

# CHARLESTON LIVING

January/February 2014

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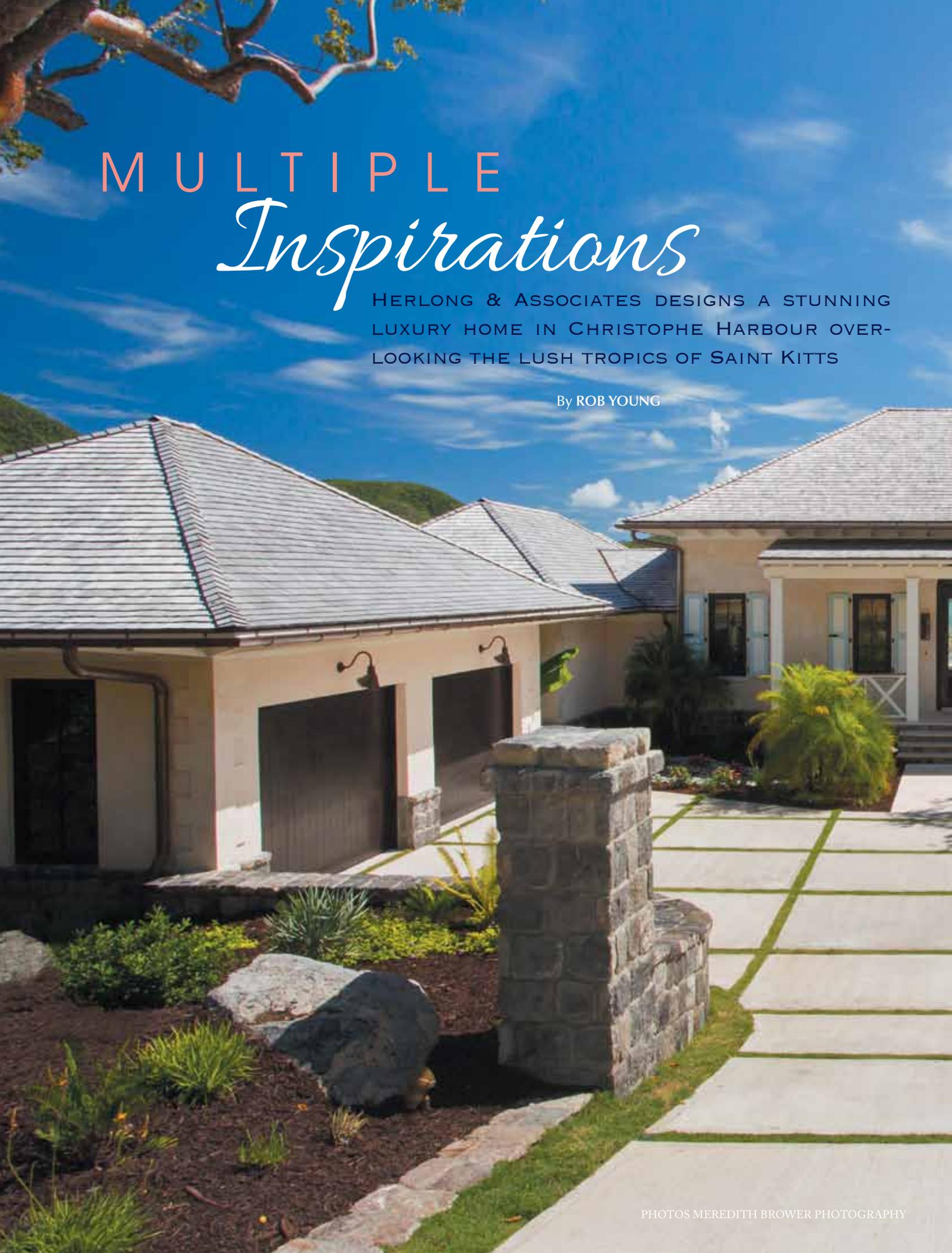
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M U L T I P L E

# *Inspirations*

HERLONG & ASSOCIATES DESIGNS A STUNNING  
LUXURY HOME IN CHRISTOPHE HARBOUR OVER-  
LOOKING THE LUSH TROPICS OF SAINT KITTS

By ROB YOUNG





The upper-level porch provides expansive views of the Christophe Harbour bay.



## LUXE DESIGN REQUIRES A LUXE TOUCH.

Nowhere is that more apparent than at Christophe Harbour, an exclusive, high-end development at the southern end of Saint Kitts. The seaside villas provide a stunning landscape: lush hillsides climbing from the ocean floors, white sand beaches, serene bays, and protected habitats spanning more than 2,500 acres alongside the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The natural surroundings of the private community complement a peaceful Caribbean enclave set with stylish homes, exclusive amenities and an exceptional, 300-berth super-yacht marina.

The island and harbour have proved to be fertile grounds for Herlong & Associates, a full-service Charleston architecture firm dedicated to coastal custom design, residential renovations and interior design. The company also is home to Flatfish Island Designs, an offshoot enterprise that provides intricately thorough and polished home plans for purchase. All told, Herlong & Associates commands an uncommon expertise for all manners of consumers.

Though most of Herlong's work is concentrated in the Low-country, Saint Kitts represents an important part of the company's business. Herlong & Associates, as led by principal Steve Herlong, has developed a number of villas on the island during the past four years. Just recently, the firm completed its first private home on Saint Kitts. Overall, the project took two years – one for design, and one for construction. "This was our first big custom house, and now we're working on another really nice custom home for a couple out of Houston," Herlong says.

One thing's for certain: the setting is splendid. With year-round, average air temperatures hovering around 84 degrees, Saint Kitts maintains a moderate, tropical climate. The proximate waters are a few degrees less, while sea breezes help keep the island cool, particularly in the evenings. In total, Christophe Harbour possesses 12 miles of coastline and six beaches. Coral reefs, historic shipwrecks and a celebrated sea turtle monitoring program give the seas additional prominence.

As with the island, Christophe Harbour retains an authentic Caribbean soul. Infrastructure already includes Hillside, Beachfront and Cardinal Point enclaves within Sandy Bank Bay. The Pavilion Beach club, surrounded by palms, stone arches and fireplaces, was opened two years ago. Additionally, the first phase of construction has started for the Tom Fazio designed golf course, which takes full advantage of the sweeping mountain ledges that tower 500 feet.

And just outside the resort in Basseterre, the capital of Saint Kitts, duty free shops line merchant centers. Offerings include crystal,



china, porcelain, gold and silver jewelry, tobacco, liquor, watches, leather goods and more. Recreation services feature boating, snorkeling and other activities.

In fact, one quarter of the Saint Kitts is classified as American oceanic rainforest, a rare ecosystem teeming with unique plants and animals. All land above the 1,000-foot range is classified as a national forest reserve, assuring preservation for decades to come.

“This is going to be an area or resort where people from the States, from Europe, from Russia and other parts of the world come to visit and live,” Herlong says. “The exclusive super yacht harbor is going to be a huge draw for the international crowd. It’s not unlike what you see at St. Barts, which is maybe 40 miles away.”

Conventionally, the homes on the island pull from multiple inspirations. “Stylistically, the influences are French island, French colonial, Dutch colonial and British colonial. You’ll see all three of those depending on the history of the island,” Herlong says.

The Herlong & Associates home was built with an eye on preserving those Caribbean traditions. “Saint Kitts was for a long time a British colony, so there is substantial British influence. So we were trying to understand and develop and respect typical Caribbean styles. There’s a touch of simplicity and elegance to it,” Herlong says.

“We drew from those ideas, but more specifically from the British colonial sensibility,” he continues. “And we not only tried to work that into the house and architecture, but we wanted to bring that into the interiors and furnishings as well.”



The swimming pool and open kitchen are perfect for entertaining; (opposite) One of two master suites.







And really, it speaks to the strengths of the firm, especially Herlong. Hailing from Saluda, S.C., Herlong moved to Charleston once he graduated from Clemson University in 1979. At first, he found work at a commercial architecture firm before branching out on his own. He founded Herlong & Associates approximately 22 years ago, the design-build firm emphasizing custom construction work. He established the firm fresh from a three-year sailing expedition with wife Susan aboard their 37-foot, cutter-rigged sailboat. Afterward, he felt cleansed, instilled with a greater admiration for nature and its influence on design.

Reflective of the philosophy, on Saint Kitts Herlong & Associates crafted a home with a refreshing mix of British colonial and contemporary styles. Located on a hillside lot, the space offers fantastic views across Christophe Harbour bay, elevated above crescent beaches. These lots typically are ideal for privacy. The home itself, contains an open, central living space with large, foldaway doors. Two identical master suites on the upper level provide extraordinary privacy. The lower level offers two bedrooms and bathrooms, and affords entry to the porch, pool area and outdoor kitchen space.

Herlong & Associates designed the home for a group of investors from the Charleston area. “They’re planning on enjoying it, going down occasionally,” Herlong says. “It’s not likely to be a full-time residence. It’s going to be for people to go spend a week or so at a time with family and good friends.”

Interestingly, too, the build team was almost entirely local as well. Charleston’s own Phillip Smith worked as the general con-

tractor, coordinating the project with RAZO Construction of Saint Kitts. Herlong & Associates team members Theresa Bishopp and Heather Allison managed the interiors and unique finishes, helping to create an aesthetic perfect for entertaining.

The rear elevation offers lots of privacy and views of the beach; (opposite) The second master suite.

“It took the skill not only of us as architects, but our full interior design staff was involved too. We had to select, source and procure all the finishes, materials and furnishings,” Herlong acknowledges. “Then we had to have everything shipped and we had to go down to the island and actually uncrate everything and set the house up for the owners. It took a complete effort from our team.”

The market seems to be growing, too. Already, Herlong has seen great interest in the home – and in Saint Kitts. “I was lucky enough to stay in the house during Saint Kitts’ annual member-guest event this fall. The house was just being finished, and we were able to host all of the member-guest group. “Everybody was excited to see what kind of possibilities are available for truly, high-end luxury living in Saint Kitts.” ■

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