



Punta Perla – An Approach to Design

An Architectural Vision

The converting of natural land into an urbanized resort area inevitably implies a process of creative destruction and extraction. Not only are elements of the natural environment removed or forcefully relocated, but local natural resources are used and/or manipulated to make up part of the construction and decoration of the resort area. Although inherently and initially violent for the existing environment, such a process does not necessarily mean pervasive or long-term damage. In fact, when carried out with coherent and systematic planning, the implantation of an urbanization of this type can generate a positive symbiosis between the natural surroundings and the newly implanted community.

In the case of tropical island urban developments, several requirements are elemental in order to maximize the benefits emanating from a symbiotic relationship of this type: the effective and good use of different species of flora and indigenous plants; the necessary understanding of water volumes, basins and rain levels; a thorough study of geological conditions; and a rigorous familiarity of the marine environment. Carried out correctly, these actions permit the creation of an organic vegetative system that foments the necessary interactions between pre-existing natural space and the projected new habitat in a sustainable and balanced way.

Such considerations are particularly essential in the Punta Perla Caribbean Golf, Marina and Spa development, which aims to create an environment that is faithful to the immediate landscape yet that is accessible to visitors, most of which are not normally accustomed to the native surroundings. Indeed, Punta Perla has been conceived as a living organism that strives to honour the flowing and graceful nature of the landscape and that seeks to give ecological issues the utmost importance in all facets of planning¹.

From a design perspective, this has translated into a development that is ordered in the form of various habitable amoebas interconnected by roads of varying circulation velocity and with a diversity of types of interior movement (pedestrian, jogging, golf carts and minimal vehicle transport). In terms of construction, this means the preferential use of natural materials – many of which are native to the land – that are adaptable and resistant to the local climatologically conditions, ones that emanate from sustainable sources or ones that do not

¹ Seen from overhead the residential community layout resembles the form of a typical Caribbean plant, the sea grape. Symbolically, this design shape speaks to the importance given by the architects and other designers to the local environment and its organic characteristics.

harm the local environment, and ones that enhance the overall beauty of the urbanization. Lastly, with respect to planning, this signifies the proper study of viable long-term energy, water, and waste management options so as to incorporate the concepts of efficiency, recycling, and sustainability in as many aspects of the operation and functioning of resort community as possible.

In sum, the understanding of and respect for the natural environment serve as guiding principles for both design and construction, with care for the native surroundings and its resources taking a place of equal importance alongside any development consideration.

Influences on Planning and Design

The Punta Perla Caribbean Golf, Marina, and Spa Resort represents an attempt to incorporate luxury, comfort, nature, and balance in the design of a residential and tourist community that strives to respect and live in harmony with its beautiful and engrossing surroundings. Indeed, the natural environment of this gorgeous and inspiring part of the Caribbean has been the principal element of creative inspiration. The design has also borrowed insight from important resort and residential designs in places like Bali, Fiji, and Bora Bora that have perfected the concept of tropical gardens in which man-made structures blend perfectly into the local surroundings without disturbing the natural beauty, charm, and health of the environment.

The final design is the result of numerous visits to the Dominican Republic and the land where Punta Perla will be located. In addition to extensive information taken from visits with important design, engineering, and planning experts, land explorations and overhead helicopter viewings of this breath-taking piece of the Caribbean have given the architects the material from which they have sculpted their final overall design for this community.

The Rationale for Key Elements within the Resort

Punta Perla has been conceived as a sustainable and all-encompassing living paradise that stands out from other impressive resorts of the region. This creative approach has naturally required the incorporation of series of recreational and business elements that complement the everyday demands of the residential and tourist communities that inhabit the resort. But more than inspire a series of facilities and services that offer diverse options for a luxurious lifestyle, the guiding design concept has pushed both designers and developer to create unique conditions geared towards promoting wellness and balance.

The emphasis on wellness is not only exemplified by a diversity of sports and recreational installations and opportunities, but by the resort's spas and medical services, the latter of which will be established to treat a wide range of ailments as they occur and to promote lifestyles and health programs that focus on aspects of prevention. The idea for the incorporation of a dolphinarium, for example, stems from this mentality of promoting wellness, as this type of installation can and will serve, among other things, as a therapeutic tool for children of special needs. The emphasis on ecological sustainability within this large resort community is another example of wellness, as the favouring of a healthy natural environment at the macro level sets the tone for what healthy and responsible living can and should be for the community's residents and visitors.

Balance principally results from the effective and coherent meshing of modern, luxury installations and services with the natural tropical environment and all that is inspired by it, including resort design and planning. It is also the product of a great gamut of leisure and recreational options available for the visitor – options that inevitably inspire a mixture of

moments of relaxation complemented with spaces of fun-filled and personally enriching activity.

Through both wellness and balance, the visitor may ultimately enjoy disentanglement from the daily stresses of life. Indeed, Punta Perla, through its various resort offerings, strives to provide a truly unique vacation or living experience, something that implicitly translates into a healthy disconnection with many aspects of our daily lives in other parts of the world.