

A PLACE IN THE SUN

Versatile architectural firm Timothy James Slawson designs dream residences to a client's specific tastes in the enticing Florida Keys



Sun-soaked and tropical, the Florida Keys is a haven for those in search of a first home, or even a second home. People from around the world are drawn to its climate and natural beauty.

Indeed, many clients of the Florida Key's architect Timothy James Slawson are seeking refuge from colder climates in Europe and across America, Canada, and beyond.

Tim set up his firm in 2001, initially working from his dining table, and now has three employees. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and has established a loyal,

word-of-mouth following. Working in partnership with clients and interior designers, the practice creates around four to eight luxury homes per year in the Keys. Both new and remodeled structures, the residences range from 4,500 to 6,500 sq ft and are all air-conditioned.

"Our mission is to create a style based upon the clients' wishes rather than what we deem to be stylish," says Tim. "It's the client's home, not ours." This means that there are no limits to the design possibilities available, and has led to a diverse portfolio. Tim's team has designed

homes in a huge variety of styles, including Moroccan, Old Florida, Bermuda, West Indies, Caribbean, and classic Key West styles.

Standout properties

One of the most impressive was a 12,500 sq ft Balinese-style home, completed in 2007 in Key Largo, which featured in *Open House* magazine in 2008. "My clients wanted a tropical and highly landscaped five-bedroom house that opened up like a pod," says Tim. "They wanted to feel like they were living in Bali."

This Balinese pod design incorporated open-plan spaces with high ceilings, pools, water features, large overhangs, and mature landscaping. The pool was integrated into the center of the house, and it was possible to see from the living room through to the bedroom. In addition, the stunning entrance had custom hand-carved wood doors, and used local stone and cypress. The house had no rain gutters; instead, sheets of rain enveloped the house and provided a natural cooling system.

Tim's designs are consistently clean and simple with good proportions and eco-friendly principles, such as cross ventilation for natural cooling and to minimize use of air conditioning. Local materials are also used, such as coral rock—a keystone material—and cypress.

The company's expertise and versatile use of local materials ensure that wherever in the world clients find inspiration, the end result is always a place to call home.

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