

JANUARY 02 2018

# 15 Lessons On Island Style From An Iconic Barbados Hotel


[Save This](#)
[Print This](#)
[Comment](#)

There is much to love about Barbados — pink sugar sand beaches, warm azure waters, tropical breezes... but the island is also home to [The Crane](#), the oldest continuously operating hotel in the Caribbean. Perched on a cliff in the southeast coast in St. Philips, this circa-1887 hotel has been a magnet for stars (dating way back to Buffalo Bill Cody, who paid his tab with a gold watch, to Prince Harry, who popped by for lunch during the island's Independence Day celebrations in November). Let's break down the historic and Bajan design components that give The Crane such enchanting, enduring style.



**Author:** Wendy Jacob

**Photographer:** Courtesy The Crane

**Tags:** [Barbados hotel](#) [Oliver Messel](#) [Tropical](#) [Tropical Paradise](#) [Tropical Retreat](#)

< 1 of 16 >

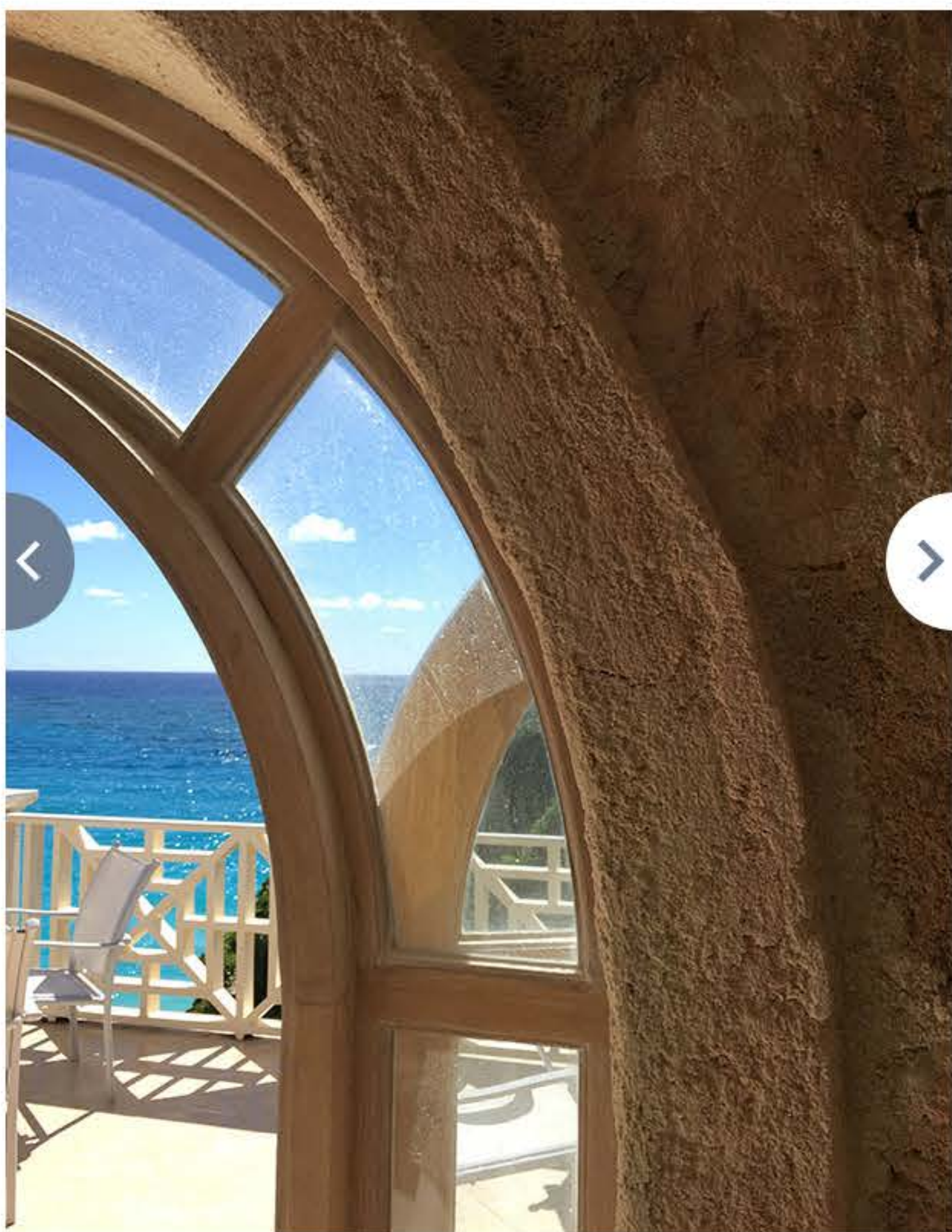


## Pool With A View

While vacationing at The Crane, actor Eric Idle invited his fellow Monty Python cohorts and they wrote the *Life Of Brian* while sequestered around the hotel's iconic pool. The pool was built in the original hotel's former parking lot (and makes much better use of the view).

**Photographer:** Courtesy of The Crane





### Coral Stone Walls

Barbados is a coral island (the sand is crushed coral, which is one reason it has a slightly pink tint). Cut from the sea cliffs, the stone is difficult to quarry but its natural heat reflecting properties helps buildings stay cool.

Photographer: Wendy Jacob

< 3 of 16 >



### Stone Surround

The coral stone walls that now surround the spa were erected in 1887 and form a dramatic enclosure that allows bathers to look across the front lawn out to the Atlantic. The open air surround is positioned beside The Crane's former carriage house, which has been converted into a restaurant and bar.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane

< 4 of 16 >



### Messel Green

Set designer and British expat [Oliver Messel](#) emigrated to the island in the 1970s to curb his arthritis and transformed several important Bajan homes. The designer was so fond of this particular shade of emerald, it's been dubbed Messel green, which can be found on projects like Fustic House, Messel's favorite house on the island. Crane Hotel owner Paul Doyle, a Canadian who sold his Toronto home in 1988 and used the proceeds to buy the hotel, notes Messel green is a go-to at The Crane, as seen on the above pergola.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane





**Bold Balustrades**

The Pavillion Room's chubby balustrades are a weighty counterpoint to the airy openwork railings that border the hotel restaurant, L'Azure, which opened in the hotel's former ballroom in 1921.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane

< 6 of 16 >



**Stylish Sun Shields**

Bajan parapets (small hoods over the windows) shield the sun's rays in the shake-shingled Bar 1887, at the heart of The Crane village.

< 7 of 16 >



**Georgian Architecture**

Over the 390 years since settlement in 1627, Barbados has seen a variety of architectural styles. The orderly, symmetrical Georgian style of The Crane's original hotel building, the Marine Villa, has endured since many Jacobean and Victorian examples were demolished in the Great Hurricane of 1780.

< 8 of 16 >



**Louvered Shutters**

A keystone of plantation style, louvered shutters allow ocean breezes to waft into the rooms while protecting upholstery and furnishings from fading.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane





**Plantation Furnishings**

Ornately turned (typically mahogany) colonial furnishings are a beloved Bajan classic, which pop against the creamy stone walls and floors.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane



**Ornate Details**

According to Paul Doyle, this style of desk is common sight in Barbados. In the original hotel, the floors and woodwork are mahogany, and other plantation-style earmarks are ornate carvings, turned legs, and brass fittings that can stand up to the salt air.

Photographer: Courtesy of The Crane



**Demarara Windows**

Demarara windows are a Bajan hallmark: they tilt forward and are often held in place by sticks to help steady them in high winds. High tray ceilings (often in pickled or limed wood), pitched roofs, and ceiling fans are also island staples for drawing and breaking up hot air.





**Shell Shapes**

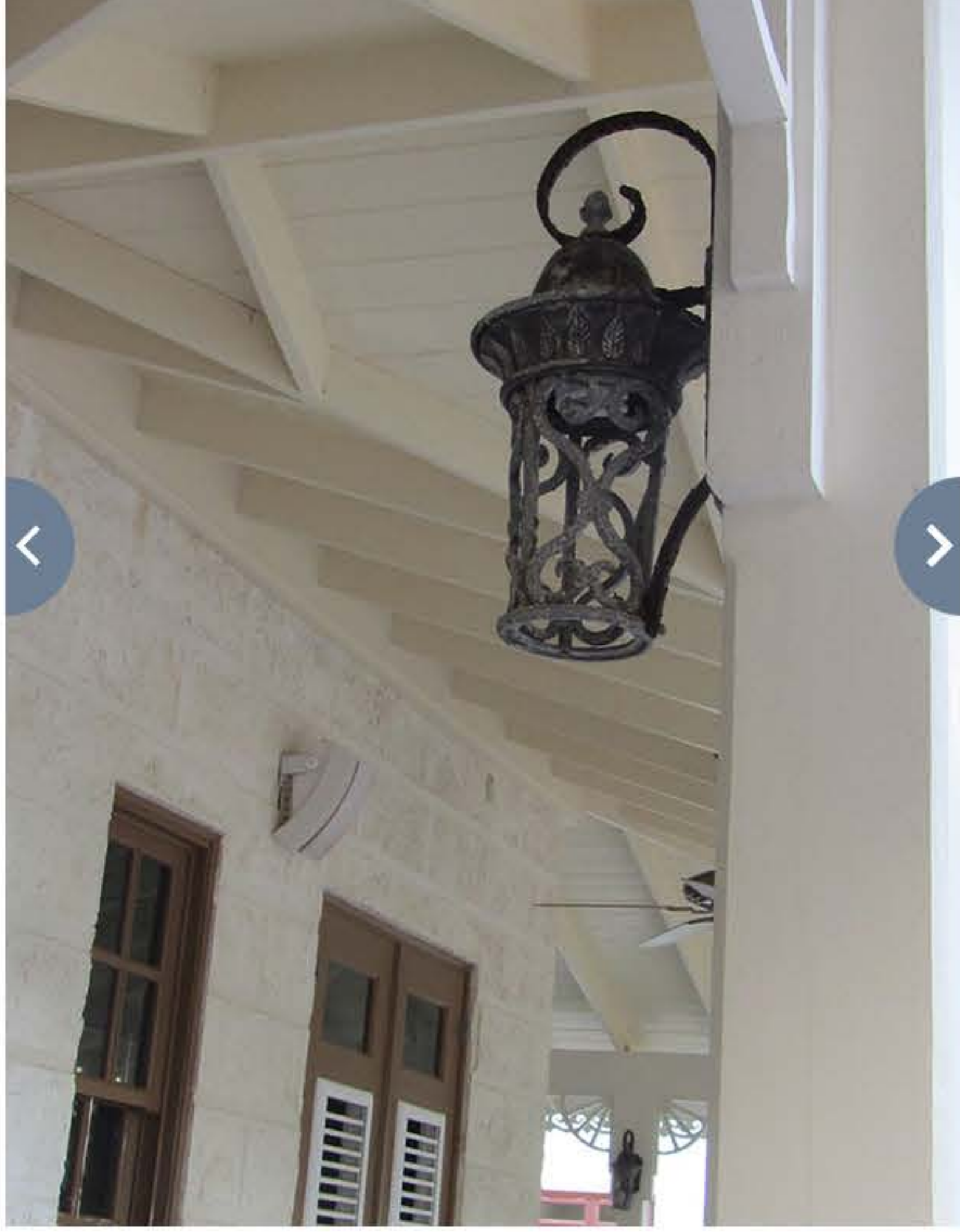
Nothing says "island" like a scalloped shell sconce.



**Open Air Bathrooms**

The Crane's new Beach Houses overlooking Skeete's Bay Beach and Culpepper Island have retractable walls that allow the bathrooms to flow seamlessly into the adjoining garden. The open-air, travertine-clad shower takes a page from the indoor/outdoor elegance of Bajan beauties like Fustic House.

Photographer: Wendy Jacob

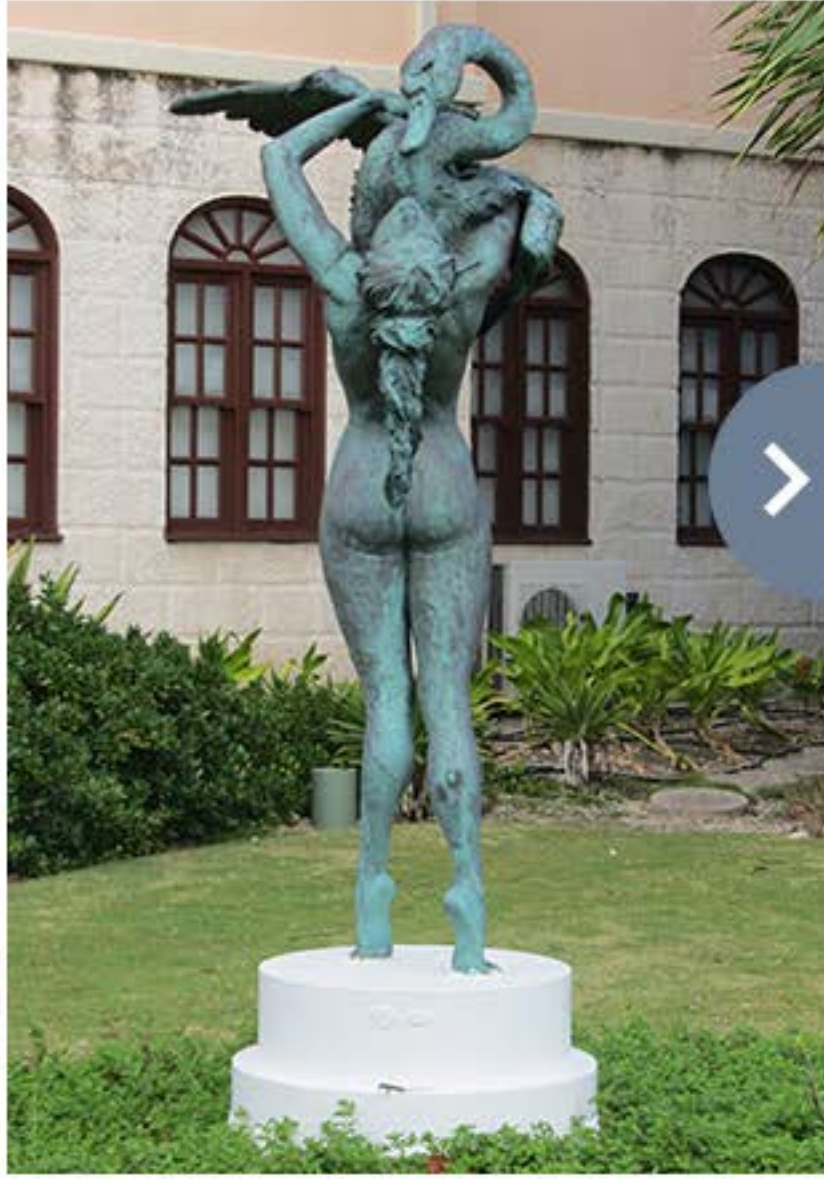
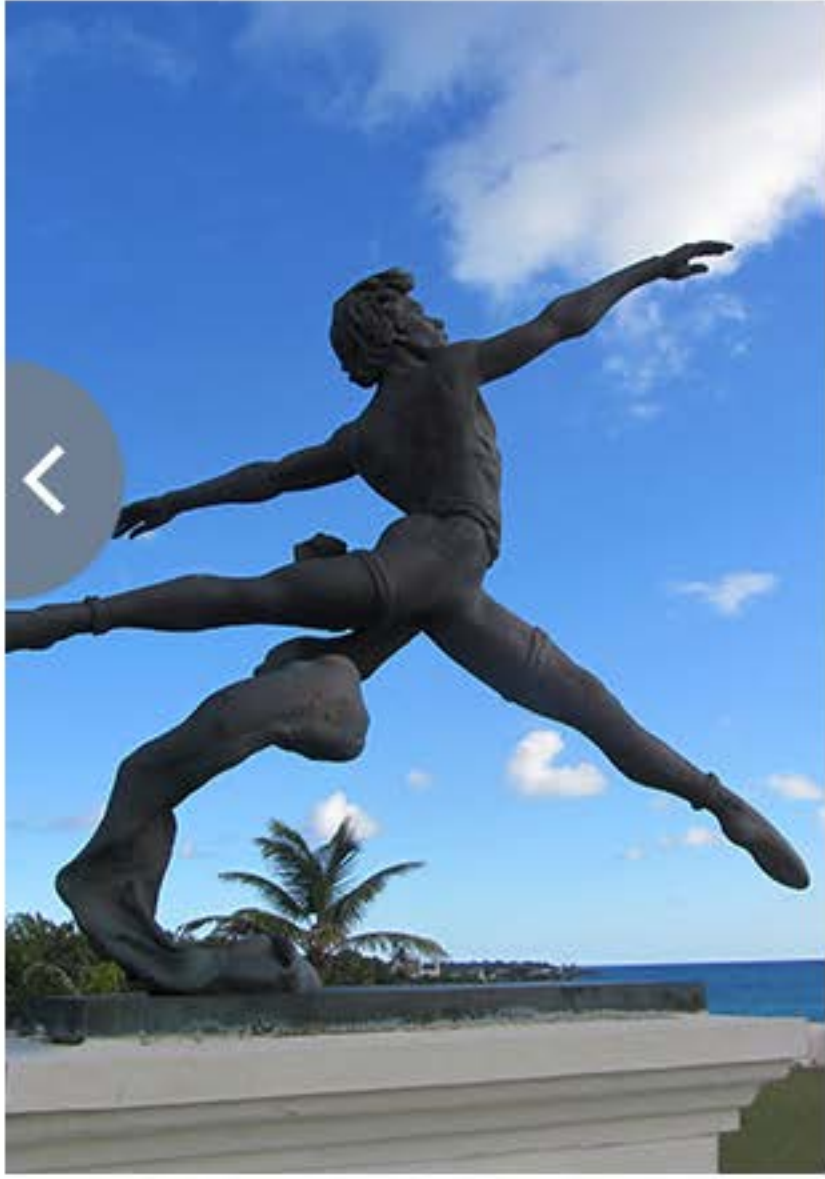


**Opulent Ironwork**

Spanish influenced ironwork, with its curlicues and tendril motifs, is seen on many Caribbean islands. The intricate designs are a striking counterpoint against the pale coral stone walls.

Photographer: Wendy Jacob





### Garden Sculpture

Amid the flora, the eye needs something to settle on, and giant succulents and fan palms can't grab all the glory. On The Crane's front lawn, an Enzo Plazzotta sculpture of British ballet star David Wall leaps towards the sea, while in the Marine Villa, a bronze depicts the mythological tale of Leda and Swan. (Tour nearby [Hunte's Gardens](#) in St. Joseph, where figures are tucked in amongst towering palms and a huge array of plants).