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Urban Renewal

A MODERN NEW BUILD ON LONG-OWNED FAMILY LAND IN BRICKELL ALLOWS A HUSBAND AND WIFE TO PARTAKE IN CITY LIVING ON THEIR OWN TERMS

INTERIOR DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE CHARLES TREISTER, TREISTER DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT, COCONUT GROVE, FL

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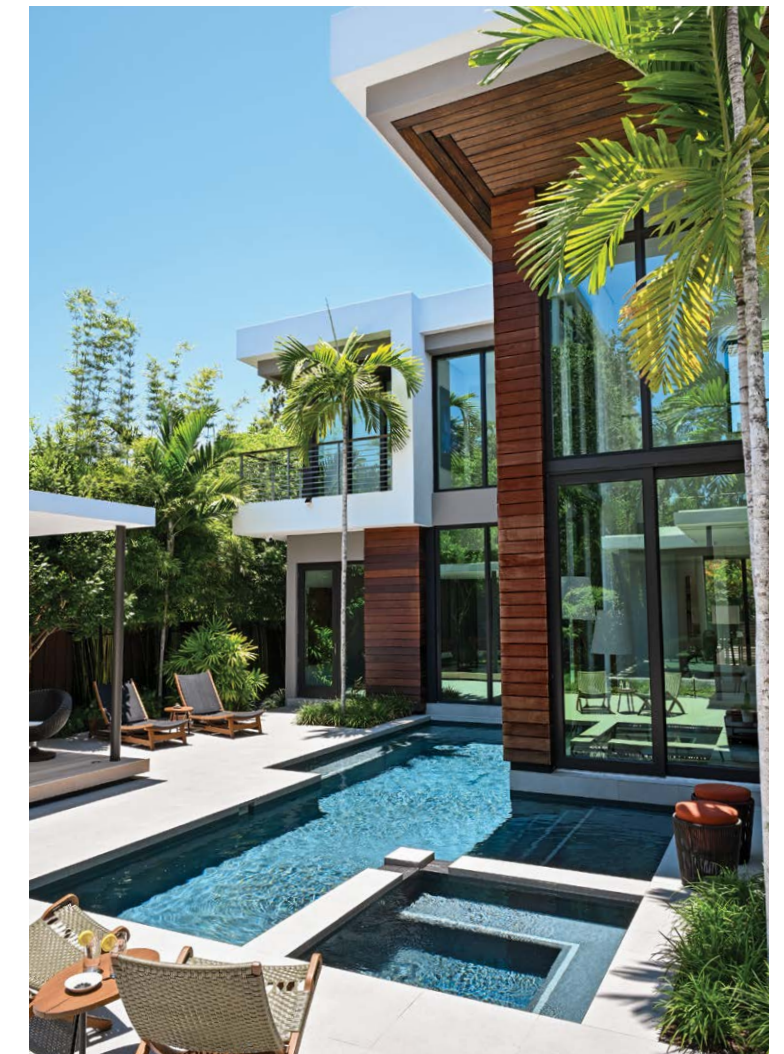
PHOTOGRAPHY KEN HAYDEN, MIAMI, FL



ABOVE: The front elevation of the new home, as well as the motor court, side-facing garage, and bonsai-inspired plantings set the color palette seen throughout. Mature oak trees—saved from the original garden—hint at the lush landscaping executed throughout the property.

LEFT: When making design decisions for the courtyard garden, privacy and serenity were the main goals. Designer and architect Charles Treister created sightlines to ensure the indoor and outdoor spaces would interact. Furniture selections from Saccaro helped achieve this effect.

DYNAMIC, SOCIAL, AND UNDENIABLY metropolitan, Brickell is one of the country's fastest-growing urban centers. Just beyond the tall buildings and crowds, however, exists a somewhat suburban side to the neighborhood where single-family residences keep the city excess comfortably at arm's length. Nestled in this much-desired area is a 6,000-square-foot tropical modern home—newly constructed on property owned by the family for half a century—that masterfully integrates its interior and exterior spaces, offering its residents the chance to experience their hometown in a new light.



The property's original residence was built in 1945 and was best described as a nondescript Florida home with a blank slate of a front yard and a back garden. The latter, carefully curated by the homeowner with selections from Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden and Homestead nurseries, was something of a secret garden—a space nobody entered or even saw, with window coverings blocking out the view. The homeowner's sister bought the property in 1970, and she and her husband took possession 15 years later, shortly after they married. They raised a family there, tending to the maintenance that an older home in a tropical climate requires, until, at last, they decided the place needed to be retired. The couple didn't want to leave the neighborhood, but had never considered a new build, until they began having conversations with Charles Treister, a friend, design professional, and president of Treister Design & Development.

ABOVE: The pool wraps around the exterior of the living room, creating a floating effect. "The simplicity of the palette, which is made up of white, gray, and wood, ensures all you see is the greenery and the blue of the water," says Treister. "This carries on the idea of openness."

LEFT: Expansive double-height windows and sliding doors are intended to visually remove separation between the interior and exterior spaces. The design team incorporated porcelain tile designed to look like bleached oak indoors and out to make a seamless transition between the spaces.



With open, airy public areas, the home makes entertaining easy—the homeowners say gathering friends at the house is often more comfortable than navigating a busy restaurant. Focal points include the massive, bookended slab of the kitchen’s backsplash, as well as the island countertop. The artworks in the family room and nearby dining room were done by painter Alan Treister, architect and designer Charles Treister’s late brother.

BELOW: “All of the public spaces are flowing and open, but each is defined by the ceilings, which are accented by cove lighting,” says Treister. The dining room is the only area in the public portion of the house with a view of the motor court and street.



“I saw how his work incorporates the inside and the outside,” the wife says of other residences that Treister has designed. “He was patient enough to describe to us how our home could be.”

Patience, it turns out, what a good quality to have with the project, which the couple and Treister began conceptualizing in 2017. Plans were drawn and the existing structure was demolished in 2019. The project then spent the next year in the permitting process before construction finally began just as the COVID pandemic hit its stride. The move-in finally took place in late 2022.

“I shared a bunch of Facebook posts with photos of the empty lot saying, ‘Look how much progress we made!’ over the course of a year,” the husband quips, noting that end product was worth the wait.

The tropical-modern, garden-courtyard style of the home features “the simple volume of modern architecture and a very open, free-flowing floor plan,” says Treister. “The tropical part is the integration of the outdoor and indoor spaces.”

Treister conceptualized not just the architecture, but also the landscaping and interior design, working with Edward Lewis Architects on the architectural construction documents and David Odishoo on landscape architecture.

Inside the home, open and free-flowing public areas abound. On the ground level, a stylish office faces the street. The primary bedroom is in a one-story wing at the back of the property, providing



ABOVE: The rooftop terrace offers city views of Brickell that the homeowners say are particularly appealing in the evening. Treister constructed a screen of dark aluminum and ipe to artfully conceal nearby structures, enhancing the home's secluded feel.



ABOVE: "If you're going to spend your time outdoors, you're going to want to eat and cook while you're there," says Treister, noting that the outdoor kitchen also showcases the Japanese inspiration for the garden. Rock formations mimic flowing water, leading to a concrete seating area that "floats" in the distance.

ABOVE RIGHT: The various heights of the home's roofline create interest and define spaces, including an unexpected rooftop terrace where well-pointed palms and bonsai-inspired plantings accent the hardscape.



the ultimate retreat. Four additional bedrooms are located upstairs—two are used as landing spots for the couple's visiting grown children, a third serves as a gym, and the fourth was turned into a music room. "I love that [the gym and home office] were built just for me," says the husband. "That's where I spend most of the day, and I enjoy both of them equally. But there's also nothing like looking out the kitchen window."

That vantage point features bamboo and other plantings that cleverly disguise nearby lower-rise buildings, creating an alfresco sanctuary.



“The house wraps around a courtyard garden and that typology allows you to have privacy and serenity,” explains Treister, who drew much of his inspiration from traditional Japanese homes. The palette is a coordination of neutrals—white, limestone-inspired grays, dark metal, cypress, and rich ipe. He chose neutral yet comfortable furnishings that lean into mid-century modern sensibilities, with linen fabrics, wood, and leather accents. “With the white, gray, and wood, all you see is the outdoor greenery and the blues of the water and sky,” he says.

Treister also took advantage of the geographic position of the lot—a quarter of a mile from Biscayne Bay and located atop a coral ridge, about 18 feet above sea level, making it one of the highest elevations in Miami-Dade County. The second-floor terrace catches breezes off the bay and lifts the homeowners’ eyes to the city that surrounds them.

“Our biggest surprise was getting on the roof deck and realizing we could see all the lights of the city, which was not the case before,” says the wife, noting that she and her husband love to gather friends and family in their new house on a regular basis. Long walks around Brickell to explore the everchanging neighborhood are also part of their routine.

“We love it here,” she says. “We’ve been on this piece of land for a long time and it’s very special to us. What we’ve done to it with Charles’ help has only made it better.”

BELOW: The primary bathroom features a large vessel tub and walk-in shower, as well as views to a part of the garden that’s completely secluded.



ABOVE: The one-story wing that houses the primary bedroom is situated at the back of the property and nestled under a mature oak tree. Sliding doors open the bedroom to the garden’s fountain and fire pit.

SOURCES

LIVING ROOM

Sofa, club chairs, armchairs, cocktail table, and floor lamps – Saccaro, Miami, FL
 Drapery – Atico Concepts, Aventura, FL

KITCHEN

Cabinetry and island designed by Charles Treister, Architect, Coconut Grove, FL, and fabricated by IK Studio, Doral, FL
 Stools – Saccaro, Miami, FL
 Lighting – Kuzco Lighting, kuzcolighting.com

FAMILY ROOM

Sofa, chair, cocktail table, and console – Saccaro, Miami, FL

DINING AREA

Table, chairs, buffet and floor lamp – Saccaro, Miami, FL

BACK EXTERIOR

Seating grouping, cocktail table, umbrella, dining table, and chairs - Saccaro, Miami, FL

THROUGHOUT

Architect of Record – Edward Lewis Architects, Coral Gables, FL
 General contractor – C.L. Contractors, Miami, FL

Landscape design – Treister Design & Development, Coconut Grove, FL

Landscape architecture – David O., Coconut Grove, FL

Landscape contractor – Artistic Lawn Service, Miami, FL

Pool designed by Charles Treister, Treister Design & Development, Coconut Grove, FL, and fabricated by Aquarama Pools, Weston, FL

Custom cabinetry – Cabitech, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Marble fabrication – Reyes & Sons, Miami, FL

Metal fences, railings, and specialty metals – All Dade Fences, Hialeah, FL