

Happy Medium

Farmhouse style meets sleek modernism in a family's sophisticated Coral Gables residence.

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Architecture: Antonio E. Rodriguez, Antonio E. Rodriguez Architecture Studio
Interior Design: Maggie Cruz, Maggie Cruz Interior Design LLC
Home Builder: Alex Gil, Gil Development
Landscape Architecture: Ivan Vila, VisualScape Inc.





The mahogany front door of a Coral Gables residence by designer Maggie Cruz opens to reveal a foyer crowned with an RH chandelier. Benjamin Moore Chantilly Lace colors the walls. A Noir console complements the owners' lamp and mirror, while a vintage Turkish rug covers Roca's Downtown tile flooring in Antracita.

One word looped through designer Maggie Cruz's mind as she envisioned the interiors of her clients' new Coral Gables home: balance. She needed to unite the diverging tastes of the owners—the husband wanted a modern, polished look, while the wife desired something more charming and approachable for their family of five. Still, they needed a place that set the right scene for formal entertaining. The designer would have to meet them in the middle, for a warm, contemporary feel that is elegant and refined.

"All the images the wife showed us were more farmhouse, so we had to figure out a way of working that in without taking it too far," she recalls. "But that's always the interesting dynamic: trying to come up with a design that makes both husband and wife happy."

Cruz wasn't the only one merging styles for the L-shaped structure, lined with expansive windows and glass sliding doors. From the outset, architect Antonio E. Rodriguez set a sophisticated tone that blends opposites. "We tried to balance modern with traditional," he explains. "The house has a traditional roofline and is fairly symmetrical along the front, but then it has a modern architectural language with glass." Builder Alex Gil introduced clean-lined coastal materials, found in exotic woods and stones. "We used Brazilian cumaru hardwood for the facial and overhangs and seashell stone from the Dominican Republic on the exterior floors and wall areas to give it a tropical feel," he says. A stainless-steel cable railing and bronze aluminum louvers add a contemporary twist to the palette.

Cruz took a similar tack with the interiors, countering some of the more modern architectural finishes so nothing was too harsh. For instance, to warm the lower level's sleek black porcelain flooring, she opted for wooden ceilings, plus light ash and oak finishes for the millwork and built-ins in the kitchen and the family area. The soothing woods allow for the desired farmhouse feel, without being too on the nose. "These spaces are pretty grand, and they're square-shaped," the designer notes of the layout. "So when you start adding these materials, they're going to feel a little more relaxed." Likewise, the wine cellar's white oak shelving softens the iron-framed glass doors,

complementing the nearby wood staircase with a striking railing wall of bars of iron.

She used product materials, too, to invoke a cozy environment but strategically played within a neutral palette of organic, earthy tones for a sophisticated look. "A project starts revealing itself to you, and you start seeing what's appropriate and what's not," Cruz explains. "At first, we were exploring the idea of bringing in some color, but it wasn't the right choice. In the end, playing with texture is what made the most sense." A cashmere throw tops the living area's white linen chaise, joined by complementary sofas and armchairs, marble coffee tables and a black stained-wood bench. The family area is home to a chunky linen sofa, a leather armchair, a woven lamp and teak-and-rope armchairs. Velvet stools pull up to the marble bar, plush dining chairs surround a long wood table and durable woven rugs throughout ground the spaces with tactility.

Although the interiors are soothingly neutral, the residence isn't completely absent of color thanks to the property's lush greenery by landscape designer Ivan Vila. "The design criteria involved simple lines with elegant and rich plant material," he says. Vila bordered the grounds with oolite boulders and bamboo and arranged plantings such as lemon trees, coconut and large medjool palms, bromeliads and seagrape.

Happily, there was one space in the home where husband and wife shared the same vision: their suite. "They both were in line with wanting it to feel like a sanctuary, a very quiet space—somewhere where they can unwind at the end of the day," Cruz says. Shades of ivory on the channel-set armchairs, grass-cloth wallpaper and blackout draperies envelop the room with a dreamy presence. For simple elegance in their bathroom, she repeated a marble with soft white veining on the countertops and flooring. "I picture the wife there, getting ready for her beautiful parties in this glamorous bathroom," the designer says.

The family brought few items from their previous home to their new address, but one sentimental piece stands out: a collection of antique locks and keys, gathered from their travels over the years, that Cruz had framed in a modern acrylic shadow box—a fitting display of the house's dichotomy. "It's a family home but elevated," the designer says. "Everything has a place and a purpose and was done very intentionally." ■



Above: The designer outfitted the dining area with a table, chairs and chandelier by RH and hung an Ivette Lopez artwork near an Arteriors wall sconce. The wine cellar and the staircase show off white oak and powder-coated black steel.

Opposite: Custom stools by Premium Upholstery tuck into the white oak bar, featuring a waterfall island of Opustone Stone and Tile Concepts' Bianco Lasa marble. RH pendants decorate the space, as do a collection of locks and keys from the clients' travels Cruz artfully arranged in an acrylic box. Kasas Interiors fabricated the draperies.





Brownstone Furniture armchairs join a Lee Industries sofa and chaise on a Surya rug in the living area. Above the Williams-Sonoma bench, Haikell Delgado artwork centers a pair of Arteriors wall sconces. The coffee table and floor lamps are Four Hands.

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Above: A Palecek chandelier and Circa Lighting sconces offer light in the main bathroom. Cruz repeated Opustone Stone and Tile Concepts' Mystery White marble on the flooring as well as the countertops of the vanity's white oak base, wearing Schoolhouse's Edgecliff pulls. Kohler's Purist hardware and a stool by Premium Upholstery complete the look.

Left: Four Hands armchairs and a Nuevo side table pair with a bed and nightstands by RH in the main bedroom. Kelly O'Neal artwork adds a striking touch, as do the pendants and overhead light by Visual Comfort. Draperies by Kasas Interiors and a grass-cloth wallpaper by York Wallcoverings inject an ethereal feel. A vintage Turkish rug offers texture on the Bella Citta flooring.