

September 2002 Issue 2

# INSIDEOUT

Cayman's Home & Living Magazine

Complimentary



## 21st Century Living, Cayman-style

*Inside a millennium home*

### Solutions for a Healthier Home

*Ridding your house of unwanted guests*

### Mortgages Made Easy

*Advice from the finance experts*

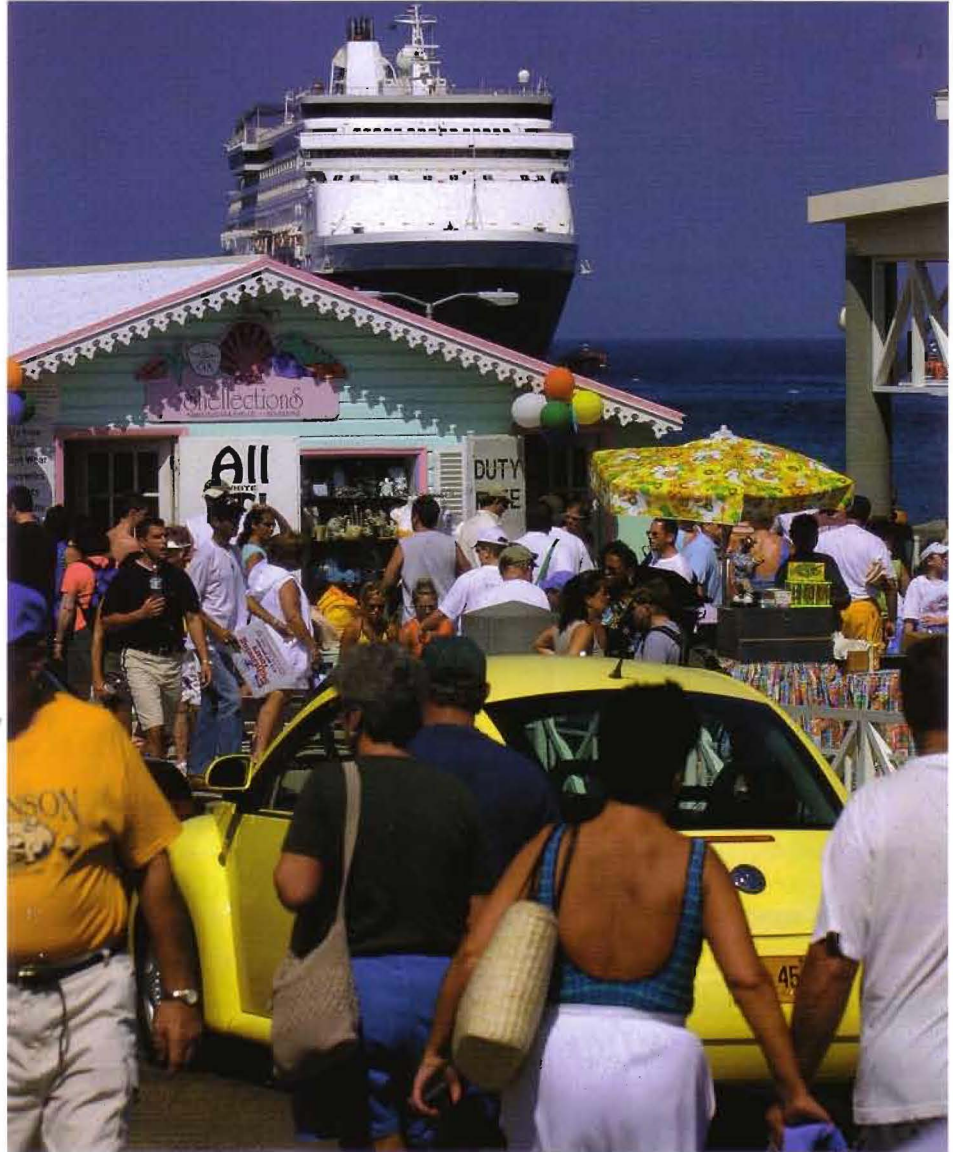
### A Potter's Garden in Paradise

*Explore a vibrant garden on Boggy Sand Road*

### A Month of Sundays

*Creative ideas for Sunday brunch*

 Cayman Press



## imagineering the Cayman experience

As Cayman prepares for the winter season, the George Town waterfront is expected to handle the visits of up to 10 to 15,000 cruise ship visitors per day. The Ministry of Tourism, the Port Authority and the Port Beautification Committee have a number of improvement plans underway to assist the cruise passengers' arrival and departure and to provide the most memorable experience of their time in the Cayman Islands.

Among these proposals is a master plan for landside improvements which is being developed by local architecture and imagineering firm, Cayman Style. *InsideOut* sat down with John Doak, principal architect of Cayman Style to find out what is being planned.

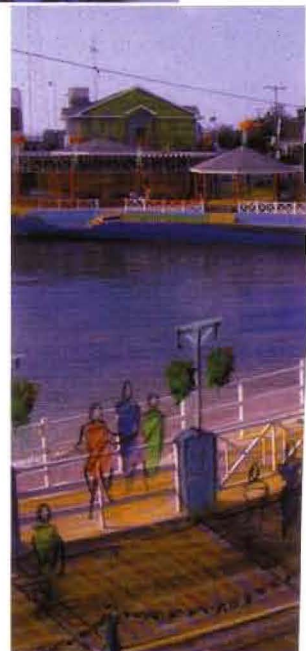
**INSIDE OUT:** Tell us about the new proposals for the waterfront?

**DOAK:** Your readers will be aware of the Port's plans to upgrade and expand its docking and cruise passenger facilities, including the proposal for a new terminal at the end of Fort Street. These plans are expected to improve the arrival and departure facilities on the docks. Cayman Style's challenge has been to look at the

landward side of operations and examine ways to reduce the congestion on Harbour Drive. Studies also have to respect the needs of our downtown business and residential community.

**IO:** What are the solutions being proposed?

**DOAK:** We are developing a plan that proposes the partial pedestrianisation of the waterfront during cruise



ship visits. Harbour Drive simply cannot handle our downtown traffic and the arrival of cruise ship passengers. Taking traffic away from the waterfront will allow a safer, pedestrian friendly environment for visitors, downtown office workers and residents to shop and enjoy our islands' capital. With the arrival and departure of between 10 to 15,000 passengers a day, it is essential that we create landside space to seamlessly manage the movement of these people. By reducing the traffic on Harbour Drive, we can create wider promenades and areas where passengers can arrive comfortably before going on to shop, take a taxi to the beaches, or a tour bus. The management of our dockside areas is critical to the visitor's experience and also to the well being of our business and resident communities.

It should be noted that Harbour Drive would only be closed to through traffic for limited periods when ships are in port. During those times taxis and tour buses will still be permitted on the waterfront along with essential service vehicles. The plan also suggests improvements to sidewalks on Cardinal Avenue, Fort Street and Shedden Road by introducing shady trees and wider pavements. Implementation of these proposals requires careful planning and the support of all stakeholders. However, we are encouraged that George Town's leading merchants, the Port Authority and the Public Works Highways Department are already fully behind the proposal.

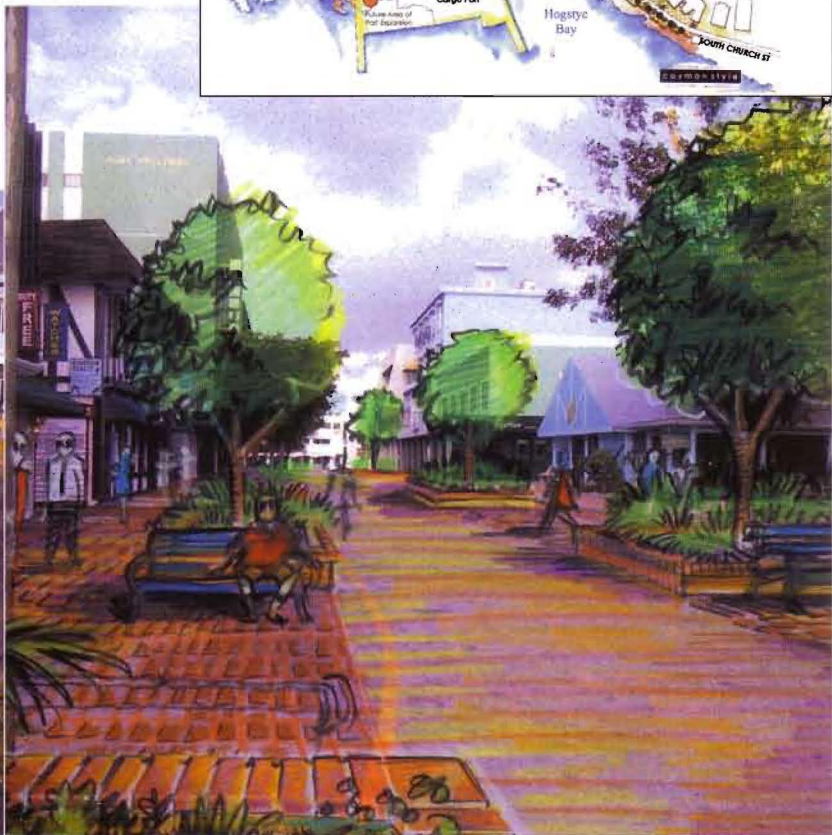
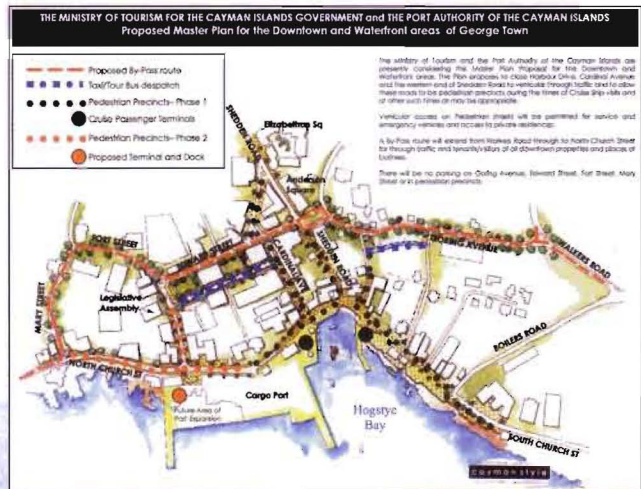
Department has been looking at the short-term effects of closing Harbour Drive to traffic but once the connector road between Goring Avenue and Edward Street is built, traffic will be able to freely pass through the centre of George Town. This new route would provide access to all parts of the downtown area at times when Harbour Drive is closed.

**IO: What other benefits will the master plan provide?**

**DOAK:** It includes promenade style sidewalks, shady trees and rest areas, and recommends a cohesive approach to the design of storefronts, street furniture, signs, street lighting and sidewalk finishes. Under the guidance and administration of the Beautification Committee, whose members already comprise many downtown merchants, it is anticipated that, with the contributions and support of the downtown community,

**IO:** If all these streets are closed to traffic how do residents get to work in the downtown area?

**DOAK:** Public Works



Illustrations provided by Cayman Style



the waterfront will develop as a place of great civic pride for our residents and visitors alike. The most significant benefit will be the reduced congestion and the creation of a comfortable environment for our visitors and downtown community.

**IO: How is the plan to be implemented?**

**DOAK:** The original thrust of the proposal was to resolve the conflict we have between cars and people on Harbour Drive, while the add-on beautification improvements extend this theme to the main shopping streets. George Town merchants have endorsed their support of the Harbour Drive and pedestrianisation proposals so the Beautification Committee is reviewing options for implementing the proposals in the most effective way. The Port Authority's plans to rejuvenate Hogstye Bay are already underway. With the continuing endorsement of our downtown businesses, building owners and the community at large, Government envisages that all the beautification proposals can be implemented at the earliest time.

**IO: Which of the proposals are happening first?**

**DOAK:** The Port Authority is undertaking a complete redecoration of the passenger terminals and their

administration building. Cayman Style's imagineers and design consultant Gina Hew, has come up with a bold scheme that will transform Hogstye Bay into an exciting and colourful port of call.

The experience of being tendered into Hogstye Bay is an exhilarating and unique one for cruise passengers who disembark directly onto a dock at other ports of call. The natural shape of Hogstye Bay and our piers embrace you with open arms, so we've tried to enhance that island welcome with a fanfare of exciting, bright Caribbean colours, flags, flowers, live music, coupled with the friendly Caymanian smiles of our greeters onshore. Many of our onshore tour operators have already built themselves colourful stalls and signs. This stimulation of all the senses will make for a truly memorable experience.

A number of improvements are also being considered for the Quincentennial celebrations so many of the beautification aspects for shopping streets including Cardinal Avenue, Edward Street and Fort Street are being planned over the next year.

Once the link road between Goring Avenue and Edward Street is completed, the rest of the plans to turn the waterfront into an exciting experience our visitors will never forget can be put into action. ●