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## Belize Resort Project To Proceed

By Hotels, Ambergris Daily and Hospitality Trends Staff

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Ending a two-year litigation that stalled development of a US\$50 million luxury resort hotel in Belize, a crucial strip of waterfront property on the island of Ambergris Caye was awarded to the project's developers by a Belize court.

**Richard Roth** of New York-based The Roth Law Firm PLLC traveled to Belize to try the case for developers of the Ma'loha Resort & Marina. The court returned a verdict in favor of the developers. The victory enforces the sale of two acres of land adjoining the coast of Ambergris Caye, the largest island on Belize and that country's top tourism destination.

"This land is the proverbial diamond in the rough. It is in a unique location that is private and pristine yet close to San Pedro, while at the same time has coastal and river access," said David Bane, a managing partner on the project's Belize and U.S. based development team. Noting that the land is intended as the location

of the resort's docking facility, pool and oceanfront restaurant, Mr. Bane said that the development of the project would have been called off without it. "We are thrilled that we were able to prove at trial that the entire property, and not just a part, was sold to the developers," he said.

"My clients were at all times in the right legally. We are thrilled about developing this five star resort and are equally excited about the positive impact this resort will have on Belize in many ways," **Roth** said. "The outcome is very good for Belize as well as for my clients."

Mr. Bane noted that the development team has strong roots and connections in Belize as well as the United States. "Our objective is to build and operate a resort designed to the highest environmental and luxury standards, that will be a premier destination resort for visitors from the U.S. and worldwide, and create a positive and

lasting economic impact on Ambergris Caye and in Belize," he said.

Ma'loha Resort & Marina is in the design phase, and the development team estimates an 18-month to two-year build, Bane said. He noted that the resort will incorporate a number of ecologically progressive elements including water making systems, solar panels and potentially wind turbines. The development team helped start a school in Belize that already educates over 500 children, and they plan to establish a foundation to provide college education scholarships for Belizean children, Bane said.

Ma'loha Resort & Marina will be operated independently, and a U.S. based team will be engaged to manage the property, which will

have approximately 150 rooms and will be the largest hotel on Ambergris Caye, Bane said. The project is also considering a casino component to enhance leisure offerings on the island that do not currently exist.

Ambergris Caye is a popular destination for underwater enthusiasts who come to explore the Belize Barrier Reef, second largest in the world after the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. The Belize Barrier Reef is only half a mile from the Ambergris Caye shore where the Ma'loha Resort & Marina is to be located. The project will open the fishery with the docking facility as well as allow the transient boater the ability to stop and enjoy the islands many offerings. Ambergris Caye is reached by air service from Belize City, as well as by numerous ferries from the Belize mainland.

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**295 Madison Avenue, Floor 22,**  
**New York, NY (212) 542-8882**  
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