

ON THE WATERFRONT

A Miami businessman wants it all—minus the celebration

By Louise Fox

Photography by Bramley Photography

When the owner of a waterfront estate in Miami indicated on a drive-over site building project that guests had given a \$250K appraisal for their home, it was not with any desire to "lose it." "I know what I have but I'm not satisfied by what I have" was the businessman, who grew up in a prominent family and by degrees a South Florida fixture for 40 years. "Something that I have is the great neighborhood, the beach, the family and myself." And though he wanted to furnish his new home with his savings, he didn't want to live in a mansion—so the first order in an environment that would give him the feel of a palatial estate was \$1.5M worth.

He also wanted a fully appointed, technologically advanced home—just as the workday had to be hidden. "The morning" was his weekend residence and good friend Robert Dugan, a co-owner of Advanced Home Design in Miami, FL, "speaks up to the client's behavior on in the wall. You walk into a room and don't see a thing."

There was something else: The divorced father of two boys, ages 8 and 11, wanted interior designer Christine DeLuca of Anthropologie Creative Design Group in Miami, FL, but the workday had to be hidden. "It's a place where the kids could enjoy every moment. We have to be prepared for great party-going moments," the businessman told his interior designer.

The working division of the two-story house, opened artistically around a patio-enclosed, 3-level pool, got a bigger message of better beach, city views and elevated design and technology. Technology designers behind various or awarded clients are going to lift by creating a home on the waterfront. I mean, what more. Color, using blue, red to give a lift to the design with full compatible atmosphere, so the business has without looking like it's from a former neighborhood in the water. In fact, the old living room is another piece in the past room. All of this is such to the attention of the owner. "I loved the process of going through a few different contractors and the different feeling with every one and the end" the businessman says. "But I definitely love my home."





In the master sitting space, a custom cabinet conceals the audio-visual equipment, which includes a 55-inch Fujitsu plasma TV, a flat monitor, a bar and a refrigerator with an ice maker. Side chairs, upholstered in Rogers & Goffigan fabric, are from Sussner in Miami.

"The gym occupies the 'cool' side in the great house, overlooking the water and the pool," says the homeowner, adding that he wouldn't work out much if the gym were located elsewhere. The flooring is distressed American oak; the island, crafted of Rogers & Goffigan fabric, are from MDM Custom Window Treatments.

He loves it so much, in fact, that he moved his office there. "Kids can't go out," he says of his work space, equipped with a billiard table and dualing television-computer screens positioned above the simple oak table that serves as his desk. "I don't have a quiet room to cry in. I don't want a quiet room," he adds.

Not that the office is the business hub of the house; of the great room is social hub, is



The master bedroom, above, has a Sony Playstation and a 55-inch Fujitsu television. The navy upholstered linen are from Four Lamps in Newport. The 17th-century Italian settee was discovered at James Jeffrey in New York; the island for the light fixture comes from Carlini de la Pierre Antiques.

The theater's custom-made U-shaped sofa is from John John, upholstered in a silk, velvet-like fabric. The Hollywood Regency accessories are from D&S Studios. "I don't want theater seating because that's not how my family functions," says the homeowner. "He's always lying on top of one another." Advanced Home Theater brought in John Arlotta of Arthur + Lambert, to oversee the room's construction and installation. Arlotta worked closely with the house's interior designer on the room's look.



"The home theater system is at the very highest level from an audiophile's point of view. Plus the room's aesthetics are in unison with the rest of the home, and provide the maximum acoustic performance."

—John Julian,
interior designer

"He wanted the house to be multi-use, geared to a point, yet accessible. Even if guests prefer something more modern for themselves, they all feel that the house is elegant, warm and welcoming."

—Charlotte Desjouis,
interior designer



In the music room, above, the boys can jam on a variety of instruments without disrupting their father at work in his home office. If the family wants to watch the 35-inch Flatfish, they can lounge on the custom sofa, wrapped in Rogers & Griggan fabric, or the ottoman, upholstered in Holly Hued leather. Move along, the boys play Guitar Hero and video games in this room.

one might expect. "Our world revolves around the kitchen," the owner says. "It's a welcoming, comfortable place. That's where the family congregates and talks, and where I have business meetings at the table."

The table is custom-crafted of a rare wood plank set atop a French cast-iron base. Most of the home's antiques, discovered by Desjouis and the homeowner on scouting trips, arrived from a 40-foot container. The pair started searching in New York, but changed their course and headed to Europe to shop. "He wanted to build a rare collection of furniture," says the interior designer, who happily educated her client about the world of antiques during their search. "These furniture items value the vintage you take it home from the store. Antiques will never depreciate," she says.

One of the first purchases selected by Desjouis was a 115-inch-tall 19th-century French wood cupboard with rounded sides. In an adjacent kitchen wall, an oversized door opens to reveal a 42-inch plasma television. "I actually purchased the cupboard for the master bedroom, [but] the ceiling was too high as we expected," she says. "The really is a treasure." Desjouis and her team had to



The kitchen's entertainment cabinet with mirrored doors is from Amy Perlin Antiques in New York. The curved-arm chairs are Belgian antiques; the side chairs, slip-covered in a washable fabric, are from John Julian. "That keeps the place maintained with a little trouble as possible," says the interior designer.



The main house and guest house border the pool. While the children splash in the fountain in the shallow steps, the grown-ups can enjoy music from eight Wilson speakers concealed in rocks as they lounge on outdoor furniture by David Southland. The home's outdoor shutters are hand-made from pine, a wood more dense and weather-resistant than oak. "Millworkers will knock their knaps on it," says Desjouis.

reduce the cabinet's height so it would fit.

With a bonus of this size, Desjouis adds, it is not unusual for about 30 percent of the selected furniture pieces to end up in a different spot from the one originally intended. "As a project evolves, you switch bits," she says.

A pair of painted French antique armchairs replaced the master room's upboard. Shined new oak, tucked behind original glass, hides the 35-inch Flatfish plasma television. For the owner's musician, the surround-sound system's Trist speakers and subwoofer settle cozily in the walls and ceiling.

Each morning, when the owner's alarm clock rings at quarter to six, the master suite comes to life. "The shades open," he says. "The television doors spring open. The TV turns on, and tunes to the business channel. Then the second level [level] automatically to case I don't sit."

While the home's audacious technology



The family gathers in the stone-walled outdoor kitchen about five times a week. The owner, who is in the gas and utilities business, outfitted his full-time chef with an aprons barbeque on which to create his appetituous dishes. "It's beautiful and functional," the businessman says about the space, which is lit by a cast-iron chandelier from Wilson Antiques and John Julian barbies. The barbeque area is equipped with bar stools upholstered in Holly Hued leather and fabric, and two 26-inch Sharp LCD televisions.

could) be much more impressive—there are more equipment racks in the house, and the entire system can be controlled via the Internet—the business can regard himself not so much a techno-nerd as a lifelong serial fanatic.

"For years I couldn't afford to do what I wanted, and this was my great opportunity," he says, alluding to the media room, for which he spared no expense. "It's small, about 12 by 18 feet. But it took anything you could listen to—including a live performance." Advanced Home Theater brought in John Arthur (owner of the room construction and acoustics), and ensure that the design authentic fit that of the overall house.

Lastly, on his Stewart & Wilson Screenwall Electrak projection screen, the owner's been watching Andrea Bocelli's romantic DVD *Islands*, which features scenes of 1950s Naples, celebrities, including sports figures such as Mike Piazza, have dropped by to enjoy the Wilson surround-sound system. "Michael Caine was over with his wife, and he was blown away," the owner says.

Bogle and Reichard traveled to Indianapolis dozens across the United States with their client to advise on all things technological. Bogle is assisting in his enthusiasm: "The sound is indescribable. In my experience, no one has ever heard sound like it. A lot of times a project is meaningless to a client. They say what to spend, and they show up at the end. But this is the owner's passion. He was really invested in it."

He was so invested that as soon as he heard about the newest equipment, he found himself craving it. "With his level of wealth, it wasn't an issue," Bogle says. "It was up to us to temper him. I'd say, 'Do you really need it?' It doesn't happen very often that I'm stopping a client."

Again and again Advanced Home Theaters refined the system for him, the homeowner says, as he learned what he needed rather than what he thought he wanted. "It's been a work in progress," he says. "Could I go back to the old style? Certainly. But I'm the type of guy [who] goes berserk when lights are left on. For 45 years, I lived raising light switches off. But as you get into a house this size, automation becomes almost essential." ■

For more images of this project and a full equipment list, please visit HMagazine.com.

A Miami Dream Home

For custom installers Al Reichard and Robin Bogle of Advanced Home Theater in Miami, Fla., the biggest challenge with this project was keeping up with the unceasing changes. "The job started off as a bare wall with the owner wanting nice but basic audiovisual and integration to go along with an adaptable listening space," Bogle says. "As the project went on, though, his enthusiasm for the integration side of a grew dramatically—so the point that the mania for the project sort of became 'More, bigger, better.'"

"There were so many changes throughout the project, we started to feel like the only constant was change," Reichard adds. "And I don't mean that in a sound negative at all. Change is good and it's bad. When you're planning for one thing and end up implementing something completely different, there are just so many things affected down the chain that you don't realize it first."

Bogle cites the security cameras as a specific example: "The camera system grew from simple stationary cameras to military-grade pan-and-tilt-zoom cameras. With a simple non-tilt-and-zoom camera you select a touch screen and it gives you a picture. But if you upgrade the camera to pan-and-tilt, as we did here, you have to go back to that touch screen, update all the graphics for panning, tilting, and zooming—so that alone is a major change. But with this project it wasn't one touch screen—it was 20 touch screens, and a good number of handheld remotes. We had a team of three programmers working nonstop for six months just to keep up with the changes."

As the project evolved, space also became a major challenge. "The thing that makes the house so great is that you don't just have the high-end audio rooms with the Wilson [Alexandria X-2s and the Hikois monitorback amplifiers], Bogle says. "The master bedroom is a very high-performance system. So are the family room and the kid's playroom. So fitting all of this gear into the space allowed us to use fun, fun, fun because the project continued to grow in scope, what was a perfectly acceptable space two years into the project became inadequate by the time we finished. We removed the house three times [after the Sherrock was already in place] because we had to keep relocating equipment racks."

Luckily, the owner didn't quit. He was a pleasure to work with. His first concern was the A/V performance, and if it held up the project a few weeks, it really didn't matter to him. But things like that cause friction with contractors because they're trying to get the job done as quickly as possible. They don't necessarily think the custom installers are the most important people on the job, but, as it turns out, on this project we definitely were. They never saw it this way and I can't blame them, but here the A/V performance was paramount."

The upside of all this change? "If you run the sort of company that allows you to be flexible with the client and accommodate all their needs, the upside is that the client gets exactly what they want," Reichard says. "That makes it all worth it in the end." —Chris Bogle

RESOURCES

Custom Installer: Advanced Home Theater of Miami, Fla.
(305) 593-1965; ahthe.com

Theater Designer: Arthur & Liebhart of Miami, Fla., and Chapel Hill, N.C. (704) 284-8886;
www.ahli.com

Integrator Designer: Atmosphere Creative Design Group of Miami, Fla.
(305) 438-3733; atmospherecreators.com