

Marilyn Mangled Wood Houses Where Tri-Steel Homes Survived

Hurricane Marilyn slammed into the U.S. Virgin Islands

on September 16, 1995, killing nine people and causing massive property damage. Still reeling from a brush with Hurricane Luis only two weeks earlier, the islands of St. John and St. Thomas were shocked by the fury of the near Category 3 monster.

“Marilyn wasn’t supposed to be that bad,” said builder John Campbell. **“Then at the last minute, it really intensified. No one was prepared.”**



Campbell, the owner of the building company B.C. Construction Group and the architectural firm Campbell Design Group, is an authorized builder for Tri-Steel, the industry leader in the design and manufacture of steel-framed homes. He has built more than a dozen Tri-Steel homes in the Virgin Islands.



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On a scenic ridge overlooking the ocean and the Hyatt Resort on St. John stands one of the Tri-Steel homes built by Campbell. One of the highest points on the island, the houses on the ridge all suffered incredible damage— except for the Tri-Steel home. *(See top photo above.)*

“The Tri-Steel house was the only one in the area with no structural damage,” said Campbell.

Most of the steel homes built by Campbell suffered zero damage. Even on St. Thomas, which endured the worst of Hurricane Marilyn, the Tri-Steel homes needed only minimal cosmetic repair.

Reportedly 80% of the homes and business on St. Thomas sustained massive damage.

One man on St. Thomas told Campbell he’d clocked one gust at over 200 m.p.h. Although his Tri-Steel home was only engineered to withstand 110 m.p.h. winds, it escaped with only the loss of a few shakes.

The buyers who had recently purchased Campbell’s personal home were extremely happy with the way the steel withstood Marilyn’s vicious attack. They told him that the wood house across the street “looked like a bomb had hit it.” The worst damage their Tri-Steel home suffered was a broken window caused by debris from a neighbor’s house.

“Here in the islands,” said Campbell, “there are many reasons to build a steel framed home. Lower insurance rates are a factor. Termite resistance is a factor, too. The best reason of all is that you don’t have to worry about it blowing away in a hurricane.”

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