



PORTRAIT BY ART PASQUALI

Neville Scott:
The man with the vision behind
The Barcadere.

THE BARCADERE

A New World-Class Landmark for Cayman

By Iris Stoner



Looking back on the evolution of his idea for The Barcadere and the George Town Yacht Club, Neville Scott is quick to point to a glaring irony.

“A huge portion of the world’s pleasure yachts, 70 percent as a matter of fact, are registered here to the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry and they all say ‘George Town’ across the back of them.

“Yet, there was no George Town Yacht Club. It seemed a little bit of an anomaly to me,” Scott says. That observation led him to form the yacht club as a limited liability entity.

Of course, he is well placed to opine on such things. He has grown up in the marine environment as the son of Anthony Scott, who with his brother, Stanley, founded Scotts Marine in 1975.

In fact, it was his desire to expand that company, of which he is now Managing Director, that led to the plans for The Barcadere, a full-service marina, the likes of which have never before been seen, or possibly even imagined, in Cayman.

Calling Scotts Marine the “impetus behind the entire project,” Scott explains: “About 10 years ago, I saw the need to get Scotts Marine from its current location where it’s kind of hidden away behind AL Thompson’s and bring it down to the waterfront and bring it to the next level, so to speak. It was started by my father, and it’s my responsibility now to make it bigger, make it better.

“So there will be our marine showroom, which will be very large by

any measure, not just by Cayman standards. We’ll have an indoor boat showroom and a chandlery as well as a service center in the back side of the building. And we’ll be able to pull boats out right here, pick them up, service them and put them back in the water, and send them back on their way.”

While Scott will happily discuss all of his plans for Scotts Marine, he gets truly animated when talking about The Barcadere, which comes under the remit of sister company Scotts Landing. It’s clear how much time and thought he has devoted to developing the marina, starting with doing his homework.

Ask him about the history of the original George Town Barcadere and, without so much as a pause, he will accommodate. And maintaining links with the past as he plans for the future, is a recurring theme.

“I like to remind people of the historical significance of the site, especially from a maritime perspective, to the Cayman Islands. The turtle crawls were out here. You’d bring the turtles from across the Caribbean and store them here for butchering and processing. The turtle soup factory was right down the street here in the vicinity of where CUC (Caribbean Utilities Company) is.

“The old PBY aircraft (flying boat) would fly in and land just offshore and moor just offshore and then people would come in by a little skiff and get off and they’d clear Customs and Immigration.”

He points to a series of photos that he copied and has displayed on a wall in his office. “And here you

see the Commissioner arriving in this one photograph in what was then I’m sure great pomp and pageantry. That was the first airport; this, right out here, was the airport. That same aircraft (the PBY) was flown by Owen Roberts, who the current airport is actually named after.”

He continues, his enthusiasm building. “As a matter of fact, there is still one of those aircraft that sank out here and you can, if you were so inclined, with a mask and snorkel, take a look at.

“The site itself has a great deal of history. I’m very cognizant of that and I’m constantly trying to impart that knowledge to people, and it’s also informed my architectural design for the place. I’ve tried to take what is traditional Caymanian/Caribbean-style architecture and translate it, I suppose, into something that is more robust and applicable to 21st-Century Cayman.”

He is also looking to return the area to its glory days when boats were the vehicle of choice for many.

“This site has historically been kind of a hub of activity for the George Town area. Before the days of roads, everybody coming from North Side would sail down in their catboats or what have you, straight down into George Town Barcadere and then go up on this road here,” he says, pointing on a map, “which is actually the North Sound Road, and, as far as I can tell anyway, is one of the oldest roads in the Cayman Islands.”

He envisions The Barcadere becoming a new center of activity



PHOTO BY ART PASQUALI

The marina is configured for 83 slips, depending on the size of the boats, and all of the docks should be completed by early summer.

and, at the same time, evoking an earlier age.

Another feature of which he is proud is the lighthouse memorial he is building in his brother-in-law's name, to help commemorate Caymanians lost at sea.

As for the club itself, he can picture it all very clearly.

"The idea is to have a restaurant out here on the water where you can come out and have lunch or have dinner. And there's a fantastic breeze blowing off the North Sound, and there's fishermen coming and going. So when you see that there's fresh tuna on the menu, for instance, and the tuna is hanging on the weigh station, there's no question that the fish is fresh."

Scott adds that it won't be a "cliché seafood restaurant (but) an open-air, very casual place."

He also took inspiration from history when he designed the club. And the word "design" is not used loosely here. Scott studied architecture and actually put pencil to paper to create the buildings and features that comprise The Barcadere.

"My favorite structure, bar none, on this island is Pedro St James. I would move in there and live there if they'd let me. I truly love that structure. Unfortunately, it was built in a different time for a different set

of conditions that now no longer apply. But there are still certain things about it that can be applied or translated into an architectural language that would be applicable in this day and age," Scott explains.

To illustrate his point, he describes the proposed façade of the yacht club.

"If you were to examine it from an architectural standpoint, you would see certain elements of Pedro St James in terms of the vertical elements and the stone and the stairwell, and the little alcove here on the main entry that you'd walk through into the restaurant. And we've opted for exposed rafter tails and the half-round old-style guttering. And exposed concrete, architectural grey concrete, and hardy plank. This is all concrete behind it, but it's insulated and clad with hardy plank so it looks like it's made from wood when in fact it's actually a steel-reinforced concrete structure built to hurricane standards.

"And the idea is to be as true to materials as possible and as true to this architectural language that I've tried to create out here. This new vernacular, as it were. Maybe new Cayman style is a little bit of a stretch, but it's definitely not old Cayman style.

"I wanted it to have character, not be a caricature."

The club will offer annual memberships both within Cayman and internationally, making for a vibrant, interesting mix of people. "Once it's reached a point where it makes sense, we will invite every single owner of a yacht that's registered to the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry to become a founding member of the George Town Yacht Club.

"And, hopefully, they'll all take us up on that and given that 70 percent of the world's pleasure yachts and some of the most affluent individuals in the world own these yachts, the George Town Yacht Club is potentially one of the most prestigious yacht clubs in the world."

Toward that end, and thinking globally, Scott is looking for more – "royal" approval. "We're trying to achieve a royal charter for the George Town Yacht Club so we can call it the Royal George Town Yacht Club just like the Royal Bermuda Yacht Club or the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club of which I'm a member as a matter of fact. So the idea is that it would be linked to, associated with, and have reciprocal benefits with other yacht clubs the world over."

The marina is configured for 83 slips, depending on the size of the boats, and all of the docks should be completed by early summer. Though Scott says there will still be slips available for lease, he adds:

"We would encourage people to approach us sooner rather than later because of the placement. We have different size slips, and it is kind of a jigsaw puzzle. We have to make sure the right boat goes in the right position."

Though membership would obviously appeal to boat owners, the club will be open to anyone. Scott sees the facility as a family-friendly place, a venue for all sorts of related events that will become not only a center of social activity but also a center of the community.

He has already forged relationships with related organizations, connections that he feels strongly about.

"I built (the Cayman Islands Angling Club) a weigh station out here and this is to be (their) home. And, similarly, with the Cayman Islands Maritime Heritage Foundation, better known as the Catboat Club. Those guys are looking forward to me getting the clubhouse finished so they can meet here. We're going to be, from time to time, hosting catboat regattas offshore out here.

"With things like the Catboat Club and the Cayman Islands Angling Club, we don't profit directly, but it's all about awareness and building relationships."

Eventually, he would like to see the natural progression of the development leading to a boutique marina hotel. In fact, Scott has the perfect place already chosen and can visualize the project from building down to the vegetation.

"There's a berm that we've left out here on the waterfront and the idea is that we want to build bungalows all across the top of it, and then bungalows down on the flat in front of it, and dress this whole area out here as a sand beach." And all of it overlooking the North Sound.

He also would replant mangroves along the shoreline, design rock gardens, and put in cocoplum and sea-grape trees. "Basically, my mandate on the vegetation is that if it cannot

survive out here on its own accord, I don't want it out here. I want to create a tropical island atmosphere for the entire project, but for this peninsula in particular. And the idea is (to let) the vegetation mature until such time as we get around to building the hotel, hopefully when the world's economy stabilizes, and it makes a little more sense.

Pending planning permission, when the demand is right, they will start work on the hotel and also a commercial building, which would comprise about 43,000 square feet of retail and commercial space.

The other building slated for "future development" is a boat storage facility, which Scott describes as a giant warehouse storing boats on shelves. "Think aircraft hangar, that's the scale of it," Scott says. Originally, this multilevel storage was conceived to accommodate 100 boats, but the idea has proven to be "very attractive to a lot more people than I anticipated," says Scott, so they are redesigning it to hold twice as many vessels and much larger ones as well.

"The idea is (the boat) sits there; it's under cover, it's enclosed, it's secure, and it's in a hurricane-rated facility. It can sit there until the weekend. You give us a call on Saturday, we pull it out, put it in the water, we test it to make sure everything is fine, we put fuel in it, we put ice in the cooler if you want, and when the bar and restaurant is completed we put a six-pack of beer in there, a six-pack of sodas, and we'll make a half-dozen sandwiches. It's full service.

"And you hop in your boat and you turn the key and you go. And you know it's going to start because we've already taken care of that before you got there. You have a key, we have a key. So the idea is you show up, you jump in your boat, you go run around, you enjoy it, you bring it back, you tie it up, you walk away from it.

"You go have a hot shower at the changing rooms. You go over to the restaurant and socialize with your

"I have been very fortunate to be associated with partners and investors who share the vision for this world-class facility."

friends and family, have some good dinner and then go home. On Monday morning, or the next day or whatever, my technicians pull the boat out of the water, clean it up, prep it for storage and stick it back on the shelf until next weekend or six months from now or next year or whenever you come back down."

And as part of a commitment to providing the best service to boat owners, Scott installed a state-of-the-art fuel system and partnered with ValvTect Marine Fuel, a well-respected name in the industry, to become the first ValvTect-certified marina in the Caribbean.

Scott has also met his self-imposed obligation to be as green as possible. He explains:

"The fuel station also has the island's only functioning marine sewage pump-out facility which has a 5,000 gallon holding tank that allows us to be able to pump wastewater, grey water, sewage from local and visiting vessels so that they no longer have to discharge it at sea which has been the practice around Cayman for far too long."

And, if further proof were needed of his dedication to the cause, Scott is not charging for the service. "It's hard to get someone to pay for something that they've heretofore done for free," he says, alluding to the dumping at sea.

Scott adds: "We've made a huge investment in a sewage pump-out and storage system that we basically will never see a return on, but it's part of our environmental and ecological approach to building this marina. It's to make sure that we are having a minimal impact or as small an impact as we can on the marine environment that we are all out there to enjoy."

His environmental consciousness extends to the whole project. He's voluntarily striving to build The Barcadere to recognized green standards, specifically the LEED certification developed by the U.S. Green Building Council and the Blue Flag Program, run by the independent non-profit Foundation for Environmental Education.

Overall, the fulfillment of his dream for The Barcadere won't come cheap. Scott and his partners have already invested more than 10 years and many millions into the project with much more to come.

"I have been very fortunate to be associated with partners and investors who share the vision for this world-class facility," said Scott. "They are as committed as I am to bringing this project to the island and the Caymanian people."

Scott estimates The Barcadere will cost about \$30 million at completion, which includes the cost of the land but not the hotel, which could cost an additional \$10 million to \$15 million. The development costs of the boat-storage facility could easily add another \$5 million. "It's a \$45 million to \$50 million project at the end of the day," Scott estimates.

"Some times I wonder what I was thinking. But it's something that Cayman sorely lacks. It's something that has been very well-received. I've gotten nothing but positive feedback. Everybody's enthusiastic and excited about it. Everybody's first reaction is, 'We can't believe someone hasn't done this before.'"

Even though Scott doesn't expect to see a finished yacht club or Scotts Marine building at The Barcadere for at least one year to 18 months, his vision for it is certainly complete.

"At the end of it all, we will have a nice multifaceted development. We call it a marina community. It's not just a marina, it's not just a yacht club, it's not just a boatyard, it's not just boat sales, it's not just a restaurant. I like to think that I'm transforming the George Town Barcadere area into something that the whole of Cayman can be proud of." ✨

THE LIGHTHOUSE: A LANDMARK MEMORIAL

The one aspect of The Barcadere that will have no actual marine function might nonetheless be the structure that will hold the most significance for Neville Scott.

He is building a memorial to his brother-in-law, David Anderson, who was killed while boating in the North Sound in 2007. Scott designed the monument in the shape of a lighthouse, which will sit at the end of the canal that leads to the marina.

He explains his motivation for the memorial. "In 2007, I lost my brother-in-law, who was like a brother to me, in the North Sound. He was killed in a boating accident. I took it very hard. At the time, I decided that I wanted to do something. He was cremated and his ashes were spread in the North Sound. And there's no gravestone. His family doesn't really have anywhere to go to grieve.

"So, I thought I would build a monument for my brother-in-law. And this was really a part of my grieving process to be quite honest. In retrospect, I can say that now. I became obsessed with it."

To prepare for the design, Scott researched lighthouses. Extensively. "I did a study of lighthouses; I visited other lighthouses. I bought books and books and books on lighthouses."

Not surprisingly, he discovered that the light is basically the whole point, though in this case, the 40-foot-high structure is purely ornamental.

"It will have a light in it but technically it's not a lighthouse because that's the Port Authority's remit. What I'm doing is building a maritime monument that just happens to look like a lighthouse. It can't flash, for instance; it can't be certain colors. And it can't be visible to the air. It can only be visible from the horizon down. But I want it to be visible from anywhere in the North Sound. My objective is whenever you come in to Stingray City channel, the main channel, or Rum Point channel or if you're leaving Kaibo – which, incidentally, is where he was leaving from when the accident occurred – or anywhere in the North Sound at night, you will be able to see that light. And the idea is to have the light be blue."

The bottom part will be clad with stone and the upper part will be clad with hardy plank, he explains, so it will look like a wooden lighthouse sitting on a stone base when in fact it is a steel-reinforced concrete structure built to withstand the worst-case scenario.

Many organizations are helping Scott to realize his vision. Private companies have donated materials and labor, and the Cayman Islands Maritime Heritage Foundation is supporting the project.

The Maritime Authority of the Cayman Islands has also agreed to partially sponsor the construction of the monument. David Anderson was the first Caymanian to become certified as a fully qualified Marine Surveyor with the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry, a division of MACI.

The lighthouse is "my way of honoring his life. He was a good kid; he had a lot of potential," Scott explains. He continues to seek help from all quarters for the project. "We welcome all support and any other donations toward construction," says Scott, who has been funding the project out of his own pocket.

Ultimately, he would like to get the lighthouse officially sanctioned as a maritime monument for the Cayman Islands. And he is planning to call it the "David Alexander Anderson Memorial to Caymanians Lost at Sea."

"I want it to be something that means something to all Caymanians, not just to me and not just to his family," Scott says, adding, "there have been a lot of us – meaning Caymanians – lost to the sea over the years, since this island has been inhabited."

He continues: "It will be definitely by far the largest, most visible, the most significant. And it's being built at George Town Barcadere, which has been one of the most significant – with the possible exception of Hog Sty Bay – locales on the island from a maritime perspective. Since the 1700s, as long as Cayman has been inhabited, this place has been in use. So I think it's a perfect location for it, and I think that the lighthouse is a perfect form for it."

Scott is hoping to get the funds in place so the lighthouse can be finished by October 28, when David Anderson would have celebrated his 30th birthday.

