

THE TIES THAT BOND



SOME HOUSES LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THEMSELVES — THEY SEEM TO CALL OUT: “MASSIVE” OR “I AM A SCULPTED WORK OF ART;” THIS ONE BESPEAKS “WELCOME HOME”

INTERIOR DESIGN BY ALENE WORKMAN, ALENE WORKMAN INTERIOR DESIGN, INC., HOLLYWOOD, FL
TEXT BY MARINA BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIM SARGENT, PALM BEACH GARDENS, FL

The phrase interior designer Alene Workman uses to describe her design of this 8,000-square-foot South Florida home, as well as its owners, is dynamic yet grounded. “The wonderful couple who owns this house could have lived anywhere,” Workman says. In fact, they do have other homes. And they could have built bigger, newer or in a trendier location. But both have careers, his very high-profile, hers high finance — and they have family. “Above all, it’s those ties to family, location and their own grounded sense of who they are that dictated where they made their primary residence and the warm personality of the home.”

Originally, the family had different plans. Situated in an upscale yet understated community, the residence had been expanded from its original 3,500 square feet to accommodate the family while an even larger one was being built. Workman was called on to make this house at once “sophisticated, sumptuous and warm,” while keeping it in the context of the unembellished suburban community.

LEFT: Defining functional spaces within the greater expanse of an open living, dining, gaming and kitchen area was a challenge. Interior designer Alene Workman shapes various environments with a floor-to-ceiling open buffet, lighting, ceiling definition, wall coverings and area rugs that lead the eye up and around the great room.

AS SEEN IN
FLORIDA DESIGN'S
MIAMI
HOME & DECOR



New additions can sometimes be awkward and transitions unremarkable. Not so in the master wing, where pear-wood-paneled double doors, dramatic lighting and a stainless steel wall-mounted table announce entry.

“Over time, they gave up the larger plan and decided not to leave,” she says. “This was home.” Yet challenges were created when the original garage was to become a home theater, the master suite grew twice its original size, and bedrooms and offices had materialized on either side of the home’s central core. “And the architectural elements inside were less than inspiring,” Workman says. Thus began her development of an interior design slate filled with architectural illusions and beautiful materials that would add “zing and sing.”

The homeowners fell in love with the warmth of wood — striated Macassar ebony in dark tones with paler linear patterns, and the honey glow of pear wood with which Workman paneled doors, walls and a soaring cube of an étagère that divides the dining area from the great room.

“Light plays its own role in interior design,” Workman says. With the poolside’s reflected sparkle on the Wendell Castle mirror, the Carriage House table and chairs, soft marble flooring and lush honey-colored walls, a special mood is set in the dining area — to change only in sunset’s glow.





"Everything is wonderfully open," says the designer, noting the immediacy of the great room with the dining area and its opulent chandelier by Andromeda, as well as the view of the beautifully finished granite and wood kitchen. Unified by polished Saturnia marble below and by custom-designed lighting above that alternately floods and highlights, Workman kept the palette subdued while calling attention to diverse textures.

Suggesting the balance of an abstract painting, Workman created Macassar ebony and pear-wood cabinetry for the great room. Honey-caramel lounge chairs in leather circle around to the soft chamois-like tones of the sofa and its pillowed bursts of red and orange. Brueton's brushed stainless steel cocktail table presides at the center of the space, while the occasional tables echo the geometry of the cabinetry and its artifacts.

Playing dynamic thrusts against each other, Workman designed circular tables next to a soaring buffet in a kind of tensile dance between the great room and its adjoining dining area. Here, a floor-to-ceiling, mahogany-framed mirror anchors a wall of pear-wood panels. And in the living area, golden forsythia seem to look down on the game table with a "lightning bolt" stainless steel tube base whose center is filled with tidbits of cracked glass.



"When I first met the clients, it was so gratifying to find the wife already had a folder of my work she'd been cutting out of magazines for years," Workman says. "So she already knew we'd be in sync."



ABOVE: Luminous painted-glass panels wrap the powder room as a cone-shaped basin and circular mirror stand like sculptural sentinels. Elegant calla lilies arch from tiny vases, creating a Greek chorus of design.

LEFT: A room that can multitask ... the great room stands ready as a media center, piano recital hall, and in this corner, game room or even a homework site. Circled with honey-blush upholstered chairs by Brueton, Mirak's stainless steel zigzags lend the game table a pizzazz that awakens the rest of the space.

FAR LEFT: Understated and open, the kitchen is arranged for easy access and quick clean-up. Hidden cabinetry and storage abound, while pretty porcelain does shadow play behind frosted glass. Mirak's barstools stand up and are noticed.

"WE GUTTED EVERYTHING AND USED 'SMART SWITCHING.' EVERYTHING IS CONTROLLED CENTRALLY AND EFFICIENTLY," WORKMAN SAYS.
"ATTENTION TO ENERGY USE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF INTERIOR DESIGN."



Even the kitchen is included in the warm rhythm of organic materials: Rainforest brown granite for the counters and backsplash, pear-wood cabinetry, and ebony on the trim and stylishly high barstools. In cool contrast, the metallic punch of stainless steel repeats on the cooking hood and counter knee guard.

A passageway tying the new master wing with the main house becomes its own sophisticated venue with metal, woven-mesh walls and upholstered red-leather and mahogany doors opening to the home theater and office. Workman transformed the old garage into the dramatic space, where the husband can monitor his computer while watching the latest action flicks.

Looking out over the pool and the surrounding seating areas, Workman says, "This is a house that's really meant to say 'welcome home.'"

ABOVE AND RIGHT: When the explosions begin, you won't hear a thing. Action scenes will only purr quietly beyond Brambier's upholstered walls that wrap the home theater and office. Mounted on custom steel frames, posters of cinema daring action line the walls, while a custom-designed, half-moon desk fronts a wall of sparkling trophies.