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Hotel Business **DESIGN™**

HBD EXCLUSIVE: Thom Filicia on Designing for Grace Bay Club

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PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS AND CAICOS
—Marking his first interior design project in the Turks and Caicos, celebrity interior designer Thom Filicia brings his sophisticated aesthetic and celebrated style to Grace Bay Club, a luxury beachfront resort located here.

Known as the interior design expert in the former Bravo TV show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Filicia formed a partnership with Grace Bay Resorts to design the Grace Bay Club lobby and two prototype family-friendly Villa Suites, as well as The Residences, the company's first private residential micro-resort of single-family beachfront homes. The renovation to the lobby was recently completed, while the Villa Suites will open later this year. The adults-only hotel and estate will follow in 2015.

Filicia was selected to create a more unified design aesthetic across the entire property. Inspired by the classic beauty of the resort's tropical surroundings, Filicia's concepts combines new textures, dynamic colors and soft lighting to enhance the property's overall atmosphere and deliver a more contemporary experience for guests. HBD asked the creative force behind the Thom Filicia Home Collection about the design concept of the resort, which is surrounded by the shores of Grace Bay Beach.

What were the client's goals and how were they achieved?

I think Grace Bay Club's goal was to find a person who could understand the look and feel and help communicate the personality of the resort. Grace Bay Club already has great products—the hotel, the villas, the residences, their restaurant and bar concepts, and poolscapes. They were simply in need of someone to serve as a visual voice; someone who can help create cohesion across the property and tell the story of how all of these elements are connected.

Talk about the materials/palette chosen for the project. Why were these selected?

FTurks & Caicos and the resort itself influenced all the color palette and materials. The vibe at Grace Bay Club is relaxed and easygoing, and the island is full of friendly, welcoming people. I wanted the resort to feel friendly and welcoming as well. For example, the lobby is a place that someone having a pre-dinner cocktail or a guest making an appointment for a tennis lesson in their bathing suit mid-day can both feel comfortable. The materials chosen are therefore made to suit a sophisticated yet relaxed lifestyle.



Thom Filicia



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Many of the furniture pieces utilize beautiful indoor/outdoor materials in clean, modern designs that feel warm and inviting, and are at the same time durable. Additionally, the residences feature a lot of floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open right to private beaches. The furniture we chose needed to be able to stand up to the elements of a Caribbean island—salt, sand, sun—while still conveying the layered and interesting, crisp and clean aesthetic of the property overall. The design has to be sophisticated and modern, but still authentic to its location and point of view.

Were there any notable challenges during the design process?

The challenges with this project were the same as with every design project: How do we make a smart impact on the space? How do we communicate the essence of the brand and ensure that it is cohesive across all of the spaces on property?

Moving forward with Grace Bay Club, I'm excited to take on the challenge of making the property's bar and restaurant spaces feel new and fresh, while being careful to maintain the history of the product. The resort's guests love the product and how it's developed over the years, and we want to be careful to maintain that for them, while hopefully elevating the personality of the Grace Bay Club.

How did the hotel's location play into the design concept?

The location of Grace Bay Club was hugely influential in the design concept. The lifestyle on the island and at the resort is what I tried to capture and communicate through design. The landscape, waterscape, island itself, all played a major role in my choice of fabrics and materials, lighting and color palette.