Material Delivery

This is how we got ALL construction materials to our place.

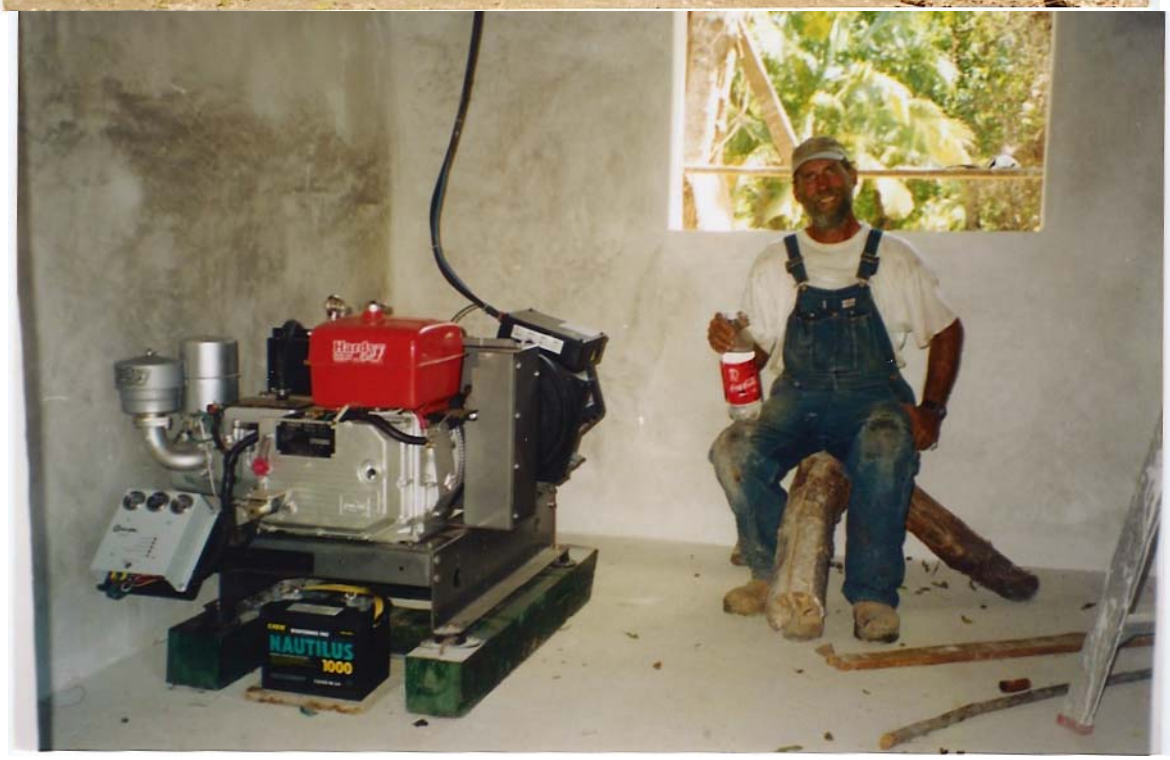
We would order the materials from the mainland, then, after a week or two or three, the cargo ship would anchor off the beach.

Then I had to build a temporary dock & hire some guys with “cayuca” boats to move material from the cargo ship to the dock. After that, my guys would offload to the beach. Once it was all on the beach, we used our Gator to haul up to the construction site.

The Gator is really handy. It has six wheels & a dump truck bed.

The stuff in sacks is sand and gravel.

Generator House



This is my little generator house. Walls are concrete & block, with all block cells filled with clay to keep things quiet. We have 2 of these 9kv generators. We also have a really big battery bank with a 4kv inverter. This allows us to run the generator for about 3 hrs/day to charge the batteries and then the inverter converts 24v DC into 120v AC for household use. We shipped that orange container down from Louisiana & dragged it up the beach. Since this pic was taken, they have run “city power” to our place, but the genny will still come-in handy.

Construction of Casita Foundation / Cistern

After digging a huge hole in the ground, this is the start of concrete work. It's a 15,000 gallon water cistern that sits under the 1st floor patio. We have a good, fresh water well onsite, but it makes sense on an island to collect rainwater as well. Lots of concrete & rebar in this because it's also part of the house foundation. All rebar is #4 with #3 ties since they can be bent by hand (just takes a lot of pieces). No rental equipment on the island. Those are my concrete mixers, but most work is by hand. Concrete for everything above foundation level was hauled, "fire brigade" style in 5 gallon buckets with a lot of guys.

Interior Arch Forming

This is how I formed the arches. The black plastic tubing is my electrical conduit inside poured concrete.

The roof framing is the only wood in the casita, except for doors, cabinets etc. Roof has 6x10 timbers, capped with 1” tongue & groove, double layered tarpaper & clay tiles. Roof framing is exposed to the inside of the casita.

Miscellaneous Pics

This is how lumber is dried Island style.

Its absolutely necessary because the wood arrives really wet. So wet in fact that some pieces sank when they were thrown off the cargo ship into the bay. The “plan” was to float them to the beach.

This is our caretaker’s house. His name is Orlando & he lives here with wife & little daughter. Guaranteed, this is the best house he has ever lived in. Since this pic, we extended the house in back and added a kitchen & bathroom. Running water & a flush toilet doesn't sound like a big deal to us “gringos”, but he has never had it.

Another pic of the casita roof framing. Anchor bolts hold these wood beams into a concrete beam atop the walls. In this pic, the wood beams are temporarily supported above the formwork as concrete is being poured for the beams. That way everything fits up. The wood to wood connections are thru-bolted.

Casita Construction - Outside

Most of these are views from the beach. The little hill we dug the foundation into is solid limestone as compared to sand which is everywhere else. Most everything is poured concrete except for block fill between concrete columns at the back. Normal construction on the island is wood, so I set-up a concrete apprenticeship program with my workers. This is a very strong house & will survive a hurricane.

Done for Now

We ran out of time and $$, so this is how we left it. Still need to plaster in & out, lay floor tile, install plumbing & electrical fixtures and install windows.

1st floor has 8' ceiling and 2nd floor has an open beam ceiling with10' at the perimeter and 16' at the ridge.

The guys are my construction crew. 4 of them started as machete choppers, clearing the jungle & I set-up an apprenticeship program to re-train them into concrete workers. I'm proud of that.

The side view shows how small the casita really is. 2nd floor has 1 br, 1ba, LR & kitchen. 1st floor is laundry on one side & utility room on the other.

The "patio" is 20'x35'. While living on the island, we have found that the patio is where one spends all their relax time.

The gutter downspout is poured inside the concrete column, leading to a 16,000 gallon cistern under the 1st floor.

More of the same. The enclosed rooms on the 1st floor are a laundry room on one side and a electrical/mechanical room on the other side.

The area in front, with the dirt still dug out is where the front patio extension will go under our "Turn the Casita into a Casa Grande Plan".

The front of the casita as shown is about 150 feet in from the water. When we do the addition, the front of the building will be about 115 feet in. Still far enough to avoid salt spray.

My temporary boat house and the shipping container under cover.

Views from 1st floor patio

These are views from the 1st floor patio. With all the concrete mass, it stays really cool under here.

Views from the Beach

The top pic is our little boat. It's a 20' military surplus Boston Whaler "commercial" model with a 150hp Evinrude. I will need to take a Yamaha down next time since Yamahas are just about all that you can get parts for in Honduras. The boat is fast & strong.

The bottom pic is the view pulling onto our bay. & you can see the casita if you look closely. Our property runs near to far in the top pic and full with in the bottom.