

# AT HOME abroad

A California couple blended family history and a passion for exotic destinations when they built their house on Carriacou.

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**if** a house holds stories about its owners, Cecil and Patricia Hollingsworth's cliff-top aerie is an open book.

Filled with cherished historical artifacts that reflect their passions and diverse family history, the house overlooks the azure waters of Carriacou in the Grenadines.

Cecil's dream of living here began almost 40 years ago, when he first spotted Carriacou while on a sailing trip through the islands around Grenada. The successful businessman/entrepreneur felt drawn to the tiny island and determined to build a house there one day.

Serendipitously, he married Patricia, whose great-grandmother was born on Grenada—just 20 miles south of Carriacou. After years of marriage, and the arrival of sons Jason and Justin, Cecil finally shared his secret dream of building a house in the islands. Many spouses would have balked because Carriacou is so remote. (The journey from the family's home base in Los Angeles would take nearly 24 hours and include a 75-minute boat ride.) But Patricia didn't hesitate for a moment. "I all but had my passport ready and bags packed," she says.

The Hollingsworths found a site overlooking Sparrow Bay and showed it to Grenadian architect Bryan Bullen, who'd just opened his own firm. Bryan designs "buildings at once modern yet firmly grounded in local vernacular," he says. That's what Cecil and Patricia hoped for.

They asked Bryan to create an idiosyncratic family house reflective of their ancestry and travels. The house would serve as a getaway for the four Hollingsworths and as a vacation rental when they weren't visiting the island.

In planning the home, Bryan considered Cecil and Patricia's family histories and

"It's like a tree house with a bird's-eye view of the Caribbean." —Cecil Hollingsworth





“I wanted this house to have a connection with the community,  
yet remain private.” —architect Bryan Bullen



The Hollingsworths named the house *Sankofa*, a word coined by Ghana’s Akan people. It means “go back and take,” or reclaim your past so you can move forward. Left: Two walls in the master suite open completely to the sea. Above: Verandas and translucent walls usher in light and views.

Carriacou culture, as well as traditional elements of many island houses. “The idea was to construct a contemporary dwelling that reflects the spirit of the Caribbean—the sun, sea, and sky,” Bryan says. “The architecture reflects a history of place—where we’ve been and where we hope to go.”

While local craftsmen and artisans handled the home’s construction, Patricia and Cecil stayed in a motel, supervising the project. Over the course of 18 months, the house’s character began to develop.

A planklike wooden bridge (shown above), symbolic of a union between Asian and African cultures, opens to the street on one side and a deck with jaw-dropping water views on the other. A stone salvaged from the foundation of Patricia’s great-grandmother’s Grenada home and intricately carved wooden doors imported from India (home to some of Patricia’s ancestors) mark the front entrance.

The doors open into the kitchen and informal eating area, a layout common in

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island cultures, where the kitchen often serves as the main gathering room. The area’s translucent ceiling and canvas tarp filter light during the day, and contemporary pendants suspended from cables provide a warm glow after sundown. Wood furnishings and an eclectic mix of accessories collected from travels abroad warmly contrast the dyed concrete walls and stone flooring.

Throughout, louvered doors provide privacy while admitting breezes. When

not in use, the doors open to reveal broad views of the Caribbean and Carriacou’s undulating coastline.

Today, Cecil stands on his porch and looks out over waters he sailed so many years ago. Flags marking the edge of the property flutter in the breeze, brightly colored reminders of the dream that led him here. 🌿

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In the surf near *Sankofa*, Cecil and his sons swim and fish. Right: Living spaces extend onto cantilevered balconies looming over the Caribbean. “The decks bleed into each other but remain separate spaces,” Bryan says.

