

CREATIVE NATURE

FOR HER FAMILY'S GOLDEN BEACH WATERFRONT HOME, AN ARTIST INDULGES IN HER CREATIVE WISH LIST.

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ARCHITECTURE / STEPHANIE HALFEN, SDH STUDIO ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN
INTERIOR DESIGN / IVONNE RÓNDEROS, DKOR INTERIORS
HOME BUILDER / COLE HAYNES, TWENTY TWO GROUP
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE / PAUL WEINBERG, KEITH AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Architect Stephanie Halfen and designer Ivonne Ronderos fashioned an art-filled and nature-inspired Golden Beach dwelling for their clients. A custom 10-foot yellow entry door, made by Twenty Two Group, creates an inviting entrance into the color-infused home. Planting beds lining a concrete panel start outside and flow into the foyer—a design, conceived by landscape architect Paul Weinberg, that's repeated in the living and dining area. The porcelain flooring is by Italgres.



Ever since she studied architecture in her native Venezuela, it had always been a dream for this South Florida homeowner to construct a residence from scratch. So, when she and her husband finally had the chance to build on a waterfront site in Golden Beach, she enlisted architect Stephanie Halfen, a fellow Venezuelan who shares her modernist aesthetic. Halfen, working with designer Ivonne Ronderos, created a home that blurs the division between indoors and out, celebrates bold color, and offers space for the wife, who is an artist, her husband and their two daughters to exercise their creativity.

For inspiration, Halfen looked toward the wife's favorite architects to conceptualize the home's overall design—Mexican icon Luis Barragán's use of color and his mingling of water with architecture, and Frank Lloyd Wright's dexterity with vertical and horizontal planes. "The focus of the design was to bring the natural surroundings into the home," says Halfen, noting that both Barragán and Lloyd Wright celebrated that interaction. A series of deep overhangs and covered terraces ease the transition from the exterior to the interior, and inside, smaller windows treat outdoor elements as art, like the floor-level apertures in the living room that frame the lap pool as it extends down the side of the house. The larger wall of windows also creates a broader vista, making the pool's wider portion appear as if it were melting into the canal beyond. "The whole living room feels like you're floating in the water," says the architect.

The home's structure also represents the family's collective artistic impulses. A white "roller door" connects the master bedroom and art studio, so the artist and her husband can work together at a built-in surface that runs between the rooms. With her daughters, the wife spray-painted the cabana bath to simulate the graffiti on a subway car, and arranged seashells in the concrete barbecue counter when the mixture was poured. Magnetic erase boards in the kitchen, the girls' bedrooms and the upstairs studio stand ready for impromptu messaging and artwork. And the living room's modular furniture, furthermore, allows the homeowner to rearrange it when the mood strikes. "I enjoy versatile spaces so I can interact with their design," she says.

Color was also a top priority. "We live in sunny Florida with beautiful water views," the wife says. "I wanted to take advantage of natural light and to use materials that emphasize where we are, like sand-colored porcelain, coral stone and the use of vivid colors." Yellow—the artist's favorite hue—is a recurring theme throughout, so Ronderos color-blocked several walls to highlight fields of function, such as the kitchen's range hood, custom shelving in the office and girls' rooms, and other built-in display niches. "She wanted something colorful that she could interact with and to help organize her thoughts," Ronderos says. "Everything has a connection with the structure of the house."

Landscape architect Paul Weinberg incorporated similar techniques to mix hard and soft surfaces outside. He brought the front-yard plantings right up to the entry garden, for example, and created a scalloped edge of landscaping along the driveway "so the garden could spill over into it" and vice-versa. Likewise, behind the home, where the steps from the terrace to the lawn are lined with grass, "we wanted to move the soft feeling of the lawn up to those patio areas," says Weinberg.

As the house was taking shape, general contractor Cole Haynes stayed on schedule by fabricating many of its elements off-site, like the custom 10-foot-high entry door, the frameless interior doors that blend into the walls, and all the bathroom millwork. "As much of the interior that you can bring in and install as efficiently and as quickly as possible, the better," Haynes says, noting the neighborhood's restrictions on when construction could take place. Haynes and his team also built the home so it would receive an eco-friendly LEED certification—another homeowner priority. "They were instrumental in this effort, and they showed great sensitivity to the environment, which we, as the builder, also appreciated," says Haynes.

Equally important to the home's ecological sustainability was the significance of environmental and artistic expression—from the natural elements reflected into the spaces to the details inspired by the owner's native country. In one of the bathrooms, blue and yellow tile patterns channel artist Carlos Cruz-Diez's mosaics at Venezuela's Simón Bolívar International Airport, and the open living area allows light to pour onto the walls featuring works from Venezuelan artists Mateo Manaure and Héctor Poleo. Miami's tropical landscape is also on display, especially in the large two-story living area overlooking the canal and backyard's natural surroundings. "You see the green of the lush landscape, the blue sky and the turquoise water," says the architect. "It's truly very special." ■

"THE FOCUS WAS TO BRING THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS INTO THE HOME."

—STEPHANIE HALFEN



Above: A painting by Venezuelan artist Mateo Manaure hangs on a cement panel that rises from the shared living and dining area through a glass pane in the second-floor balcony and up to the roof, where natural light streams down through a large skylight. The coral-stone cube echoes elements of the home's exterior.

Right: Eames dining chairs surround a Skorpio table by Cattelan Italia in the dining space—a contrast to the family's heirloom sideboard and a piece of artwork by Héctor Poleo that hangs above. Modular seating in the adjacent living room by Casadesús from Arravanti gives the homeowners creative license to arrange the area into many different configurations.



Halfen used reclaimed teak to highlight the staircase and create a visual transition between the first and second floors. The shelves support a revolving display of artwork and souvenirs collected from the family's travels.



The bedrooms open to a balcony "creating an experience of movement," Halfen says. "Once you walk out of your bedroom, you are connected to the space. It provides a sense of family gathering."



"EVERYTHING HAD TO HAVE A CONNECTION WITH THE STRUCTURE OF THE HOUSE."

-IVONNE RONDEROS

Below, left: A hanging Adagio chair by Paola Lenti joins the family's existing furnishings on the terrace, which faces the canal that lies beyond a broad lawn and pool. Deep overhangs lined in reclaimed teak shade the exterior lounging space and the artist's studio above.

Below, right: Inside and outside meet in the master bathroom, where the river rocks and ipe wood surrounding the Duravit Durastyle tub are repeated in the adjoining open-air shower and garden. The fittings are by Hansgrohe from Ferguson.



"She went bold where most people play it safe," Ronderos says of her client. Instead of artwork, Ronderos designed a custom rug through Artistic Looms that flows from the floor and up the wall in the master bedroom—an idea her client heartily endorsed.