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# WARM WELCOME

THE EXTENSIVE RENOVATION OF A FAMILY'S  
CORAL GABLES HOME REFLECTS THEIR LOVE  
OF ART AND ENTERTAINING.

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HOME BUILDER / JORDAN GRUBER AND JASON ELMER, KROME CONSTRUCTION  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / JOHN FARRAR, THE ARTICULATE GARDEN



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—CAROLYN MCCARTHY

Like a good conversation, a space ideally suited for entertaining should encourage free-flowing, organic interaction. Designer Carolyn McCarthy realized early on that her clients' Coral Gables residence lacked that key element. Partitioned by too many walls, the abode's gathering areas were siloed. And despite a prime Coral Gables Waterway location, the home didn't take full advantage of its picturesque setting. On top of all that, the original design was planted firmly in the 1980s.

What began as a small project evolved into a two-year, top-to-bottom renovation for McCarthy, architect Ryan Alderman, general contractor Jordan Gruber and builder Jason Elmer. Having collaborated with the owners previously, the designer knew how important the social spaces would be. "I had spent the past two years prior working on their children's houses, so I had a good sense of how they entertained," she says. "Every weekend, they host probably 20 people for dinner."

Restructuring the clients' home to fit their lifestyle meant removing several confining walls and doors as well as liberating obstructed vistas. Gruber and Elmer replaced a dining room wall with glass-enclosed wine storage and substituted the staircase's thick wood balustrade for stainless steel and glass, facilitating views to the outdoors even from the kitchen. They also knocked down the wall between the family and living areas, creating one expansive space, and removed the latter's 10-foot-high, 15-foot-long cherry built-in in favor of a fireplace of book-matched marble. "I felt like I needed a strong focal point when you walked in," McCarthy explains.

Among the most striking aspects of the redesign, the home's foyer originally featured a sizable dark wood door prefaced by a long porch. Gruber and Elmer brought the entry forward, doubling the dimensions of the foyer, and installed a 12-foot glass pivot front door to capitalize on the natural light. Yet that's not the greatest expanse of glass

they added to the home. The living area's glass doors span an entire wall's length, open wide and stack unobtrusively to encourage indoor-outdoor living. Even better? The idyllic waterfront landscape can now be seen from the foyer.

For a family who lives to entertain—and lives in a balmy tropical climate—outdoor space is the holy grail. In the backyard, to enlarge the upper terrace, the team filled in a set of steps that had led to the pool; a barbecue pavilion was added as well. Among the grounds, landscape designer John Farrar complemented the water view with beach creeper, Lignum vitae trees and a grove of Satakentia liukuensis palms. "We really tried to make sure all the plant material was pretty mature and at a good height so, even from their second-floor windows, the owners had almost fairly immediate privacy," he says.

In addition to fashioning spaces geared to hosting guests, McCarthy had to take another critical component into account for the redesign: the owners' ample collection of artworks by Cuban masters. She initially considered hanging the paintings salon-style in the upstairs family room until an art-hanging consultant made a salient point. "He looked at me and asked, 'Have you ever seen a Monet hanging above a Monet?' And I said, 'Point taken,'" she laughs. "Because they are different artists and are probably all of equal reputation, we worked on balancing size and scale as well as framing. We reframed only a few pieces, because they were so beautiful on their own."

Just as imperative was the way each work of art was illuminated. "One of the first things we did with the owners was pinpoint locations for pieces," Elmer recalls. For certain major walls, he and Gruber installed recessed track lighting with adjustable heads that can be moved and changed depending on the artwork. "A lot of collectors like to cycle through their paintings throughout the years of living in their homes," Gruber notes.

To ensure the artwork remains the center of attention, McCarthy kept the walls white and decor a quiet palette of cozy grays—no big splashes of color—for a clean, modern look. Yet to prevent the design from being too austere, she incorporated wood—particularly walnut, which appears in places such as the beams lining the living area's lofty ceiling. "The furnishings were how I really tried to warm it up," she says. "For example, the living area rug has a lot of soothing tones, and it picked up so nicely on the veining of the marble on the fireplace." With geometric shapes and neutral hues, the furniture amplifies the renovated architecture as well as the waterfront view.

In the end, McCarthy says, the new open flow and connection to the outdoors are what make the home so inviting. "I really love that modern tropical effect you get when the doors are all open and the breeze is coming through," she says. "There's a great romance to it all when you walk in and see the water." ■



A glass WSI pivot door opens to the foyer of a renovated Coral Gables home by designer Carolyn McCarthy. The drama continues with Hammerton Studio's Aalto pendants as well as *La Isla Aquella* by José Bedia (left) and *Dreamcatcher* by Sandro de la Rosa (right). Artefacto's Sweep bench rests on leathered marble flooring from Innovative Surfaces.





Walnut ceiling beams by C.G. Quality Woodworks distinguish the living area, which is grounded by an ikat silk and wool rug by Woven Art Specialist. Artefacto's Carrie armchairs and a Roberta Schilling Collection sectional and pillows pair with a Pure Project Home coffee table and ottoman. Marsh Industries created draperies using a Fabricut material from Fabric and Walls.



**Opposite:** On the master bedroom's balcony, Janus et Cie's Amari lounge chairs flank Dedon's Babylon side table and offer an excellent vantage point for gazing at the Coral Gables Waterway.

**Below:** Consentino's Dekton surface covers the cabinetry and bar from Armazem on the loggia. Sifas' Pheniks side chairs and Kwadra dining table are from Patio & Things, where McCarthy also sourced Janus et Cie's Forest high-back barstools. The Fanimation fan above the table and the Northeast Lantern's Uptown lantern are from Benson's Lighting and Fans.



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In the master bedroom, Artefacto's Greta chest and Mute nightstands join the brand's Brasília bed, complemented by Frette linens. Bodor walnut paneling from Armazem accompanies a wall displaying *Esmeralda*, *Malaquita y Jade* by Zaida del Río. The wool and silk rug is from Woven Art Specialist.



In the powder room, Krome Construction suspended the cabinetry—consisting of a quartz countertop from Innovative Surfaces and a Florense vanity base from Armazem—in front of a backlit wall of Opustone's Lumix quartzite. A beveled mirror by CM Glass hangs above Hastings' Quad ceramic sink and Franz Viegener's Lollipop faucet from Coral Gables Kitchen & Bath.





Ledge Lounger chaises and side tables beckon swimmers to the pool, remodeled by Tuttle's Pool Company, while Sifas' nearby Pheniks chaise lounges and side tables from Patio & Things rest on flooring from Innovative Surfaces. The home's exterior walls were plastered with a smooth coat and painted Benjamin Moore's Cascade White.