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# Seven buzz-worthy designers working on Caribbean project

Posted by Kevin Brass in Lots Of Zeros, Caribbean real estate, Next Life, Over The Top, News, Eye Candy, General  
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Design by Shigeru Ban

More details are emerging about the villas designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban for Dellis Cay, a much-discussed development on a 560-acre private island in the Turks & Caicos.

Ban is one of seven top architects designing villas for the [Dellis Cay project](#), which is anchored by a hotel and spa operated by Mandarin Oriental. The first releases, 17 villas by [Piero Lissoni](#), are sold out, says Sandra Nassima, the project's design coordinator.

[Zaha Hadid](#), [David Chipperfield](#), [Kengo Kuma](#), [Carl Ettensperger](#) and [Chad Oppenheim](#) are the other designers working on different phases of the project. Early buyers include actors Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta Jones, and Nasir and Nargis Kassamali, founders of Luminaire, the Miami-based design company.

Originally developer [O Property Collection](#) expected 70 percent of the buyers to come from the United States; instead only about 40 percent have been U.S., with the bulk originating from Latin America, Russia, the U.K. and Italy, Nassima says.

[Shigeru Ban](#) designed 15 villas, each with an "overwater pavilion" that is essentially a separate house. He originally wanted the overwater element constructed on hydraulic jacks that would allow it be moved during hurricanes, but settled for a permanent structure on concrete pylons, Nassima said. The villas are priced between \$7 million and \$9 million.



The designers were given basic guidelines for the villas but few specifics, beyond that they be designed as vacation homes, not permanent residences, Nassima says. The developer sought designs that reflect the “Caribbean context”—i.e. no Tudor castles on the sand—and they must respond to the sun and storms that are part of Caribbean life, she says.

After the first round of sales, they are tweaking designs to add more internal amenities, such as additional showers, Nassima said. “Now we know what customers are looking for,” she said.

Construction on the project started in June and the first phase is scheduled for completion in 2010.

The developer is keeping a close wrap on upcoming designs. “We don’t want to show too many at the same time,” Nassima said. A villa designed by Zaha Hadid was unveiled earlier this year.

