

COASTAL LIVING[®]

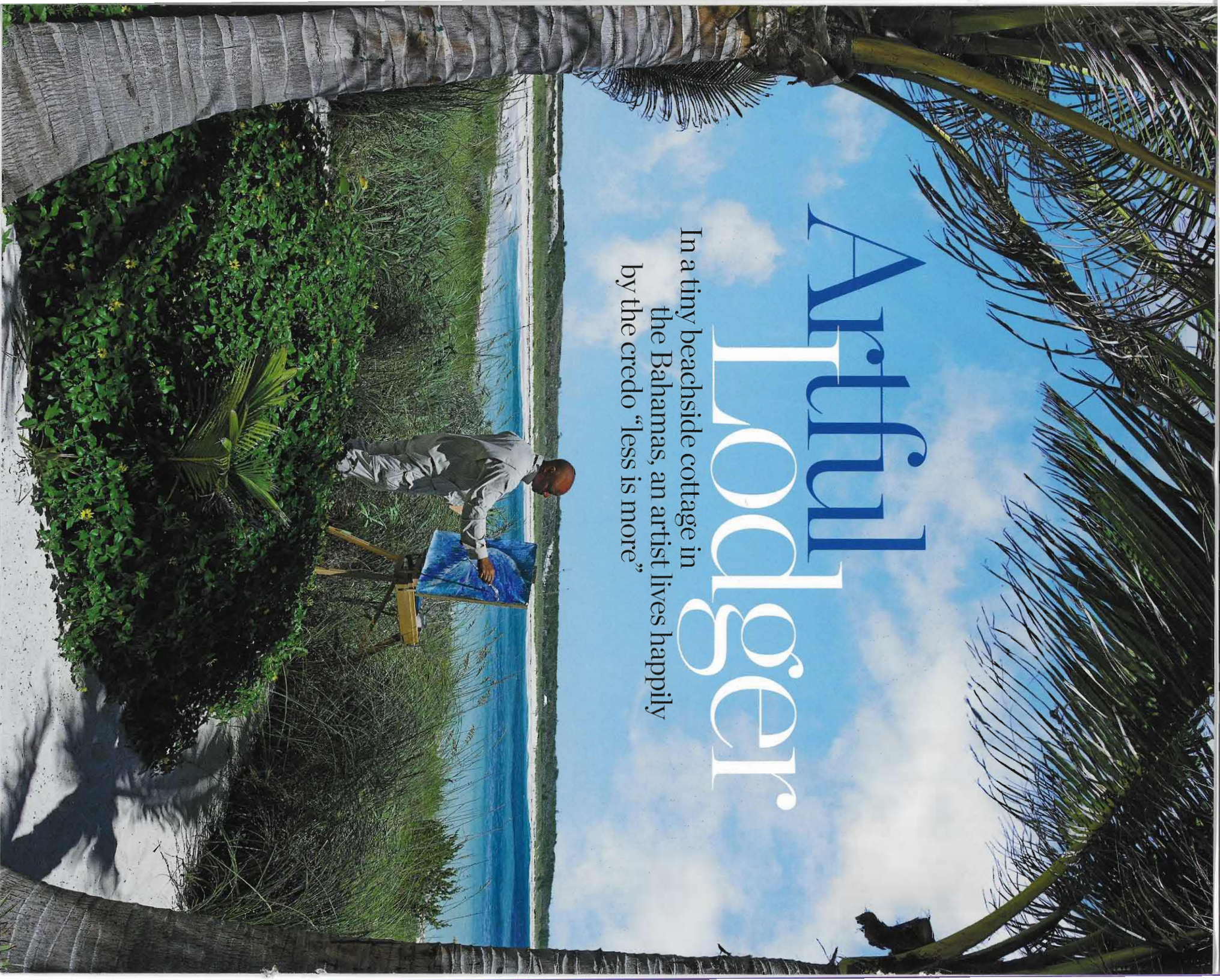
BEACH COTTAGE STYLE

Fresh & breezy looks
for every room



Artful lodger

In a tiny beachside cottage in
the Bahamas, an artist lives happily
by the credo "less is more"



WRITER ELAINE STUART PHOTOGRAPHER TRIA GIOVAN STYLIST HEATHER CHADDUCK



Furnishings and frames
from Bamboo & Rattan
in West Palm Beach
lend vintage island
style to the studio.



The peacock chairs outside
the studio are from Rattan
Shack in Miami.



Bahamian artist Antonius Roberts considers the natural world his subject and his cause. He has received international acclaim for his sculptures made from dead or bulldozed trees, and for his paintings that incorporate trash he collects on the beach. So when he designed a second home and studio with Lindroth Development Company on Great Abaco Island, he wanted the house to have as little impact on the environment as possible. "It's not just about a place; it's about a lifestyle," says Antonius.

The result of his vision is the inaugural residence in Schooner Bay, a new community in the Bahamas. The traditional 19th century-style cottage, which faces the Atlantic Ocean in front and a lush coppice forest in back, was built to exacting environmental standards.

Many architectural features—a poured-concrete foundation, shingled roof, top-hung shutters—provide insulation and ventilation that minimize reliance on fuel-consuming heating and cooling systems.

More important, the house represents a triumph of right-sizing, where homeowners live in just the amount of space they need for basic day-to-day functions, thereby putting less strain on the environment. This design trend, which values quality over quantity, has blossomed in response to the recent economic climate,



Porches and large windows protected by top-hung shutters connect the cottage to nature. The sofas on the screened porch (top) are from Pottery Barn.

“I see the entire community as an artist’s studio. It provides me with an opportunity to live with art all around me” —ANTONIUS ROBERTS



Antonius incorporates items he finds on the beach, such as plastic or rope netting, into his paintings and sculptures. “I want people not only to look at my artwork, but also to feel it,” he says.

and is particularly relevant in an island setting, where resources and land are limited. Antonius’s cottage measures a mere 883 square feet, but because of the open floor plan, 10- to 12-foot ceilings, and a screened porch that extends the living area, it feels much larger than it is. Smart design touches, such as under-counter refrigeration and split doors that require less space to open and close, maximize space. “It’s just big enough. It’s all I need,” Antonius says.

These space-saving characteristics are in keeping with the larger mission of Schooner Bay. The harbor village—which sits on 330 lush acres just a short flight or ferry ride from Nassau—was engineered by urban-planning gurus Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company to tread lightly on the land. The landscaping features exclusively native species; the infrastructure includes rainwater-harvesting cisterns and geothermal cooling systems; and only one-third of the site will be developed to preserve dunes and vegetation.

As Schooner Bay’s artist-in-residence, Antonius holds

workshops and exhibitions to educate the community’s other homeowners and visitors about sustainability, and serves as a cultural consultant. “It is an artist’s dream to be able to live and work not only in this space,” he says of his home and studio, “but also in a place where people understand and appreciate art.”

The interior of his house is likewise a marriage of efficiency and art. “A lot of thought about economy of space went into these houses, particularly Antonius’s cottage,” says designer Amanda Lindroth. Her challenge was to choose small-scale furnishings and accents that wouldn’t overwhelm the interior—or overshadow its owner. From white walls to curtainless windows and natural-fiber rugs, there’s a simplicity that allows the artist’s work to shine. “It was meant to be like a gallery space,” Amanda says.

Two of Antonius’s reclaimed wood sculptures are prominently featured: the kitchen table carved out of a mahogany tree trunk and a living room console made of 200-year-old



In the living room (above), Matouk's seersucker fabric covers the antique American Empire sofa, found on eBay. The bamboo blinds are from Smith+Noble.

The cottage's front path (near right) is made of native bush stone. The exterior is painted Linen White by Benjamin Moore.

Far right: The master bedroom's coverlet is from Les Indiennes. The vintage Chippendale-style bed is from Circa Who in West Palm Beach.



pine. Amanda also hung a series of his sketches in an English brass museum display system in the sitting room off the kitchen. She furnished the cottage with a mix of antiques and slipcovered furnishings accented by rattan mirrors, old-fashioned sea grass mats, and bamboo blinds that supply natural texture and pick up the wood hues. "The style is sort of Hemingway-in-Cuba," Amanda says.

To reflect Antonius's Bahamian roots, the designer peppered the house with vintage finds, such as a weather-beaten barometer, a marine flag pillow, and rattan barrel tables. "Ninety percent of my interiors are antique," she says. "It's just so much more soulful to have old things." Antonius agrees: "The whole place feels warm." He also likes the way that the recycled items fit with his artistic vision of preservation and transformation.

And whenever he feels inspired to make art, Antonius just walks next door to his studio, a freestanding cabana with a native thatched roof in a stylized pagoda shape. The spare decor includes a swing chair, tea-stained nautical charts in vintage bamboo frames, and a buoy that came right off the sand outside. Amanda expects this space to evolve: "It will be fun to see how he continues to use it as a laboratory."

Antonius cherishes this creative environment. "Whether it's the cabana, my cottage, the woods, or the beach itself, I see the entire community as an artist's studio," he says. "It provides me with an opportunity to live with art all around me." And to Antonius, there is certainly no better way to live. 🌿





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Antonius made the living room console out of pine discarded from an old building in Nassau.