



In Full Color: A vibrant home in Virgin Gorda

Barefoot luxury abounds at Baraka Point

By Jenny Cahill-Jones

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Jennifer Bogdany never intended to design and build a home in the Caribbean, but fate had other ideas. Back in 1998, the Montreal native had just moved to London where she was training as a neuro psychologist, when an impulsive vacation to Virgin Gorda with her husband changed the course of her life. “The first time we went to Virgin Gorda we got blown out by a hurricane,” explains Jen. “So we went back again within a year to finish our vacation.” On that second trip, they fell in love with the island. “We were looking for laidback barefoot luxury and Virgin Gorda was it.”

The next year the couple were back, with the idea of looking for a long-term let that would allow them to visit 2 or 3 times a year, but they weren't having much luck. “We were driving around, looking for a long-term let when we came across a sign that read ‘lots for sale’.” They immediately fell in love with the views from the headland that was to become Baraka Point, and impulsively decided to make an offer. “We bought a bottle of champagne and said to each other ‘What do you think?’” remembers Jen.



However, the parcel of land they coveted had already been sold. Almost immediately, fate stepped in to lend a hand. The original deal fell through and the couple were able to put a deposit down on the land while still on vacation. “We’re both naturally risk taking,” laughs Jen of their impulsive decision. “Either that or crazy!”

The couple’s original idea was to build a small cottage that they could use for vacations.

Somehow, over the course of the first few months, that plan turned into building a luxury mini-resort that the couple would manage as a full-time business. “It didn’t seem too terribly difficult,” recalls Jen. “It was so exciting we just got carried away with it. I grew up on building sites, so that part wasn’t daunting to me.” Even so, many people would not take on the challenge of designing their own sprawling 5-bedroom estate with no formal experience.

The home that Jen designed, Baraka Point, is formed of a series of octagonal pavilions dotted across the headland of Nail Bay in Virgin Gorda. The architecture was inspired by the round dwellings at the [Ngorongoro Crater Lodge](#) in Tanzania, where the couple spent part of their honeymoon, and the name comes from Africa too. The word Baraka is from the Swahili saying *Haraka Haraka Ha Ina Baraka*, meaning *Hurry Hurry is no Blessing*, which Jen says reflects the slower pace of life that the home inspires.



There are 3 bedroom pavilions at Baraka – each bedroom on a separate floor with adjoining bathroom. Then there’s the ‘living quarters’, a luxurious set of lounging and dining spaces that look out onto the infinity pool and the bay beyond. A separate spa and games pavilion complete the estate.

Baraka Point is not your classic all-white everything home. Each room is decorated in vibrant colors – lime greens offset by pink silk pillows, turquoise blues and burnt oranges that recall the hues of the sea and sky. The furniture and decorations were sourced from all over the world – lighting from Morocco, textiles from India, solid wood pieces from Indonesia among other places.



“The color came from Africa,” explains Jen. “I wanted the house to reflect nature. The Caribbean is about tropical colors, mangos, sunsets, azure seas.” The same applies to the outside of the buildings as well. “The orange blends in with the background – more subtle and fits in with the environment,” says Jen.

The surrounding landscape was completely restructured during the build to create a lush tropical garden, designed by Craig Collins International. The main focus is a 300ft long path that snakes around each of the pavilions, flanked by palm trees and other vegetation. “As you walk the path, you see snapshots of the ocean, almost like a camera frame,” says Jen. The path leads down to a deck that wraps around the point, and is Jen’s favorite spot on the island. “My family jokes that I should have just built the deck and pitched a tent on it,” laughs Jen. “I love spending time there, [especially] at sunset.” She also loves the master Kerala suite, with its private plunge pool and magnificent views.



Jen is not the only person to fall under the spell of Virgin Gorda. Many of her guests come back year after year to enjoy this special place, where a staff of 8 including a private chef look after every need. Some come here to get married then return again to revisit happy memories. Others bring their extended families for a week of fun and relaxation – whether that be taking to the ocean in sea kayaks, or jumping in beach buggy to explore nearby coves. Guests love the wood-fired pizzas, which are famous across the island.

Good food is another of Jen’s passions, so much so that in 2012 she and her husband opened up a restaurant in Virgin Gorda with the original chef from Baraka Point. Designed by Jen (naturally), [Coco Maya](#) is a relaxed beachfront spot with beautiful ocean views, cooking up Asian food with an

Latin twist – think ocean-fresh sushi and house ribs with a sweet chili, garlic and agave sauce. Just down the road from Baraka, it's fast becoming another guest favorite.

Jen manages to spend vacation time at the villa with her extended family two or three times a year, catching up on stories and thinking up new plan for her burgeoning business empire. One such plan dreamed up recently is to create a similar retreat in Italy, a project that Jen will no doubt tackle with the energy and enthusiasm that continues to make Baraka Point a success.

Find out more about [Baraka Point](#)

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