

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

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CHARLES GWATHMEY'S ST. BARTS PARADISE

The architect designed one of his final projects for a spectacular island site: a villagelike compound of pristine white pavilions with breathtaking views

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The room's steel-and-leather chairs by [Mark Albrecht](#) surround a custom-made table, which features a mara-wood top by [Tucker Robbins](#).



NO ONE WHO KNEW CHARLES Gwathmey, either as an architect or as a friend, had any doubts about his dedication, his passion, or his loyalty. Case in point: In May 2009, while battling advanced esophageal cancer, he traveled to St. Barts to check on the progress of a family compound he was designing there. He took along Kang Chang, an associate at his firm, Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects.

"St. Barts is an amazing project on every level," he wrote to Chang from his home office soon after their return. "I hope to see its final realization, but totally trust your commitment and guidance.

My life has obviously changed and I am compromised, but I never stop thinking about creativity and self-criticism."

Although Gwathmey died shortly thereafter, on August 3, 2009, at the age of 71, the residence stands as one of the most compelling works of an architect who was among the preeminent modernists of his generation. Its completion by Chang, in late 2010, was seamless and proved to be a testament to their long and close relationship, which had begun after Chang's freshman year at Syracuse University. The two met when the Korean-born architecture student came to visit a friend who was working in the Gwathmey Siegel office; while there, he ran square into the physically imposing Gwathmey, though Chang had no idea who the man was. →