

MODITERRANEAN

Photos by Paul Stoppi

The Mediterranean architecture popular in Miami Beach during the 1920s and 1930s gets updated with a modern approach ripe for the 21st century.

■ This historic estate on Miami Beach's Pinetree Drive had to be torn down because the concrete structure was no longer viable. But because it was a historic home that showcased Miami Beach's Mediterranean style, it had to be rebuilt in a similar fashion. "The owner really wanted a modern house, but because there were limitations in how it could be rebuilt, there were things we couldn't change," said Tom Diverio, named partner of Dunagan Diverio Design Group, the firm that designed the home's interiors. "The architect did create more clean lines and we integrated the classic Mediterranean style with a more contemporary feel."

Architect: Thomas Weber, The Weber Studio, Key Biscayne, FL.
Interior Designers: Charlotte Dunagan and Thomas Diverio, Dunagan Diverio Design Group, Coral Gables, FL.
Landscape Architect: Michael Sapusek, Intuitive Design Group, Palm City, FL



“This home sits on four very large lots. The expansive living room has a custom bar on one end and a fireplace on the other; this allowed for various seating areas. And because the owners are major art collectors, the artwork throughout the home provides pops of color while the furnishings give the right balance between traditional architecture and a modern feel.”

“The owners have young children, so everything had to be approachable and comfortable. Nothing could be too fragile,” said Charlotte Dunagan, Dunagan Diverio’s founding principal partner.

For instance, the club chairs have slip covers for easy cleaning. But with the bar stools a more sophisticated look was created as they are designed in metal with woven leather and serve to punctuate the home’s modern aesthetic.

The custom bar’s countertop is made of quartzite and has a natural stone appearance. The walnut wood with a satin finish is used for the bar’s striking backdrop and works to integrate the entrance to the home’s movie theatre.



Because the homeowners have three young children, they wanted a big kitchen that was designed to be both kid-friendly and good for entertaining. The design team created one island near the cooktop for prep and another banquette-style island with a bench to be used as the breakfast table. The islands were custom designed to allow for the varying seating heights.

The kitchen ceilings are very high so to keep the cabinetry to human scale, little cubbies were created out of the dry wall with recessed LED lighting. Another interesting element introduced into the kitchen is the ceiling detail. Instead of having a very flat white ceiling, decorative molding was added as were pendant lights hung at different heights. A tubular light fixture from Rowman Hill was hung above the breakfast table.

Diverio explained that the redesign of this historic Miami Beach home was very exciting because of the challenges it presented.

“We wanted to create a more modern home but because of the circumstances of having to maintain many of the traditional Mediterranean-style design elements, we had to think about ways in which we could create clean lines and make the archways and moldings more modern,” he said.

Typical to these Mediterranean-styled homes built on Miami Beach in the 1920s and 1930s were also influenced by the MiMo design movement. Thus, the house also has art deco elements that needed to be respected when it was rebuilt.

In addition to the challenges, Diverio found the home very refreshing because it wasn't a typical modern house. Due to the requirements, components and different styles needed to be incorporated to create a modern home, Diverio found it amazing to see how all these elements came together.

One example of this more modern approach is the home's exterior that is associated with the traditional Mediterranean style. The home is made of concrete with an overlay of stucco. But, by giving the stucco a smoother sleek finish, rather than the typical Mediterranean heavy texture, the home has a more contemporary feel.

But because a more traditional approach was required for the ceilings, Dunagan used very modern light fixtures throughout the home, while also using the lights to soften its overall feel. Delta Lighting was the partner on both the indoor and outdoor lighting fixtures.

Other elements that offer a more modern design approach are the floating crown molding and walnut-cased doorways on the main floor.

To keep the style consistent and cohesive, rich cream off-white marble flooring was used throughout the home.



The focal point of the master bath is the floating tub by Brand Wet Style. According to Diverio, this tub was specifically selected because the goal was to create a very modern tropical feel which meant the incorporation of warm woods. Brand Wet Style has created a water-resistant wood that is used to wrap the tub and creates the perfect platform to hold soaps, shampoos and wine glasses. The wood platform has LED lights underneath and the tub sits on a stoned pedestal.

The bathroom's back area has windows that look out to the canal and is designed to enhance this resort-like oasis. The two custom-made wooden towers create ample room for storage and the daybed with cushions made of terry cloth automatically adjusts.

“The bathroom has a spa-like feel. When sitting on the day bed, it is possible to see the water. These elements give this bathroom the perfect details to create the ultimate restorative space,” said Diverio.

Although the owners have small children, they wanted a formal dining room. And with the dining room's arched entry being immediately off the home's foyer, Dunagan didn't want to create a separate and walled-off room. "We wanted to have transparency, but still have a separate dining room," said Dunagan.

"So, we created a glass wall with black frames to keep the transparency and natural light, but still have a separate space."

This was important because the dining room is in view from the front door and it is possible to see all the way through the house and out to the water. The dining room's glass wall creates an intimate space but makes the space feel open. 

