

# ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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## BEYOND *Temenos*

PARADISE FOR RENT  
ON A CARIBBEAN SHORE

Architecture by H. G. Oscar Farmer  
Interior Design by John Morton Levine  
Text by Stephen Calloway  
Photography by Bruce Buck

The three villas making up Temenos, a private rental property on Anguilla, in the Caribbean, were designed by H. G. Oscar Farmer "to be like a village tumbling down toward the water." **BELOW:** The Sea Villa. **RIGHT:** Santa Barbara Designs umbrellas line the private beach.



Island paradises come in all shapes but not all sizes; true paradises are, pretty much by definition, small. Some are really tiny. Anguilla, which lies toward the northern end of the great arc of islands that forms the Leeward and Windward groups in the Caribbean, is a mere strip of land, 16 miles long by barely three and a half at its widest point. Lying between the Virgin Islands and Barbuda, Anguilla has a flat and gentle landscape ringed with some of the finest white-sand beaches in the Caribbean. Mercifully, the horrors of commercialization have, so far, largely passed it by. As a result, the island remains a haven set in the brilliant blue ocean.

Nowadays, when we hear the words *sensitive development* being bandied about, the alarm bells should begin to ring. However, when the new development is small in scale, carried out using the finest materials and created by sensitive architects and designers and the whole scheme masterminded by a couple who understand the spirit of the place, then something truly remarkable can emerge.

Robert F. X. Sillerman, the founder and former executive chairman of SFX Entertainment, and his wife, Laura Baudo Sillerman, have long known and loved Anguilla. Their dream, elaborated over many years of visiting the island, was to build a small and exclusive enclave of villas on

a two-acre site rising 70 feet from the shore. The couple's aim was to bring some measure of prosperity to the island but at the same time to ensure that its unique atmosphere was not compromised. Appropriately, they gave the project the Greek name Temenos, meaning "sanctuary," and in June its three villas—Sky, Sand and Sea, respectively—were completed and ready to be rented.

Los Angeles architect H.G. Oscar Farmer helped make their dream a reality. Known for work that blends historical and contemporary forms, he conceived the villas as a small village set into a sloping hill overlooking Long Bay. Eschewing obvious or formal grandeur—even though the

three structures cover more than 20,000 square feet and include 13 suites—all is built to a human scale.

Multilevel but visually rising only two stories, the villas are composed of an infinite variety of brilliant white cubic elements that seem to grow out of the landscape. Pierced by tall casement windows with louvered shutters, the smooth rendered-plaster surfaces contrast with the dark green landscape. Each villa has its own

**BELOW:** The Sand Villa's sitting area is "fresh and spare," says designer John Morton Levine, who chose a neutral palette for its interiors. Honed-marble floors lead to the living area, at left, and the dining area, at right. The handcrafted wrought iron chairs are covered in canvas.






**TOP LEFT:** Farmer designed the headboard and the marble-topped writing desk in one of the Sea Villa's four suites. Stark carpet. **CENTER LEFT:** In the Sky Villa, a bath includes a glass partition that separates the outdoor shower from the marble interior. Kohler fixtures.

infinity-edge pool and a private walkway twisting and turning down to the beach. Farmer's bold geometric forms and carefully contrived changes in level combine to create an almost abstract, stage-set quality that recalls the picturesque massing of Greek island architecture.

The interiors were designed by New York-based John Morton Levine, who had worked on the Sillermans' ultramodern Upper East Side town house. He gave each of the villas a unique palette based on its name. "In the Sea Villa, I used deep-blue fabrics interpretive of the sea," explains the designer. "The Sand Villa is accented with terracotta and beige; and the Sky, the palest of blues." All of the structures have marble floors and baths, wrought iron furniture and subtle handcrafted rugs. The interiors have an elegance and a simplicity that both complement the architecture and provide a degree of sybaritic luxury—without which no island paradise would be complete. □

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"Each villa was designed to take advantage of the sloping site," says Farmer. "Breaking down the mass into smaller units created interesting roof forms and shadow effects." **LEFT AND RIGHT:** The Sea Villa's infinity-edge pool "resembles a waterfall pouring into the sea," he says.



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