

Back & Forth

A NEW MIAMI HOME NODS TO A GENTEEL OLD FLORIDA, WHILE MODERN TOUCHES PLACE IT FIRMLY IN THE PRESENT DAY.

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE /
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The custom-painted entry doors from Ultimate Door are visible only from the home's inner courtyard. The checkerboard limestone and Thassos marble tile from Ocean Across, installed by Genesis Marble & Tile, lead through the foyer to the loggia and pool. The outdoor sconces are from ELK Lighting Creativity in Nesquehoning, Pennsylvania.



Modern homes, with their straight lines and hard angles, can easily become too austere for a young family seeking casual comfort. Such was the paradox designer Maggie Cruz addressed when her clients asked her to infuse a new house they were building with the vintage vibes of an old-Florida plantation home. “It’s a very grand house,” Cruz says, “yet the wife wanted to make sure it felt cozy and charming but at the same time modern. She really wanted it to feel like a Florida home—authentic and appropriate.”

Cruz worked with frequent collaborators—residential designer Scott Tao and builder Mark H. Candela—to combine soothing colors and rich wood tones within a

crisp shell of black and white to achieve that goal. “We definitely felt like the house needed to be grounded in natural textures,” she says. Tao shared the same mission with regard to how the home would be built. For example, a small coral-stone house sat on the property when the owners purchased it. It had been neglected for too long to save, but it inspired the team as the new residence took shape. “Bringing some of that old-Florida vernacular was something they wanted to do as an homage to that old house,” says Tao, who partnered with associate architect Jose Perdomo on the project.

The mix of old and new starts with the weathered brick driveway that leads through a smooth stucco façade into a private courtyard. Only then does the house reveal itself



Designer Maggie Cruz had the foyer paneled in shiplap siding, which lends a casual note to the formal checkerboard-tile floor pattern. The carved cabinet by Noir adds warmth to the cool space. The white marble lamp is from Urban Loft; a mirror from the owners’ collection lends a reflective surface.



Cruz designed built-in bookshelves to anchor the living room; they were fabricated by Paez Design. The natural-oak backing of the shelves complements the white-oak Aspen Hill flooring from The Carpet Boutique, while the white shade in the trim continues from the walls and furnishings, which include a metal-frame wing chair by Noir. The bell-jar pendant in the distant foyer is by Visual Comfort & Co.

through a set of glass-paned blue doors that open into a foyer lined with checkerboard tile and shiplap-paneled walls. “They wanted a colored door that sets the stage, that says you’re about to go into a cool house,” Cruz says. The first-floor architecture bears modern hallmarks of voluminous angular spaces with oversize windows, but Tao says its L-shaped layout enhances the classic plantation design, where French doors in nearly every public room and bedroom open to a porch, veranda or balcony. “It brings back the lure of living in a tropical climate,” Cruz says. She used knotty, whitewashed oak on the floors as a contrast to the sleek white walls—“a huge way of giving it some warmth,” she explains. Cruz also designed a wall of built-in shelving to create a library space in the multipurpose living room off the foyer. The natural-oak backing of the shelves, encased in white-painted wood, provide a handsome frame for the family’s collection of old encyclopedias. A pair of eggplant tufted armchairs adds a

The living room was designed to be a library, music room and entertaining space all in one. The armchairs and sofas are by Verellen from Michael Dawkins Home; the Roark chandelier is by Ralph Lauren Home for Visual Comfort & Co.; and the coffee table is by Noir. The scene is grounded by a sisal Fibreworks rug from The Carpet Boutique, and overlooking the space is a painting by Laura Concha from the owners’ collection.

Another painting by Concha sets the tone for the modern family room. Highlighting the Roche Bobois sofa are Surya pillows with green dip-dyed stripes and custom pillows made by Premium Antique Upholstery using fabric by Zak + Fox. The stools are also by Surya, and the coffee table is by RH.



The owners chose a big kitchen dining area over a formal dining room. The farm table and globe light are by RH; the French bistro dining chairs are by Serena & Lily. The slipcovered wing chairs leading up to the space are also by RH. French doors by CGI Windows & Doors, from Window Classics, lead out to the terrace and pool area.





Plenty of character comes through in the kitchen's custom-colored cement tile from Ocean Across at the wine bar and Grove Brickworks backsplash tile by Waterworks. RH barstools pull up to the island beneath pendants by Visual Comfort & Co. Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances are from Ferguson. Airam Stone Designs fabricated the countertops from KeysGranite; the cabinetry was fabricated by Paez Design.

note of elegance to the otherwise neutral setting. "It's a nice place to introduce color but in a sophisticated way," she says, a hint of formality that works well when the family entertains.

The wife, who is Colombian, displays her mother's sculpture on the living room shelves. But although her South American heritage speaks through the art, the culture's tendency to separate kitchens from social areas doesn't hold true here. "The kitchen is the heart of the house," Tao says. Two sides open to an expansive outdoor terrace and loggia that frame a large pool, and there's no formal dining room. Given the importance of the kitchen, Cruz faithfully combined old and new elements on every surface: Modern cabinetry and stainless-steel appliances contrast with a brick backsplash; a custom cabinet and hutch blends rustic old-world painted cement tile with smooth marble; and a glass-and-metal globe light hangs over woven French bistro chairs that surround a black farm table.

The design team gave just as much thought to the outdoor spaces, from the pool that can be seen from most of the interiors thanks to the L-shaped architecture, to the simple, elegant garden of clusia plants, pigeon plums and lady palms by landscape designer AJ Morales, to the inviting alfresco living area: the husband requested a large outdoor seating, dining and entertainment area to be as well-appointed as the interiors. Cruz responded with large-scale contemporary furnishings set within the columned loggia, and she rewired indoor pendant lighting to hang alongside the colonnade. "You can see them from the inside," Cruz said. "I really wanted to make sure they flowed well and were pieces that were noticeable."

The large covered terrace was designed to be an extension of the home's interior. A parade of columns along the terrace and loggia delineate the outdoor living space, which is just steps above the pool. The terrace and loggia are paved in Dominican coral stone from Florida Silica Sand Company. The pool, built by Tuttle's Pool Company, was designed to be situated between two existing royal palm trees. All furnishings are by RH.



Above: Thanks to landscape designer AJ Morales, potted plants lend privacy to the outdoor dining area until the perimeter plantings reach maturity. The table, chairs and bench are by RH.

Left: Most of the L-shaped house's interior spaces overlook the pool. Powder-coated aluminum railings, from Mora Iron Art, line a balcony that flows from the upper bedrooms to the master bedroom terrace. A standing-seam, painted-aluminum roof, installed by Top Seal Services, was chosen for its durability.

The master bedroom is swathed in soothing neutrals, such as the natural-linen bed by Bernhardt, from Urban Loft, and custom linen draperies. Custom pillows using blue-and-white fabric by Schumacher lend a splash of color. Cruz selected an RH chandelier made from wood beads rather than crystal to keep the casual feel. The white waxed-oak bedside tables are by Noir; ceramic lamps from Victoria's Armoire perch atop them. The art above the bed is also from Urban Loft.



Upstairs, the master suite balcony sits atop the loggia, with 180-degree views from the street to the pool. A well-used rec room on the other side of the property offers front-porch viewing from a wide balcony that connects it to the main house—a detail that evolved from the owners' request for a larger garage. "I said, 'Let's take advantage of that, reinforce the foundation and create a second-floor volume,'" recalls Candela, who helmed the build with supervisor Steve Tofolli. The new bridge between the two buildings not only creates another outdoor room, but it also forms a striking porte cochere that frames an entry into the courtyard below. "You can see everything right from that bridge," he says.

Cruz notes that in a neighborhood filled with "big, new houses," this one is successfully grounded within its leafy plantation-like surroundings. "The house really makes them feel like they are living in a slower and more family-oriented time," he says. ■

The wife wanted to make a statement in the master bath, so Cruz obliged with Vena Grigio marble from Ocean Across, which she had laid in a herringbone pattern that covers the entire shower wall; it was installed by Genesis Marble & Tile. The round acrylic tub is from Signature Hardware.