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Watch: Robert A. Levine on building from Brooklyn to the Caribbean

RAL Companies founder joins TRD's Amir Korangy on the latest episode of Coffee Talk

By **Hannah Kramer**

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It goes without saying that the pandemic was a tough time to be a hospitality developer.

"[Projects] in the Caribbean were all delayed," RAL Companies' Robert A. Levine told TRD's Amir Korangy in the latest episode of Coffee Talk.

Today, although the pandemic rages on, the tide seems to be turning for resort developers like Levine, who has ongoing construction in the Cayman Islands and Puerto Rico. In conversation with Korangy, Levine explained the scope of some of those island projects, as well as the

challenges involved in getting them done and building partnerships with top hospitality brands like the Four Seasons and Mandarin Oriental.

The developer isn't a stranger to large projects, both overseas and closer to home. Levine, who was born and raised in Flatbush, developed the ambitious One Brooklyn Bridge Park condo building on a site he bought from the Jehovah's Witnesses as DUMBO prepared to go through a rezoning in the late aughts.

"[The project] had influence on a lot of the development of Brooklyn Bridge Park around it," Levine said, laying out his process for working with the city to negotiate easements and incorporate the development into the larger landscape of Brooklyn's waterfront.

Though the process could be convoluted, it isn't what it once was — "the building department was a very different place" in the 21st century than it was in the earlier years of his career, Levine said, hinting at the city's bygone era of greased palms and sealed envelopes.

Watch the video above for more.

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