





SCULPTURED GEOMETRY ON GOLDEN BEACH

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Ramon Pacheco & Associates, ARCHITECTURE

NuHouse Inc, Robert Zemnickis, Principal in Charge, INTERIOR DESIGN

Tracy Construction and Development Corp, BUILDER

Geomantic Designs, Robert Parsley, ASLA, Principal in Charge, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

*F*ew experiences are more soul satisfying than living in an oceanfront home in South Florida. Rippling water blanketed in morning gold is a gift to the eyes while a warm ocean breeze from an open window adds a soft caress. Such every day pleasures exemplify the joy of oceanfront living.

It was pleasures like these that motivated Peruvian born Rossana and Alberto Franco to purchase an oceanfront site on Golden Beach. A vacation in the exclusive town had convinced them that it was the right place to build a home and raise their children.

“We were in New York for 16 years and had our four kids and it was time to make a decision to move to the suburbs,” says Alberto, a fund manager who played professional tennis on the circuit. “We felt that nowadays, with the way communications are, you don’t really need to be physically in New York City to conduct the type of business I do.”





Pacheco's quietly dominating architecture is reflected in interior details such as 36-by-36-inch squares of Oasis Blue, honed limestone flooring from Piedras International.

The Francos made a good choice. Their pure white, 10,000 square foot neo-traditional home, resplendent with classical arches, perches majestically on a rise overlooking the ocean. Although the structure is almost devoid of ornamentation, the contrast of the arches to the flat, geometric roof provides the strong architectural statement. As for the expansive white, it allows the colors of the sea, sand, sky, and foliage to dominate.

The Francos retained Miami architect Ramon Pacheco to design the house. "We selected

Ramon because of a home he did for a friend of ours and because he is amazing with symmetry," says Rossana, who was completely immersed in the design process. Pacheco, in turn, recommended Robert Zemnicks of NuHouse Design for the interiors. When builder Tracy Ross and landscape architect Robert Parsley joined them, an outstanding team was assembled which achieved the ideal arrangement. Everyone was involved from the conceptual stage to completion.

Alberto gave Rosanna free reign with the de-





sign while he involved himself with the structural part. Rossana's father, a civil engineer and a developer in Peru, also participated.

Most important, the Francos brought sophisticated ideas and avant-garde influences to the program. Rossana declared at the onset, "We like a very clean, simple understated look to live with in all of our spaces."

"They really knew what they wanted," Pacheco notes. "When you work with clients who know what they want, it makes it easier."

Nevertheless, Pacheco found designing the home very challenging. The program for the second floor designated it to be extremely large, but in order to comply with the code, it could only measure 70 percent of the size of the ground level. In essence, "The second story dictated the size of the house," Pacheco states. "We had to make ground level very big to achieve the clients' {program}."



Notwithstanding, this affected the landscaping. “It was a lot of house on a very small lot,” says landscape architect Robert Parsley.

Since the Francos had requested a formal look with a Mediterranean overtone, Parsley’s goal was to apply appropriate materials that could survive the harsh winds and salt air.

To do so, the front landscape basically uses foliage as a screening element from the road and only two Italian cypress trees and a Canary Island palm. In the back, the challenge was to make a transition from the formality of the house and landscaping to the wild dune. Parsley first implemented a tiered effect toward the ocean with formal sod steps followed by a level grass play area for the children. But he opted out of plant material as a transition, allowing instead an abrupt stop from grass to beach.

The power of the home is obvious from first glance. In a simple processional in front, it is

reached through a security gate onto a European-style courtyard. Next comes a wide, elegant stairway leading to the 11-foot-high, arched front door. Like all doors in the house, the front door was custom designed by interior designer Robert Zemnickis.

Upon opening the door, the visual encounter is staggering. With what feels like magnetic force, an axis shoots straight forward through a multi-arched gallery. It then slices in and out of the main living space, passes beyond a glass-enclosed loggia, glides over the infinity-edge swimming pool, and finally stops at a picture-perfect view of the ocean.

While the impact is dramatic enough to quicken one’s heartbeat, it is merely a seductive prelude. For every major living space except the dining room offers glorious ocean views and throughout perfect proportions abound.

With the ocean such a critical element,

Both living and media rooms open to the gallery as well as a glass loggia and the ocean view. Rather than close them with traditional walls, Zemnickis installed floor-to-ceiling draperies.



When it came to the unique lighting and furnishings to complement the 1940s interior design concept, Rossana and Zemnickis shopped in New York and Paris. In a five-day stay in Paris, they bought enough merchandise to nearly fill an entire shipping container.

Zemnickis executed the interior design in tones reflecting sand colors. Working closely with Rossana Franco, he achieved striking effects by introducing furnishings that complemented the scale of the imposing architecture. “Rossana needed somebody to help her articulate it but she definitely knew the direction she wanted to take,” Zemnickis relates. “We kind of {all} fed off each other in terms of the ideas. It was like a group project in the sense that there was not just one particular influence.”

The interior design concept was strongly influenced by a small group of French designers of the 1940s, including Michel Frank and André Arbus. “Their designs were based on craft as opposed to mid-century modern technology,” Zemnickis says. “There was no mass-produced furniture, so each client had his own signature.

“The idea here was to keep everything muted and simply detailed. Every now and then we

would introduce a very sculptured element, like a light fixture. That’s why it’s very lean: it’s more a curation than decoration.”

Pacheco’s quietly dominating architecture is reflected in interior details such as 36-by-36-inch squares of custom cut French limestone flooring. Yet unlike some large homes, the Franco home is primarily comprised of smaller rooms that exude a sense of warmth and intimacy. This is particularly evident in the main living space, which is divided into mirror image rooms bisected by the arched gallery. On the north is the formal living room, on the south, the media room.

Both living and media rooms open to the gallery as well as a glass loggia and the ocean view. Rather than close them with traditional walls, floor-to-ceiling draperies were installed. Thus each room can achieve privacy as a separate entity or blend into one large space.



In the back, the challenge was to make a transition from the formality of the house and landscaping to the wild dune. Robert Parsley first implemented a tiered effect toward the ocean with formal sod steps followed by a level grass play area for the children. The pool was built by Greenbrook Pools. Windows and doors are clear, impact resistant glass from Weather Shield / S & P Architectural Products.

In addition to designing the millwork throughout the house, Zemnickis also designed some major furniture pieces. An example in the living room is an “ebonized” white oak bench. Nearby is his custom fireplace screen made of three-quarter-inch Starfire glass held by antiqued brass feet.

Opposite in the media room is the designer’s Japanese ash hanging wall unit. “But it doesn’t read like a wall unit,” Zemnickis states. And indeed it doesn’t. More accurately, the huge installation appears as a powerful textured, hanging sculpture.

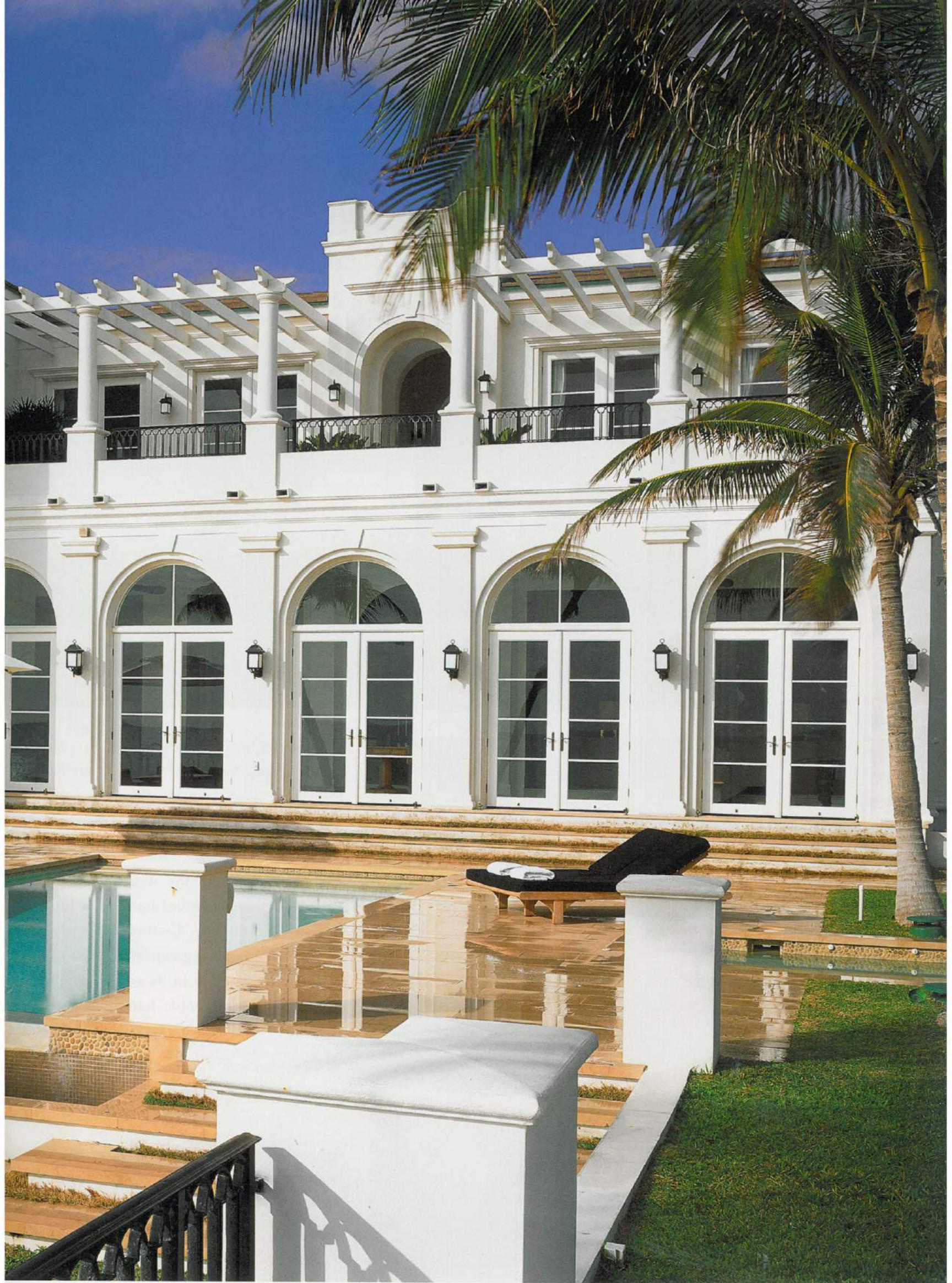
A main requirement by the Francos was that the house would be extremely family-oriented. In response, Pacheco designed a huge, highly functional kitchen, fully open to the adjacent breakfast area. It invites family interaction and, of course, the ocean view is accessible.

Immediately beyond the breakfast area is the indoor/outdoor family room. This room takes a new direction from the limestone flooring with a richly stained concrete floor. In addition, a series of 11-foot-high French doors dividing the breakfast/kitchen area and the family room allow the rooms to be totally separated. Yet even with the doors closed, everything is within view through the glass.

The exceptionally livable room holds a custom bar of maple and stainless steel with four-inch-thick shelves. The bar balances the scale of a massive table made from a solid section of an exotic African tree trunk. Above, the intricate, decked, black-stained ceiling with cross beams adds to the tropical flavor.

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shopped in New York and Paris. In a five-day stay in Paris, they bought enough merchandise to nearly fill an entire shipping container. “Robert was a genius to know where everything was going to be placed,” Rossana says.

Indeed, for among the unusual items from Paris was the chandelier hung on a lift above the circular staircase. Crafted of a combination of Murano glass in green with gold-speckled globes, it is glorious in its simplicity. Nearby, the stairway wall holds hand-blown sconces from the Paris Flea Market.

“This house was a house with clean lines and clean details and meant to be dressed up by the designer,” builder Tracy Ross says. “Robert added the flair the owner wanted.”

Ross cites the dark, ship-like wood flooring upstairs, the contrast of dark wood of the furnishings with the white, and the open space planning. Still, he emphasizes the rewarding experience of working with the cohesive team.







Pacheco concurs. "Nobody on that team was a prima donna or took possession of ideas," he says. "Everybody participated with good taste."

One visit to the house says it all. ▲

RESOURCES

Pool Builder

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Coral Gables, FL 33146
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Stone Supplier

Piedras International
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Coral Gables, FL 33146
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Windows & Doors

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