





## TWO SOUTH FLORIDA RESIDENTS FIND THEIR **DREAM HOME** NEXT DOOR

By Christopher Hall

Photography by  
Kim Sargent

Paul Courchene and Jim Luckie made it easy on their movers. For six years the couple lived in a traditional 1920s Spanish Colonial-style residence that Courchene built near the ocean in historic Delray Beach, Fla., just north of Boca Raton. When an adjacent lot became available, they decided to purchase it and build a spec house. “We wanted to control what was going in next door,” said Courchene, a South-Florida builder of high-end homes. “But once we got into the design process, we knew we were really building a home for ourselves. So we moved next door.” Working closely with architect Randall Stofft and Jeff Strasser of Marc-Michaels Interior Design in Winter Park, Fla., Courchene and Luckie created a 5,300-square-foot home with an aesthetic distinctly different from that of their prior residence. In the backyard pool area (left) and throughout the home, the feel is classic yet contemporary, with a nod to the Far East. “Paul and Jim have traveled extensively in Asia,” Strasser says. “You’ll find subtle Asian influences throughout the house.”

## Green with Entry

A custom mahogany-and-glass front door (right) that evokes an Asian screen sets the aesthetic tone of the residence. Inside, a floor of honed black marble laid in a staggered patten extends from the foyer into the living and dining rooms. Oak stairs that lead to the second-floor guest accomodations exude a clean-lined solidity that is balanced by the delicacy of a wrought-iron handrail created by a mocal metalworker. "We thought hard about the handrail, and even considered steel cable," Courchene says. "But we wanted something with both a lightness and a handcrafted artisan quality." The painting depicting calla lilies, by Canadian artist James Lahey, inspired the choice of the vibrant green leather that covers the bench. "It's an unexpected hint of color in an otherwise neutral area," Strasser says



## Lining Up

The intimate feel of the roughly 600-square-foot living room (left & following page) reflects the owners' preference for spaces with an embracing, human scale. "We're not fans of huge, two-story-high rooms," Courchene says. Right angles and straight lines figure prominently throughout the space, which features wall paneling of rift-sawn white oak and a custom coffee table of tiered rosewood rectangles. In the bar area behind the sofa, a Mark Kaplan painting - presented in a triple ridged frame that swings away from the wall to reveal a liquor storage compartment - also contributes to this aesthetic. Upholstered walls, sheer drapes, and twin pendant lighting fixtures of amber Murano glass soften the rectangle slightly. "The window treatments allow you to get a sense of the pool outside while keeping your focus inside the room," Strasser says. The four-sided fireplace, which is faced in moss-green Brazilian granite and surrounded by glass, opens to the living and dining room.



*Lateral Move*





## Suite Escape

Strasser and the owners wanted to create sanctuaries of calm in the three upstairs guest suites and in the main floor master suite. (above). They painted the masters bedroom's walls and ceiling a pale tranquil blue and installed French doors that open directly onto the poolside patio and its rustling palms. Asian-inspired wood lattices with inset mirrors flank a wall of upholstered Ultrasuede panels, both of which Courchene helped design. "The wall not only gives the illusion of a headboard," Strasser says, "it adds some drama to a room that is visually very quiet."



The main-floor master bath (left) decorated in the same neutral tones as the bedroom, features custom cherry millwork and a counter of earth Yellow Root marble. A silver-leaf ceiling tops Venetian-plaster walls. A mirrored folding screen and floor to ceiling mohair drapes obscure a window that overlooks the front garden and the street. "The screen and drapes provide needed privacy," Strasser says. "But they still allow natural light and air into the room."



## Taking It Outside

The covered loggia is next to the family room and accessible through a wall of sliding glass doors. It is a virtual continuation of the indoor space, with the same architectural ceiling detail and Spanish-marble floor found in the adjoining family room. "Visually, it reads as one space," Strasser says. The owners use the the outdoor room frequently from December through May, firing up the barbecue in the adjacent alcove's full kitchen. They often host small diners at the dining table, which has a hand-painted, glazed ceramic counter top they found in Florence, Italy. A casual but chic rattanlike sofa and matching loveseat by Rausch Classics face a cast-stone fireplace; atop the mantel is a bronze stand from Mexico that depicts astrological signs. "The fireplace provides warmth on the infrequent cold nights we have here in South Florida," says Courchene. "And otherwise it makes for great ambience." Push-button retractable screens between the classically inspired columns keep flying insects at bay while still allowing views of the pool and the garden's lush tropical plantings. With its clean lines and classical architectural references, the room embodies the creative dynamic of the entire home. "I'm inclined toward the traditional," Courchene says, "and Jim likes the contemporary. In this house we had to meet halfway, and sometimes that meant going to the next level to find something we both liked. In the end, I think the effort paid off."