

# *A natural for design*

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**ITALIAN ARCHITECT STEFANO NAPOLITANI EMBRACES NATURAL ELEMENTS OF SEA, SAND, WOOD AND STONE IN HIS CONTEMPORARY COASTAL DESIGNS, EVIDENT IN TWO NEW LUXURY RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS IN CAYMAN.**



When Stefano and Elisa Napolitani travelled from their home in Italy to Grand Cayman to visit friends and sample the diving here, they didn't foresee that three years down the line they would be designing a pioneering project that would impact the future of architecture and design in Cayman.

Based in Milan, Stefano runs Waves Project, an accomplished design studio, with Elisa, an interior designer. As an engineering student at the University of Southampton and a talented and avid sailor, Stefano was an Associate Member of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects before going on to carve a career designing custom-made yachts in Italy. Upon the advice of a friend, he subsequently became involved in the redesign of a hotel which then led to further major residential and hotel developments and the beginning of Waves Project.

Fast forward to the couple's first visit to Cayman and they had fallen head over heels in love with the blue skies and crystal-clear water while exploring the island. "I'm a diver, I'm a sailor. I love the sea and I love this place," says Stefano.

After stumbling across a cove of white sandy beach in South Sound, and an introduction with NCB Group, one of Cayman's leading residential and commercial developers, and Joelle and Michael Meghoo of MJM Design Studio, the concept for the TIDES development was conceived.





Renderings of:  
Right: SOLARA Canal Front.  
Left: TIDES Master Bedroom.



Renderings supplied by Waves Project

## STEFANO'S ATTENTION TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AROUND HIM DRIVES MANY OF HIS DESIGN DECISIONS.

### Natural elements

Since breaking ground in January, this luxury oceanfront condominium development is taking shape and the distinctive European influence is undeniable. Miles away from “beach chic,” this project encapsulates “contemporary coastal design” and embraces “natural elements of sea, sand, wood and stone,” something that is integral in Stefano’s design process.

“I want to see the ocean everywhere I can,” he says. “I want to wake up in the morning and see the ocean. I want to cook and see the ocean. Don’t build walls, build windows.”

This concept was paramount in the initial stages of design, with floor-to-ceiling windows installed to fulfill his vision and capture the extraordinary views.

Stefano’s attention to the natural environment around him drives many of his design decisions. A concern for the duo was the lack of natural light through the central part of the building, as is commonplace for many properties on the island. This led to another unique design feature being introduced to TIDES – four vertical ‘light caves’ positioned through the center of the building to allow windows through the interior, bringing natural light into every room regardless of placement.





### Time and space

A major influence for Stefano is his experience designing yachts. “The space is something important. Any boat, even if it’s big, it’s small. For a boat, the master bedroom must be small, and the kitchen must be big because people want to meet in the kitchen,” he says.

This is particularly noticeable in the couple’s next project in Cayman, also in partnership with MJM Design; SOLARA, a new development located in Crystal Harbour boasting 26 luxury town houses. This fundamental concept of functionality and livability of the homes is a crucial aspect of the design process. “Time and space are two very important things for everybody,” says Elisa. “We must understand how people live and pay attention to what people really need when it comes to the practical issue of living.”

Having the pantry close to the garage or the front door, and hidden storage in the garden to tidy away toys, for example, means more time to relax and enjoy your home. This manipulation of space and function is certainly this duo’s forte.

SOLARA presented its fair share of obstacles to overcome, including a lack of water frontage. But in true Stefano style: “If you don’t have water, you create water.” So, they built a canal and, in keeping with Stefano’s obsession with water, every residence will have incredible views and boating enthusiasts will have direct access to North Sound right from their own boat slip in a private marina.

“We pay a lot of attention to the natural environment; the wind, the sun, the trees, the sand,” says Stefano of the inspiration and direction of his projects.

“The style in Cayman is changing,” says Elisa. “Young people and families, especially, need something more contemporary and fresh.”

It is this new perspective, and the seamless marrying of the natural environment with timeless but contemporary design, that make TIDES and SOLARA unparalleled developments, ultimately shifting the parameters for architecture and design in Cayman. 

Renderings of:  
Below: TIDES Rooftop Terrace.  
Far Left: SOLARA Living Room.  
Top Left: SOLARA Rooftop Terrace.

