

INTERIORS

Mr. Edward Seaga's home

66 - Sunday, December 30, 1990

The orchids around the small pool were in full bloom and looked almost magical. "You can't have soil around a pool (it might spill in the water), so I thought orchids would be a good choice. Of course, you should know which types like full sun and which ones need shade...", said Mr. Edward Seaga while pointing to more orchids hanging, magnificently, from the ceiling of a nearby covered patio.

It had never occurred to "Interior" that the Leader of the Opposition was also the owner of a green thumb (no pun intended!). More surprises were in store, but let me try

to take you on a tour of Seaga's home in an organised fashion.

Roughly described, the house has the shape of a "U", with the two sides of the letter connected by a well-stocked greenhouse. The result is a pleasant enclosed garden. Beside the pool, which is joined to an open-air jacuzzi through a narrow channel, complete with a small, Chinese-style bridge, there is also a bird sanctuary, lots of flowers and greenery.

It's a quite and serene place.

Living Quarters

Inside, throughout most of the house, the walls have been set in the palest of pink, an "off-pink", if you want (My photographer, who must have enjoyed the Season quite a bit, kept insisting it was off-white).

Interestingly, the wooden flooring has been pickled in white. It contributes to the luminosity and the feeling of airiness of the house.

Upon entering the small entrance hall, the first thing you see is an enormous oil canvas by Barry Watson, called "Deliverance". It is breathtak-

ing and hangs above a setting consisting of a small table flanked by two chairs, classic in style.

A small Chinese silk rug lays on the floor. It has a pat-

tern made of a fascinating combination of white and shades of light green.

The living-room is quite large. A huge painting of a costumed festival group by Barry Watson hangs on the wall opposite to the entrance hall.

Mr. Seaga has a large collection of paintings by Jamaican artists. These works are usually very powerful, with a liberal use of strong colours; the latter is true also for a collection of Haitian

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paintings hanging on another wall.

The strong colours from the paintings, their (often) contemporary themes, are in contrast with the subdued shades of the surroundings, the traditional furniture (mostly good Chippendale reproductions), the white flooring, the light flowing through the French

corner one can see an unusual piece of furniture: a genuine (albeit a bit battered by the weather) Chinese cooking table.

Sleeping quarters

Thereafter, we looked at the two bedrooms shared by the children. In Christopher's room, "Interiors" fussed over



Antique game table

windows. The result is rather pleasing.

"The place is cosy", conceded Mr. Seaga at one point.

A crystal chess set stands ready on a genuine antique (and beautiful) chess/card table. Mr. Seaga, precise but concise as he was all through our tour, comments: "I don't play chess, but my son does".

There is also a large display cabinet which contains gift and mementoes, some quite rare, given to Mr. Seaga by foreign Head of States and political personalities.

One reaches the dining-room through an opening in the wall beside the entrance hall.

Exactly 20 small prints by Hakewell hang on the walls. The problem is that, initially, the artist had created a set of 21 prints and our host is still looking for the 'missing' one!

The dining table and its matching chairs stand on a beige and peach carpet.

This room is bordered by a lovely enclosed patio which is covered by a light wooden treillis on which a jade vine is trained.

A metal table and metal chairs painted in antique green furnish the place. In a

an antique "escritoire" (a small desk) placed against a wall and was unaware of the fact that a young man's shirt had been forgotten on the bed.

Mr. Seaga, however, quickly grabbed the offending piece of garment, carefully folding it before stashing it away. It was funny and touching to watch.

The house also features a cosy music room, containing state-of-the-art equipment. Mr. Seaga took pain to explain all the technical niceties but it went over my head for your dear "Interiors" Editor is not technically inclined. However, I can vouch for the fact that the music being played throughout the house (an opera) was indeed excellent.

I asked our host what kind of music he liked best and he answered that, with the exception of jazz and chamber music, he likes all types of music from "grand opera to reggae".

The music room leads directly to the master bedroom. Colour scheme: blue and pink. Here again there are paintings of local artists displayed on the walls but also a great many family pictures.

On the floor stood the most

impressive row of briefcases (bulging with documents) I ever saw.

Time has come to describe the bathroom attached to the master bedroom (there is practically no partitioning wall between both rooms.) A huge tub/whirlpool has been installed in the middle of the room, almost at ground level. It is flanked on either side by washstands.

The bathroom is pink. However, I noticed that the bathtowels were resolutely green.

In the left corner, a fake grotto has been built. Plants are already growing, but the planned spring and waterfall aren't functioning as yet, due to some technical

mishap.

To the right, there are two doors. One leads to a fully equipped gymnasium and the other to a small dressing room.

The Cottage

We ended our visit in a sort of cottage, a bit separated from the rest of the house. It is mostly reserved for meetings with party members. Still, the place has the stamp of coziness and airiness which characterises Mr. Seaga's home. Here also, there are mementoes of our host's political career as well as more personal souvenirs like the rocking chair which the painter Kapo bequeathed to Mr. Seaga in his will.

Our host also shown the very first sculpture produced by Kapo: a man's head made of lignum vitae. He told us that at the beginning of his career, Kapo used to have his work seized by the police on a regular basis! Why!? Because it was considered as 'dangerous' obeah work.

Another focal point here is provided by a glass display cabinet. It contains a collection of books dedicated to Mr. Seaga by people as diverse as Rex Nettleford, Richard Nixon and Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King.

At various points during our visit, we were escorted by two friendly poodles with the unassuming names of "Bobo" (for the smaller one) and "Fifi" (for a much larger one).

"Bobo" was especially friendly and keen on socialising. While I was going over my notes, he suddenly jumped from his master's lap in order to jump around a bit. I overheard Mr. Seaga muttering to himself: "He has so much energy! . . . I should lend him to J.P.S."

Mr. Seaga, Edward



Mr. Seaga with energetic poodle



A corner in the 'cottage'. Kapo's chair in the background

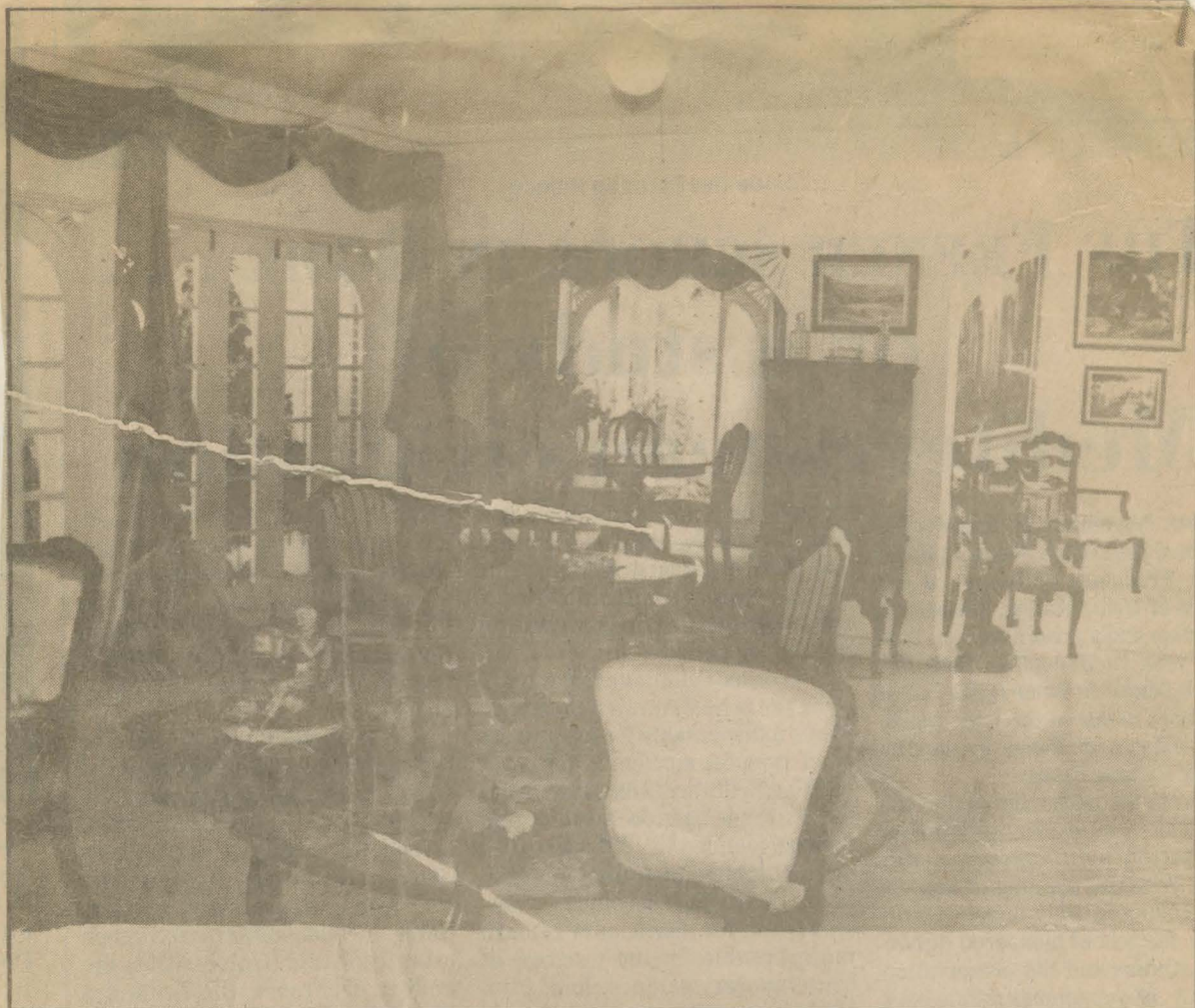
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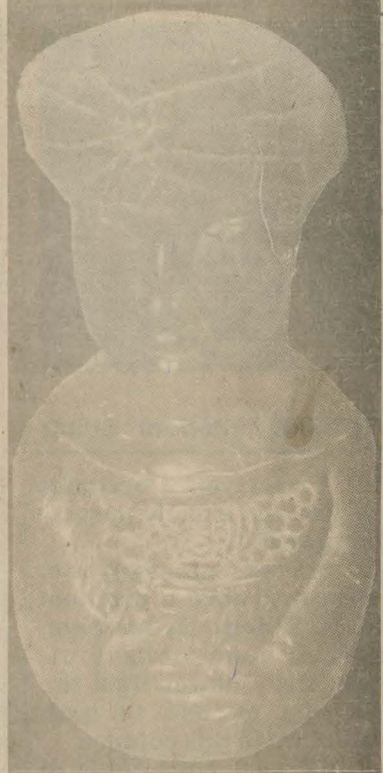
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View from living room. Dining room and entrance hall in background



Orchids in bloom



Painter Kapo's first sculpture