



# OPEN HOUSE

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# COVER HOUSE: BEACHFRONT VILLA



*Double stairways lead to an arched entryway which is flanked by 18-foot-high stone columns. Underneath, a gated opening leads to the motor court.*

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Hailing from the Chicago area, the owners of this spectacular, 11,000-square-foot, winter residence originally wanted to create a very traditional, Chicago-type style for their beachfront villa; however, as the owners and architect, A. Jeffrey Harrell, A.I.A., worked through the design, what evolved was more of a Palm Beach style with a Mediterranean flair which would maintain grandeur while lending itself more to the flavor of the area. This seemed simple enough but when combined

with the limitations and requirements of the site it became very difficult to design and perhaps even more difficult to build. The site is located on an exclusive 1600-to-1700-foot-long drive along the Gulf of Mexico which to the water side of the roadway is divided into 12 home sites. The advantage of each site is that it is uniquely located directly on the beach; the disadvantage is that each site is only 75-80 feet deep because to the other side of the roadway is a protected nature preserve.





*Above the fireplace, the playful monkey-and-jungle oil painting on canvas adds a whimsical touch.*



entryway is where the gated opening to the motor court is located. Elaborate cast stone details and windows around the motor court belie that it contains an enclosed garage. Ornamentation on the exterior of the house is especially detailed as seen in the windows which include cast stone columns and intricate cast stone frames. The windows themselves are unusually deep which establishes a feeling of quality and permanence. This tone of detail and elegance continues throughout the residence. From the two-story-high foyer, which is accentuated by a curved bridge overhead, the living room opens to an absolutely breathtaking panorama of views through a spectacular wall of 22-foot-tall arched windows. The wall is bowed and it is this curve which pulls one's attention directly outdoors where views of the gulf and beach spread to one direction and then the other. Dan Dodrill of Daniel Wayne Homes describes the difference in the effect that the bowed

*Views can be enjoyed upstairs from the upper-level bridge which bows outward.*





*The living room showcases breathtaking views through a bowed wall of 22-foot-high arched windows.*

Compounding the already difficult narrowness of the site is the fact that state requirements dictated that this coastal home be 21-feet above sea level. So in addition to having the house very close to the street, it must have enormous height. Consequently, many of the homes in this area are built directly against the street and are almost condo-like in appearance with little or no architectural features on the street side. In spite of the difficulties, the ultimate goal was that this residence would look and feel like a home as opposed to a condo. To achieve this, the design plan would include some distance from the roadway, a grand stairway to the entry for a sense of inviting arrival, and the visual elimination of a garage. The architect was not the only one who faced challenges: the custom home building firm of

Daniel Wayne Homes was faced with managing a major construction project with no front yard of which to speak - only a seven-foot-wide piece of land to the front of the site; no backyard - only sandy beach; and only very narrow side yards. There was very limited room for a limited amount of equipment, and sometimes there was not even enough room for the workers. The roadway to the site also presented limitations and workers were sometimes shuttled in few by few. The work was intensive and difficult. Ultimately, though, the residence is awe-inspiring. Double stairways lead to an arched entryway which is flanked by 18-foot-high cast stone columns. The thick, stone archway leads to massive, custom-built double front doors of solid mahogany. Underneath this Palladian

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*A graceful archway with twisted columns of cast stone leads into the dining room.*

wall creates from a typical flat wall as being similar to the difference between a regular movie and a 3-D movie: the regular is nice until you experience the exciting difference of the 3-D. The ceiling is 23-feet high and handsomely coffered. The fireplace intentionally was located to one side of the room so it would not interfere with the view. There is more than enough spaciousness in this room to accommodate a cozy seating group by the fireplace while still focusing the main seating group toward the views. It was this very spaciousness, though, and how it would be made comfortable and warm which was a main concern for interior designer Karen L.

Benson, A.S.I.D.. Decor-wise, the homeowners wanted something of a West Indies look. This is their vacation home, so they wanted something tropical yet they also wanted a bit of stately tradition. They collect antiques, including Oriental rugs and Chinese porcelain, and wanted to incorporate their finds. The lady of the house is particularly fond of birds, wildlife, and florals, so this is a theme which is repeated subtly throughout the decor. The homeowners also are people who enjoy having fun, particularly with their four children and many grandchildren, so they wanted a place where everyone would enjoy getting together.

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*The kitchen and nook take maximum advantage of the sweeping views. Upper cabinets have glass fronts and backs for minimal obstruction.*

While some homeowners today prefer a large family room and smaller living room, these clients preferred instead to have a smaller, more intimate family room and a grand, spacious living room. At 24' x 36' with 23-foot-high ceilings, the room, indeed, is quite spacious. A soft, golden color predominates. Flooring is saturnia marble and the fireplace is cast stone, so a generous amount of fabric was incorporated to soften the space and create a warm comfort. Toward this goal, it is perhaps the draperies which are the most striking component of the decor. Gracefully spilling from 23-feet above, the draperies are a golden silk with lining and interlining of heavy felt. They were made to be full and to puddle on the floor to bring warmth to the large volume of space. Two sets of oversized tassels accent each drapery. These elegant draperies actually help to frame and enhance rather

than detract from the outdoor views. Furniture is large and overscaled. In the main seating area, the linen fabric on the conversation chairs with its touch of yellow, red, and blue matches the Oriental rug and became the inspiration for the color scheme of the entire room. It carries just enough pattern to be interesting on the chairs and in some of the throw pillows but not so much that it is too busy. Facing sofas are in a soft, golden yellow. The coffee table is iron with a leaf motif and glass top. To the other side of the coffee table is a large, upholstered bench. Unlike having another sofa here, this bench adds mass and balance to the space without obstructing the view. To one side of the room is the heavily-embellished, cast stone fireplace with a recessed art niche, also framed in cast stone, above the mantel. In keeping with the fun, grandchildren-oriented nature of the house, an artist was commissioned to





create something for this niche which would be traditional in style but with a lighthearted and whimsical subject matter. The resulting monkey-and-jungle scene is actually an oil painting on canvas which was installed in the same manner as wallpaper. The mix of antiques and new pieces contributes to the feeling that the home has been here for some time. As one approaches the breakfast nook from the living room, the flooring changes from a honed and filled saturnia marble to a stone-looking ceramic tile which then carries through the nook, the kitchen, and the family room. The nook also has floor-to-ceiling bowed windows for wraparound views of the gulf but the ceiling has been lowered and beams added for a cozier feel. To the side of the nook is the kitchen. Although the rooms are open to each other there is visual separation created by some of the kitchen cabinetry.

The upper cabinetry, though, contains glass on the front and back for a free-flow feeling between the rooms and to prevent obstruction of the views. Custom-designed, raised-panel cabinetry is maple with a lightly-toned antique finish. Countertops are a "Giallo Veneziano" granite. Everything in this space was designed to maintain the airiness and showcase the magnificent views. Behind the kitchen is the family room which provides a comfortable spot to sink in, put your feet up, and relax. The breakfast nook, kitchen, and family room are designed for easy interaction from one area to the next. Additionally, this whole kitchen/family room/nook side of the house opens to the swimming pool deck, making it a favorite gathering spot for the family. There is a study which provides a getaway for the gentleman of the house. In a departure from the light and airy nature of the rest

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*The leafy branch motif of the crisp cotton toile was the inspiration for the branch design in the headboard of the custom-made guestroom bed.*

of the home, the study is more traditional and very masculine. The flooring and wall paneling are cherry, as is the fireplace, except the surround which is in a brown-toned marble. Furniture is in leather and the coffee table is an inlaid leather trunk. Custom, built-in shelving flanks the fireplace while across the room there is plenty of built-in cabinetry. Sliding glass doors with heavy velvet draperies open to a private balcony which overlooks the gulf and beachfront. Located upstairs, the bedrooms, too, were designed to take advantage of the views. There are two bedrooms and baths to one side of the bridge, and the master suite to the other side. The master bedroom is octagonal in shape with windows

and glass doors revealing the lovely views. The sliding glass doors lead to a private covered balcony. From either the balcony or the room itself, the water views are simply breathtaking. Windows and glass doorways are treated with floral draperies which bring a colorful accent to an otherwise neutral room. This minimal punch of color enhances rather than competes with the outdoor vista. An antique desk, purchased by the homeowners, faces the water. It is from here that the lady of the house enjoys doing her correspondence. Across the room, there is a four-poster mahogany bed. The bedspread trim is the same one used in the window valances. Generous





*The master bedroom also features magnificent views. The minimal use of color enhances rather than competes with the outdoor vista.*

use of brushed fringe, cords, and tassels adds just the perfect finishing touch to this magnificent setting. The master bathroom also is octagonal in shape and features an interesting ceiling cupola. The room is set off by beautiful floral wallpaper which incorporates the greens and blues of the outdoors with a touch of red and some yellow. Centered under the cupola is a back-to-back vanity island with his-and-hers vanities and mirrors on both sides. Even though the space is open, the setup is very private. Privacy was a key word in the design of the swimming pool area as well. All of the pools in this development are required to face south and west so no pools are right up against one another and each successive neighbor has his privacy. What is fun about this area is that it is at a 20-foot height, so there is that breezy, elevated feeling. It could have been at ground level but it was a matter of convenience to walk straight out from the breakfast nook to the pool deck rather than have to walk down 20-feet to ground level. The swimming pool has two "disappearing" edges which give an endless look to the water as it appears to flow directly into the gulf. The deck is saturnia stone and provides plenty of space for outdoor entertaining. Through columned archways is a covered barbecue area and



*Wallpaper in the master bath echoes the hues of the outdoors.*

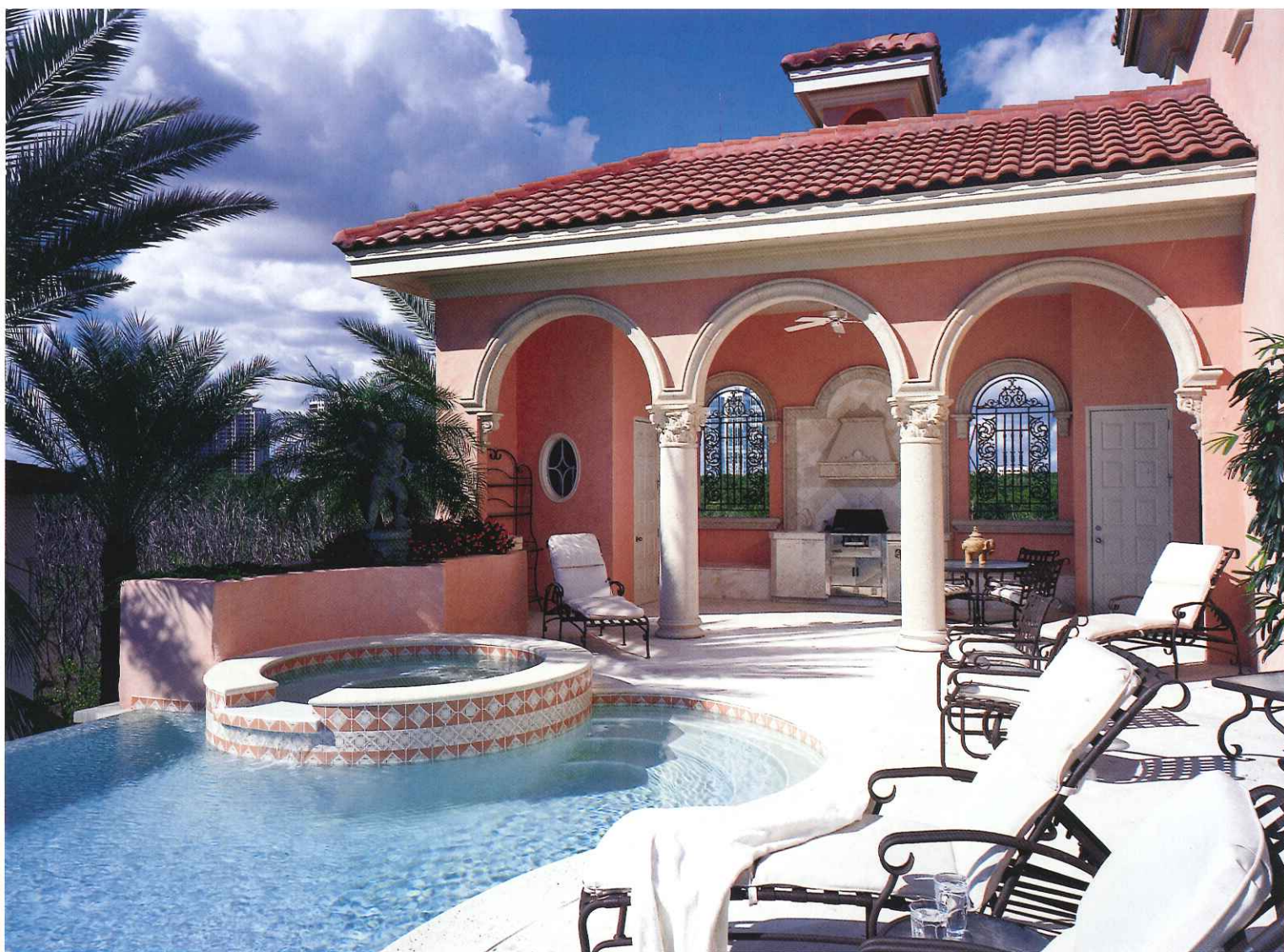
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*The saturnia stone deck provides plenty of space for entertaining. Through the columned archways are the barbecue area and cabaña.*

cabaña. Here, again, details such as the precast stone which clads the archways make a profound statement about the quality of the residence. Architecturally, it is interesting to note that the back of home is as attractive as the front. For instance, from the rear elevation there is a series of arched windows seen underneath the tall, arched windows of the bowed living room. One might believe that they are, say, bedroom windows because they are every bit as handsome and detailed as the living room windows but, in fact, inside those windows are the motor court and garage. The design team of this home not only overcame enormous obstacles but did so with such finesse that one might have a difficult time believing that any challenges existed. The design is wonderfully creative yet sensibly functional; the construction implements the highest standards of quality and attention to detail; and the interior design complements the architecture and natural beauty of the setting while reflecting the design requirements and lifestyle of the owners.



*The back of the home is every bit as architecturally attractive as the front.*

*Two negative, “disappearing,” edges on the pool give the illusion that the water is flowing directly into the Gulf.*