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HOW ARCHITECTS DESIGN THEIR HOMES

THREE LEADING ARCHITECTS DESCRIBE THE SPECIAL TOUCHES THEY'VE BROUGHT TO THEIR OWN HOMES.

BY SHERRY BECK PAPROCKI

Architects may spend years honing their visions and creating the detailing of their own homes, whether they're building a house on the water, renovating a charming cottage or refurbishing a traditional house.

"You're always sketching in your free time and putting down the ideas of what you could do," explains architect David Corban, whose own home looms over the waters of Haldeman Creek. Corban and his wife spent three years living in an 850-squarefoot ramshackle home while he created the design of his new place. He is one of three area architects who agreed to show us some of their favorite spaces within their homes.

Other visionaries include Naples architect Andrea Clark Brown, who talked of her 10-year renovation in a residence she sold in February, and Fort Myers architect Joyce Owens, whose charming mid-century home is awash in white.

Labor of Love

DAVID CORBAN

SITUATED AMID A VARIETY of diverse fishing cottages and other homes, the Corban residence becomes a focal point for boaters on Haldeman Creek both during the day and at night. Avid sailors, Corban and his wife, Carla, appreciated the water setting where the original dwelling's boathouse extended into the water.

When the time came to replace the structure, however, the process was tedious. Corban worked for eight months until he received final approval from Collier County officials to design a new home within the footprint of the previous dwelling. To work within the plan, he decided to build vertical, more than doubling the size of living space by adding a second floor.

The Corban family, including daughter Caroline, 10, especially enjoy the home's porch that draws them to watch dolphins, tarpon and other fish that play below.

"Boats are coming down the canal practically going under the house," says the architect.

Awash in White

JOYCE OWENS

AN AFICIONADO OF TRUE MID-century design, Fort Myers architect Joyce Owens looked for the perfect residence when she moved from London back to Florida. Her search led to a classic two-bedroom abode, created in 1959, in a historic community just off McGregor Boulevard near the river.

"It's very mixed," she says of the neighborhood's housing stock that was developed over a period of years. "Time is one of the most important things that develop our cities."

Since her purchase in 2004, Owens has updated the home's interior—stripping away carpets to polish existing white terrazzo floors and whitewashing much of the inside to emphasize the house's strong mid-century bones. The home's exterior overhangs and plenty of windows allow in light while keeping out heat, she explains.

Among her varied projects, Owens offers to incorporate her "tropical modern" style for some of her residential clients.

Using white as a backdrop allows Owens to change accent colors in the home's décor. A collector of classic modern furniture, the architect chooses pieces that fit well into the home as well as sate her desire to continue emphasizing good design.

"If I was going to design something to live in today, it would probably look just like this," she says of the home's structure.

Complete Redesign

ANDREA CLARK BROWN

OVER A PERIOD OF 10 YEARS, architect Andrea Clark Brown completely renovated her Naples saltbox-style home and then extended its outdoor living quarters before selling it in February. Situated in a quaint neighborhood just west of Naples Community Hospital, she took it as a compliment when a Boston area architect and his designer wife purchased it.

When Clark Brown bought the home, its lawn was admittedly overgrown with too many trees. When Hurricane Wilma took down a few trees in 2005, the architect took it as a sign that it was time to tackle the gardens—"being the tree hugger that I am," she explains. Eventually she created three individual outdoor spaces: a pool area, a palm garden and a wooden cabana brought from Bali that was added to the deck off of the master bedroom.

Among improvements, Clark Brown installed a small lap pool with a waterfall wall that is easily viewable from the sitting room. The home's palm garden can be seen when facing the opposite direction. "I had both land and sea viewable from this small sitting area," she says. "I entertained a lot out on the deck."

Once other renovations were completed, in 2008 Clark Brown and her husband, an artist, decided to remove the home's garage in favor of adding a studio-music room. The architect coordinated its style with the original home, partly by designing a second copula here. Twelve-foot windows face a forested landscape.