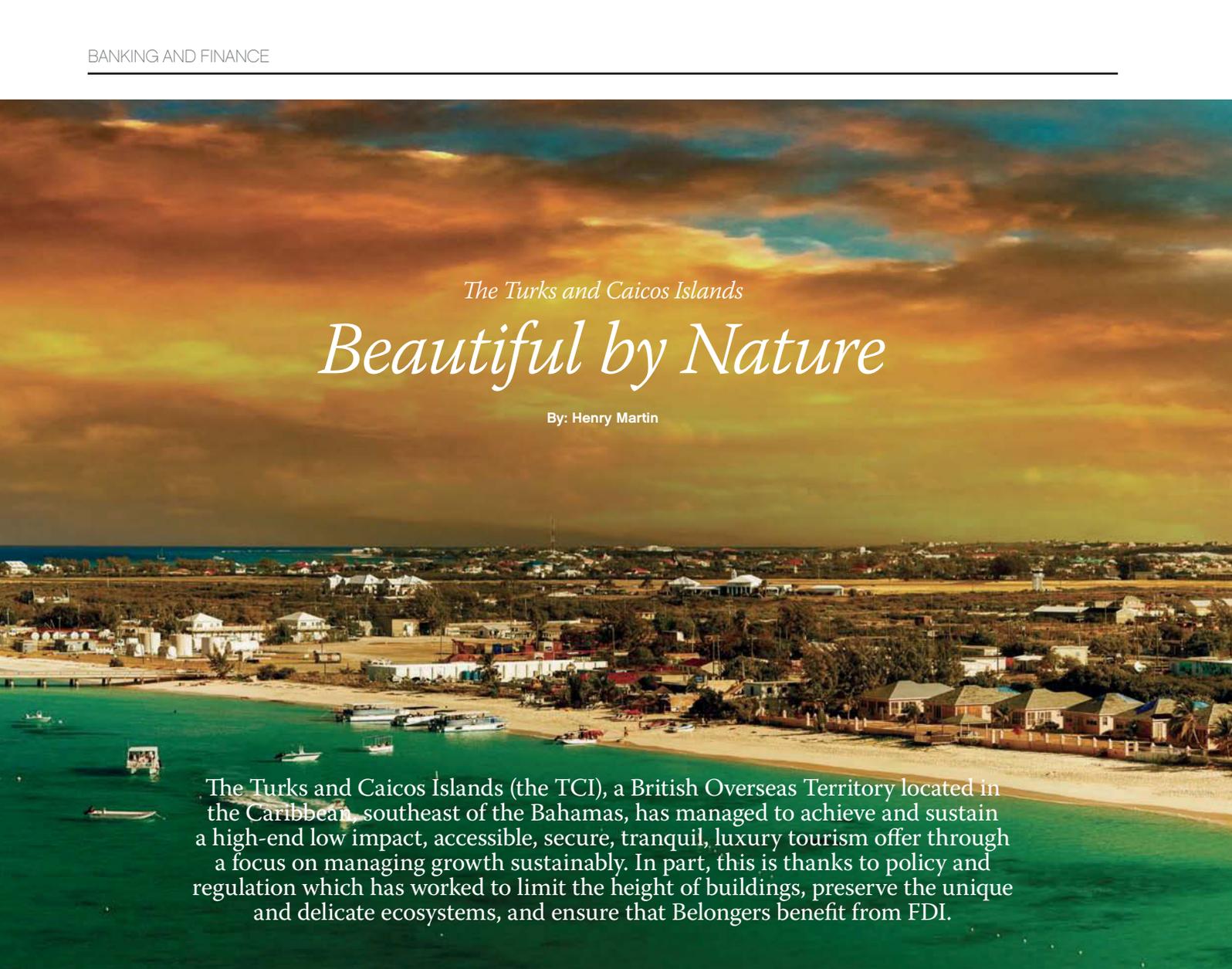


The Turks and Caicos Islands

Beautiful by Nature

By: Henry Martin



The Turks and Caicos Islands (the TCI), a British Overseas Territory located in the Caribbean, southeast of the Bahamas, has managed to achieve and sustain a high-end low impact, accessible, secure, tranquil, luxury tourism offer through a focus on managing growth sustainably. In part, this is thanks to policy and regulation which has worked to limit the height of buildings, preserve the unique and delicate ecosystems, and ensure that Belongers benefit from FDI.

01.



Recent years have seen an impressive growth in tourist numbers visiting the islands, such that the international airport has been redeveloped to accommodate this increase. Yet, the focus has remained on targeting the high-end, high-spending demographic to ensure the TCI remains free from the ravages that can be wrought by a mass market tourism proposition, a path many Caribbean nations have taken in the past and lived to regret, as they see before them a devastated natural environment and seafronts peppered with monstrous carbuncles.

The ongoing development of the Turks and Caicos Islands to its fullest potential goes hand in hand with safeguarding the resource over the long term for future generations, such that there is a raft of measures in place to conserve and manage vulnerable marine habitats. Meanwhile, the TCI's headline attractions, such as Grace Bay beach and the world's 3rd largest barrier reef continue to appeal, while the serviced accommodation

sector is also in rude health, epitomised by the likes of Seven Stars on Grace Bay beach, Amanyara, Blue Haven and Parrot Cay.

The tourism strategy, which sees high-rise buildings kept to a minimum, extends to the residential architecture too, ensuring an array of innovative low-impact, low-rise properties that leverage the landscape without dominating it. It is a sought after cocktail, meaning the TCI has become something of a mecca for those High Value Residents it looks to court.

Ron Shaw at RA Shaw Designs is the undisputed go-to man in the TCI for all such property requirements. His is a portfolio synonymous with exquisite, yet sensitive development, ensuring he remains the first and last word on architecture and design on the islands.

This capacity to reconcile growth in the tourism sector with the preservation of its status as one of the last remaining unspoiled paradises in the world is enhanced by the Protected Areas System, which ring-fences from development National Parks, Nature



“With Government and commerce united in their understanding of the importance of sensitive development to ensure long-term prosperity, the TCI’s future would seem to be assured.”

Reserves, Sanctuaries, and Areas of Historic Interest, an initiative which sits perfectly within an integrated Government approach that sees it work in partnership with various NGOs, the private sector and pertinent agencies to deliver on common goals. In addition, there is a requirement for developers to plant ten trees for every tree that is disturbed or destroyed.

As former Director of the Tourist Board, Ralph Higgs explains, “the TCI has taken a quality-driven approach to investment backed by National Papers such as the Environmental Charter (that) includes the mandatory submission of Environmental Impact Assessments at the start of the development proposal.”

With Government and commerce united in their understanding of the importance of sensitive development to ensure long-term prosperity, the TCI’s future would seem to be assured. Moreover, with the TCI also looking to develop low-impact niches of recreational, sports, wellness and medical tourism, its reputation as a quality-driven, high-end destination is only set to be enhanced further. Such offers should not only appeal to the TCI’s near neighbour, the United States, but also to new untapped markets, such as China and Japan, with their high volume of HNWIs and increasing investment interest in the Caribbean region. ●

01. The Turks and Caicos Islands.

Strategic Thinking

We interviewed John Rutherford, CEO at Invest Turks and Caicos.



01. John Rutherford.

02. Grace Bay Club provided by Sotheby's International.

03. Blue Haven Marina.

“Our ambition is to be the best investment promotion agency in the Caribbean within five years.”

How would you summarise Invest Turks and Caicos' raison d'être, its ambitions, and the road map to realising these goals?

Invest Turks and Caicos was created in 2015 to act as the lead organisation for attracting and facilitating foreign investment to the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI); to support the growth of local business; and to manage the country's Investor Permanent Residency programme. Internationally, we promote the islands in target markets to companies in industry sectors who we believe can secure a strong return on investment by having a presence here; and bring benefits to the islands through economic activity and job creation. We provide bespoke information to support the company's business plan; and if a company or individual expresses interest in locating here, we work with them throughout the investment process.

Our ambition is to be the best investment promotion agency in the Caribbean within five years. Year One has been spent setting up the business and handling a pipeline of significant projects which were already in place. Moving forward we are developing a five-year strategy with key milestones to ensure we remain strategically focused. The strategy will include a significant push to promote the islands as a leading IFC. This is a stated objective of the TCI Government which is providing financial, legislative and hands-on support for the further development of the sector, including the setting up of a public/private Financial Services Working Group.

What do you consider the Turks and Caicos Islands' flagship products, services and credentials in respect of international financial services to be, and how do these distinguish it from other IFCs?

TCI is a small British Overseas Territory that has established a name as an IFC with an emphasis on Producer Owned Reinsurance Companies (PORCs). With



02



03



jurisdictions. The jurisdiction is welcoming to new entrants to the market with a flexible and commercial regulatory approach.

How is the Turks and Caicos Islands' pro-business investment climate best evidenced?

The Turks and Caicos is a multi-party democracy, overseen by a British Governor, and all parties are fully committed to the further development of the economy through the strengthening of our operating environment. We have one of the strongest growth rates of any Caribbean island and run a healthy budget surplus. Confidence in the economy is evidenced by a S&P rating of BBB+ over successive years. We have no direct corporate, personal, inheritance or capital gains taxes and no exchange controls. There are also investment incentives and duty concessions for companies wishing to invest in our priority sectors, including Financial Services. The operating environment is underpinned by a strong judicial system based on English Common Law.

Which recent or forthcoming legislative and regulatory developments are you most excited about and why?

We have recently enacted a cutting-edge suite of new Trust Laws and Regulations, making TCI one of the most flexible and user friendly jurisdictions in which to domicile a Trust. Very flexible, targeted regulation of Private Trust Companies, Vista style trusts and a host of other legislative initiatives have been enacted to enable TCI to compete with the very best jurisdictions in the world. TCI Company and Insolvency law is also undergoing a comprehensive review by the same drafting team who prepared the British Virgin Islands' legislation with a view to creating the most modern corporate and insolvency legislation of any IFC in the world by mid-2017. The Banking Ordinance is under review, with a draft Ordinance being prepared for further consultation with the industry. A new International Insurance Ordinance will be prepared in 2017.

a portfolio of nearly 7000 PORCs, supportive legislation; a strong working relationship between our experienced regulator and the industry; and Governmental support; the PORC sector in particular, and the captive insurance industry in general, are poised for significant growth.

TCI is also a well-known jurisdiction for Trust establishment and administration, and has a broad community of Trust Companies serving the needs of the internationally wealthy. Add to this a significant number of investment fund managers and Swiss and Canadian private banks. Our development as an IFC is clearly aligned to our brand as a leisure destination: quality, not quantity, and focused very much on the high net worth (HNW) community.

The overall cost of operating in the TCI compares favourably with other mainstream captive insurance

In light of the release of the "Panama Papers", what reassurance can you provide to investors that the Turks and Caicos Islands constitute a clean, transparent and responsible jurisdiction?

The Turks and Caicos is consistently ranked as a white listed jurisdiction, and has had no mention in the Panama Papers. Compliant with all international standards, committed to transparency, and with a strong regulator, the Financial Services Commission, TCI is an early adopter of CRS, and has fully implemented UK and US FATCA. Both the Private Sector and the Financial Services Commission are aligned behind a commitment to safe, responsible and transparent international financial services, and to continuing TCI's well-deserved reputation as the cleanest IFC in the Caribbean. ●