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TWIST OF FATE

THE STARS ALIGN WHEN A COUPLE ENLIST THEIR DESIGNER
TO REIMAGINE A EUROPEAN VILLA-STYLE HOME.

WRITTEN BY LINDA HAYES / PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRANTLEY PHOTOGRAPHY



Designer Jackie Armour's vision for what she considered her dream project began long before a New York-based couple recruited her to turn the home into their family's South Florida retreat. "I'd visited the house with previous clients and immediately saw the potential and fell in love with it," she shares; but those clients fortuitously passed on the residence. When the new owners, to whom Armour had been referred by mutual friends, asked her to meet them at the house, the address didn't ring a bell. "I almost fell over when I pulled up," she says. "It was serendipity."

Set on a point with 270-degree lake views, the home was modern yet refined, with pale gray natural stucco walls and subtle architectural details reminiscent of a European villa, such as French windows and doors and arched passageways. Lush bougainvillea flowed around outdoor patios and added colorful contrast to natural grasses and swaying palms. "It was very understated from the curb," Armour notes. "But once you walked in, it was magical."

The magic stemmed from the efforts of the home's original owners, who built it as a legacy house for their extended family to enjoy. "They had wonderful art and antiques and had traveled the world," says Armour. "And they articulated that into the bones of the home: the antique French oak floors, wood beams in the kitchen and rustic wood doors. We were very mindful of keeping that character intact."

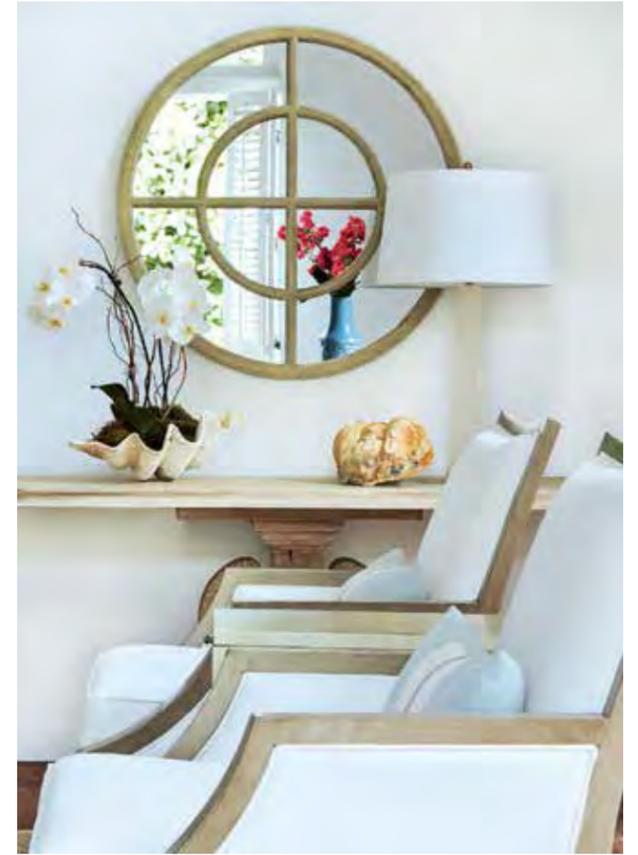
But first things first. The main living spaces were compartmentalized, and though true to the architectural style, they inhibited the flowing lifestyle the owners were hoping for. Armour's solution involved the efforts of builder Edward Knight and his trusted team of subcontractors. "Working with the home's original structure, Jackie's idea was to open the kitchen, which was partitioned off, into the family room and formal living room," he explains.



The pale palette of the living room is reflected in the Sam Moore carved-wood chairs from Designers Buying Group, the sisal Fibreworks rug from Flor Source, and the lounge chairs, sofa and custom ottoman all by Lee Industries from Pineapples, Palms, Etc. The painting from John-Richard was also procured through Pineapples, Palms, Etc.

Right: Hickory White chairs from Designers Buying Group pull up to an intimate Kravet table with nailhead trim, offering casual garden-side seating in a light-filled corner of the living room.

Opposite: Designer Jackie Armour infused a Florida feel into the living area with tabletop accessories such as glass votives, natural coral and sea glass. The circular reclaimed-wood mirror is by Uttermost.



Silver starbursts accent a bar area against Thibaut's Prescott wallcovering in Aqua. Florida Highwaymen artist Sam Newton's painting perches on the custom cabinetry by Cammi Werling of Kitchen Showcase of Stuart, featuring custom hardware by Holland & Sherry.



"We removed a large portion of a wall, which had bookcases and cabinets, reconstructed the space and added pass-throughs for better flow." Architect Mitchell O'Neil served as architect of record for these changes as well as plans for reorganizing the bedroom wing.

Infusing a bit more of a Florida feel came next. "The owners also have a more formal house in New York with a center hall and a lot of heavier, darker furnishings," says Armour. "They wanted this house to be light, bright and airy with a soft palette, so that you could walk in and appreciate the look and furnishings but still have your eye carry outward to the lake."

Aiming for a sophisticated but modern feel in the kitchen, Armour gave a new, bright-white finish to the original dark cabinetry and specified quartz countertops and a Carrara marble backsplash. A central island was finished in pale taupe to stand out, and a stainless-steel-and-glass breakfast table and acrylic chairs were added for fun contrast and

to keep the space from feeling too serious. "I wanted to throw in something totally unexpected," says the designer. Through a double-sided, semi-open cabinet system inset with antique mirrors, a view to the dining room (and beyond that, the pool) was exposed.

Continuing the muted color scheme to the living room, which had previously been painted orange, Armour designed a semiformal gathering area oriented around a fireplace and flooded with natural light. A light cream sofa and chair combo, as well as a tufted ottoman, pair beautifully with the home's original decorative European chandelier and sconces.

The master bedroom, however, was transformed into a place apart. "It opens to a terrace area overlooking the lake," says Armour. "When you're there, it doesn't feel like you're in Florida. The architecture, the shutters—it all just transports you somewhere else." Formerly bright yellow, the now crisp, clean space also features the same

In the dining room, a trestle table by Restoration Hardware pairs with Garbo chairs by Currey & Company, found through Designers Buying Group and upholstered with faux ostrich by Kravet. Stationary sheers were fabricated by Mendo's Custom Interiors using Kravet fabric. The sconce is by Visual Comfort & Co.



Left: The breakfast area off the kitchen opens up to the garden. A modern table made of white glass and stainless steel adds a sense of playfulness along with acrylic chairs. Custom shades incorporate Duralee fabric and Samuel & Sons trim.

Opposite: Opened up to connect with the home's main living areas, the kitchen features new Compac Carrara polished-quartz countertops installed by Mario Ferazzoli & Son. Schumacher fabric covers Lee Industries counter stools; the lounge chairs are also by Lee Industries. The antique European beams are original to the house.

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-JACKIE ARMOUR

Painting the master bedroom white, including the ceiling beams, gave the space a bright, open feel. Suzanne Kasler's upholstered bed for Hickory Chair, from Pineapples, Palms, Etc., is accented with patterned pillow fabric by Beacon Hill. The mirrored chest is Lillian August for Hickory White, acquired through Designers Buying Group; the chair and bench are by Lee Industries.





Against a natural setting of palms and accented with brilliant bougainvillea, the pool area sparkles in the Florida sun. Redington lounge chairs and chaises by Lane Venture, from Designers Buying Group, reflect the modern lines of the interiors. The planters are from Restoration Hardware.

Replacing a typical platform tub with a freestanding Escale tub by Kohler gave the master bath new dimension. Roman shades made by Mendo's Custom Interiors using Duralee fabric frame the greenery outside. The French Deco horn double sconces are by Visual Comfort & Co.; the bamboo stool is from Excentricities.



meticulously textured plaster walls found throughout the rest of the house. "We kept with the same design from the original home," says Knight. "Maintaining and continuing what was already there can be equally as challenging as starting anew."

Though it carries the same bright, airy aesthetic as the other spaces, the master bathroom is still a bit of a departure because, here, the tile, plumbing and flooring were all redone. New vanities, similar in design to the kitchen cabinetry, were installed, only this time with furniture-style legs. The old-fashioned drop-in tub was replaced with a freestanding Kohler beauty—its step-up platform removed to open circulation in the space and encourage connection to the outdoors.

Reflecting on the scope of the project, it's clear that its success was as much about maintaining the integrity of the home's past as enabling its future. "The house was a unique design in its own right," says Knight. "With high-end renovations like this, the whole goal is to never let there be the impression that this used to be one thing and now it's something else, but rather to make the whole project feel seamless." And their efforts were not in vain. "The clients loved the house so much from the beginning and had such an emotional connection with it," says Armour. "When they come down here from their busy, hectic life in New York, they walk in and say 'this is fabulous Florida living.' And now it's their legacy house, too. A nice complete circle." ■

The understated yet luxurious guest bedroom is rendered in a spa-inspired palette of soft, muted tones—seen in a Lee Industries bed accented with Thibaut's solid pillow fabrics, a seafoam-hued wooden chair from Excentricities, Robert Abbey lamps and Schumacher drapery fabric. A faux-shagreen table by Lillian August for Hickory White pops beneath an acrylic-on-stretched-canvas artwork from the owners' collection.





JACKIE ARMOUR, ALLIED ASID, CEO

Creating classic, timeless and truly livable interiors are the hallmark of Jackie Armour. As founder and CEO of JMA Interior Decoration, Inc., Jackie cares deeply about her clients and interior design as an art.

Jackie is exceptionally versatile, wildly creative yet practical in her approach to each project. Her business is interior design; but her expertise is far broader. She cares for each client to ensure that the smallest of details are perfect, whether they are color, quality, texture or a myriad of other elements that define your home.

With over 20 years of experience, Jackie is an Allied ASID member, has an A.S. in Interior Design with concentration in architecture and a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Florida.



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