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# LANDSCAPING A LANDMARK

## Raymond Jungles at the Historic Golden Rock Inn

Text by: AMANDA EVA JUNGLES  
Images Courtesy of: RAYMOND JUNGLES, INC.

GOLDEN ROCK INN IS A CENTURIES-OLD sugar plantation located on Nevis, a 36-square-mile island in the West Indies. The site is perched 1,000 feet above sea level on the lower slopes of Mount Nevis, an inactive, yet still towering volcano. The new co-stewards of this intimate hotel, the artists Brice and Helen Marden, were attracted to this historic site by the abundance of plants and wildlife on the grounds. The overgrown vegetation and ethereal light appealed to their well-honed senses and the collaboration that ensued resulted in a garden that feels a part of the whole.

A powerful eruption once flung massive boulders from the apex of Mount Nevis and unseen forces exerted their influence from beneath the rich soil. Where magma previously flowed, now life-giving water descends downward from “The Source,” the freshwater spring located further up the mountain and accessible only by a nature trail.

While creating the necessary terraces and roads for the new restaurant approach and parking, the site began to generously present its gifts. Boulders, stones and pebbles in abundance were stockpiled according to scale. These elements, under the direction of the master artist, his landscape architect and the landscape architect’s right-hand implementation technician, were arranged to retain steep slopes, pave paths, build steps and add drama to the site. The massive boulders unearthed by the garden-building process were discovered to have a pattern: they flowed down the slope the same way the magma once did.

Five large boulders pushed off to one side, discovered during the excavation of the new restaurant — another collaboration with renowned British architect, Ed Tuttle — hinted at what was to become the signature garden element, “The Rocks.”

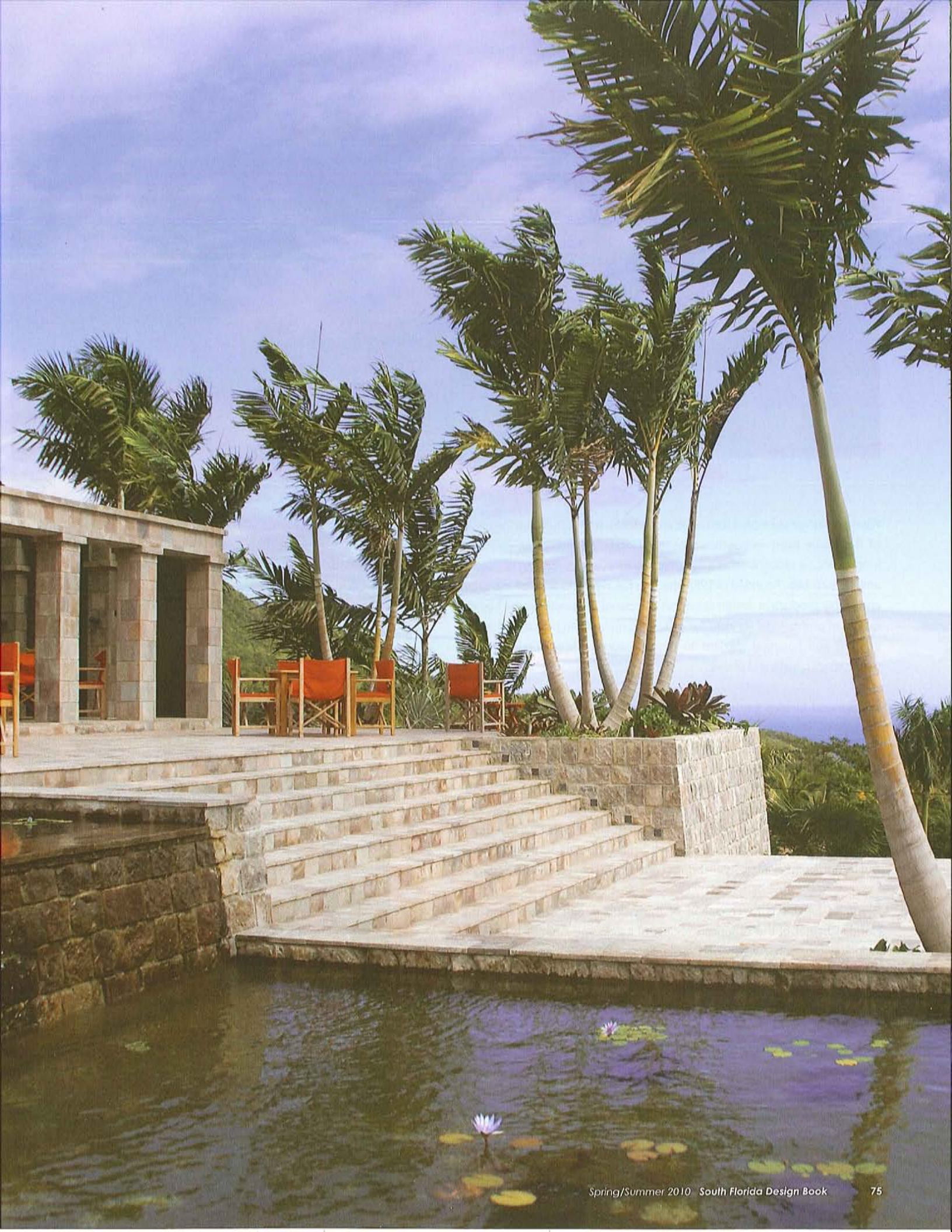
Raymond Jungles traveled with the Mardens through the local nurseries and a few private estates with vast plant collections to create a plant palette and to engage the clients in the selection of plant material. Jungles also took several hiking trips with a local botanist, Jim Johnson, into the rainforests that blanket the dormant volcano, to study the native flora and to see what local material would grow best on the Golden Rock site.

The Mardens’ love of lush and wild vegetation directed the usage of many indigenous species, as well as colorful subtropical specimens, from around the world. Water was introduced, by Ed Tuttle, in the terraced, placid lily ponds that grace the new dining area of “The Rocks.” Raymond Jungles continued to link water down a historic wall that once carried water to the original plantation houses’ cistern, which was restored to diffuse precipitation into the new garden. Now, the water flows from the wall-top rill onto an unearthed sculpted boulder and cascades into a grotto.

Golden Rock Inn is open to the public and the motions and sounds of the native animals often overpower that of the tourists. Throughout the design process, a need to provide habitat, prevent destruction and circumvent possible animal disturbances was imperative. In the mornings, monkeys pick at the low hanging mangoes, while sheep and goats tread about the site’s restored meadows. Part of the new landscape design includes a ha-ha wall to maintain an uninterrupted view from the garden and to allow Brice Marden to see the animals from his painting studio.

All of the elements that define the art of garden creation are in harmony: light, stone, water, plants, structure, land, and sky. The distant soul-searching views towards Montserrat and Antigua through the sculpted ficus tree also integrate the sea with the garden experience of this wind-blown, mountainside retreat.

RIGHT: Water garden and dining area.





Raymond Jungles practices landscape architecture from a studio on the banks of the Miami River in downtown Miami, Florida. His company, Raymond Jungles, Inc., is recognized as a dynamic, creative, award-winning landscape architecture firm. Founded in 1982, the firm has developed a well-managed and highly productive design team that is focused on providing the highest quality of professional services for projects ranging from private residential gardens and botanical gardens to hotels/resorts, offices/condominiums, public spaces, malls and plazas.

A Raymond Jungles garden is recognizable for its botanical richness and naturalism. Through the use of native plant species in combination with the subtropical aesthetic, Jungles creates projects, places and spaces that comfort the human psyche and raise the human spirit. In addition, Jungles' gardens are identifiable for their use of water features such as pools, fountains, waterfalls, ponds, and lakes. From a private rooftop oasis 34 stories above ground to the water gardens of Lincoln Road in Miami Beach, Jungles' inherent compassion for the natural landscape — both its aesthetic context and its horticultural integrity — brings comfort and beauty to built settings.

Raymond Jungles is the recipient of thirty-one design awards from the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), including fourteen Awards of Excellence and four Frederic B. Stressau Awards. Jungles also earned a Professional Award from the National Chapter of the ASLA. He was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2006. ●

For more information about Golden Rock Inn and Raymond Jungles, Inc., visit [www.golden-rock.com](http://www.golden-rock.com) and [www.raymondjungles.com](http://www.raymondjungles.com).

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** View of terraced boulder retaining wall and plantings at time of garden completion; Image showing existing conditions prior to constructing the boulder retention wall; The wall runnel feeds the new chute. Water cascades onto the specimen boulder and into a small pond grotto.

