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warm front

A SOFT PALETTE AND CUSTOM FINISHES BRING AN INVITING AIR OF DISTINCTION TO A FORT LAUDERDALE VACATION HOME ON THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY.

WRITTEN BY LINDA HAYES PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY CAMPBELL



INTERIOR DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE Daniel Heighes Wismar
and Greg Dufner, Dufner Heighes

HOME BUILDER Rodney Sarkela, Sarkela Corporation

BEDROOMS 5 | BATHROOMS 3 | SQUARE FEET 8,800



The limestone-clad entry boasts a new stairway railing conceived by designers Greg Dufner and Daniel Heighes Wismer. The de Gournay wallpaper features a hand-painted willow motif that seems to branch out from an antique chest acquired through Parc Monceau in Atlanta.



When setting out to renovate a Spanish Colonial vacation home in Fort Lauderdale for a couple with four children, New York-based designers Daniel Heighes Wisner and Greg Dufner knew exactly what they were in for. "We'd worked with them on eight or nine homes in the past 15 years, in California, Northern Michigan, Chicago, New York, and Seattle," says Wisner. "This is their Florida incarnation."

Situated on a tranquil peninsula along the Intracoastal Waterway, the house already had appealing features, including striking water views on three sides and established landscaping. But although the architecture fit in nicely with its surroundings (an important distinction for the homeowners) and the structure had good bones, the interiors left something to be desired.

Framed by pineapple palm trees, the tropical, verdant entry courtyard is paved with local coral stone and features a burbling fountain. Through the front door, the living room and Intracoastal Waterway beyond can be seen.



Opening out to the pool terrace, the clubroom includes a leather sofa by Jean de Merry, an upholstered sofa from Holly Hunt, and Roman Thomas stools. The rug is from ABC Carpet Home, and the light fixture is also by Jean de Merry. Gene DeBartolo's ink drawing, titled *elephant*, is from Tucker Robbins.





The kitchen's original cabinetry received a dose of color with a backsplash of decorative tiles from Solar Antique Tiles in New York. An existing Wolf range lends a modern lean, and pendants from Roman Thomas light the space.



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"The interior didn't meet the owners' aesthetics," explains Wismer. "It became a project of stripping away layers and very carefully and selectively putting back elements of character that were in keeping with what had been done architecturally." But the layout needed some adjusting, as well, to better suit the family's lifestyle. In addition to cleaning up the flow of the floor plan, more significant changes included relocating the master suite downstairs, which required an expansion that allowed for a new upper-level guest bedroom and gym.

Room by room, Wismer and Dufner brought every element up to par. Within the entry, new limestone floors were laid, a sculptural staircase was reconceptualized with a rearranged landing and a custom-designed handrail, and hand-painted wallpaper with a willow motif was applied

T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings chairs from Dennis Miller Associates, in an Edelman Leather textile, hug a table from Holly Hunt in the breakfast area beneath a Roman Thomas pendant. Blonde Siberian wood flooring runs underfoot, and the space opens up to an added integrated grilling area.



A loggia runs along the entire length of the house. Sutherland chairs add a jolt of color with Perennials outdoor fabric in vibrant teal; they are from David Sutherland along with the occasional table.



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to the double-height walls. In the clubroom—one of three living areas where the family often gathers to read or catch a game—the duo selected reclaimed barn siding to clad the ceiling and had the beams and millwork painted white. They also extended the living room's graceful double-vaulted Venetian plaster ceiling into the adjacent dining room to unify the formal, light-filled spaces that enjoy framed water views.

Throughout the home, contemporary furnishings are set against a clean white backdrop, accented with soft, subtly textured pillows, throws, rugs, and draperies in subdued colors such as seafoam green and gold. "It's a palette of restraint," says Wismer. "We didn't want anything to stand out or look like it doesn't belong." All of the furnishings were either custom-designed or selected, except in the kitchen, where the

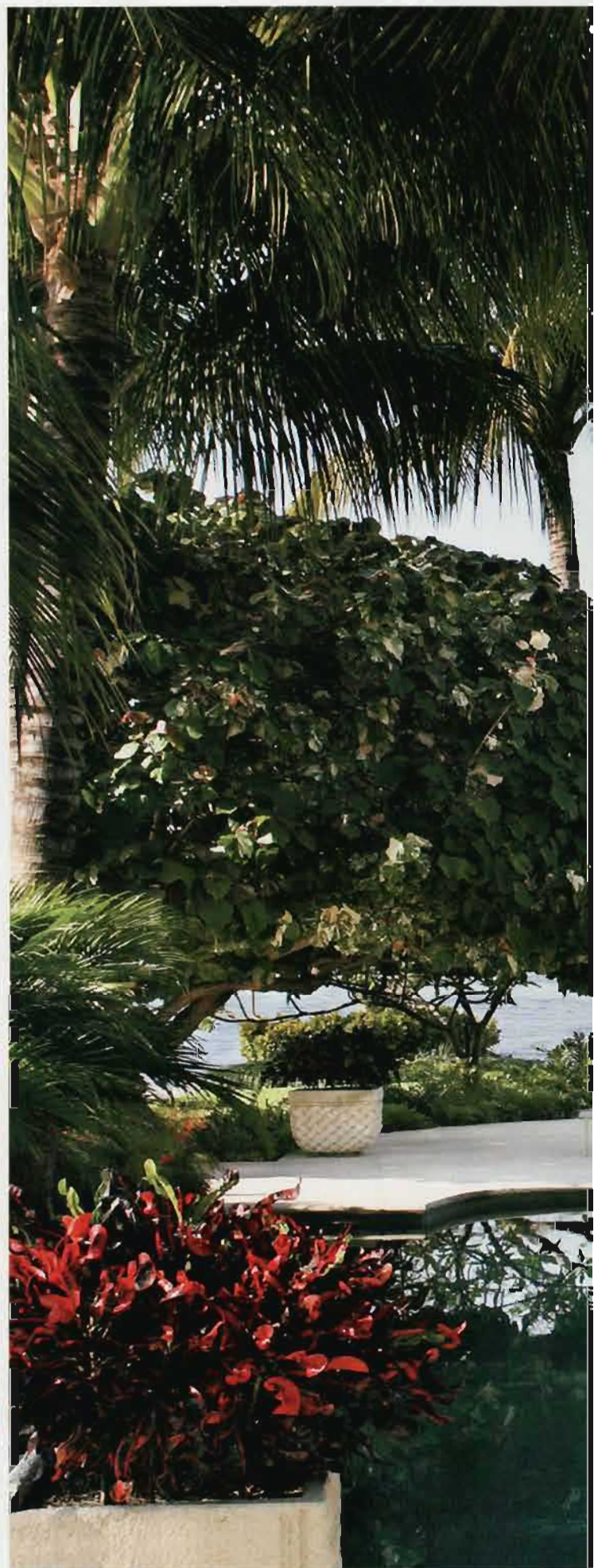
Surrounded by swaying palm trees, the classic Spanish Colonial-style home sits naturally on the ample site. A carpet of fresh grass provides a cooling effect, while the newly added arch of bougainvillea softens the architecture and lends a touch of romance.

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existing cabinetry was pulled out to make way for new Siberian oak flooring and then replaced. "Each room has its own personality and detail, but it all works together," says Dufner.

Attention to detail is what builder Rodney Sarkela, who oversaw construction for this renovation and was involved in the original build with the previous owners, attributes to its splendid result. "It was very creative," he shares. "The drawing details and design were so incredible in terms of the level of finishes and selection of everything from flooring to cabinetry to lighting systems. We went back down to the basics and brought it up again in a new design. It's truly unique for this client."

To finish the project, Wismer and Dufner planned slight modifications to the exterior, including removing extraneous ornamentation and adding a double-height bay window at the rear of the house. Along with





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AND WITH A GREAT CONNECTION TO THE WATER."

At the edge of the Intracoastal Waterway, Richard Schultz chaises from Knoll bask in the sun beside a swimming pool that was refinished with glass mosaic tiles by Walker Zanger. The adjacent covered terrace houses an outdoor dining area. Palms and native sea grape trees offer shading.



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with Jeff Galit of Big Orange Landscaping, the designers tweaked the existing landscape, keeping it as minimal and natural as possible. "We cleared out the excess foliage and amplified the volume of the healthiest, most vibrant plants," Dufner says. They also refreshed the courtyard with more uniform stonework and decorative tiles, specified an arch of bougainvillea at the back of the house to soften the loggia, refinshed the swimming pool with glass mosaic tile, and added a companion spa.

Overall, the home reflects the owners' waterside lifestyle as well as the purity of their taste. "It's contemporary, but not super modern, and with a great connection to the water," says Wismer. "It really is a family affair." **L**

A hallway at the top of the stairs connects the guest bedrooms and features more of the de Gournay wallpaper, starburst pendants by Jean de Merry and sconces from Roman Thomas. A bench, also from Roman Thomas, with Edelman Leather fabric on the cushion, rests on a runner from Tai Ping made of hand-tufted wool and silk.



In a guest room, a quilt and pillows by John Robshaw Textiles from ABC Carpet & Home dress the bed from Holly Hunt, while Mitchell Gold • Bob Williams ottomans share color cue with draperies fashioned from Lee Jofa fabric. A rug from Tai Ping grounds the setting, and Gracie lamp offers light for bedside reading.