





ELEGANT COMFORT

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Ramon Pacheco, AIA, Ramon Pacheco Architects, ARCHITECTURE

Carola Hinojosa, INTERIOR DESIGN

Mercedes Porcari, Exoticscape, LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Edmundo Aldrey, Aldrey Planning and Construction Co., BUILDER

A realtor had shown them several houses – almost to the point of exhaustion – in one day. Then, as dusk approached, Juan and Diana Puig were shown a house in Coral Gables that was just a few months away from completion. They fell in love with it and decided on the spot it would suit them and their two young daughters very well – all 14,000 square feet of it.

“As big as it is, it’s a warm house,” Juan Puig, a real estate developer, says. “Despite its size, it is very user-friendly.”

“I don’t like stuffy,” Diana Puig adds, who stays involved with activities at their children’s local school. “I didn’t want anything trendy and it had to be kid-friendly.”

After a six-month wait, the family moved into the house in August 2005, and gave it their own personality through their museum-quality collection



of Cuban art as well as a superb wine collection.

Architect Ramon Pacheco adapted a traditional style. "I treated the façade of the house in a very classical manner. It resembles an English house, though the barrel tile and the distressed stucco would be a departure," the architect notes. And it was some of the adapted materials that truly make the house unique.

"There were 20 different trades working on this house for a year and a half," builder Edmundo Aldrey points out. "I define myself as an orchestra conductor who has to make music so all the specialties can work in harmony without conflict."

There is a harmonious feeling as one approaches this house that, although new, has the appearance of having been in its location for a long time. A raised walkway a few feet higher than the driveway creates a feeling of anticipation as one approaches the arched mahogany front doors. Pink ground orchids, pink crepe myrtle and white crepe jasmine lend a touch of informality to the meticulously manicured topiaries in the front garden.

Just inside, a two-story rotunda serves as the foyer and establishes a formal aesthetic with a black and white checkerboard marble floor and a curving stone and wrought iron staircase. On the first floor walls are finished with traditional painted white millwork, while above a large mural graces the walls. Titled "Passages of India," the mural was hand-painted on silk in China and acquired from the London-based company de Gournay, explains interior designer Carola Hinojosa.

Just beyond the foyer, a central gallery bisects the home. Architect Ramon Pacheco organized the spaces on both floors through a classical gallery design. Individual rooms, while separate from each other, can all be accessed from this central gallery. A seemingly endless number of Macedonia stone columns complemented by rich millwork that took months to complete, punctuate







The long, columned gallery - a signature of architect Ramon Pacheco's designs - has niches in which paintings by Cuban artists are displayed. Millwork and cabinetry throughout the house are from Viking Cabinets, Inc.

the space while reinforcing the classical theme of the house. "I've used a lot of columns because I love columns. They define space and add elegance," notes the architect.

Floors in the gallery are a cream-colored limestone off set with marble inserts. The architect used mahogany floors for several of the rooms accessed from the gallery.

The adjacent, formal living room is separated from the foyer by the gallery. Lined with large French doors, the room enjoys views of the terrace, pool and waterway beyond. In keeping with the classic architecture, the center set of doors to the rear of

the home line up perfectly with the front entry doors, "keeping the symmetry of the plan," Pacheco explains.

For the living room furnishings, Hinojosa, who jokes she's becoming known as "the colorless designer," chose beige fabric for all the upholstered pieces "because I think color is given by the people, the art and the accessories."

And it is the art, which Juan Puig has been collecting for a dozen years and "seriously" for six, that gives the living room color and texture. Three paintings by his favorite artist - Fidelio Ponce de Leon - and one by Manuel Enrique share space on



der to the LORD for all his benefits...





A dozen chairs by Ralph Lauren sport leather sleeves above the textured upholstery. The rug, woven in 100 percent wool, is from Pakistan.

one wall. “Their art collection is probably the best I’ve ever seen in a client’s home,” architect Ramon Pacheco observes.

More paintings are showcased in the dining room which can be entered from the foyer or the gallery. Two works by Amelia Pelaez and one by Mijares bring color and texture to the otherwise monochromatic space. A dozen high-backed chairs by Ralph Lauren sport brown leather sleeves above

the textured beige upholstery. An area rug, also by Ralph Lauren, made of 100 percent vegetable dyed wool in Pakistan anchors the table.

Other inviting spaces on the first floor include a family room adjacent to the kitchen as well as a game/media room featuring a 135-year-old billiard table said to have come from Yale University. This room features a number of Cuban abstract paintings which Juan Puig says are his favorites in his





collection. Doors to these spaces can be thrown open, converting the area to one great room along with the living room when the family entertains a large group.

The couple's other impressive collection – 5,000 bottles of wine, some dating to 1815 “and all drinkers,” Juan Puig asserts – is housed in his home office/wine room. An antique wine tasting table stands in the center of the room surrounded by mahogany cabinets and racks upon racks of wine. Two closets were also refrigerated for wine that couldn't be accommodated in the main wine room racks.

The house was originally designed with five bedrooms, but the two on the first floor were converted for alternate uses. One serves as a gym filled with exercise equipment, while the other is a playroom for the children and their friends.



The second story – accessible by the foyer staircase or an elevator near the kitchen – contains the family bedrooms. Each daughter has her own spacious room with hand-painted wallpaper. The spacious master suite encompasses a large bedroom with a fireplace (a flat screen TV hangs above it), a sitting room and luxurious master bath. The latter is spa-like with its tub recessed in an alcove, a large shower with multiple shower heads and twin marble lavatories with stainless steel faucets.

The second floor is as much an art gallery as the first with paintings by Domingo Ramos, Tomas Sanchez, Manuel Mesa, Gil Garcia and Victor Manuel gracing the walls.

One of the most inviting areas in the home is the covered terrace. Accessed through nine Honduran mahogany French doors, the terrace runs the length of the house and can be accessed from most



One end of the terrace contains a barbecue grill and the other, concealed behind bi-fold doors, a bar with a flat screen TV and a beer tap - the keg fits in the cabinet just below the counter. Two seating arrangements of comfortable, woven patio furniture, topped with crisp, white cushions await the frequent parties the homeowners host for family and friends.





Photo ©



ABOVE: Woven chairs surround a table on the terrace which also accommodates two seating arrangements. Nine mahogany French doors link the terrace to several rooms. Marble and stone flooring as well as countertops throughout the house were purchased, fabricated and installed by Miami Stone District, Inc.



LEFT: The columned terrace at the rear of the house is the scene of many family gatherings on weekends. The hedge conceals an infinity edge pool.



of the public areas downstairs. Stone columns and flooring were combined with naturally distressed beams gathered from old barns. One end of the terrace contains a barbecue grill and the other, concealed behind bi-fold doors, a bar with a flat screen TV and a beer tap – the keg fits in the cabinet just below the counter.

Two seating arrangements of comfortable, woven patio furniture, topped with crisp, white cushions and a large dining table and chairs await the frequent parties the homeowners host. The columned terrace overlooks a large infinity edge pool which appears to flow into the waterway below. The lawn, planted with salt-resistant grass, surrounding the pool is golf course perfect as befitting a home that appears to be picture perfect for the family. ▲

RESOURCES

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