

COMPLIMENTARY

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THE BARCADERE

the revival of cayman's original marina

Barcadere. You won't find the meaning of this word in any English dictionary, although it is a term that has been used by seafarers for centuries. From the Spanish word *embarcadero* meaning "a place to launch and retrieve boats," barcaderes are richly steeped in the Cayman Islands' culture and history.



Many of the first inhabitants of the islands made their living as fishermen, using barcaderes for their daily fishing expeditions out to sea and back. West Bay had one, so did South Sound. In fact, sailors would often be seen in their catboats sailing to and from Smith's Barcadere, now called Smith's Cove, a popular beach with locals. Perhaps the most vital barcadere to Grand Cayman's social and economic livelihood was the George Town Barcadere. Quietly nestled in an area off the North Sound Shore, it has been located at the tip of North Sound Road since the early 1700s, as evident by its mark on one of Grand Cayman's first existing maps. The area was the mid-point for sailors travelling eastbound and westbound; fishermen from nearby islands like Jamaica and Honduras would also stop there to unload their catches with the hopes of selling local Caymanians their evening's dinner. In those days, the iron shore was hammered down to create a ramp for the boats.

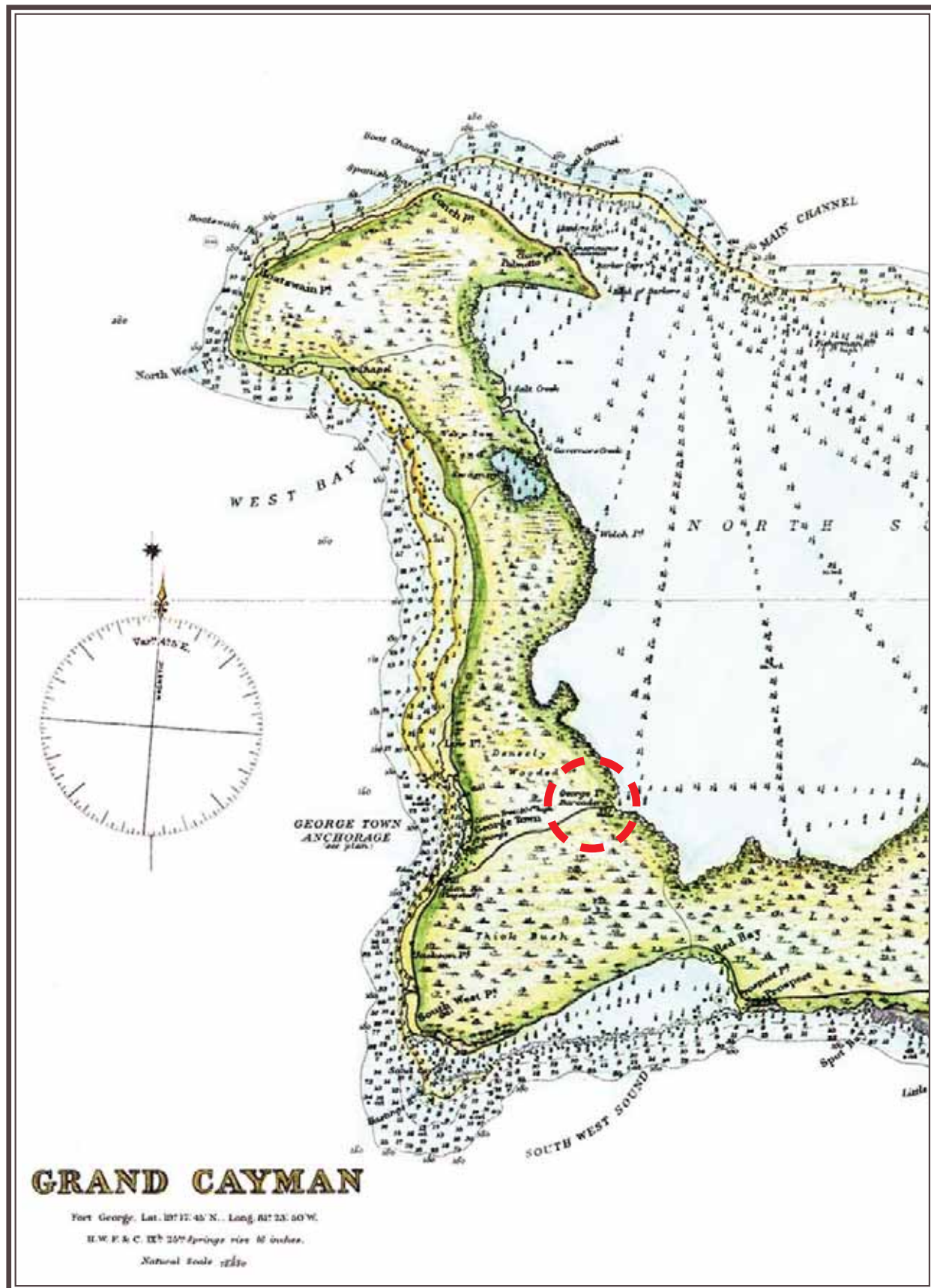
Later on, the area became known for its sea turtle pens where the turtles were slaughtered and packaged in the nearby turtle soup-canning factory and sold throughout the Cayman Islands as well as to international markets. (This was, of course, before people understood the ramifications of such an inhumane act.) The area was also one of the first pieces of land to be granted to private citizens in the Cayman Islands by the British Crown in 1735.

The large protected area of water in the North Sound was smooth enough for seaplanes to take off or land, and in the 1940s it became Grand Cayman's first airport, complete with a customs and immigration building and a thatched hut arrival and departure waiting shelter. The seaplanes would bounce-land on the water and tiny skiffs would retrieve the passengers from the seaplane's anchored spot, bringing them to the dock. Small crowds would gather in the waiting shelter to witness their arrival, giving them a chance to

socialise and catch up with each other as well as marvel at the seaplanes. After Owen Roberts International Airport opened nearby in 1954, seaplanes gave way to commercial aircrafts and the bustling fishing days seemed to slow down as the island's economy started to explode and grocery stores began to sell mass-produced goods, including fish. The George Town Barcadere became a desolate area, a 'no man's land' – until now, of course.

Enter Neville Scott of Scotts Industries group, a company formally incorporated in 1975 by his father Anthony and his uncle Stanley and includes Scotts Automotive, Scotts Marine and Scotts Equipment. Neville is the mastermind behind the resurrection of Grand Cayman's original George Town Barcadere. He has renamed the expansive 16-acre waterfront property The Barcadere Marina, and his goal is to, quite simply, establish a "world-class marina that harkens back to the olden days." So far, the project has generated a lot of

interest in the area from a real estate perspective and Neville hopes to inject some life into the deserted area. The eighth generation Caymanian comes from a long line of seafarers, whose forefathers emigrated to Cayman Brac by boat, eventually settling in Grand Cayman in 1971. Neville had his very own pint-sized boat at the tender age of two; it was a tiny skiff hand-built by his grandfather, so the marina is a natural extension of who he is at the core. "Boats are what I love, so out of all the businesses I have been involved in, this is my most inspiring and where my heart is," says Neville, who has also been trained as an architect, which proved to be beneficial when it came to turning his vision into reality. He wanted to create an architectural language that would give the marina an island-flavour by using materials, methodologies and styles reflected in the Caribbean and, in particular, the British West Indies. (Chalmers Gibbs Architects helped with the fine-tuning.)



The Barcadere is an entity unto itself. It will include approximately 85 wet slips; a multi-level dry storage facility for 112 boats; forklifts and travel lifts; a service centre housed with technicians for boat maintenance, repairs and service; a fuel station with pumps on the dock and land side; a casual bar and restaurant; a change room with showers, washrooms and locker facilities; a commercial/retail building that will feature 40,000 square feet of available lease space; and a boat sales and service centre that will be the new home for Scotts Marine. Although Scotts Marine has been in operation since 1985, Neville is happy to give it a new home on the waterfront at The Barcadere, allowing customers to get their boats serviced or stored without necessarily having to worry about overland transportation of the boat to and from the facility. (Scotts Marine is currently located on North Sound Road behind the A.L. Thompson building.) At the new location, customers will now be able to enjoy the panoramic view of North Sound, with easy boat access to many of the island's key attractions such as Stingray City, the Sand Bar, Cayman Kai and Rum Point, all of which can be seen in the distance from the marina's pier.

Neville's high level of service will be hard to beat and will surely appeal to all boaters using the marina's facilities, from the occasional boaters to the avid, frequent boaters. "Someone who lives abroad may only need their boat launched and retrieved about four or five times a year, or if they live here all year round, they may use their boat as many

as two or three times a week. For example, you may store your boat nine months out of the year here and the other three months at a home in Cayman Kai," says Neville. To accommodate everyone, he plans on implementing a system that includes 12 launches and retrievals per year, which will include a boat storage fee based on a per foot per month plan. "If you want to take your boat out on a Sunday morning, all you'll have to do is give us a call and we'll arrange to take it off the shelf of the dry storage facility, check it for any potential problems, prep it for use, fill it with fuel, drop it in the water, bring it around to the staging area and tie it up so that by the time you come down to the marina, everything will be ready and waiting for you." The convenience of lockers right on the premises will allow boaters to easily gather items and simply place them in the docked boat, such as fishing tackle, scuba diving gear, wake boards, etc. They will also receive access to the secure storage as part of the fee. At the end of the day when they come back to the marina they will be able to take a hot shower in the changing rooms and settle in at the bar and restaurant for dinner with their party or meet up with fellow boaters from the marina.

Technicians will also be available on an as-needed basis for any other services that are required. Says Neville: "You know your boat will start because we have taken care of all the issues that might arise on a typical day when someone takes their boat out on the water: dead batteries, forgetting to fuel, issues with oil, or mechanical problems which we would



The commercial area



The Boathouse

discover when we take the boat out and run it to make sure everything is as it should be – all before you even set foot on the dock. Whatever problems there are, we will endeavour to catch them before you get on the boat to go out.” He adds, “I’ll even stock your cooler with ice, bait or a six pack of beer if that is what you want.” Now, that’s service.

The Barcadere has many other benefits as well. The dry storage facility will be made of concrete walls, engineered metal roofs and level-five hurricane standards, so not only will it keep your boat indoors in a secure environment day and night, it will also shelter your boat from the harsher elements that can wreak havoc on a boat, such as the hot sun, forceful winds and rain. The decks and docks will be made of Ipe wood, a very durable and long lasting Brazilian hardwood similar to local ironwood. The marina will also cater to boats of every size. Forklifts will launch and retrieve boats that are up to 35 feet long; travel lifts, which are large crane-like apparatuses with slings, will lift larger boats (up to 100 feet long and 150 tonnes) out of the water and back into the dry storage facility or to the boat yard to be worked on.

Neville hopes to make The Barcadere a premier destination for boaters, both locally and internationally.

various government departments and the port authority.

One of the biggest bonuses to his location is that he is literally 30 seconds from the Owen Roberts airport, and the National Roads Authority has plans for a four lane highway which will run from the airport alongside The Barcadere and become the main artery out of the airport up to Seven Mile Beach, tying into the new bypass along the way. He hopes this will take place within the next two to five years, in conjunction with the airport expansion, but in the meantime he has already entered into agreement with the adjoining landowners to create a public access directly from the airport to the North Sound Road right next to the Department of the Environment building.

At the moment, most of the marina’s infrastructure is in place, including the underground utilities, seawalls, and perimeters of the marina. Construction has now commenced and Phase One is slated for completion by April 2008, with the changing room, fuel station and wet slips all available for lease. By next year, Neville plans to complete the remaining components and is currently entertaining proposals from various local institutions to finance the rest of his visionary concept (the property has already been bought outright, and

The sea has been a part of my family’s livelihood for a long, long time, and this will undoubtedly be the nicest, cleanest, most environmentally friendly and well organised marina in the Cayman Islands. I am purposefully designing and constructing it to last well into the next generation.

“What I am building is a world-class facility, by any measure, and it will be a destination not just for residents of the Cayman Islands but for anyone yachting in or through the North West Caribbean.” Since many boaters travel through the Panama Canal from the west to east coasts of the US, he would like the marina to be a midway point for them, just the way it was in the early days. He would also like to capture some of the cruise ship market that is currently in the George Town harbour, which he feels is currently overcrowded. Since the marina is only a five-minute drive from the port facility in George Town, Neville hopes to lure in commercial tour operators (including sunset cruise operators) and transport tourists by bus back to his marina, which is a perfect start and end point for trips out to Stingray City, Rum Point, etc. Neville also wants to attract the private yachts that usually need to wait a whole day on the perimeters of the shore until port authority gives them the okay to dock (boaters are not allowed to interfere with cruise ships during the peak times, especially during their high-season). However, in order for this to be done, he needs to create a new “clearing station” or a customs and immigration facility, which he is currently in discussion with

the project financed to date by an investment group consisting of himself, his father, uncle, and a couple of very generous overseas investors who have preferred to remain low key, all of them credited as strong role models who have helped him realise his dream).

Now that it is all starting to come together, many locals are starting to take notice. Very early on in the process, Neville was often asked the same question: “Are you building this to sell it or to keep it?” His answer always remained the same, “I’m building it to keep it. The sea has been a part of my family’s livelihood for a long, long time, and this will undoubtedly be the nicest, cleanest, most environmentally friendly and well organised marina in the Cayman Islands. I am purposefully designing and constructing it to last well into the next generation.”

Like his hardworking forefathers before him, Neville is on his way to creating a legacy that will not only put The Barcadere on the world map again, but also bring Caymanians one *slip* closer to their roots. ■

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