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The Futuristic Fairmont

The historic hotel property gets a very contemporary $70 million makeover

It has sex appeal. It's not often you can say that about bricks and mortar, but somehow you can it about the first phase of the redevelopment of the Fairmont Hamilton Princess.

Smooth lines, lots of light, modern furniture, open spaces, luxury – it's all there. It oozes class and quality. Somehow, even the new marina has got something special about it.

Phase One of the redevelopment of the hotel involved a complete refurbishment of the Poinciana Wing. the building of a marina capable of berthing (and providing services to) millionaires' super-yachts, and a new restaurant.

Now complete, it has transformed what was a slightly down-at-the-heel part of the hotel into a modern, luxurious, resort-style complex – a place where the visiting businessperson will want to bring the family.

Architects BotelhoWood were the inspiration behind the designs for the development, which, due to its complexity and extremely tight timelines, engaged more than half its staff.

Architect Ted Wood said: "The starting point was to take a successful but run-down business hotel and try and make it appeal to a wider audience, such as spouses and children of businesspeople, to make it more resort-like. It was a joint idea – the idea of the resort came from the owners and we ran with it."

The western side of the hotel was closed in the winter of 2014 but the plan was always to have it – and the marina – open in time for the tourist season this year, putting significant pressure on the contractors, especially as some parts came from as far away as Sweden.

BotelhoWood partner Jason Mackertich said the work on the Poinciana

The 1609 restaurant helps take the hotel away from Pitts Bay Road and puts the focus firmly on the waterfront.

wing involved taking out solid walls and replacing them with glass to capitalize on the water views. The rooms have had a complete makeover, with top-of-the-range accessories and wood flooring.

Some rooms have been merged into two, and if you want to pay $3,000 a night you can enjoy a two-bedroom, two-bathroom room which directly overlooks the marina, restaurant, and a stunning infinity pool.

Mackertich added: "It was about taking the hotel away from Pitts Bay Road and making it focus more on the waterfront.

Phase Two of the renovation is well underway, leveling the landscaping and opening up the central core of the building to the harbour views.

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Would like to congratulate Hamilton Princess Hotel on the recent completion of Phase 1 of its redevelopment.

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The 10-foot-deep breakwater walls are built on steel piles reinforced with galvanized reinforced concrete cages.

"We saw it as a missed opportunity. We have one of the most wonderful harbours in the world. We just gutted it. We are very proud of it, very happy. It is amazing to be involved in something that is huge for the whole Island."

And Wood added: "The owners, the Green family, like to do things properly. No corners have been cut and all the proper materials have been used. It has been built properly. It looks good and it works."

There was a very tight timeline to get the development done in time for the new tourist season this year. With so much going on at the same time, BotelhoWood had seven or eight staff working full-time on different aspects.

Everything had to be carefully planned – the furniture had an 18 week delivery time, the pile caps and precast elements for the marina were brought in from Virginia, US, and the smaller docks inside the marina came from Sweden, involving a 13-day crossing.

Mackertich added: "The Green family bought the hotel in 2012 and within 12 months we had prepared the master plan. Things had to fall into place and as phase one was under construction we were designing phase two."

The need for speed was perhaps felt most in the marina because of the complexity of the project. BotelhoWood's Gary Ince was the job captain and Dennis Correia, who runs Correia Construction, was in charge of getting the marina built.

It may look like any other marina, but it is not. If they gave a five-star rating to marinas, this would surely get five stars. It has one wi-fi station with three routers, the breakwaters are 14 feet wide, and there are solar powered cat's eyes to act as a guide at night.

It is custom designed and has 58 designated berths to accommodate pleasure craft and tournament fishing boats ranging from 30–100 feet in the 40-foot-deep protected breakwater, with provision for super yachts around the harbour side of the breakwater.

The berths are protected by 10-foot-deep breakwater walls, all built on steel piles reinforced with galvanized reinforced concrete cages. The breakwater is higher than any other in Bermuda for increased protection.

The marina is built in an L-shape with the entrance from the southeast corner. It has two T-shaped 10-foot-wide floating concrete docks inside making it a very stable and private area.

There is also a visitor dock facility on the east side, comprising a pier breakwater and a floating dock for local tour

BotelhoWood partner Jason Mackertich says "we are very proud of it, very happy".

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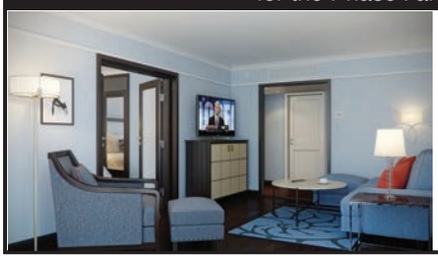

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The smooth lines and open spaces of the new marina, pool and restaurant complex.

boats and short-term visiting boats.

It is supplied with integrated potable water, custom electrical services and sanitary pump-out stations. It also has infrastructure built in to provide supplying fueling stations should the need arise in the future.

Safety features include a lighthouse and beacon with navigation lights for safe access, emergency buoys and fire extinguishers, and a pressurised fire hydrant system to cover the entire complex.

The smallest 30-foot berth concrete fingers weigh 8.3 tonnes and the largest 75-foot berth concrete fingers weigh 19 tonnes. With A Dock at 350 tonnes, B Dock at 140 tonnes and C Dock at 160 tonnes, excluding piles, there is 1,000 tonnes of floating docks and fingers.

The East breakwater is 300 feet long, the South breakwater 500 feet and the East Pier 185 feet, and the mooring bollards have a breaking strain of 10–50 tonnes and can support mega-yachts. The breakwaters are built on a total of 126 piles driven to a depth of 140 feet. A total of 37 piles support the area, which is home to the 1609 restaurant and the marina offices.

Ted Wood, partner in the firm of BotelhoWood Architects, who is behind the designs for the development.

"We started designing it about two years ago," said Correia. "It was a collaboration with BotelhoWood and the engineers Entech."

To speed up the building process, the pile caps were precast and made in Virginia. "It was like a Lego set to make it

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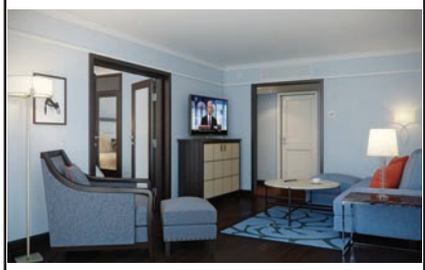

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go together quickly. We poured a lot of concrete, but the aim was to start in January and finish in August this year. It was much quicker with precast," said Correia.

Ince added: "Every 20 feet, there are two piles. Dennis came up with the idea of having a template that is repeated along the marina. They would do one part and then the electricians and plumbers would follow behind.

"In terms of design, it was very complex. In every slab, pile caps, there are 13 conduits housing water, electricity and sanitation and Internet connectivity". At each berthing spot, there is a pedestal giving access to the water and electricity.

"It was quite an aggressive and ambitious programme because it had to fit in with the construction of the restaurant and the refurbishment of the hotel rooms," added Ince.

In addition to the visible makeover, considerable work has gone on behind the scenes. The owners are investing $6 million a year over three years to make improvements to the back of house facilities such as new fire and sewage pumps.

If it is like the redevelopment of the hotel so far, it will ooze sex appeal.

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