

VISIONS OF SPAIN

Written by Peter Lioubin

Photography by George Cott



Ramon Pacheco, AIA, and Hector Martinez, AIA, Ramon Pacheco & Associates, ARCHITECTURE

Ivette Planas, ASID, Ivette Arango Interiors, INTERIOR DESIGN

George Sanchez and Carolyn Pendelton-Parker, ASLA, Sanchez & Maddux, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Oscar Hidalgo, Hidalgo Construction Co, BUILDER

Cordoba, Spain's storied city of palaces and Moorish mosques, is an architectural treasure. Its iconic courtyards, arched loggias, tiled fountains and beflowered patios have influenced the aesthetic of several generations of architects, particularly in South Florida.

For one Miami couple, the impact of Cordoba was so profound that they decided to pattern their home on Key Biscayne after

the great buildings of the southern Spanish city. Architect Ramon Pacheco, who traveled with his clients to Spain to gather ideas for the program says Cordoba provided much of the inspiration. "He was fascinated with the architecture, especially the patios," he says of the husband. "He said he would love that type of patio in his house."

Pacheco and the design team were charged with adapting the







Cordoban style into the subtropical context of Miami. That meant an authentic but simplified version of the original, with much of the detailing that would typically exist in a Cordoban home. Pacheco's Spanish Revival vernacular is iterated in such elements as white stucco walls, arched Roman windows trimmed in mahogany, wrought iron balustrades and a barrel-tiled roof.

The entrance makes a strong impact and puts a visitor in a Spanish frame of mind. Instead of an arched entry, which is typical of the old Spanish villas, Pacheco chose a more counterintuitive rectangular shape. The heavy wooden door is surrounded by a massive stone frame, which was carved of Macedonia stone in Mexico.

"The exterior columns and moldings were all

carved of the same stone," says Oscar Hidalgo, the builder. "Everything was brought from Mexico to the job site and installed by their own people."

The Spanish style is also seen in the wide overhangs, a pair of tinajones anchoring the doorway, and the wooden balcony above the garage, all of which are very Andalusian in character. The feeling is maintained as one progresses through the house. Interior designer Ivette Planas says she aimed for a simplified Spanish-Mediterranean look. "I kept the walls neutral because that's the essence of a Mission-style, Spanish house," she says. "The walls have some texture but are kept white to accentuate the dark woods and architectural elements."

According to Pacheco, the walls are thick and

Stone also dominates the living room. According to Planas, the fireplace wall is made entirely of limestone.





curved in places, in a nod to genuine Spanish architecture. Niches and arches contribute to the authenticity, as do elaborate ceiling details such as those seen in the dining room. The vaulted ceiling and entry arch leading to the room are lined with old Chicago brick, which, Pacheco explains is part of the aging of the house. “We wanted it to look like it had been there a long time,” he says.

The room is made even more dramatic by a groin-vaulted ceiling that looks like it could belong in an old castle, and a wrought-iron doorway that leads to a wine room. The flooring contributes to the aged effect. “We used a Sienna stone from Spain,” Planas says. “The edges are ragged, but we did a series of different cuts and laid it in different patterns throughout the house.”

Stone also dominates the living room. According to Planas, the fireplace wall is made entirely of lime-





stone. "The fireplace is a big statement," she says. "The limestone is a very powerful element when combined with wood ceiling beams, lanterns and the wood floor. It's a beautiful, architectural room, even without the furniture."

Big statements continue throughout the house. In the family room, Planas designed a built-in entertainment cabinet and bar unit of mahogany. Every detail, from the rope columns on the entertainment center to the iron grillwork of the bar, is reminiscent of the old houses of Andalusia.

Arched windows and French doors are encased in mahogany - again, a typical Spanish Revival element. Many open up to a courtyard patio whose design is borrowed from the noble villas of Cordoba. "In a Cordoba courtyard, you would see



pots hanging on the walls, potted plants on the ground, and beautiful fountains,” Pacheco says.

Most of the outdoor activity takes place at the rear of the house. A colonnade defined by a series of arches provides a covered outdoor room that is ideal for summer barbecues or breezy winter evenings by the bay. That space leads to the rear lawn, where landscape architect Carolyn Pendelton-Parker and the principals of Sanchez & Maddux created two distinct areas. “We concentrated on the view,” says Jorge Sanchez.

The passage leading to the water is flanked by two outdoor areas - one for swimming and another for entertaining. The pool is raised above the ground, creating an architectural element in the garden. “That cistern-type raised wall really helps raise







the water level so the eye is drawn to it," says Pendelton-Parker. "And the glass tiles in the pool make it more reflective and jewel-like."

"The vocabulary of the Spanish style is used throughout the home," Hidalgo says. "That continuation of the style makes the spaces come together, and the house looks more authentic for it."▲

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