



*Pioneers in architectural design in the Caribbean for over three decades – award-winning consultancy Gillespie and Steel know all about exceeding client expectations. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the luxury golf estate of Apes Hill in Barbados. By Tania Jacobs*

#### **Tell us about the development**

Apes Hill Club is truly a one-off in terms of location. Sitting 1000 feet above sea level on the island's fabled Platinum Coast – it enjoys panoramic views of both the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. A world class Golf and Polo Community, the resort also boasts the first Country Club on the island, and offers residents a superior living experience all set within the stunning landscaped environs of the 470-acre private estate.

Property options range from large estate homes and courtyard villas to bespoke land and villa packages, providing owners the opportunity to realise the Caribbean home of their dreams and all with the quality lifestyle and investment security that purchasers have come to expect at the Club.

#### **How have Gillespie and Steel assisted with the community build-out?**

We have many years' experience working with international New Urbanists Duany Plater Zyberk and Dover Kohl master planning, designing and implementing a wide range of global residential environments from urban developments through to luxury residential resort communities. Our involvement

at Apes Hill has very much been about shaping the resort's design aesthetic. This has primarily been achieved by fine-tuning and modifying design codes to accommodate new materials, equipment and technologies, as well as refining the master plan of build plots across the estate as new real estate projects are taken on. The unifier in this process has been the cultivation of a distinct brand identity for the resort – creating a style of architecture that is unique to the community. So far so good - first and foremost Apes Hill is defined by its Barbadian architectural, environmental and lifestyle heritage. That's how it should be.

#### **They say that good design should reference the surrounding environment - how has this been achieved?**

Apes Hill enjoys a privileged elevated location in the north eastern corner of the parish of St. James, and is also interlinked with the dramatic hilly terrain of the Scotland district which wends its way down to the east coast. This prime position offers spectacular east and west coast views. In fact, on some of the plots, there's the opportunity to capture both outlooks;

undulating hills cut through with natural gullies providing a wonderful opportunity to nest villas into the landscape.

Tropical design should always be about lifestyle; one that demands open spaces and natural light and ventilation. To capture the views however for east and west orientations, quite different design and build solutions are required. While a westerly orientation can offer spectacular sunsets, it can also come with long, hot afternoons backing the trade winds, which requires deep shade. Eastern orientations meanwhile

can offer an alluring sunrise; one that is often followed by cool mornings that turn into blustery afternoons and chilly nights. That said, regardless of the primary orientation of the plot, villa design will always command comfortable morning and afternoon living space, shaded external pool and BBQ decks with landscaped wind breaks, and an open-plan layout that invites the vegetation into the living spaces to truly assimilate tropical living.

#### **How do you go about personalising design when creating a home?**

Fundamental to successful villa design is a detailed initial brief; one that ensures that a client's needs and objectives are met right down to the finer touch-point details. Once a specific plot has been chosen, a site analysis is undertaken to mark out the villa orientation on the plot. Selecting the complementary external finishes usually of coral stone and coral render combined with specialist wall finishes completes the conceptual design stage. Next, is the more detailed design layout and planning stage which also takes into account any external build elements such as swimming pools, gazebos and car ports.

Customisation is key to achieving that final bespoke design. This includes all essential external architectural elements from roof finishes and door and window treatments through to wall texture finishes. Internal spaces are scoped in detail too. Styles vary from traditional classic through to contemporary Caribbean with communal living spaces, including kitchens and dining rooms playing a key role in the 'flow' process. Owners at Apes Hill are assured of a truly tailor-made design from the moment they walk through the door. It's a privilege to see a home design coming to fruition – especially when it's at one with the surrounding environment.

