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A Stunning Second Chance

THROUGH THE FORESIGHT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING OF A WELL-PAIRED DESIGN TEAM, THIS ONCE OVERLOOKED HOME NOW STAKES ITS CLAIM WITHIN ONE OF FLORIDA'S MOST FASHIONABLE COMMUNITIES.

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There's a lot to be said for a house that has been spared the wrecking ball. Whether it's because of good proportions, scale, or even an intriguing room or two, the reasons for renovating such a place can be as daunting as they are transforming. But once the dust settles and all the pieces come together, few things are more gratifying.

Florida architect Kevin Asbacher faced just such a challenge with this North Palm Beach home. Joined by the talents of interior designer Michael Powers, the architect made the fateful decision to peel back the layers of this seemingly forgotten residence in an attempt to reveal its true potential. "For starters, it had sat on the market for over four years," Asbacher explains. "Once our clients, a New York-based family with three young boys, bought the place and brought Michael and me onboard, I knew that we had to make it live up to its lush and inviting setting."

As it stood, the house, located on a generous piece of property just half a block from the ocean, didn't capitalize on such enviable assets. Except for an existing front porch, it remained inwardly focused, with large primary rooms that allowed only glimpses of the grounds beyond. "Since the new homeowners chose this spot to get away from the confines of Manhattan, we went about creating outdoor and transitional spaces that embraced the surroundings of South Florida," says Asbacher.

Although the project's scope required a complete overhaul of the house, both Asbacher and Powers saw this radical approach as a means of resolving a host of unfortunate alterations made by previous owners. For starters, the design team chose to infill

Previous pages, left to right: Veneered in stucco and stone and enhanced with a classically detailed central gable, this renovated residence now displays a stately front facade that's on par with its Palm Beach neighbors. A graceful, groin-vaulted foyer sets the stage for a seamless progression of well-appointed, comfortable rooms. These pages, opposite and above: A central arcade separating the living and dining rooms repeats the rhythm of the nearby foyer. The elegant coffered ceiling in the living space provides additional interest and craftsmanship. Top left: Crowned with a soaring barrel vault, the entry foyer contains a glass-tile floor that Michael Powers designed to suggest a 'caring' effect. Right: The living room is further complemented with a floral-pattern accent wall.





Above: A series of sliding-glass doors open from the dining room to an outdoor terrace. "Because the house completely lacked this kind of interior/exterior relationship before, we strove to improve such interaction wherever possible," says architect Kevin Asbacher. Below: Rather than using one large dining room table, Powers chose matching circular tables that enable the homeowners to host smaller, more intimate dinner parties.



Above and below right: Sharing the same space as the kitchen, the family room provides a comfortable, laidback area for the homeowners' three young boys to gather. A built-in entertainment center with a fretwork design reflects the same lattice effect used on the kitchen cabinetry. Below left: In the kitchen, a wavy backsplash tile hints at the home's coastal setting. The space benefits from two islands—one for food prep and the other for serving on-the-go meals.





Above and opposite top: The new central loggia establishes a connection between the indoor spaces and backyard amenities. Located just off the kitchen, this multipurpose space functions like an interior room. Features such as a seating area that's centered around a soothing fireplace, as well as a large table for dining alfresco, allow this family to enjoy the loggia year-round. To keep out pesky insects during the spring and summer months, the homeowners can raise or lower motorized screen panels by means of tracks installed within the tapered columns.

the front porch and convert it into living space. This made way for a welcoming entry, which is crowned with a stunning barrel ceiling finished in Venetian plaster. From here, the sequence of effects continues with an arcadelike foyer highlighted with a groin-vault ceiling. Because the living and dining areas were basically one large room, Asbacher separated them with a graceful colonnade that reflects the classic elegance of the nearby foyer.

Architecturally, the exteriors also were in dire need of a makeover. "Originally, the house was trying to be a Palm Beach Georgian, but its overall appearance missed the mark," Asbacher explains. In response, the architect added a central gable to the front, along with a defining cornice, stucco, and stonework. Powers followed suit by continuing this stately aesthetic inside but with a fun, fresh twist. "Since the homeowners are young and energetic, I didn't want the interiors to seem predictable or unimaginative," the designer says. "So, we established a hip,

updated look that's conducive to a growing family."

The home's revised focus to the outdoors vastly improved matters as well. With the addition of a back loggia—complete with a fireplace and motorized screens that keep pesky insects at bay—the couple and their active sons have a year-round spot to soak in the scenery. In addition, landscape architect Mario Nievera redesigned the property to correspond with the enhancements made within. Even the pool was relocated and enlarged so that the connection between the house and grounds flows in an effortless progression.

With the renovations complete, Asbacher reflects on the overall result. "If I had to point out one thing about the success of this project, it's that the house functions like two halves—the first being more controlled and set, and the remaining portion is relaxed and accommodating," he says. "While the homeowners wanted and appreciated a proper level of detailing, they knew that the day-to-day needs of their family were most important."

Below left: Ample built-in shelving and a stationary bed platform that's outfitted with storage drawers enable this space to serve as both a playroom and guest room. A queen-sized upholstered mattress provides all the comforts of an inviting daybed. Below right: The wall treatment in the bunkroom consists of a woven, grasscloth surface painted with a plaid pattern to give the room beautiful texture and depth.





Above and below: Designed to resemble a spa-like retreat, the master bathroom takes full advantage of the bright, airy aura of southern Florida. A one-way mirror panel in the shower enclosure permits light to enter while maintaining privacy.



Layered in a peachy grasscloth wallcovering, this tranquil master bedroom also sports its own private terrace.