

# TIMES OF THE ISLANDS

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## NEW DESIGN

Same In-Depth Content

Added Features

NORTH CAICOS Development

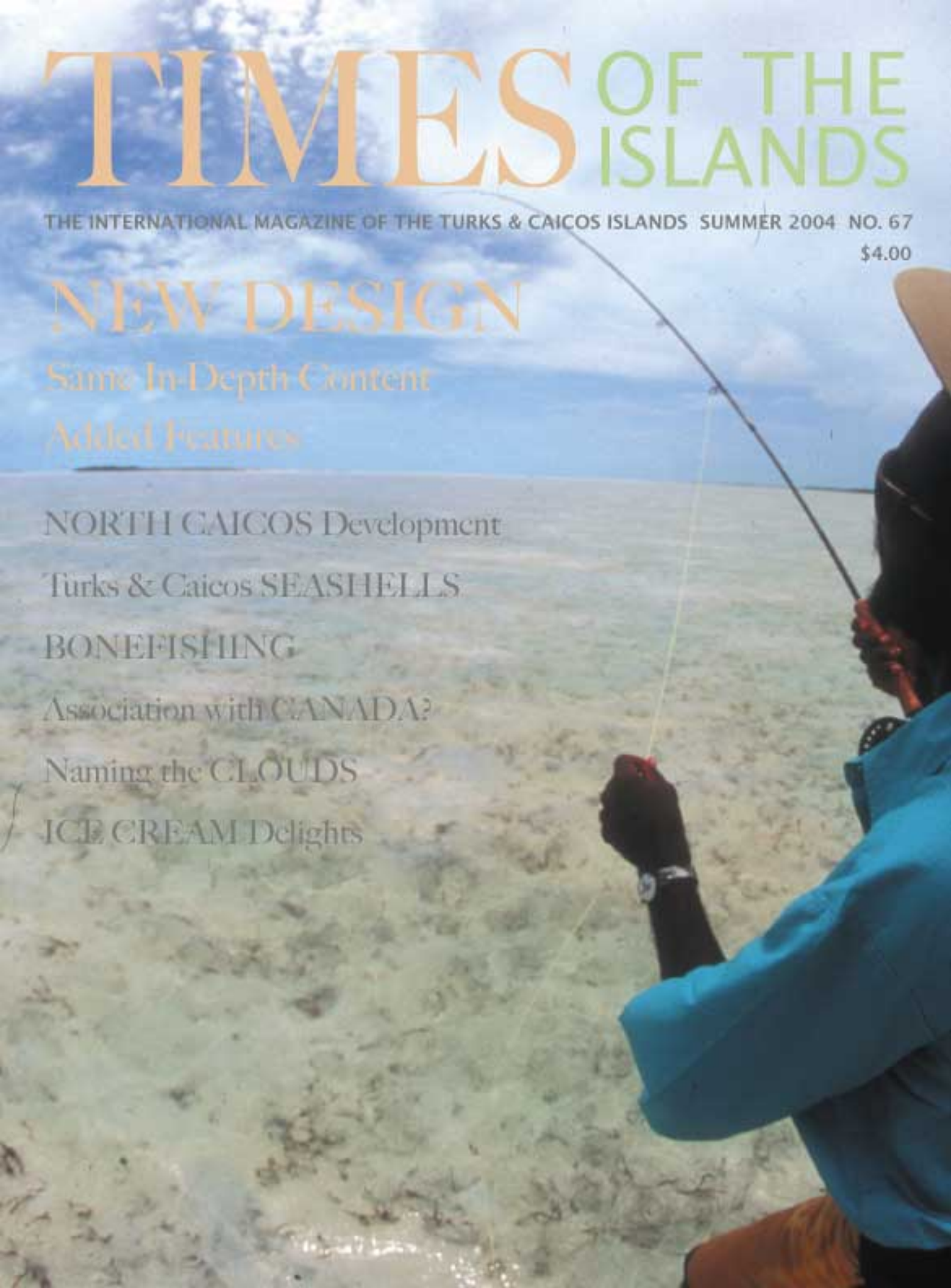
Turks & Caicos SEASHELLS

BONEFISHING

Association with CANADA?

Naming the CLOUDS

ICE CREAM Delights



Q Is there an architectural style unique to the Turks & Caicos Islands?

A With the rapid pace of development of the Turks & Caicos Islands, particularly on the island of Providenciales, it is not surprising that the traditional architectural landscape is in a process of dilution. The local architectural “vernacular” (indigenous or traditional architecture of the region) is giving way to development financed and driven by foreign investors, who each bring their own idea of an appropriate style of “paradise.” However, there is a growing list of local architects and artisans who hope to reverse the trend of dilution.

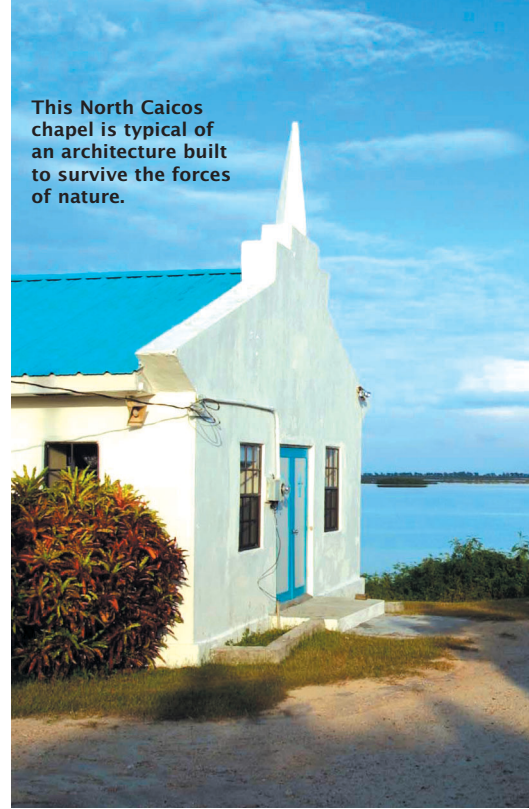
According to Simon Wood, founder and president of SWA Architects, the islands can be split architecturally into two historically separate camps defined by the dominant industries that once prevailed. The vernacular of the Salt Islands, which were settled by industrious and relatively wealthy salt traders, has its roots in the rich architecture of Bermuda. Fine examples of pure Bermudan architecture can be found in Salt Cay (White House) and in the

thick white walls, sculptured gateposts and kitchen fireplace chimneys of Salt Cay and Grand Turk. With the TCI being warmer than Bermuda, porches, decks, verandas and operable louver panels were added to provide shade and ventilate the buildings.

The vernacular of the Caicos Islands, which were settled by relatively poor plantation owners, developed from an architecture of necessity. Buildings were constructed only with locally available materials and were purely built to survive the strong forces of nature — namely sun and strong wind. These parameters gave forth an architecture of stone: short in stature, very basic and heavy with small shuttered window and door openings, with typical features being the gabled roofs and little or no overhangs to the eaves.

SWA have always espoused a dutiful respect for the architectural heritage of the Islands, believing that this approach is necessary to maintain a “unique sense of place.” Over the years, they developed several residences following this phi-

This North Caicos chapel is typical of an architecture built to survive the forces of nature.



losophy. More recently, in response to increased desire among commercial developers for a more progressive and modern architecture, SWA have taken their design philosophy and language to a new level. They affectionately refer to this newborn style of Architecture as “Turks Island Modern” or “TiMo” for short.

TiMo in its essence is a collision of the past, the present and the future. This self-imposed style

SWA ARCHITECTS



This old kitchen fireplace chimney is an example of the vernacular of the Salt Islands.



The Scotiabank building on Providenciales represents the TiMo style of architecture created by SWA Architects.

SWA ARCHITECTS

blends the traditional forms of the local vernacular (heavy white-washed walls, steep pitched gable end roofs and a distinct lack of any elaborate or superfluous decoration) with modern materials and construction methods (glass, steel, aluminum, curtain walling and cladding). Traditional corrugated roof sheeting can be used as always or substituted with the more sleek lines of standing seam roof paneling.

Set against the TCI's typically cloudless blue sky, the resultant architecture is one of clean lines and simple forms that stand in stark, yet complementary, contrast to the vivid beauty and deep colors of the environment. The

At Graceway House, TiMo blends traditional forms with modern materials and construction methods.



SWA ARCHITECTS  
picture is then completed with native style landscaping and traditional stacked stone walls that serve to soften and “ground” the buildings.

Blending TCI's unique historical architecture with SWA's TiMo creates a modern architectural style that is uniquely “Turks and Caicos.” ☺