

# Tropical

OASIS OF CULTURE

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK, WHAT A STORY THEY WOULD TELL ABOUT A WELL-TRAVELED COUPLE, THEIR ECLECTIC COLLECTION OF ART AND A COLLABORATIVE VISION THAT CREATED THIS DREAMSCAPE ON THE GULF COAST

AS SEEN IN  
FLORIDA DESIGN



INTERIOR DESIGN RUTA MENAGHLAZI,  
THEORY DESIGN, FORT MYERS, FL  
ARCHITECTURE JON KUKK,  
KUKK ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN, NAPLES, FL  
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MIKE VITTE CONSTRUCTION, NAPLES, FL  
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PHOTOGRAPHY DANIEL NEWCOMB,  
JUPITER, FL

LEFT: Brushed shellstone paves the way to a Polynesian-style home, where antique, bronze temple lions announce entry. Interior designer Ruta Menaghlaži's aim was to keep lines clean, modern and interesting with 3-D detailing and nearly 300 pounds of custom bronze hardware on the mahogany doors.

RIGHT: A wooden bench from Design Within Reach offers the perfect spot to sit and admire photographer Cory Richards' *Children of Mustang*. "It's like the children are greeting guests," says the husband, who takes pride as a historian and avid collector, and hand picks every piece because it speaks to him.



ON THE BANKS OF THE GULF COAST, in Naples' exclusive Port Royal community, this 13,000-square-foot home, despite its stature, yields a livable and cozy essence, achieved by the incorporation of warm tones along with high open spaces artfully distinguished and individually celebrated. The homeowners discovered this gem while searching for a place with enough waterfront suitable for their yacht, *Top Dog*. Nestled on a beautiful piece of property with breathtaking views, this diamond in the rough was in need of a lot of love and major reconstruction.

The search was on for a design team to anticipate the owners' tastes and style while working with a very aggressive schedule for completion. The couple reached out to close friend and builder Mike Vitte. Up for the challenge, Vitte met with interior designer Ruta Menaghlaži (formerly with Freestyle Interiors), architect Jon Kukk and the homeowners to brainstorm ideas to complete this project in time for the holidays. Although the project was considered a

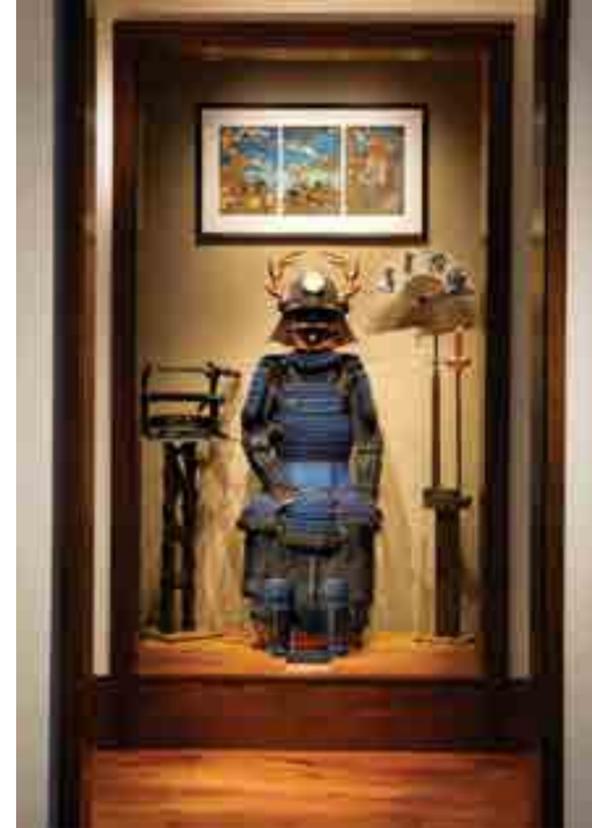
The living room offers a warm social space for conversation, where a pair of custom sofas and four lounge chairs face off across Theodore Alexander's cocktail table with a high-gloss, dark mocha finish on one side and cerused oak on the other. Low copper Indian pots fill the niches with orchids and bamboo.



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renovation, the home was completely gutted. "It was originally designed [for us] not to take it down," Vitte says. "When we opened it up, I just flat out knew we could not build on this. The house had been remodeled four times."

Yet the residence, a secondary home for the owners, retained its original Polynesian flavor starting with the exterior. "The peaked entry area was probably the one part of house that was left standing. Most everything was replaced," Menaghlazi says. "Basically, we kept the bones of the house and used all new finishes to modernize it." The design team collaborated for 13 months on the transformation of this large-scale property into a contemporary home that pays homage to Bali-style architecture with a creative touch of West Indian influence.



Avid collectors of art and antiques, the couple came to the table with collected photos from their world travels, images from design magazines, and a passion for contemporary as well as traditional art from around the world. An eclectic mix of items from photographs to antiques — referencing the homeowners' penchant for Japanese, Chinese and African influences — effortlessly commands the spotlight. Upon entry, a 2,000-year-old Oriental bronze horse bolted to the foyer table is a guest's first welcome to the home.

ABOVE: Samurai blue Zaboshi armor steps up to fill a niche, while antique Japanese Katchu Shi samurai yoroi armor presides beyond a series of four Andy Warhol screen prints. "I'm a history buff," the husband says. "Asia, China in particular, has such a rich history. And Japan, I've been there often and I love their culture."

In the kitchen lined with fumed eucalyptus cabinetry with a piano finish, Maxine Snider's stools pull up to the island topped in backlit Cristallo quartzite. "It's very translucent but it's a warmer white, not like cold, ice white," interior designer Ruta Menaghlaizi says.



From here, a gallery of art begins to weave an intriguing story that flows throughout as walnut wood flooring leads the way into the living room. *Brigitte Bardot* by photographer Terry O'Neil easily wows the conversation in the intimate atmosphere. Rich walnut paneling travels 12 feet up the wall to facilitate more of a human scale, while high windows accentuate the height of the ceiling and bring in natural lighting. The balance of the wall and ceiling look like they're floating, suspended much like the bronze Henge ring LED lights that circle the space.

LEFT: Capturing the bold aesthetics of urban graffiti art, Mr. Brainwash's *Mickey*, 2016, plays off of artist Jim Dine's *Sonny Terry*, 2007, to create a colorful and casual breakfast area swirling with pop art imagery. Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams' chairs join the circle of fun around a Carrara marble table.



Mooodi's "Random" fiberglass globes light the stairway, while the expanse of the family room is outlined by Marcel Wanders' "Mad" chairs from Poliform, and an Adriana Hoyos sectional clad in a linen weave and topped with accent pillows that bring dark blue and bronze hues to the fore.

The home registers as an art gallery but abandons the cold, austere notion of one. “I think the combination of natural materials — walnut, wood flooring, nice stone [finishes] — makes it feel warm but not sterile,” builder Mike Vitte says.

The tray ceiling in the kitchen, one of four in the house, mirrors the stepped look of the custom front door panels. “It defines the space while adding architectural interest with dimension and texture,” the designer says. Though functional, the minimalist kitchen remains streamlined with all appliances housed in cabinetry crafted of fumed eucalyptus with a piano finish. In the nearby breakfast area, Menaghlazi wanted to give the family a place to gather and enjoy casual meals. Large enough to seat 10, the Carrara marble table comes in at 7 feet in diameter, outfitted with a custom Lazy Susan.

Steps away, an eye-catching stainless steel and glass stairway emerges as walnut treads climb a wall of textured silver travertine. *Dream of Mexico* by American pop artist Jim Dine contributes a brilliant splash of color to the family room bathed in dramatic lighting cast from floating beams that support a high-peaked ceiling.

RIGHT: Adriana Hoyos' 14-foot-long walnut table and chairs run the expanse of the dining room in linear complement to photographer David Yarrow's *Mankind 2* centering the wood-paneled wall.



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The master bedroom suite pays homage to the homeowners' affinity for the West Indies. Fortuny's 3-tier silk pendant casts a soft glow above the custom poster bed with floating bedside chests. Legno Bastone walnut grounds the space in warmth, while cool and crisp Romo sheers pull open to reveal a serene waterfront view beyond.

“MOST RECENTLY, I TOOK A MONTH OFF AND WE STARTED IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND CRUISED TO ST. KITTS, SAINT LUCIA, THE GRENADINES AND JUST OFF THE COAST OF VENEZUELA,” THE HUSBAND SAYS. “I LOVE THAT WEST INDIES FEELING.”



In the dining room, *Mankind 2* by photographer David Yarrow takes center stage. A tribal essence pervades the space bolstered by vintage shed water buffalo horns from Indonesia configured into sculptures to the right, as well as a male head sculpted of black serpentine and a female sculpture made from African jade to the left.

Massive in size, the master bedroom becomes intimate with architectural interest, warm woods and soft lighting — particularly evident with the custom-designed poster bed complete with white linen sheers for privacy. In this instance, the ceiling serves as the focal point as the eyes are instantly drawn to the high-pitched walnut beams with raffia insets.

The couple's affinity for the West Indies style carries outside to the lanai. “You see the canoe, I bought that years ago even before I started building this house,” the husband says. “I had taken my family up the East Coast, somewhere around Nantucket, and I came across this old canoe hanging from the ceiling of an antique store. I told my captain, ‘We’re going to take it back to Naples. I’m going to turn it upside down, put lights in it and hang it in my West Indies-style lanai.’” And that’s exactly what he did. Just beyond the lanai, the pool area celebrates Florida living with a view of the couple’s other passion, the sea ... but that’s a story for another day.

ABOVE: On the lanai, an antique canoe hovers about the living area that features an assortment of custom teak furnishings crafted by Woodworkers Naples and cushioned in a durable Sunbrella upholstery. Ipe wood decking runs from the open-air living and dining areas to the bar, where libations flow and conversation continues.

*Head of Genesis* (below), a commissioned bronze sculpture by Robert St. Croix, presides over the pool area on one side, while the couple's yacht, *Top Dog*, docks on the other. Chaise lounges recline poolside, where Tuuci umbrellas offer just the right amount of shade.



**SOURCES**

**ENTRY AND GALLERY HALLWAY**

Artwork and sculpture - Owners' Collection  
 Bench - Design Within Reach, Bonita Springs, FL  
 Photograph of children - National Geographic Fine Art Galleries, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
 Wood flooring - Legno Bastone, Naples Flooring Company, Naples, FL

**LIVING ROOM**

Art, photography, sofas, chairs and accessories - Owners' Collection  
 Sofa and chair fabric - Romo, DCOTA, Dania Beach, FL  
 Cocktail table - Theodore Alexander, High Point, NC  
 Circular light fixtures - Henge, Milano, Italy  
 Area rug - Designers' Rug Center, Naples, FL

Wall panels - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL, and AWE Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 Wood flooring - Legno Bastone, Naples Flooring Company, Naples, FL

**KITCHEN**

Artwork - Owners' Collection  
 Cabinetry - AWE Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 Counter stools - Maxine Snider, Inc., Chicago, IL

**BREAKFAST AREA**

Art - Owners' Collection  
 Cabinetry - AWE Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 Breakfast table - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL  
 Side chairs - Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, MDD, Miami, FL

**FAMILY ROOM**

Art and sculpture - Owners' Collection  
 Stairway lighting - Moooi, Miami, FL  
 Stairway fabricated by Mike Vitte Construction, Naples, FL  
 Sectional - Adriana Hoyos Furnishings, Miami, FL  
 Fabrics - Romo, DCOTA, Dania Beach, FL, and S. Harris, Jeffrey Michaels Showroom, Hollywood, FL  
 Chairs - Poliform, MDD, Miami, FL  
 Cocktail table - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL  
 Area rug - Designers' Rug Center, Naples, FL  
 Wood flooring - Legno Bastone, Naples Flooring Company, Naples, FL

**DINING ROOM**

Art, photography, sculpture and accessories - Owners' Collection

Dining table and chairs - Adriana Hoyos Furnishings, Miami, FL  
 Chair fabric - Romo, DCOTA, Dania Beach, FL  
 Lighting - Fortuny, D&D Building, New York, NY  
 Wall and ceiling panels - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL, and AWE Chicago, Chicago, IL  
 Wood flooring - Legno Bastone, Naples Flooring Company, Naples, FL

**MASTER BEDROOM**

Poster bed, floating bedside tables and ceiling beams - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL  
 Lighting: Fortuny, D&D Building, New York, NY  
 Drapery fabric - Romo, DCOTA, Dania Beach, FL  
 Lounge chairs and ottoman - Owners' Collection  
 Occasional table - Baker, theMart, Chicago, IL  
 Wood flooring - Legno Bastone, Naples Flooring Company, Naples, FL

Area rug - Designers' Rug Center, Naples, FL

**LANAI**

Teak furniture - Woodworkers Naples, Naples, FL  
 Cushion fabric - Sunbrella, Burlington, NC  
 Antique canoe light over seating and accessories - Owners' Collection  
 Woven rope pendants over bar - Roost, Los Angeles, CA  
 Hood - Oney Sheetmetal, Inc., Fort Myers, FL

**PATIO**

Chaise lounges - Restoration Hardware, West Palm Beach, FL  
 Umbrella - Tuuci, Miami, FL  
 Sculpture - Robert St. Croix Studio, West Palm Beach, FL

**THROUGHOUT**

A.V. and technical - Gamma Tech, Naples, FL