a surfeit of amenities for the active family. “Buyers want instant options to play golf on a beautiful, challenging course, work out

in a first-rate gym, play tennis on a top-notch court, and, of course, enjoy plenty of water sports and all things ocean,” he says. “They also want a place where it’s possible to perfect the art of doing nothing, outdoors and in.”

Following are several options in the western Bahamas where second-home seekers might delight in finding something, even nothing, to do.

Baha Mar

Scheduled to open in the spring of 2015 on Nassau’s north shore, the \$3.5 billion Baha Mar resort complex will include whole-ownership residences at three of the project’s hotel properties: Rosewood, SLS LUX, and Grand Hyatt. With a total portfolio of 284 furnished residences, Baha Mar “provides a choice of lifestyle options to suit owners’ [varying] preferences [of luxury],” says Gena Conroy, vice president of residential sales and marketing for Baha Mar. “Baha Mar will position the Bahamas as a second-home destination versus a purely tourist destination,” she says.

The Rosewood Residences at Baha Mar will encompass 87 one-, two-, and three-bedroom condominiums and five four-bedroom stand-alone beach villas (three have already sold), the latter of which will



The Rosewood Residences at Baha Mar (bedroom and living room shown) will encompass condominiums and beach villas, the latter of which will measure more than 3,000 square feet. All will feature high-design interiors by Dianna Wong.



The living room of the Drake House, a two-bedroom, two-bathroom private home available for rent at Deep Water Cay.

measure more than 3,000 square feet. Priced from \$1.4 million to \$13.1 million, all of the units will feature high-design interiors by Dianna Wong, ocean-view or courtyard terraces, and amenities such as freestanding soaking tubs, carved stone vanities, and top-of-the-line kitchen appliances by Bosch, Sub-Zero, and U-Line.

The 107 real estate offerings at SLS LUX Baha Mar will consist of one-, two-, and three-bedroom condos sized between 830 square feet and 3,000 square feet. The South Beach–inspired interiors are being carried out by Avenue Interior Design and BNO Design, and prices will start at \$1.2 million and top out at \$5.2 million. At the Grand Hyatt at Baha Mar, each of the 85 condos (also one-, two-, and three-bedroom units) will be handsomely decorated with custom wood furnishings and offer a private terrace. Prices start at \$1.1 million.

Whatever their addresses at Baha Mar, all owners will have access to the resort complex’s bevy of amenities: a half mile of white sand beach for relaxing, snorkeling, sailing, fishing, and water sports; multiple swimming pools; an 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course; a 30,000-square-foot Espa spa at Baha Mar Casino & Hotel; the Caribbean’s largest casino (100,000 square feet), also at the Baha Mar hotel; and high-end retail and dining establishments, including more than 35 boutiques and nearly 40 restaurants and lounges. In addition, a dedicated concierge team will cater exclusively to residents. *Baha Mar*, 242.677.9000, www.bahamar.com

Deep Water Cay

This serene private island located just off Grand Bahama’s east end, once home to little more than a humble but well-respected bonefishing lodge, completed a multimillion-dollar renovation and expansion in October 2013. The result is the reemergence of that now 56-year-old bonefishing lodge as a world-class bonefishing resort. Among the additions are a new infinity-edge swimming pool, a fitness center, a tiki bar, floating docks, and a private 4,000-foot runway with customs clearance.

As part of the overhaul, the resort also completed two spec houses in 2013—the forerunners of a real estate development that ultimately will include some 60 three- to four-bedroom waterfront estates, as well as a number of two- and three-bedroom cottages, on the west end of the island. Priced from below \$1 million for a furnished two-bedroom cottage to approximately \$1.5 million for an unfurnished estate, the homes are taking shape in traditional Bahamian style, with archetypal shutters, overhanging roofs, and verandas. Allison Elebash, of Charleston, S.C., is overseeing the interiors (the designer for the development’s second phase has not been named), though owners of the estate homes will have the option of hiring their own designers.

Owners will also have access to state-of-the-art watercraft, scuba diving equipment, boat storage and maintenance, 250 square miles of fishing flats, internationally known guides, and just about every kind of water toy imaginable. According to Deep Water Cay’s

president, Paul R. Vahldiek Jr., the island is the ideal second-home escape thanks to its “prolific water-sports offerings” and “exclusivity and privacy.” *Deep Water Cay*, 888.420.6202, www.deepwatercay.com

Kamalame Cay

West of Nassau, the 2,300-square-mile Andros Island is the largest landmass in the Bahamas, yet it remains the archipelago’s most sparsely populated island (population 7,800). Hidden among the quiet, coconut palm-laced islets of northeast Andros, Kamalame Cay is a 96-acre private island that is expanding beyond its renowned 34-room resort to include private homes.

Upon completion, “Kamalame Cay will have 90 residences ranging from simple single-room beach bungalows to eight-to-10-room estates complete with their own docks, swimming pools, and solar systems,” says David Hew, whose family owns the private island. (Currently one-third of the 90 homesites either have been sold, are under construction, or have been built.) While the interior styling will be at the discretion of individual homeowners (with the option of full interior-design consultation from the Kamalame Cay team), the exterior architecture will fall under one of three design concepts: West Indies Thatch,



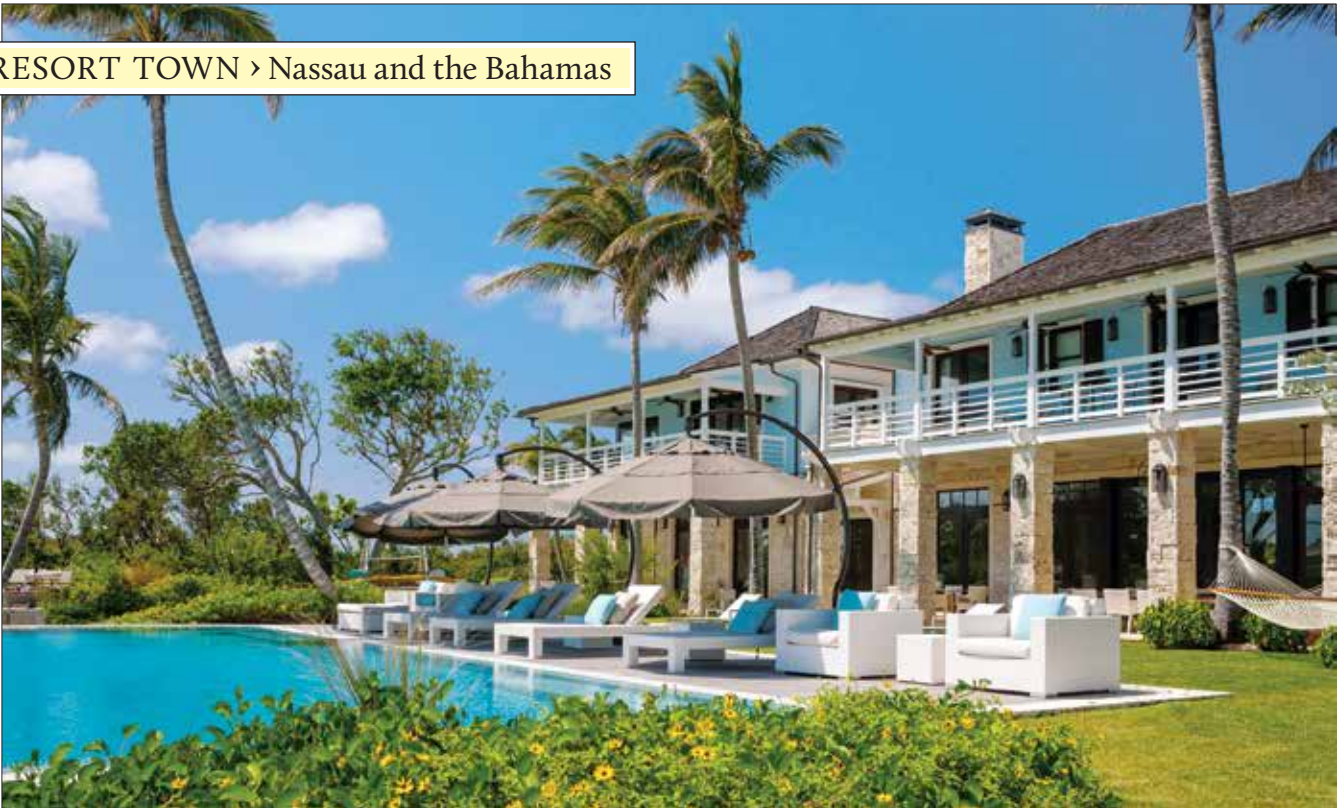
Island Colonial, or Coastal Cottage. Prices will range from \$750,000 to \$4 million.

Each homesite sits on a slice of the pristine 3-mile shoreline at the resort, where owners will have access to all of the amenities. Highlights include the communal Great House, with its restaurant serving seafood-centric delights like just-caught crispy salt-and-pepper lionfish and jalapeño-topped smoked marlin; a freshwater swimming pool; alfresco beach bars; tennis courts; a marina; and the Bahamas’ only overwater spa. *Kamalame Cay*, 305.677.6525, www.kamalame.com



TOP: The interior styling of Kamalame Cay’s residences is dictated by individual homeowners. ABOVE: The island resort boasts 3 miles of shoreline and a marina.

TOP: BEN JAMIESON PHOTOGRAPHY



KIM SARGENT

ABOVE: The residences at Baker's Bay Club are vibrantly colored, wide-balconied homes in the traditional Bahamian mode; owners are free to hire their own architects pending approval by the Club's design review committee. **BELOW:** Inside a comfortably appointed home at Baker's Bay.

Baker's Bay Golf & Ocean Club

On the quiet northern reaches of the Abacos' Great Guana Cay, some 150 miles off the coast of Florida near Baker's Bay, the exclusive Baker's Bay Golf & Ocean Club occupies close to one-third of the 1,600-acre island, largely in the form of an ocean-enveloped, Tom Fazio-designed 18-hole championship golf course. This private resort community comprises 220 custom homesites intended for single-family homes measuring 3,000 square feet to 12,000 square feet; to date, about 55 percent of the homesites have been sold. Also offered: 21 beach club cottages and 15

boathouses, which allow owners to dock their yachts just below their residences; a few of the cottages and boathouses (both available furnished or unfurnished), as well as the marina island lots, are still available. Prices range from \$1.5 million to more than \$10 million for custom homesites. Cottages and boathouses are priced from \$4.5 million to \$5.5 million.

Generally speaking, the residences at Baker's Bay are vibrantly colored, wide-balconied, colonial-style homes in the traditional Bahamian mode; however, owners are free to hire their own architects pending approval by the Baker's Bay design review committee. Owners of turnkey residences will have interiors courtesy of Discovery Home Furnishings.

According to Dan O'Callaghan, the northeast director of sales for Discovery Land Co., the developer of Baker's Bay, this community is "unique in that it's the only high-end, private residential community in the Bahamas where real estate ownership is a prerequisite to membership." With their membership, owners have access to such amenities as the Tom Fazio-designed course; club-owned watercraft; a 35-acre, 200-slip, deepwater marina; a private beach club; three swimming pools; a world-class spa and fitness facility; and of course the natural bounties of an island sandwiched between the turquoise Sea of Abaco and the cerulean Atlantic Ocean. *Baker's Bay Golf & Ocean Club*, www.bakersbayclub.com **H&S**

