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Crab Cay 'to bring the ultimate in luxury'

WHEN North Carolina investor Peter Murphy first set foot on Crab Cay in Exuma, he knew his 25-year search for the perfect island sanctuary was over.

"Crab Cay is everything, I had envisioned," said Mr Murphy of the tiny cay nestled 184 feet off the Exuma mainland, featuring 169.8 acres of rolling hills surrounded by a mile-and-a-half of untouched shoreline.

"Alluring, beguiling, and yes, in the end, it will be totally indulgent. That was my vision – to bring the ultimate in luxury for those who covet their privacy and respect the gifts of nature we endeavour to preserve."

On Thursday, he came one step closer to his dream when a delegation of government officials, including Prime Minister Perry Christie; Minister of Financial Services and Investments, Allyson Maynard-Gibson; Minister of Tourism, Obie Wilchcombe; Minister of State for Finance, James Smith; and North American and Bahamian media, investors and future residents gathered on the cay for a ground-breaking ceremony.

The ground-breaking marked the start of construction of the \$240 million resort community.

Said Charles Pullen, Crab Cay project director, president of Latitude Exuma Resorts and head of Duplin Development: "Our quest to build the ultimate gateway, where sanctuary, serenity and services become our hallmarks will be fulfilled as Crab Cay transcends from the drawing board to our groundbreaking, and now as construction begins. This private oasis will be in a class of its own, on a global level."

The design will be developed in the style of a grand colonial plantation.

A lot of the project's inspiration stems from the last person to develop the island back in the late 1700s.

"At that time, a plantation was constructed around the dreams of William Walker, who envisioned a botanical garden from cuttings he collected from

The development team plans to incorporate the ruins of Walkers' home and terraces into an historical area that will ultimately be recreated into an ecological refuge.

The heart of the Crab Cay development will be the Crab Cay Club, a private enclave of luxurious living anchored by multi-million dollar residences, a five-star hotel and spa, and a world-class marina.

The Crab Cay project will feature a private community consisting of 34 villa-sites, each property boasting 100 feet of ocean frontage, priced from \$1.8 million.

It will feature 54 estate enclaves, each with no less than two acres, priced from \$3.8 to \$10 million; and up to 50 mega yacht marina slips with a promenade.

Twenty-two acres, closest to George Town, will be the site of a five-star hotel and spa with a distinctive clubhouse, tropical pool area, tennis courts, beach areas, water sports and boat docks.

"Crab Cay will be beyond private," said Mr Pullen.

Mr Murphy added that the developers would be very discriminate as to who can purchase property on the island. "We want people who will share our vision to preserve our environment."

The investment will be a major boast to Exuma's economy, creating 300 jobs during construction – expected to take about three years – and 600 permanent jobs upon completion.

The building of utilities to serve the development, such as a reverse osmosis plant, fuel dock, a fuel and oil spillage container facility, solid waste disposal and pump-out systems should also create employment.