



Photo courtesy of Two & Quarter Photography Ltd.

Painting History

By Andrea Milam

Guests at the lovely Elbow Beach Resort undoubtedly arrive there thanks to the hotel's reputation as a beautiful luxury boutique with picturesque lush grounds.

What they may not realize, however, is that the storied hotel is as historically rich as it is aesthetically pleasing; Elbow Beach Resort has been in operation since 1908. Visitors are now being offered a window into the hotel's history with a Graham Foster mural, located on two 100-square-foot walls that adjoin the main hotel building's new conference rooms, that depicts the resort throughout the ages.

Foster, who's an established artist, sculptor, and local history enthusiast, has made a name for himself with his historical murals, which he's painted at the National Museum of Bermuda and Bermuda College. Though he's accustomed to painting large-scale creations, the Elbow Beach mural initially left him scratching his head when he was hired by the resort in 2015.

"At first, I was wondering how to fill such a large area with the history of just one hotel," says Graham. "As I began to research

the project, I found that the hotel had an amazing, multifaceted history stretching back over a century, and was a pinnacle of Bermudian tourism."

Graham gathered imagery using a magazine published to honor the hotel's 100-year anniversary, Bermuda's local archives office, and even Google images, which the artist deems his most important tool for making his research easier. He soon found that there was plenty of material to cover the space; next, he decided which approach to take.

"I painted the outside of the hotel as it originally looked in 1910 on one wall, and then the more familiar facade from the 1950s on the other," says Graham. "All around the hotel I've focused on the beach, bathers, wreck of the Pollokshields, and transportation. I've also incorporated different highlights of Bermudian history such as early aviation, ice carts, Teddy Tucker's wreck-spotting balloon, and more."

The mural runs chronologically from left

to right, with one wall covering the 1908-1940 time period, and the second covering 1940-1985. The artist applied a surreal and flowing style in an effort to create smooth transitions from scene to scene. He also spiced up his historical mural with humor by depicting a man being stung by a Portuguese man o' war, drunken revelers, and a frat boy sharing a beer with a cow on the hotel's fourth floor. Indeed, he's created a sprawling scene where visitors can lose themselves as they view Elbow Beach and Bermuda through the ages while delighting at these humorous gems hidden among the mural's intricacy. Each wall took four months to complete using acrylic paints, which are known for being durable and standing the test of time.

Be sure to stop by Elbow Beach Resort during your time in Bermuda to experience Graham's latest mural in person, and for more on the artist, visit www.grahamfoster.com.