

# I'm a beachfront addict

Picture: JOSEPH JONES



Actor John Barrowman talks to JANE SLADE about his collection of bricks and mortar and his latest purchase, an island hideaway on the Caribbean island of Antigua

**B**EST KNOWN as Captain Jack Harkness in the sci-fi TV programmes Doctor Who and Torchwood, John Barrowman is so busy with work (he has just appeared in six episodes of Desperate Housewives) it is surprising he has time to visit any of his homes, let alone monitor the build of his latest project, a two-bedroomed and two-bathroomed apartment on the Caribbean island of Antigua. "I guess you can call my property buying an addiction," Barrowman confesses. "Whenever I get a job I try to put a deposit on a home." The actor's collection of bricks and mortar includes a beachfront home in the Welsh Vale of Glamorgan, which is close to where Torchwood is filmed; two condos in Florida;

another in Palm Springs; a townhouse in London; and an off-plan condo in the Caribbean overlooking the volcanic island of Montserrat. "I found it by accident when I flew out to Antigua for a week's holiday in a lovely resort called Blue Waters, in January," says Barrowman, pictured above at Blue Waters. "I saw an advert for Tamarind Hills and just loved the location. My partner Scott is an architect so we were able to design our own home, which has access to two beautiful beaches at Ffryes and Darkwood. "I only get two weeks' holiday a year and wanted to buy where it is warm year round; several friends have bought in the South of France but it is cold there in winter. We loved the scheme and have designed our condo with an outdoor

shower, glass balcony and infinity swimming pool right outside the sitting room. "Scott looks after the structural side while I am very picky about furniture. I like Natuzzi leather sofas, which are clean, comfortable and modern. When we are not there we will offer it to friends and family but it will be our island hideaway. "The trouble is it is getting more expensive by the day because of the pound/dollar exchange rate so we have told the builder not to rush; it is supposed to be finished by April next year." Scottish-born Barrowman, 43, and his long-term partner Scott Gill chose Antigua because it is less developed than ritzier neighbour Barbados, with empty beaches and fewer

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## PROPERTY: ABROAD

### Captain Jack's Caribbean hideaway

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people. "It gives us a different kind of vacation," says Barrowman. "I hate the countryside; the idea of mud and Wellington boots appals me and I didn't want to be in some remote place without anyone around me.

"I grew up in a neighbourhood in America, which I have replicated with my Welsh house; there I have created my own Wisteria Lane with neighbours who come and swim in my pool in the summer.

"I am lucky that I can afford to provide homes for my parents too. My Palm Springs condo is really for my parents. They live there part of the year. When they are there we rent out the larger house in Florida."

Tamarind Hills is London couple Rufus and Alex Gobat's project. Alex used to run a medical aesthetics company and is now doing an online degree in interior design at Nottingham University while her husband Rufus has been building in the region for the past 20 years. His projects include Cap Maison in St Lucia, which was named best small resort in the Caribbean by Condé Nast Johansens.

Tamarind occupies the spectacular 13-acre site of a former sugar plantation straddling two of the best beaches on the island, Darkwood and Ffryes. The first phase of eight units, a mix of apartments and villas, started in February and will be completed in November. Phase two



CONTEMPORARY: The Tamarind Hills resort in Antigua where John Barrowman, inset, has bought an apartment

begins in June for completion in 2011. The scheme comprises oceanfront villas, beachfront condos and ridgetop residences all with floor-to-ceiling windows and sea views to spectacular Montserrat.

**B**ARROWMAN has bought one of the two-bedroomed apartments, which are selling from £600,000. Three-bedroomed villas cost from £1.3 million rising to £1.5 million to £2.75 million for a four-bed. The third phase will feature a five-star hotel, tennis courts, gym, spa, shopping gallery and beach

club. The building spec is high, with Italian marble inside and Turkish marble outside. "I've designed a dark grey slate infinity pool," says Alex, "which is especially for lazy people; there will be a daybed so you can roll straight into it. There will also be a dining pergola that makes you feel as if you're hanging over the sea."

Owners have come from far and wide. They include an egg farmer from Poland who slapped down a deposit on a three-bedroomed villa after a whistle-stop 24-hour visit.

"People are seduced by the unspoilt environment," says Rufus. "Not only is the location stunningly beautiful but we are close to

the family resort of Jolly Harbour, which has lots of great facilities. There are also two excellent five-star hotels nearby, Carlisle Bay and Curtain Bluff, but our prices are half those of similar properties on Barbados."

Tamarind's architectural style is very contemporary, with lots of glass plus square and rectangular edges. There will be 62 properties in all when the resort is finished in 2013 but only a third of the site will be developed. The rest will be given over to green spaces, gardens and communal areas. Owners will use golf carts to get around the resort and there will also be mooring buoys to attract day-trippers.

#### Fact file

- **Tamarind Hills** selling beach properties from £600,000 to £2.75million. Tamarind-hills.com
- Exclusive 300-acre island of **Jumby Bay** selling villas for around £13.7million. Jumbybayisland.com
- **Galley Bay** selling villas from £3.5m to £4m; four one- and two-bed cottages for sale (price on application) through paradisepropertiesconnection.com
- **Nonsuch Bay Resort** has 62 apartments and 22 townhouses with one-bed condos from £271,000 to £820,000 for three-bed townhouses. Secluded bay with restaurant and sailing school. Nonsuchbayresort.com
- **Jolly Harbour** offering two-beds from £137,000 to £3.5million for villas. jhrcaribbean.com selling waterfront properties on Jolly Harbour island from £154,000; villas on Sugar Ridge £1.5million.