



| PERSON OF INTEREST |

JEREMY GUNN

By Natasha Simpson
Photos by Mike Toy and Jeremy Gunn

I HAVE TO ADMIT AS WE APPROACHED THE LUXURIOUS WEST COAST VILLA, WHICH WAS THE PLACE FOR OUR MEETING THAT MORNING I WAS A LITTLE ANXIOUS TO MEET OUR PERSON OF INTEREST. FROM ALL THE RESEARCH I HAD DONE JEREMY GUNN WAS AN ACCOMPLISHED AND INTERESTING INDIVIDUAL WITH A RICH FAMILY HISTORY AND IMPRESSIVE IF NOT INTIMIDATING PORTFOLIO. AS WE ENTERED THE MAIN GATES OF THE LUXURY PRIVATE PROPERTY ON THE WEST COAST JEREMY GUNN GREETED US. HIS DOWN TO EARTH DEMEANOR QUICKLY PUT ME AT EASE AND BEFORE I KNEW IT I WAS LOST IN THE WONDER OF THE PROPERTY AND CAPTIVATED BY BOTH JEREMY'S CHARM AND HIS STORY.

Jeremy was born in St. Vincent and lived there until he was thirteen years old. The Gunn family goes back seven generations in St. Vincent & The Grenadines and his grandmother's family owned Mustique and sold it to Colin Tennant in 1958. His mother was born in St. Vincent and Jeremy's grandfather; Sir Ronald Garvey was the British Administrator for the island in the 1940's. His mother, Lavinia returned in the late sixties and met his father Geoffrey. Jeremy spent many family holidays in Barbados visiting friends and fondly refers to the West Indies as home. At thirteen years old a curly haired Jeremy with a prominent Vincentian accent arrived in England for boarding school.

After boarding school Jeremy went onto study Engineering Product Design and worked for a year in Research & Development on the design and manufacture of scuba diving jackets in Cornwall before returning to the Caribbean. He spent nine months in St. Vincent and then went to Canouan where he worked for two and a half years on the design and development of a luxury resort designed by Italian Architect Luigi Vietti for the Northern half of the island. He then had the opportunity to return to the UK to work with David Collins, the designer behind many of the most recognized and glamorous names in the restaurant industry – from the bar at Claridge's to the Wolseley. Without even realizing it at the time, this boy from the Caribbean was about to embark on the experience of a lifetime and at the same time build an outstanding portfolio of work.

Top: Jeremy's Grandfather Sir Ronald Garvey with Queen Elizabeth on a Royal tour of Fiji in 1953.

Centre: An 8 year old Jeremy on holiday in the UK.

Left: #9 Westland Heights, Crick Hill, St. James - A private development Jeremy worked on with nine 7,500 sq. ft. villas, each with a different and unique design.



Jeremy stands in front of antique Indian doors at a private West coast residence he worked on



Private West coast ridge residence with large open plan living spaces overlooking 25m long pool and the coast.

Footprints Beach House, St James



This is where his knowledge of Product Design helped tremendously as he worked on the design and fit out of luxury hotels, fine dining restaurants and bars which included J Sheekey with David Collins, Corinthia Hotels in Prague, Budapest and Lisbon with GA Design International, and London Park Lane Inter Continental Hotel with J2 Design. He lived in Lisbon for almost two years spending an average of six to nine months preparing drawings for the project and a year on site. Job offers were pouring in as is the usual case with talented people, and one of them happened to be in Barbados. When asked what influenced his decision Jeremy said, “I wanted to come home so I took the plunge in 2005 and took the job in Barbados”.

Jeremy started Italica Architettura & Design Inc in Barbados and is the company’s senior Designer. Italica Architettura & Design Inc has been involved in a substantial amount of both Design & Build as well as Design projects at all levels of size and budget. They have worked on an expansive list of luxury villas and condominiums including projects on Royal Westmoreland and Sandy Lane Estate. Jeremy however did want to emphasize the fact that he works on all sizes and design styles of projects with varying budgets and is currently also working on a 2,500 sq ft three bedroom contemporary home on an elevated lot overlooking South Point and Oistins Bay. The design is very clean lined with a mixture of textures and finishes such as coral render and natural unfinished timber.

As I was interviewing Jeremy, the words that kept coming up were “details or detailing”. I asked him to explain exactly what this meant and it was clear that simple things that make a home are often overlooked by the untrained eye. According to Jeremy “Details are the elements which give the completed project individuality.” Most often he will work with architectural plans and elevations and then decide for example, what sizes and finishes to use for hardware, joinery and ceiling details, lighting and tile layouts. Not only does Jeremy make the concept fully functional but also aesthetically pleasing. During the visit to one of his latest projects his talent and keen eye for detail was evident. The Arebescato marble slabs in the master bathroom

He has worked on luxury hotels and fine dining restaurants in Prague, the UK, Lisbon and Budapest. Jeremy makes the concept fully functional but also aesthetically pleasing.

had been ‘book matched’ cut in a technique that the floor to ceiling tile matched up perfectly, in a guest bedroom the air condition unit had been set into the wall that it was almost unrecognizable and the antique Indian doors where fitted and hinged with modern hardware that made the doors functional.

Apart from his educational accolades and portfolio of incredible properties what is also impressive is Jeremy’s ability to work and communicate well with people involved in the project. While this may seem obvious, the ability to maintain good relationships with both clients, project members and staff can at times be challenging but it is imperative in the completion of a successful project.

Jeremy’s versatility and diversity can be seen not only in his ability to work on jobs of different sizes but in his choice of social activities. He describes that a typical Friday night could be at somewhere like Drift Lounge on the West Coast drinking cocktails and end at Chris’s place in Gibbs for ribs and beer. He admits that it is not so much the place but the people that count.

Jeremy Gunn is an incredibly talented and experienced individual whose attention to detail elevates any project he works on regardless of size or budget. His personality and cultured background make him increasingly interesting and easy to be around. One of my favourite facts about him may be inconsequential when it comes to his design and details background but was indeed very interesting and unexpected. When asked about his taste in music, he answered saying it is an eclectic mix - very much like his design style, adding that one of his favourite albums was Buju Banton’s Til Shiloh. Jeremy is an accomplished, interesting and impressive man and far from intimidating. It’s fair to say that he is most definitely a person of interest.

Q: What is your fondest childhood memory?

A: Holidaying in Bequia with family and friends. The journey always started with the seemingly chaotic scenes at the Kingstown port getting onto the Grenadine inter-island schooner Friendship Rose. Always a mad rush to load one more thing on board before casting off for the lovely sail south to Bequia with the exciting possibility of seeing dolphins or even a whale.

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Home in Gables Estates, Miami, Florida where Jeremy was the lead consultant designer on all finishes, fit out and detailing.

Q: What projects have you been working on?

A: Just completed is Footprints Beach Villa on the West coast. Previously a Spanish styled building it was completely transformed into a contemporary, luxury beach villa. It has the most stunning elevated views through tall palm trees of the beach and vibrant colours of the sea. The interior design was carried out by Kelly Hoppen from the UK which will make this a very unique residence.

Q: Who or what has been your greatest design influence?

A: In the Caribbean, we have a tradition of light, open and airy spaces using local materials which influence me in all design projects, sometimes in new and novel ways.

Q: What is one thing you would like to see implemented in Caribbean homes?

A: A very simple change of enlarging windows in bathrooms. I recommend as much natural light and cross ventilation in a bathroom as you have in other larger rooms.

Q: Where would you suggest that people splurge and save in building or remodeling a house?

A: Splurge on doors, windows and landscaping. Doors and windows are so important in providing light and ventilation and now, more than ever security. Good landscaping takes a nice house and makes it a great house. Save on floor finishes such as porcelain instead of marble.

Q: Could you share one of your design secrets or rules with us?

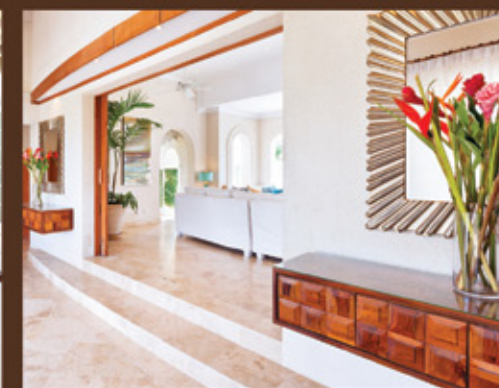
A: Design what you need and not what you want. A smaller home with money spent on better finishes and fit-out is far better than a large home with a multitude of unused rooms and spaces.

To contact Jeremy call him on 1 (246) 256-1272 or email him at jeremy.gunn@italicadesign.com visit www.italicadesign.com

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