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# MUTUAL ADMIRATION

A SEAMLESS COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE OWNERS AND DESIGN PROFESSIONALS ON A BOCA RATON HOME BRINGS NEW MEANING TO THE PHRASE "DREAM TEAM."

WRITTEN BY JORGE S. ARANGO / PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAN CUTRONA

INTERIOR DESIGN / SUSAN CONNOR, JULIE HARRIS, VANESSA BUGEJA AND MICHELE SOMMERS, P&H INTERIORS  
ARCHITECTURE / RANDALL STOFFT, RANDALL STOFFT ARCHITECTS  
HOME BUILDER / MARK MILLER, DON DANIELSON AND BILL HOUGH, BY DESIGN CONSTRUCTION GROUP LLC  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / STEVE GOODRIDGE, LAND DESIGNS OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA INC.







EXTERIOR PHOTO: MICHAEL WALL

The hit song of the Broadway musical *Happy Hunting* was “Mutual Admiration Society,” a duet first belted out in 1956 by Ethel Merman and Virginia Gibson. “The only fighting we do is just who loves who more than who,” they crooned. Another mutual admiration society flourishes today, but far south of the Great White Way, and its membership is composed of the clients and creative team behind a home in Boca Raton. “We’ve built several homes in that neighborhood, but these homeowners presented the most challenging and rewarding project to date for our team,” says builder Mark Miller about his clients, a couple in their 40s. “Their willingness to work hand in hand with our staff and the interior design team was critical to the success of the project.”

According to the wife, the feeling was mutual, as was her praise for the interior design team of Susan Connor, Julie Harris, Vanessa Bugeja and Michele Sommers. “When you work with them, you don’t have to worry about a thing; they take care of every detail,” the wife says.

The collaboration that kicked things off started when the couple met architect Randall Stofft quite by accident. The husband and wife were out shopping for a home to accommodate their family that includes a 15-year-old

daughter, twin 12-year-old sons and two dogs. While considering one house, they spied a crew erecting what Stofft calls “a classic West Indies-style house” next door. In short order, the husband and wife were walking through the emerging structure with its flat-tile roof, clapboard siding and plantation shutters.

Seeing only the exterior walls in place, the duo recognized the opportunity to customize the interior spaces to suit their needs and seized it. Essential to their lifestyle were private suites for each child as well as fluid circulation for entertaining as many as 40 people during the holiday season. Stofft answered those requests and situated the house to optimize views of the golf course. “The house was sited to take advantage of the double fairway and clubhouse,” he says. “There are expansive front and rear porches in keeping with West Indies plantation style.”

The initial interior envelope planned for the home, however, was not in keeping with the wife’s style. “It was ultra-contemporary, and that’s not me. I wanted paneled walls and a grander feel,” she says. “We were living in a heavy Tuscan home, so I wanted this house to be more traditional but fresh and bright.” A predominantly white palette—including Benjamin Moore’s White Dove on the

The relaxed exterior of this West Indies-style home by architect Randall Stofft only hints at the grandeur inside. The residence’s massing that features stepped-back areas on the façade also helps disguise its considerable square footage. Land Designs of Southern Florida framed the front with two date palms.



A Cascades chandelier by Fine Art Lamps, from Capitol Lighting, hangs over an elegant floor in the entry. Installed by La Casa of Granite, Absolute Black India granite from Marble of the World encircles custom Siene stone mosaic by New Ravenna, purchased from Ceramic Matrix, and coordinates with the black-and-ivory bone inlay table by Bernhardt.





Romo-upholstered chairs by The Charles Stewart Company and Emerson Bentley sofas covered in fabric by Vanguard Furniture face a Caracole console below the television in the family room. Theodore Alexander coffee table cubes and an occasional table by Sherrill Furniture offer elegant surfaces for drinks and snacks; the Genesis rug is from Stanton.



Antique mirrored tile studded with D'Kei rosettes by RM Coco and a pair of chandeliers by Corbett Lighting set a sophisticated tone in the dining room. Armchairs by Caracole sit at the head of a Swaim table, while Chaddock chairs dressed in Kravet fabric provide side seating.



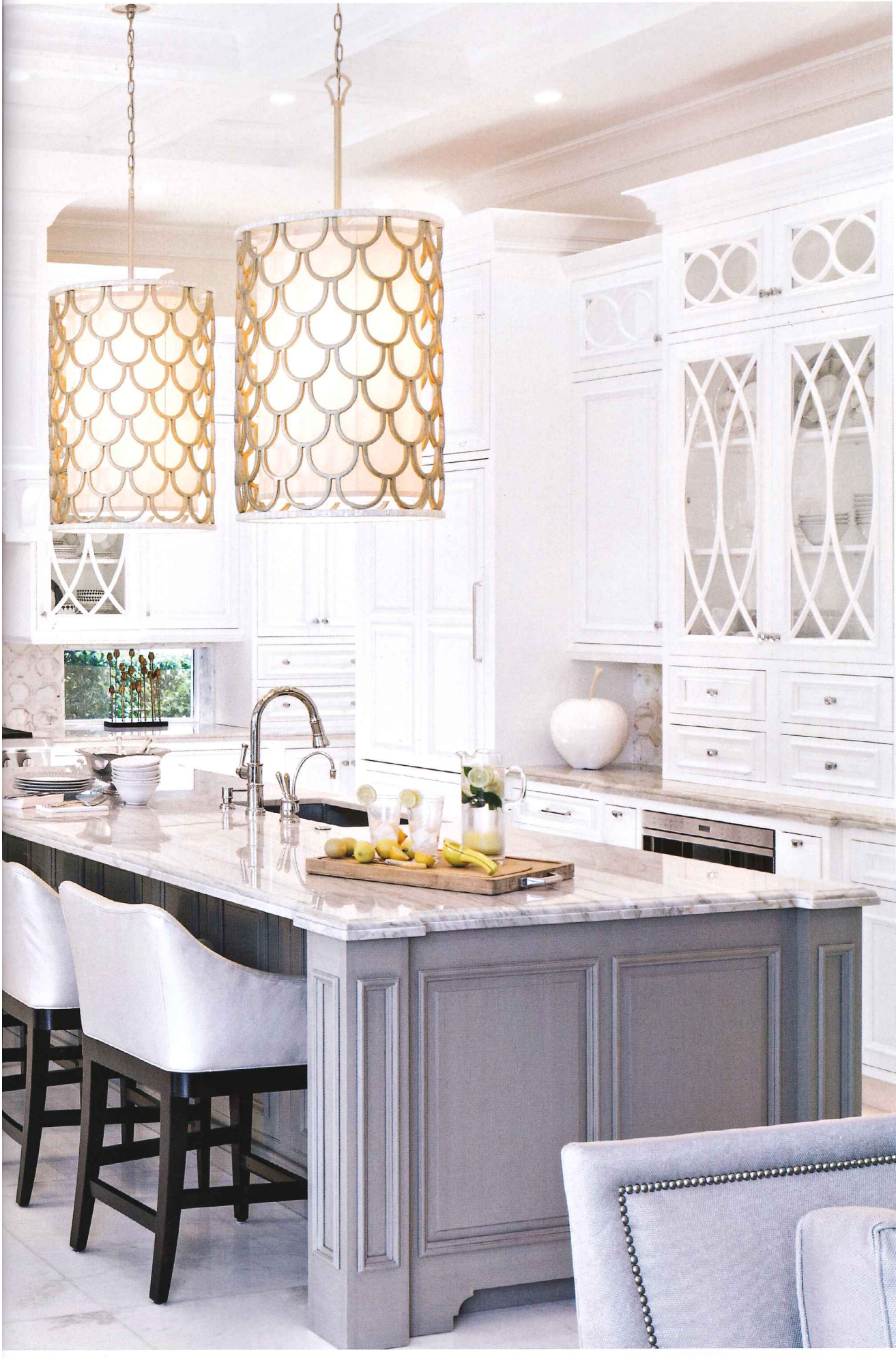
A Pacina rug by JF Fabrics underlies the living room seating arrangement, which brings together a Caracole sofa, an Emerson Bentley bench sporting Robert Allen fabric and a coffee table with an inlaid crystal stone top by Century Furniture. A Corbett Lighting pendant from Beautiful Things Lighting is overhead.

walls—along with handsome trims, coffered ceilings, white marble floors (mixed with black stone in the high-toned foyer) and other detailing supplied the requisite classical-meets-modern sense of relaxed elegance she was hoping for.

The interior design followed suit. “The high contrast of light and dark tones highlights the architecture of the house,” says Connor, noting the overall furniture palette, which leans toward taupe, including grays and metallics that give depth to the design. “The furniture is classic with clean lines. They are not either trendy or period pieces.” In lieu of oversize furniture, selections are tailored and were planned to allow a comfortable flow within the space.

According to Connor, the wife was drawn to very luxurious fabrics that had a great hand to them. “This was fine for the accent pieces, but using high-performance fabrics like faux leather on the kitchen counter stools and leather on the clubroom sectional allow the fabrics to stand the test of time—and pets and children,” she says. Connor judiciously deployed the wife’s favorite lively Missoni fabrics on accents throughout, including in the foyer, the mezzanine lounging area and the guest bedroom. This injects a youthful vibe, as does the art, which the wife selected with the help of the firm’s art consultant, Deni Quinn of ArtSpex.





The kitchen features custom cabinetry from Rogers Design Group, quartzite countertops from Marble of the World, an Artistic Tile sculpted-marble backsplash, and Corbett Lighting pendants hanging over the island; the Vanguard Furniture counter stools are covered in Romo vinyl. In the breakfast nook, Hickory White chairs with polished-nickel nailheads surround a Caracole table; Visual Comfort & Co.'s Mykonos light fixture suspends from overhead.



Nailheads reappear in a guest room on a bed by Vanguard Furniture, enlivened by a colorful accent pillow and hand-tufted rug, both by Missoni. A Chamber side table from Century Furniture is topped with a mother-of-pearl Zilia lamp by Made Goods, and a Troy Lighting pendant crowns the space.



Currey & Company sconces with a contemporary gold-leaf and penshell-black crackle finish flank a mirror by Mirror Image Home in the guest bathroom. The crystal cabinetry vanity from Rogers Design Group is outfitted with a satin nickel faucet by Santeo; the wallcovering is by Seabrook.

In the spare-no-expense category, “the overall lighting package for the house was exceptional,” says Miller, who worked with co-principals Don Danielson and Bill Hough on providing the necessary electrical framework to power an extravaganza of chandeliers and pendants throughout the rooms. In addition to overseeing every aspect of the project, the trio also provided the necessary infrastructure for a team of skilled craftsmen to install such items as the mosaic in the master bathroom, high-end cabinetry and lavish backsplashes in the kitchen and clubroom bar, as well as the foyer floor.

Outside, the grounds conformed to the clean lines of the house. “The owners were after more of a tailored look than a subtropical one, so it’s a simple palette,” explains landscape contractor Steve Goodridge. Neat hedges create crispness that complement the architecture of the house, while more graceful palms tap into the West Indies relaxed island vibe.

Thanks in large part to this mutual admiration society, the warmth and camaraderie that went into the home permeates every room. As the wife heartily concurs, “We’ve built two other houses, but this was so much fun, we almost wished it didn’t have to end.” ■