

A PERFECT FIT

DOWN TO THE SMALLEST DETAIL, A CORAL GABLES HOME IS PERFECTLY SUITED TO ITS OWNERS' NEEDS



One of the joys of home is being surrounded by meaningful heirlooms and objects of sentimental value. But when those heirlooms have been collected and handed down over several generations of two families, living with them becomes a practical challenge.

Unless, of course, one plans ahead. For a couple who have inherited and amassed enormous collections of art and antiques, displaying family heirlooms has always been of paramount importance. So when they decided to build their retirement home, they planned every detail to the letter in order to showcase every special object. It wasn't easy: Their collections included everything from pewter pieces, circa 1700s, to old leather-bound books, to 18th-century faience, to a cast-iron, wood-burning stove, all of which had to find a prominent home.

Architect Ramon Pacheco rose to the challenge. "He toured our old house and took inventory of the furniture and collections we would be taking to the new house," the husband says. "He understood that our family heirlooms, and the collections we have accumulated during our travels, were extremely important. He incorporated everything magnificently in our plans."

"There were so many things that I thought it would be a miracle to incorporate them all in such a beautiful fashion," Pacheco recalls. "It was an ambitious program, and the clients were very sophisticated. Everything had to be exactly right."

In fact, the owner was precise and very involved. "He's a meticulous person," builder Jose Mendiola, Jr. says. "He was on the job site every day, sometimes until late at night. Sometimes we'd walk in in the morning and find notes from him."

Because the clients are of European and Peruvian heritage and have lived all over the globe, they wanted the architecture to reflect their background and sensibilities. "Our taste is traditional

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Mahogany cabinetry in a Flemish design houses the owners' collections of pewter, mugs and tableware. Cabinetry here and throughout the house was custom-built and finished by Hector & Hector.

and a little understated," the husband says. "We both love the Mediterranean style of architecture."

Pacheco designed the house in the manner of a Tuscan villa, with wrought iron balconies, barrel tiled roof with dark wood outriggers, and tapered columns. The entrance is strong and balanced. A cast-stone arch frames the entry doors, while a series of arched windows topped with a Juliette balcony and overlooking a fountain creates a symmetrical, powerful composition. The traditional Mediterranean elements continue inside. Interior

designer Marisel Díaz worked closely with Pacheco to ensure the interiors would harmonize with the architecture. She selected pale travertine marble and American walnut wood flooring, and highlighted ceilings with reclaimed antique wood beams. The beams appear in different compositions in the living room, kitchen, breakfast room, and even the terrace.

She also used a neutral palette. "Everything had to be very classic," Díaz says. "We had to introduce the few colors in the house very carefully to make



sure the clients would not get bored of it or need to update it.” Once the classic backdrop was established, the team had to strategically design every niche, every arch, and every cabinet to house the owners’ collections.

“When I designed the house, I knew where everything was going to be placed, piece by piece, collection by collection,” Pacheco says. For example, in the kitchen he created a display niche for the antique cast-iron stove that had been in their family for many generations. To give it its due impor-

tance, Pacheco and Díaz designed a brick “sanctuary” where the stove could be displayed, along with some copper implements and old bellows. That presented a special construction challenge. “We had to reinforce the wall structurally, to support the weight of the brick,” Mendiola says.

In the dining room, a mahogany cabinet was custom built to house the owners’ collections of table linens, glass and silverware, and display their collections of antique pewter and mugs. “To complement these timeless objects,” Díaz says, “we intro-

French Louis XIV chairs were covered with a beautiful damask fabric with subtle colors that are repeated elsewhere in the house. French doors and windows, all with impact glass, are from Marvin Windows & Doors.



duced Elizabethan-reproduction dining chairs, upholstered in cut-velvet tapestry fabric, and a custom hand-forged, wrought-iron chandelier that is suggestive of the Old World.”

In the library, mahogany panels and shelving display a collection of important leather-bound books, many of which “came from my father’s library,” the husband says. An antique Flemish oil-on-wood hangs above the fireplace.

In the breakfast room, collections of pewter and faience, both from the 18th century, are showcased in a hutch that sits inside a niche designed specifically for the display of these pieces. The importance of these collections is underscored by the rich backdrop - Venetian plastered walls in gentle hues of green and gray.







The adjacent kitchen not only is functional, it also serves as a portal to the wife's extensive orchid collection. A large window overlooks the area that was specially designed to house the orchids. Landscape architect Orlando Comas explains: "We created the trellis outside the kitchen and breakfast area to house the orchids. Orchids need semi-shade to thrive, so by positioning them here we gave them morning sun but not too much light."

Even the master bathroom was purpose-built: A mahogany cabinet houses the couple's collection of old apothecary jars. The rich woods are offset by Breccia Oniciata marble counters and Crema Marfil floors. Because no detail was too small, Díaz even planned the reflection in the mirrors - more mirrors and a window - "to make the room look larger and brighter," she says.





The genius of this home is definitely in the details. "It's a small house with all the big house features," Mendiola says. "The millwork and cabinetry, Venetian plaster, niches, arches - there is an incredible amount of detail."

"It's not a huge house, but it's so unique," Pacheco muses. "It's very romantic, very inspired." ▲

RESOURCES

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Keys Granite
8788 NW 27th Street
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305 477 7363

Windows & Doors

Marvin/Window Classics
2401 SW 32nd Avenue
Pembroke Park, FL 33023
954 966 1148

Builder

Jomed Construction Co.
4812 SW 74th Court
Miami, FL 33155
305 666 3334

Cabinetry

Hector & Hector
6790 NW 84th Avenue
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