

OCEAN HOME

Beach-Ready Blueprints

BY ANDREW CONWAY



Ask any architect how one ocean home varies from the next, and he or she will likely tell you it's all by degrees—the sun's orientation, the view, the water, the specific location, geography and topography, and adjacent sites and structures, not to mention the array of building materials being incorporated into the project.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Location: Costa Rica

Architect: David Konwiser

Principal, IKON Architecture and Co-Owner, Villa Punto de Vista, Manuel Antonio
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Most important consideration in a coastal architecture project: I think it's a crime to waste the opportunity to properly design and develop the most coveted pieces of real estate on earth. For an architect, there is a real responsibility to develop a coastal property in a reverent fashion befitting the opportunity at hand.

An unexpected or unique architectural element you've used: A detail I am pleased with at Villa Punto de Vista is within the viewless hallways that I transformed into a sort of "gallery of doorways." The effect was obtained by framing each entrance with a perimeter of Italian Bisazza mosaic tile and then cove-lighting the detail. The lighting is the only illumination of the hallway and not only produces the desired gallery effect but allows the unique colors for each doorway to designate each room, eliminating the need for name plaques or door numbers.

An evolving coastal architecture trend: The most fundamental trend overall is lowering dependence on CO₂-emitting utilities such as electricity and mitigating building operation costs. In coastal homes, this primarily means cutting down air conditioning using next-generation glazing and a more thoughtful use of sun shading, which is typically the most eco-friendly solution.

An overused element or no-no in coastal architecture: Materials that weather badly. I can't believe the number of architects still using vast amounts of exposed wood that, when not maintained with the diligence of a yacht's crew, looks 15 years old after one year in the sun.

Your favorite coastal home project and why: A project I had the pleasure of visiting recently is Playa Vik in Jose Ignacio, Uruguay, by local design legend Carlos Ott. Hats off to the man. His work is refreshingly unique and my approach to architecture is similarly inspired.

A coastline on which you would love to own a house and why: Santorini, Greece. Where else can you seemingly soar above the ocean, not to mention the lost city of Atlantis, from the rim of an extinct volcano?

A common myth about coastal architecture you've proven wrong: Thanks to seasonal storms and hurricanes, there's a paranoia associated with coastal architecture that keeps buildings from being as "liberated" as is possible when it comes to windows and doors. My solution with Punto de Vista was the introduction of cantilevered corners throughout the building, which bring the outside in like no other structural system can with a glazing solution that still protects the villa's occupants in the event of an occasional storm.

An idea that still has a client talking: Turning the nautically shaped roof over the Jacuzzi on the villa's sixth floor into a water collector. When it rains, the collector sends a tight trail of water six stories down into the reflecting pool at the villa's entrance. Our clients simply love it and don't regret booking the villa in the off-season.

A project that best represents your individual coastal architecture style: Punto de Vista's ship-like form is in reference to the fact that the villa is "chartered" by its guests and serviced by its "crew." I also wanted the tropical birds of the rainforest to be honored with the "wings" of the building. Together you have a yacht that flies gracefully over the rainforest.

I love designing coastal homes because: There is a breezy liberation of mind and body when at the sea that few other geographies can match. That said, I see an ocean of possibility in all projects when a client is open to a building becoming what the site tells us it must be.

Note: This original article has been redacted of some of its content to be related solely to the Villa. You can view the full article here: <http://www.oceanhomemag.com/October-November-2012/Beach-Ready-Blueprints/>

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