



The front driveway at the main entrance to the home is made of Chicago brick. The residence was designed with three stately arches to greet guests.

TIMELESS DESIGN

With a touch of glamour, this lakefront Weston home is both classical and clean.

BY LINDA MARX / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY CAMPBELL



A pair of crystal chandeliers and a marble stairway with a custom black iron railing highlight the grand foyer.

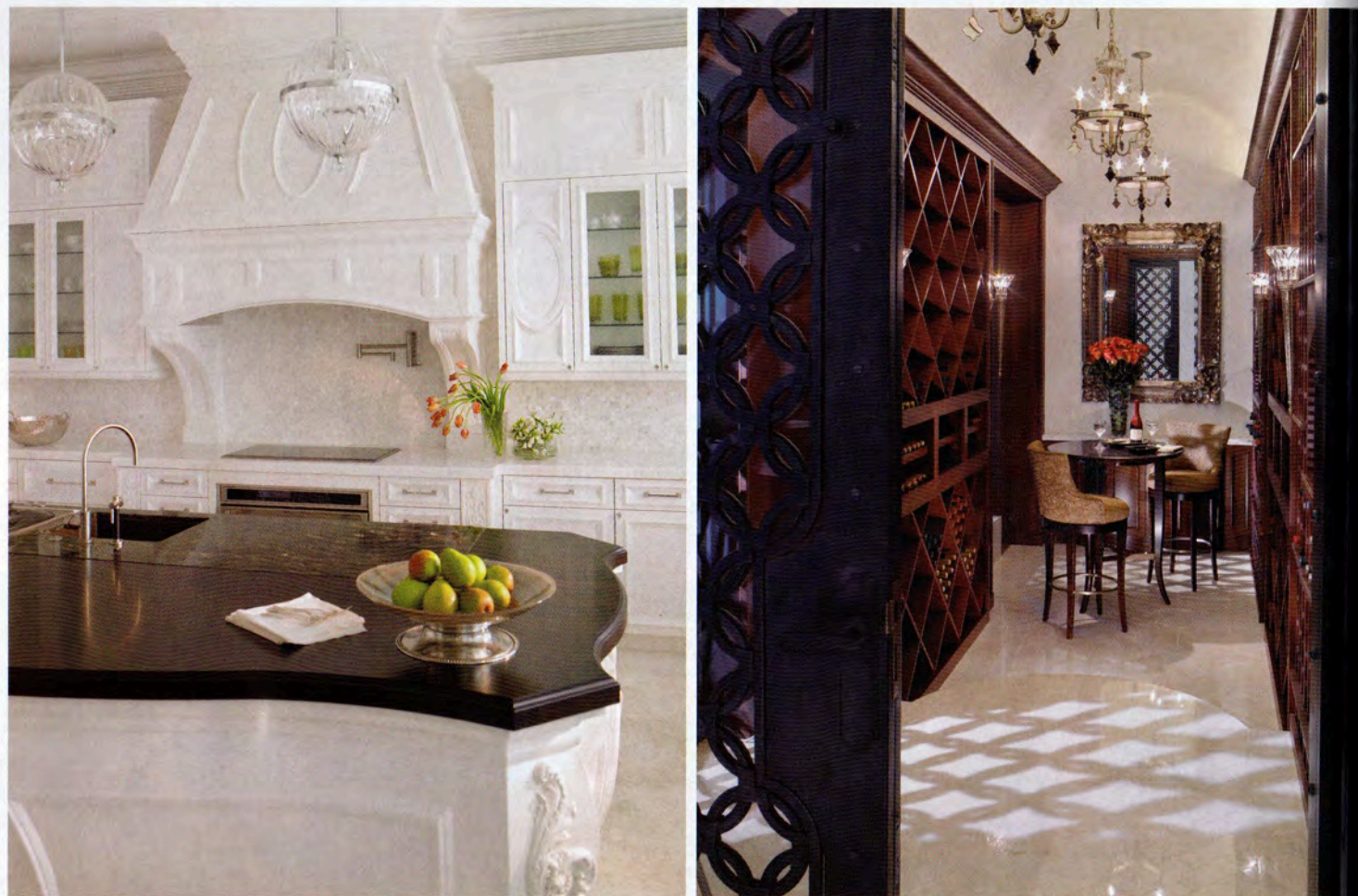
In the living room, a velvet-type chenille tufted sofa from Phyllis Morris of Beverly Hills is accented with bright throw pillows. Hand-forged solid bronze and brass lamps were made in France.



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WHEN DAWN CAUSA WAS ASKED TO design a ground-up home with her longtime Weston clients, she knew the challenge was vast but the reward would be exciting. After working with the couple—the wife is American, the husband is Cuban American—for about 18 years on a variety of projects, Causa was eager to tackle the interiors of their two-story, 14,000-square-foot home created by Stofft Cooney Architects and built by Albanese.

The couple had lived in the same Weston area for 20 years and knew what they wanted for their new house. With an exterior created in clean Mediterranean design, Causa spent the greater part of three years working her magic inside. “I worked a great deal with the wife, who loves beautiful and refined things,” says the designer, who owns Causa Design Group in West Fort Lauderdale. “While she likes elegance and glamour, I wanted their home to be timeless, like an Oscar de la Renta dress. It had to look fine 10 years from now.”



ABOVE: The dark wenge wood island top adds a bold contrast to the all-white kitchen, with cabinets from Artisans' Guild in Naples, Florida. ABOVE RIGHT: A high-top table and barstools are the perfect fit in the 10 x 18-foot wine cellar, which has Venetian stucco walls and French vanilla marble floors. OPPOSITE: Causa created the crotch walnut bar with its Calacutta Macchia Oro marble top. The pearlized leather barstools come from Christopher Guy; across are a matching Baker table and chairs.

The 6-bedroom (one is a maid's quarters with an apartment), 10-bath home, completed at the end of last year, is indeed a marvel of fine craftsmanship. With crystal chandeliers, upscale fabrics, French Vanilla marble flooring and Venetian stucco walls, it is both beautiful and sophisticated without being ostentatious. "The interior is clean classical with a touch of Mediterranean, especially the loggia," says Causa. "The home is not over the top. Merging the inside was easy with the stone exterior and dark stained woods."

The main challenge Causa faced was working with the intricate detail throughout the large home. There are custom columns in the living room, an exquisite fireplace mantel, a grand foyer and stairwell with custom-designed railings, a domed ceiling and a temperature-controlled wine cellar, among other things. And the home is fully automated. "It took time to do things right, but I wanted the couple to enjoy the beauty of their home," says Causa. "With scale, proportion and balance, I sought to bring the dream and function into reality."

Some rooms were complex and colossal. For example, the kitchen was huge—"a monster," as the designer so aptly describes the space. It took a great deal of thought to make things work. Since the owner does a lot of entertaining and caters

large events, the room had to look spectacular but also function well. "I brought in companies from Naples and the state of Ohio to make it glamorous and beautiful yet user-friendly," she says, adding that the countertop has a built-in steamer. "I did a one-of-a-kind design with warm, clean cabinets and mother-of-pearl backdrop with crystal fixtures." In the large living room used for formal entertaining, Causa worked through the challenges. When she couldn't find a piece that worked, she designed it herself, like the parson's-style table in onyx with a silverleaf base. Where there was too much fuss, she figured out ways to hide it. "I reduce wall acne," she deadpans.

In the entertaining area adjacent to the living room, Causa custom-designed the crotched walnut bar, one of the most beautiful woods in the world. She knew the piece would have to function in several arenas. Since the husband's office and the couple's home theater space are located nearby, different people would use the bar for specific reasons. "Having couples over for dinner, or guys coming to the husband's office then going to the bar for drinks and cigars, are frequent happenings here," says Causa. "It had to work for all of the functions."

The wine cellar adjacent to the dining room has solid iron doors and mahogany cabinets. The clients like different wines and champagnes and hold



frequent tastings in their home. "They are well traveled in Europe and California and have a second home in Utah," says Causa. "They are sophisticated in their tastes."

The outside terrace is another ideal spot for entertaining. Off the living room, the space is elegant and romantic, and looks at the courtyard and fountain. While seated, guests enjoy mesmerizing lake and rose garden views. With its ambient lighting, the terrace is a perfect place for nighttime soirees.

Upstairs, the 1,800-square-foot master suite is soft and serene. The area outside of the chamber is a rotunda with a bridge area where the couple can look across to the guest bedroom and down to the staircase in the grand foyer. It's a tranquil oasis amid glamorous furnishings, including a bamboo fiber rug that is plush and kind to the touch. "When the wife walked on it, she was in heaven," says Causa. "It is super yummy."

But the suite's showpiece is the closet. It has sliding shoe racks, three-way mirrors, clever lighting and special storage areas. "This space is beyond your dreams," the designer laughs. The wife's master bath is also a stand-out. Under the domed ceiling and Baccarat chandelier is a gorgeous soaking tub that was custom made in Ohio. There is a separate shower enclosure, and the plumbing fixtures are made of nickel and solid rock.

While every room in this large home exudes a gorgeous elegance and soft glamour, nothing is overdone. The husband and wife are sophisticated in manner yet down-to-earth and family oriented. And the home is a clear reflection of both. "The wife always looks beautiful, it is like she and her husband and their house share the same qualities," observes Causa. "They are each refined and timeless, warm and inviting. Never ostentatious."

Both husband and wife are thrilled with their new digs and love coming home to relax in its different spaces. While Causa says she doesn't have a specific look and always designs for the client, she definitely knows what works. She is blessed with an artistic touch. "I design the art that my clients live in," she says. The artistry of this home speaks for itself. ❧

BELOW: A Christopher Gray bed with a velvet headboard and crystal brocade pillows dominates the spacious master suite, which has motorized window treatments and a beautiful sitting area. **FAR RIGHT:** This night exterior shot of the back of the house is of the courtyard and dining terrace. Urns and fountains complete the dramatic setting.

