

Inside Peek

The Crane Resort

The oldest resort hotel in the Caribbean adds residential components to pre-existing beach bliss in Barbados.

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A sign in the window of the real estate office at the Crane Resort in St. Philip on the southeast coast of Barbados lists a 4,021-sq.-ft. three-bedroom Ocean View Penthouse residence featuring a private furnished roof deck with plunge pool available for Week 39 (Sep. 29-Oct. 6, 2018) at a cool US\$54,695.

Lest that sound extravagant, the Crane is on a building campaign to keep up with the demand for its high-end accommodations. Dating from 1887 and the oldest hotel resort in the Caribbean, the Crane has five restaurants, including Zen, whose Japanese-Thai cuisine received Zagat's top score in Barbados for food. The resort's rooms and cascading swimming pools overlook pink-sand Crane Beach, which *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* named one of the "10 Best Beaches in the World."



Zen won Zagat's top score in Barbados for food, thanks to its "simply awesome" Japanese-Thai cuisine.

Paul Doyle, owner and managing director of Crane Resorts, a Canadian businessman who snowbirds back to his Toronto house during summers, bought the Crane out of receivership in 1988 when it was but an 18-room hostelry.



Toronto's Paul Doyle, owner and managing director of Crane Resorts.

In his original building campaign, Doyle erected gracious, elegant, old-looking blocks in a *retardataire* island style. Hotel-room interiors evoke rum-plantation great houses, thanks to their 14-foot-tall rooms with coral-dust-finished walls (the luxury finish of Barbados) culminating in tapering, plank-lined tray ceilings, and curve-topped door embrasures set into the thick walls. The carved, dark-caramel-coloured mahogany furniture includes tall-poster beds whose barley-twist columns rise from ornamental pineapple bases.

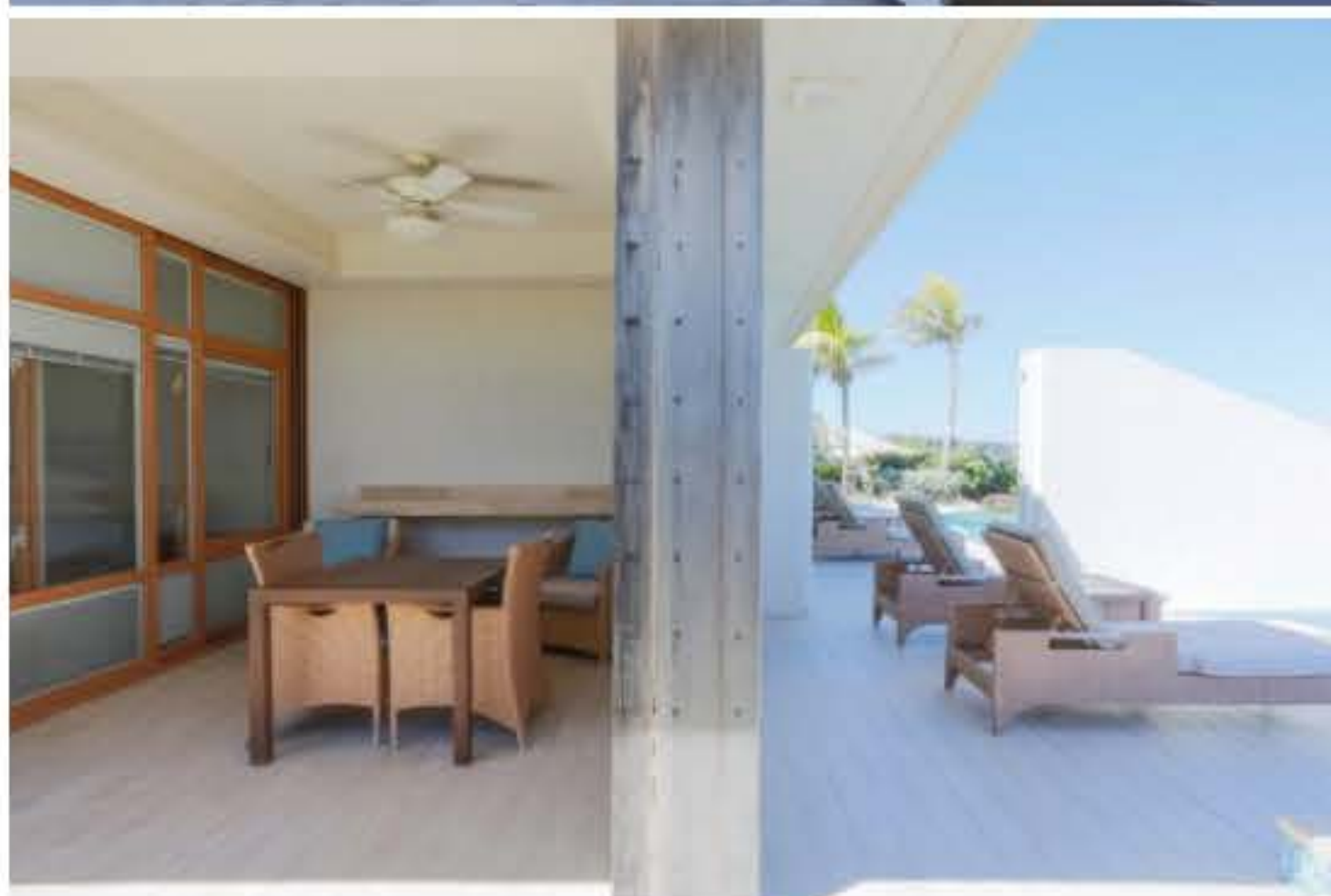


Traditional island-style Resort interiors feature 14-foot-tall rooms with faux coral walls, and tray ceilings.

What's new is the Crane Private Residences, a residential community within the Crane Resort with two and three-bedroom residences and penthouses ranging from 1,916 to 3,619 square feet. Residential interiors are in a more contemporary, transitional style, sans tray ceilings, and sliding patio doors in lieu of French doors with mullions and muntins. The reduced ceiling height, ranging from eight to nine foot six, and consequent reduced air-conditioning load and electricity bills compared to the hotel units, enhances buyer appeal. As well, the kitchens are larger and better-equipped; in keeping with the North American de rigueur modern residential fashion, kitchen appliances are concealed behind a seamless row of panels.



Phase 1's 16 residences are complete and Phase 2's further 20 residences are under construction. Ground floor residences have private pool and gardens; upper-storey units have coastal views; penthouse units have private roof decks, dining gazebos and swimming pools. In addition to the usual public elevator on each floor, each residence has its own private elevator extending from the underground parking lot directly to the foyer within the residence, for the ultimate in entrance and egress redundancy.



"Underground" is actually at grade. To optimize the narrow view corridor between the existing resort buildings and minimize excavating the coral terrain, which resists blasting, the new Residences perch above the parking basement. In an interview at the resort's L'Azure restaurant, senior architect Ian Ramsay explained the enlightened resort urban planning. "Subsequent Residences buildings," he says, "will pop out of the landscape as separate entities, but underground they will be connected in an internal loop, with all the services, such as the laundry and garbage shoots, handled from the basement."



Senior architect Ian Ramsay.

A second development, Beach Houses, at nearby Skeete's Bay, is more architecturally edgy. It will comprise 63 freestanding residences with one to four bedrooms, each set on a fifth of an acre and commanding 180 degrees of wild, dramatic ocean views from its front terrace with infinity-edge pool and hot tub. Thick masonry walls and a green roof will reduce solar-heat gain. As well, each house will be sited to blend into the landscape and be virtually invisible from the others.

"We have solar mats on the roof to heat the pools, hidden behind the roof parapet so you won't see them," Ramsay said. "Service stacks rise along the garden wall, so there are no roof chimneys."

The model home presents a monolithic, almost monumental appearance with its windowless entry façade, clad in faceted Turkish ceramic tile. The interior opens up as a surprise, celebrating indoor-outdoor living. This aspect evokes influential mid-century modernist houses in Palm Springs, such as the Kaufmann (subsequently Barry Manilow) Desert House designed by Richard Neutra in 1946, which emphasized connection to the landscape while offering shelter from the harsh desert climate by means of large sliding glass walls opening up the living spaces to adjacent patios. Barbados not being a desert, however, Beach Houses bathrooms open out to their own private tropical mini-Garden of Eden.

For more information, please visit <https://www.craneresorts.com/>. For additional images, please visit <https://davidlasker.myportfolio.com/barbados>.



Twilight at the Village.



L'Azure Restaurant features classic and Caribbean specialties along with panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean and Crane Beach.



Phase 1, Crane Private Residences.