

The Courage to be Contemporary

When Holland Salley left Palm Beach on Florida's East Coast for Naples on the more primitive West Coast in 1956, the reigning style in the nicest homes was beach cottage tropical – whatever would hold up best against the elements.

But the elements, advanced technology and Salley himself changed all that. Hurricane Donna battered Southwest Florida's homes in 1960; home air-conditioning became viable, and Salley convinced his clients that with cooled homes and the home-minding service he was offering, homeowners could refurbish their water-

logged premises with furnishings that would make their winter retreats more beautiful and comfortable than ever before.

The décor revolution spearheaded by Salley, with a boost from Mother Nature, accommodated some changes in the four-plus decades that followed. Clients relied on Salley and his ever-expanding staff for elegant, traditional designs that lent themselves to a subtropical location. They warmed to new color trends and welcomed old-world variations.

But contemporary and modern interiors were as



scarce in this sunny bastion of conservatism as a January frost. Until lately, that is.

Leslie Christian, ASID, NCID, has been going full tilt for the past three years, providing her brand of contemporary design to Holland Salley clients looking for something fresh. Her brand of modern is not cliché.

"It doesn't have to be cold, harsh, minimal or futuristic to be modern or contemporary," said Christian. "I like to achieve the look without sacrificing warmth. The right blend is important. Mixing the classic modernist masters, such as Eames and Le Corbusier, with natural back-

grounds, textures, metal components, and pairing old and new, can deliver a contemporary interior that is beautiful, comfortable and inviting."

That's exactly what Judith and John Slocum were after when they worked with Christian to create a two-story, 5,000-square-foot, waterfront home on Marco Island.

The owner-builders are no strangers to the local home construction scene. John Slocum has built homes with partner Tom Christian since 1985, and both men were veteran builders before that. And it isn't the first time the Slocums have built a home to live in and ▶



sell; that's a common custom locally.

"Although we wanted something different from the usual styles that are used here," said Judith Slocum, "it had to have a high comfort level and practicality as well as good looks." Christian worked with the couple right from the start, suggesting a 1,000-foot bonus room over the garage, working out the pool details and pushing for a charcoal gray exterior, almost heresy in these parts.

"Gray was a major player in the interior color scheme," said Christian. "In addition to its use alone, some of the colors we used were 'grayed-out' – neutral

and pastels that were muted with gray undertones." That's the case in the dining room, where grayed-out yellow and lime are among six soft tones used on the cream-trimmed walls.

Christian worked with Don Hatlen, of Hatlen Woodworking, Marco Island, to create a built-in wall cabinet/hutch in ribbon mahogany and a matching cube cabinet for the dining table base, which uplights through frosted glass. A dropped ceiling reprises the cube contour. Bronze geckos cavort on the fully upholstered charcoal gray chairs that surround the square glass table



top. And for an old-new surprise, the dining room's diagonally-set, recycled barn board planks contrast dramatically with the warm cement-look porcelain tiles that cover the floors of the living room and kitchen. "The living room is an informal space," said Christian. "The faux-suede sofa and love seat are positioned to face the flagstone fireplace, and the coffee table's square glass top is supported by a zebra wood/stainless ▶

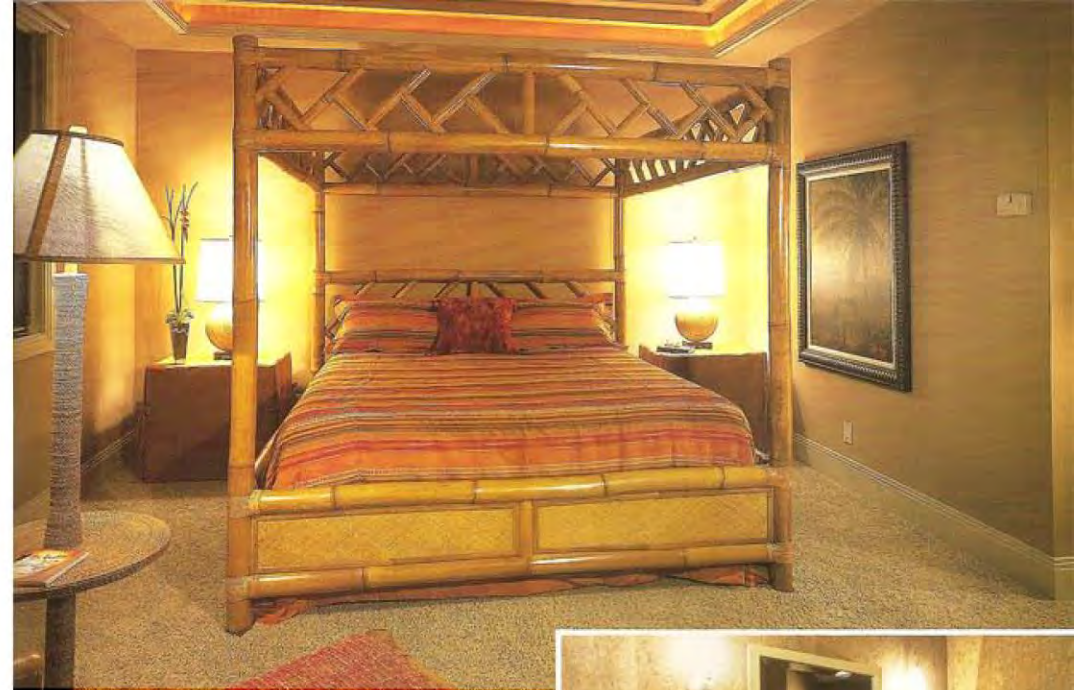
PREVIOUS PAGE – The home's sleek lines and charcoal color make it visually interesting day or night.

OPPOSITE – The dining table's lighted cube pedestal was custom designed to provide another distinctive, contemporary element to the decor theme.

ABOVE – The angular pattern of the living room seating and passthrough opening is counterbalanced by circles in the area rug, lamp and lamp table.

RIGHT – A commercial-grade, steel-gray checked wallpaper has the beauty and brawn to embellish the powder room/pool bath.





steel 'X' base." But the designer made sure that not everything is angular in the taupe-walled living room. The curves of a rope-lighted freeform drop ceiling and the bronze circles in a mushroom gray area rug provide balance, along with a circle-base lamp base on the round glass top of an end table.

Curvaceous pendulum lights illuminate the silver-and-copper-speckled black granite of the casual dining bar and the rollback bar stools upholstered in charcoal gray. "We kept the kitchen looking sleek and streamlined," said Christian, "with stainless steel appliances and

ABOVE - A quartet of multitone tweed easy chairs form a cozy spot for casual gatherings in the upstairs sitting area.

LEFT - Quartzite from China supplies drama and texture to the master bath.

OPPOSITE ABOVE - Tropical shades of orange and hot pink complement the bamboo canopy bed and sand-colored shag rug in this second-floor guest suite.

OPPOSITE BELOW - Traditional rosewood is newly interpreted for the vanity of this second-floor bath.

brushed nickel hardware on cabinetry that matches the wood in the formal dining room." Stainless steel also serves as a segue to the second floor in an open-rail bannister that is paired with cantilevered stairs.

"Since the second-floor ceiling can be seen from the bottom of the stairs, John wanted it to have some detail," said Christian. "He opted for stained beams that we inset with honey-colored raffia panels." From the quartet of multi-tone chenille easy chairs, it's easy to huddle around a large, chocolatey wicker coffee table or admire the Gulf of Mexico through a wall of glass. Custom cabinetry houses books and knickknacks and serves as a second work station; there's a full office downstairs.

One guest suite has the most privacy, alone on one side of the upstairs sitting room. On the other side are a lilac-hued guest room, a tropical guest suite, an extended wet bar, the bonus room, and a powder room where old and new meet again.

"I liked the idea of rosewood, which is traditional, used for a curving, cantilevered, modern-look vanity," said Christian. The wall covering is chocolate brown cork.

"Because the Siocums have a favorite resort in the ▶





Christian. "That bath also has its own privacy garden outside the tub."

The Slocums enjoy water activities within their two-story screened pool and spa area, or without on their 65-foot McKinna motor yacht. When the four-bedroom/five-bath house, which is priced at \$3.875 million, becomes someone else's, it might not be too long before the Slocums again go contemporary.

"We love the look and comfort of this home," said Judith Slocum. "And guests are excited to be here because they enjoy being in contemporary surroundings, which look so different from everything else." ♦

ABOVE - Generous glass allows occupants on both levels to appreciate the view of the waterway that leads to the Marco River.

LEFT - The bronze-toned mirror gives an amber glow to the master bedroom's rope lighting.

Bahamas, we painted the bonus room walls tangerine, lime, magenta and violet," said Christian. "There's plenty of room for the pool table, big screen TV, game table and other recreational furnishings."

The downstairs master suite relies on more subtle tones, with a bronze mirrored wall reflecting a rope-lighted, triple tray ceiling, mocha walls and a rolled-back, indescent silk-upholstered bed paired with a terry-like spread of gold, mocha, steel blue and cream. "The spread's colors were the perfect accent for the master bath, which has natural quartzite walls and flooring," said

*Courtesy of Holland Salloy
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