Old *Soul*

Channeling the elegance of the past, a newly built residence pens a love letter to Florida's halcyon days.

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Architecture: Stan Dixon, D. Stanley Dixon Architect **Interior Design:** Margaret Kaywell, Kaywell Interiors, LLC
Home Builder: Tim Givens, Tim Givens Building & Remodeling Inc. **Landscape Design:** Mario Nievera, Nievera Williams Design

The coral stone loggia features a fountain with a mural from Devonshire. Over time, the sea plum plants against the wall will grow as a vine to frame the tile work. Ground orchids and pots of fishtail palms fill the space.

The *thwack* of a screen door. The distant clammer of dogs and children. The embrace of a tropical breeze. These simple pleasures—gleaned and cherished over decades of Floridian holidays—are what spurred one Chicago couple to fly south for good and build their dream home. And for these clients who sought to capture a certain nostalgia, the design had to speak the same language.

"Their desire was for it to not look like a new house but something original to Palm Beach Island from the 1930s or '40s," architect Stan Dixon reflects. Happy to oblige, he put pen to paper, devising a gracious yet humble structure that has seemingly evolved over the course of a century. "Family. Entertaining. Old Florida. Those were the marching orders," adds interior designer Margaret Kaywell—who, joined by general contractor Tim Givens and landscape architect Mario Nievera, composed the design team.

That vision begins with a cheerful Anglo-Colonial-style façade and picks up pace as you enter the home through a windowed gallery devised as a receiving hall and built from scratch to resemble a loggia long-ago encased. "The idea was for it to look like a converted porch," Kaywell describes. Reclaimed marble tiles were laid underfoot, and the coral stone block walls were limewashed and left raw to evoke a peeled-away stucco exterior. "We used steel windows and doors, which might have been used in the '40s or '50s, to enclose the space and reinforce the narrative," Dixon explains.

Storytelling similarly defines the kitchen, which was designed as "an eating lounge" to cater to more family time, Kaywell shares. "They wanted the most unusual kitchen you could think of," she adds. Two anteroom pantries allow for intrigue over storage, making way for pieces like the captain's chest-inspired lower cabinets. "Whenever we remodel a project, we save materials that can be repurposed," Givens notes. "Those cabinets were built from reclaimed cypress timbers from a demolished 1920s house." Another custom confection: the farmhouse-style table that centers the space, which was based off an antique table the wife saved to her inspiration binder; Givens' carpentry studio crafted the piece out of salvaged wood used for a mash tub from a Kentucky distillery. Grounding the kitchen while stealing the show are oak floors decoratively painted by the wife—a professional portrait artist—upon Kaywell's direction and, finally, distressed to evoke a lifetime of foot traffic.

A lesser expected heart of the home and resounding fan favorite is the moody cocktail lounge. "Early on, the clients requested an elegant, sexy room for entertaining. Stan jotted down 'Sexy Bar' on the plans, and the name stuck!" laughs Kaywell, who rose to the occasion with peacock-blue lacquered walls, velvet banquettes and Lucite chairs cheekily re-covered in the owners' old Louis Vuitton luggage. With its twinkling, mirrored ceiling, "It's a bit of a surprise—like you've opened up a little jewel box" Dixon muses. Yet even in this most polished of spaces, patina takes precedence, seen in details like the bar's stone toe kick, which was ground down to suggest years of loving wear. "Everywhere you look, there's the hand of craftspeople," Givens concurs.

True to the brief, all public areas are designed with entertaining in mind—even the entry gallery, where an octagonal settee can be rolled to the outskirts to make way for a long, narrow table. When the doors are open, welcoming ocean breezes, the space turns into an alfresco dining hall that encourages guests to cap their meal with a stroll through "these incredible, rambling outdoor pockets," Dixon observes. Unifying the south and north lawns as well as many-numbered garden nooks is a plant palette designed by Nievera in the same spirit of old-world elegance. "We used many native species, such as sabal palm, agave, butterfly bush and saw palmetto," he notes. "The plantings are informally placed in the garden with little symmetry but carefully considered for textural variety."

That tropical flora has since grown in, and the cedar-shingled roof has weathered with salt and sun. Now loved and lived in, the residence nestles in its plot in a way that might fool even the staunchest admirers of Palm Beach's architectural history. As delicately detailed as a seashell in whisper pink, Kaywell says, "It captures every vision these clients dreamed of for a Florida home."

Tea-stained marble floor tiles from Paris Ceramics and walls of Dominican stone from Coral Classics by A&P define the entry gallery. Pillows in Quadrille's Paradise Garden textile sit on the custom octagonal settee.

Behind a 1930s artwork, clé zellige tiles rise 9 feet in the kitchen. A banquette in Radish Moon fabric, Century Furniture chairs and an armchair and ottoman in Kravet's Posie Dot offer seating. General contractor Tim Givens crafted the table and cabinet.

Left: *Dark Times* by Gay Griffin Riseborough commands the cocktail lounge. Banquettes in Pollack's Heritage velvet mingle with antique coffee tables. RH's burnished-brass Fulham sconce wears a custom shade.

Opposite: A copper counter tops the bar, painted a custom lacquer. Visual Comfort & Co.'s Soleil fixture hangs from a mirrored ceiling. Worlds Away's Duke chair is outfitted with the clients' old Louis Vuitton luggage.

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Above: An Edward Fields Carpet Makers rug grounds the primary bedroom, whose chic mélange includes Mr. and Mrs. Howard for Sherrill Furniture's Tuscan bed, Regina Andrew's Adeline lamp and an antique chair. Schumacher's Wesley Ticking Stripe on the walls enhances the coziness.

Opposite: At each corner of the pool, landscape architect Mario Nievera arranged Florida thatch palms with bleeding heart vines wrapped around their trunks. Santa Barbara Designs' Mirasol umbrella shades the chaises. Just behind is a preserved banyan tree.

Above: Illuminated by Northeast Lantern sconces, a table from Faustina Pace Antiques & Interiors and Oly dining chairs provide space for informal entertaining on the east terrace. Sabal palms and beds of philodendron, elephant ears and tree ferns add a lush quality.

Opposite: Benjamin Moore's Strawberry Yogurt colors the stucco exterior, accented with pecky cypress shutters. Clusia plants line the top of the coral stone wall, while a date palm stands near a jasmine vine in a lattice pattern on the chimney wall.