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REINVENTING HISTORY

MULTIPLE TEXTURES AND A SERENE PALETTE BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO A HISTORIC MIAMI HOME

*T*he majestic, if eclectic, homes in Miami's historic neighborhoods collectively tell the story of Florida's past. But sometimes they also are victims of unfortunate renovations that rob them of their inherent charm.

One family recognized the special bones of their historic house and wanted to renovate it in a way that would restore its former glory. "It was an inter-

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esting challenge," interior designer Fanny Haim explains. "The house was historically relevant but had had successive renovations that obliterated any character."

Haim, who was working on another project for these clients at the time, accepted the challenge and set about giving them a "sophisticated beach house" that honored the past but also was relevant in the present. Her inspiration, she says, was the

Fanny Haim, ASID
Fanny Haim &
Associates
INTERIOR
DESIGN









house itself. She let the grandeur of the structure inform her decisions about the interior rhythms, yet kept everything light, bright and au courant.

“It was very dark, drab and fragmented,” she says. “The first thing we did was open it up to the outside and give it more flow between spaces.”

Her strategy began with the entrance experience. She replaced a solid front door with one made of glass and iron, and she added a window to admit light. To further brighten up the space, she used a palette of light colors and multiple textures.

Floors of tumbled marble mosaic in a scalloped motif are juxtaposed with coralstone baseboards and casings, a limestone and iron staircase, and bleached jute covered walls. The extra light illuminates the tactile textures, hinting at the level of detail that informs the interior design.





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In the original plan, the living and family rooms were separated by a massive fireplace. Haim removed this, effectively creating one contiguous space that not only is suffused with light, it also is perfect for entertaining. Two columns clad in coralstone create a visual separation between the two spaces without interrupting the flow.

Adjacent to the living room, an anteroom that was previously underutilized now serves as a lounge area with a humidor and bar. The seating is arranged in two vignettes: a stylized “bar” - an intarsia and stone table with three armchairs - and an asymmetrical sofa combining raw linen, velvet and silk textures.

For the owners, the family room was of paramount importance. Since they use the home for entertaining and gathering with family, they wanted something spacious but also comfortable. Haim appointed one side of the room as a television area, with a large screen and plush yet elegant seating. “We used welcoming furnishings and cushy materials for a play between casual and formal,” she says. “Like elsewhere in the house, we used a palette of neutrals, such as ivory, stone and jute, with hints of dusty blue.”

The textures in the room range from a distressed wood coffee table that looks like driftwood from the beach to a polished metal daybed that adds a



The kitchen, the room that set the tone for the renovation, is an interpretation of a French bistro kitchen, at once vintage and modern. The honeycomb tile floor is a nod to the early- to mid-twentieth century, while white cabinetry and Calacatta Gold counters and backsplash look fresh and current. Modern light fixtures hang from a pyramidal tongue-and-groove ceiling, adding to the tension between old and new. The chef's table, which seats 10, is an interesting juxtaposition between a country-style wood table and stainless steel chairs. "There are a lot of ambiguous, unexpected details that make the room interesting," Haim says. "It is classically modern."







bit of glimmer. The ceiling is enhanced with dark-stained wood beams, between which are raffia panels and alabaster lighting fixtures.

The glamour quotient is upped in the dining room, where the owners frequently entertain in more formal fashion.

Haim kept the owners' dining table and chairs, giving them a facelift with new upholstery, and complemented them with pieces of a similar scale - two vertical cabinets with mirrored doors, an ornate silver-leafed buffet and a massive rock crystal mirror. The pieces are large yet exude a delicate sparkle due to their reflective surfaces.

Adding to the shine factor is a silver tealeaf paper on the ceiling and a crystal chandelier. To ground the look, Haim dressed the walls in grasscloth with natural and dusty blue tones. "The organic tex-



tures and the silvery elements give an interesting dialogue,” she says.

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The chef’s table, which seats 10 comfortably, is an interesting juxtaposition between a country-style wood table and modern stainless steel chairs. “There are a lot of ambiguous, unexpected details that make the room interesting,” Haim muses. “It really is classically modern.”

Interesting changes were made to the private areas as well. The master bath was completely redone.

“We had an opportunity to make a major change,” Haim says. “We utilized a small balcony to make a state-of-the-art shower, which allowed us to expand the rest of the space.”

The view, she says, is a huge protagonist in this bathroom. Flooded with light, the room shines with polished marble and marble mosaic walls. Chocolate-stained wood floors and cabinetry ground the look while still keeping it very open and modern.

The bedrooms were refreshed with a lighter color palette and given a new dose of glamour. In one of two large guest rooms, Haim used a color scheme of pale celadon and white, combining soft, luxurious textures with reflective surfaces to bring in the

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The boys' bedroom incorporates a nautical motif, with a shirt-stripe wall covering, strong blue and white palette, and oars hanging on the wall.

In reflecting upon the project, Haim believes they "recuperated the lost soul of the house."

"It is now a cohesive story from outside to inside," the designer notes. Indeed, there is a wonderful spirit to it now, which combines the past and the present in one seamless design. ▲

