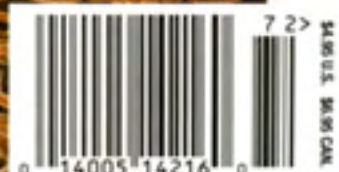


# RENOVATION STYLE

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# classical interpretation

*by christine hofmann-bourque photography by william stites  
produced by erin milgram and sarah needleman*

A ho-hum spec house is reinvented as a European-style villa, where life moves seamlessly between indoors and out.



The grand 330-square-foot loggia at the entrance to the house was the only addition to the home's footprint. With the French doors thrown open, the space doubles as a party area; last year, 30 Passover guests dined at one extra-long table.



To begin with, it was all about the Gators. Not the kind that creep around area lakes—the type that storm onto the football field for the University of Florida. They gave Mycki Ratzan the nudge.

“The goal was to be able to not miss a play,” says Mycki, who decided a new kitchen was in order for the Ratzans’ Miami home—a kitchen designed around one key question: Can the cook see the game on TV?

Architect Raymond Fowler and interior designer Judi Male were tapped to tackle the kitchen renovation. Then, the plans spiraled. Talk expanded to reinventing the house in the tradition of French and Italian villas, but with a relaxed, island vibe that would provide the character the 15-year-old builder’s spec house was lacking.

“There was no molding, no architectural detail inside,” Mycki’s husband, Stuart, says. “So next thing you



**FAR RIGHT:** Connections to the outdoors were a big part of the renovation. The property boasts five courtyards, including this one tucked behind the master suite. **ABOVE:** There’s no question the English-style media room is Stuart Ratzan’s domain. “It’s the one room where I had veto power over everything,” he says—including having his Hurricanes rather than wife Mycki’s Gators on TV. His high-tech paradise features 19 speakers; walls insulated with 3 inches of padded foam; and a computerized “movie” setting that automatically closes the shades and dims the lights for showtime.





## bring on the bling

The secret to giving Mycki and Stuart Ratzan's traditional-style home a fresh, modern edge?

Architectural and interior design bling-bling:

**SILVER-LEAF WALLPAPER.** The dining room, *this photo*, is wrapped in a daring choice of platinum paper.

"It glows!" designer Judi Male says. "It keeps this from being just another pass-through space."

**CHROME FIXTURES.** Mycki chose shiny finishes for the dining room wall sconces and the faucets in the master bath. "It's bright and blingy against the dark wood and gives an old/new feel," she says.

**TILE 'JEWELRY.'** Artsy mosaics dance at the base of the loggia columns and in the master bath.

**GLAZED WALLS.** The master bedroom walls were painted seafoam green, then sprayed with a clear, iridescent glaze.

**CHANDELIERS.** Crystal romances the master suite, while a capiz-shell fixture shimmers above the dining table.

**WOOD CARVINGS.** Ornate onlays embellish cabinetry around the refrigerator. A striking pediment and crown molding top the media room's fireplace.





Old-world charm is on the menu in the kitchen, thanks to distressed cabinetry and a side-by-side refrigerator disguised as an arch-top armoire. The expansive pantry was custom-built to showcase vintage 1850s Dutch stained-glass doors.







know, we gutted the whole house, the yard, and redid the pool."

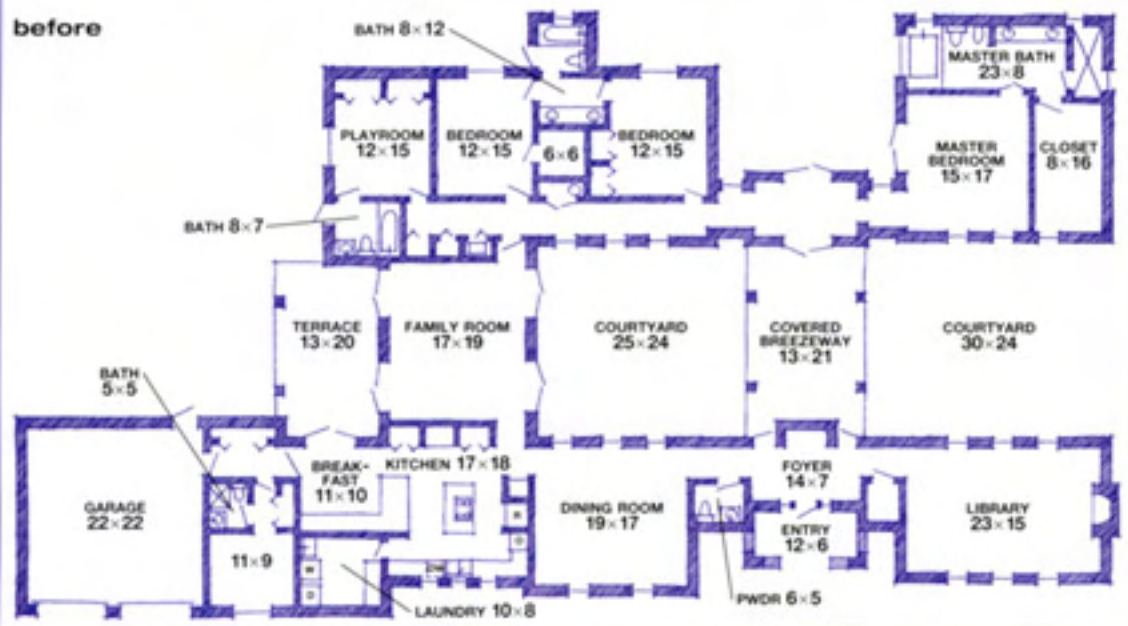
The straightforward kitchen redo evolved into a 28-month-long project to elevate the quality of the home to the level of its grand (4,200) square footage, gardens filled with palm trees, and address in Coconut Grove, a neighborhood within shouting distance of Biscayne Bay.

"It became every detail, every corner," Stuart says. The house was torn down to its concrete walls and floors, and the unsightly soffits and low-grade finishes quickly disappeared in a cloud of drywall dust.

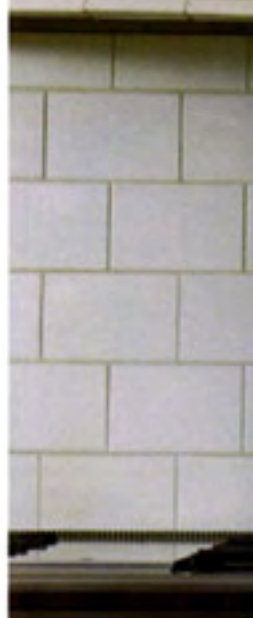
Tackling the home's awkward layout was a top priority. The house is U-shape, with the main entrance at one end and bedrooms at the other. So

Mycki's kitchen is a chef's and sports fan's dream, thanks to dough-friendly marble countertops, professional-grade appliances, and excellent sight lines to three TVs so she doesn't miss a minute of the Gators' games (unless Stuart switches channels to see his beloved Hurricanes). Farmhouse sinks get a modern interpretation in stainless steel, while a coffee system and microwave stack into a corner with one of the all-important TVs.

#### before



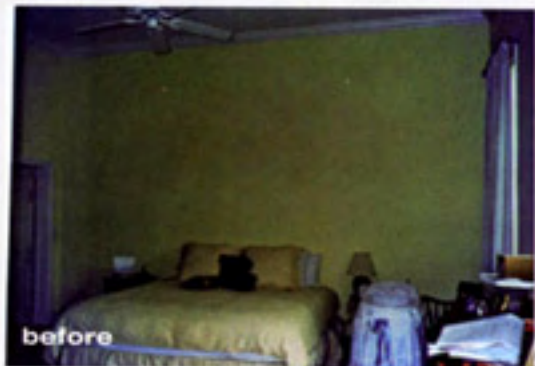
#### after





“We achieved  
a timeless, classical  
feeling.”

— architect Raymond Fowler



if the front doorbell rang while Mycki was in the master bedroom, she had to walk half the length of a football field to greet her guest. The solution was simple yet grand: Connect the two ends of the house by converting an existing roofed outdoor space into an enclosed loggia, essentially a fancy hallway flanked with French doors and anchored by Tuscan-style columns.

To bring proper scale (and loads of sunlight) to the 12-foot-tall rooms, all of the shrimpy 8-foot-tall doors and windows were swapped for 10-foot French doors and extra-tall windows. Layers of architectural details were piled on: hefty moldings with historical profiles; wood floors with plank widths of 4, 5, and 7 inches, laid at random; and cypress ceilings in the loggia, dining room, and family room. “We achieved a timeless, classical feeling,” Fowler says. “It feels like it’s rooted in history.”

The furnishings, however, are a different story: They emanate a youthful, modern spirit that sucks the “stuffy” right out of traditional. That twist is exemplified by the dining room’s contemporized, hot-pink wing chairs.

**LEFT:** A cozy corner of the master bedroom is the perfect place to show off a piece of the couple’s art, which they’ve just started collecting. **OPPOSITE:** Mycki, a self-described chandelier fanatic, bought this antique chandelier for a different room, but decided it was perfect for her seafoam green master bedroom.







"They're sleek and young, and they have a real pop," Male says.

The color palette—soft browns, greens, linens, and silvers—is what Male calls "natural neutrals" and Mycki calls "no-color color." These subtle hues take a back seat, letting the eye rest instead on the home's architecture and Mother Nature. "Almost every room opens to the outside," Male says. "These colors relate to the garden."

"That's what this house is about—the outside-in, moving from indoors to outdoors," Stuart says. To that end, this couple who loves to entertain carefully planned the five outdoor courtyards. "We wanted each one to tie together, yet have a different feel," Mycki says. The courtyard at the front entrance is formal, for example, while the kids' courtyard with the tree house is playful, and the one off the master bedroom is Zen-like.

"This house is done exactly the way we want, down to every inch," Stuart says. "That's a great feeling. There are bigger houses and houses on the water. This house is not that grand, but it's great." ■

**Architect:** Raymond Fowler

**Interior designer:** Judi Male

For more information, turn to Sources on page 118.

**OPPOSITE:** "My bath is heaven," says Mycki, who outfitted this tranquil green-and-white room with a soaking tub and French-style chandelier. **ABOVE LEFT:** The Ratzans are music lovers who used the gutting of the master bath as an opportunity to wire the mosaic- and subway-tile shower for sound: Mycki starts each day under the rain-head shower listening to satellite radio. **ABOVE RIGHT:** The furniture-look master bath cabinetry features a center unit that operates as the medicine cabinet. "It has yin-yang openings," says interior designer Judi Male, so Stuart's door opens toward him and Mycki's toward her.