

Florida Architecture



STRONG AND HANDSOME

Perez-Vichot & Associates, Manuel Perez-Vichot, AIA, ARCHITECTURE

Design Perceptions, Nury Feria, ASID, INTERIOR DESIGN

Geomantic Designs, Robert Parsley III, ASLA, Principal in Charge, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Soto Development Inc, with Tri-Tech Construction, BUILDER

*S*ubstantial, weighty furnishings, fine Oriental carpets, textured fabrics and a Tuscan-inspired color scheme: all the elements of a traditionally styled decor, yet they are anything but typical within the framework of this classically elegant Miami estate.

With the desire to build a larger, custom home in the same established neighborhood as their former residence, the homeowners, a married couple with two older sons, were fortunate to find a well-proportioned lot that backed up to a lush, tree-lined golf course. The couple quickly earmarked the

site's existing home for tear-down and proceeded with plans for a fresh start, enlisting the talents of architect Manuel Perez-Vichot, working with builder Steve Soto of Soto Development (in concert with Tri-Tech Construction), to produce the grand-scaled, 8,000-square-foot structure.

The home's exterior features an updated Mediterranean theme articulated with a simple, beige stucco facade, stone-detailed embellishments and barrel tile roof. Carefully sited with an eye to privacy from the adjacent golf course, the mature tree canopy of huge, old oaks along the golf course greenbelt lends





A tray ceiling with white crown molding pairs with crisp, white plantation shutters in the dining room, where ochre-toned walls and a reddish alabaster chandelier continue the home's sunny Mediterranean palette. The painting, another from the owners' private collection, is an original oil-on-canvas by Domingo Ramos.

a dramatic backdrop to the views towards the rear of the property and the home's outdoor patios, pool and pool deck.

Having worked with her on numerous projects over the past 10 years, at Soto's suggestion, the owners enlisted Miami-based interior designer Nury Feria to supply full interior design and architectural detailing for the home. Renowned for her accomplished and intuitive international sensibility, the Cuban-born designer, whose portfolio of projects throughout South Florida and Latin America includes such high profile clients as Gloria and Emilio Estefan, felt an immediate kindred spirit with the Brazilian-born homeowners and quickly won their confidence.

"The owners, like myself, have lived in Miami for decades, but our shared Latin heritage gave us a common bond and easy rapport," the designer

offers. And, though her clients clearly expressed an objective for "something traditional and elegant, yet in a way that truly reflected their informal, relaxed lifestyle," they otherwise provided her with full reign in all color, materials and furniture selection.

The result is a fresh, eclectic decor that manages a refined, subtle glamour with an offhanded, unstudied warmth. Though firmly ensconced in the traditional vein, the interiors are by no means predictable or staid. "Great traditional looks are all about the mix," Feria confidently shares. "What works for me is more gut feeling about proportion and style than anything else."

Her choice of bold, hearty furnishings and vibrant Mediterranean-inspired color scheme lends a sense of proportion to the expansive rooms. "We wanted to portray a strong sensibility in both style





A series of rectangles and square cutouts in the ceiling gives a skylight effect in the family room, which doubles as a home theater and entertainment venue. In the foreground, Feria's custom-designed bar features cherry wood with a Black Absolute granite countertop.

and scale," Feria candidly explains. Because the household of four includes three, tall males, furniture selection was inclined towards weighty pieces with a more streamlined, uncluttered approach than normally portrayed in a traditional setting.

The dramatic, octagonal-shaped grand entry foyer is the core of the home; all the downstairs living areas flow from the space. Stone-detailed crown molding extends the perimeter of the space and defines the entryways and second floor balcony overhead, lending a more human scale that tempers the soaring, 24-foot-tall ceiling height. For the walls, Feria chose two corresponding shades of ochre, with the darker of the two shades near eye level, to add depth and intimacy to the open space, while the matte-finished, Crema Marfil marble flooring, cut in oversized, 24-by-24 inch squares,

underscores the grand proportions of the space.

Marble flooring continues into the living room, where a singular conversation grouping of eclectic pieces dominates the airy, light-filled space. Anchored by a large Oriental carpet in the home's signature palette, the composition features two, oversized, deep-cushioned sofas clad in dark olive-toned chenille and detailed with Windsor finials and tassel trim. Between the sofas, a large, mahogany wood cocktail table sits adjacent to an oversized ottoman near the fireplace, while directly opposite, a pair of cane-backed armchairs with bamboo-patterned legs is a counterpoint to the otherwise traditional pieces. As the room's focal point, Feria's prominent display of two distinctly disparate artworks exemplifies her philosophy regarding exhibiting art for its own sake, not for



decorative purposes. "I believe art should be enjoyed for what it is and what it represents to the collector, not because it echoes the particular style or colors of a decor," she says. "Many of these paintings have been favorites of the homeowners for many years, so the deliberate mix of styles serves to emphasize their significance and further personalize the space."

In the dining room, another original artwork from the homeowners' private collection echoes the tropical view outdoors towards the pool area and golf course. To meet the owners' request to provide seating for 10 within a somewhat small footprint, Feria designed the rectangular dining table, a large plank of hand-hewn alder wood atop a tressle base, to seat two at each end, then surrounded it with carved Provence chairs clad in two different



A full canopy of old oak trees along the golf course greenbelt at the edge of the property assure the owners privacy. An abundance of palms and rock ornamentation to lend a tropical feel.

patterns of gold and green chenille. "This is one home where the entire family loves to cook," says Feria of the spacious, old world kitchen. Defined by rich, custom cherry wood cabinetry and gleaming Juperana Gold granite countertops, the luxurious appointments are in keeping with the home's traditional theme, yet the clean-lined dining grouping, and stained glass light fixtures blend happily in the casually elegant setting.

Transitional furnishings and a darker color scheme translate a more informal tone in the adjacent family room. Appointed with a bar area and home theater, the space serves as a flexible entertainment venue for family members and friends. An oversized sectional sofa with reclining seats clad in reddish brown chenille provides comfortable seating for movie viewing, as do a pair of oval-backed lounge chairs covered in beige chenille tweed. A wall of custom cabinetry opposite the sofa houses the home entertainment center, with a theater-screen placed as the centerpiece, flanked by component racks on each side and speakers built-in above and below the screen.

Upstairs, in the master bedroom suite, a distinctly softer, restful tone prevails. Against the backdrop of hardwood floors of Brazilian mahogany, all furnishings and fabrics are deliberately more neutral and subdued, according to Feria, to convey a subdued, serene atmosphere. The well-portioned space includes a full sitting area that includes a settee covered in a buttery-toned brocade; paired with a slightly French-style armchair and a near-contemporary styled, French mahogany side table.

With its fresh, "eclectic traditional" style, the new home makes a strong statement that truly suits its homeowners request for a graceful and timeless decor. ▲

