

# ARCHITECTURE JOYCE OWENS LLC

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VILLA CAPTIVA



Joyce Owens is the founder of the eponymous Florida-based Architectural, interior architecture and interior design firm (AJO) consistently delivering exceptional projects noted for their award-winning tropical modern design and immaculately tailored interiors across the USA Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the UK and Italy.

In 2022, the AIA Florida (American Institute of Architects) awarded Joyce the 2022 Gold Medal, recognizing her designs, leadership and impact as an architect. In 2020, she received the Florida Medal of Honour for Design.

*“Always aiming to improve the relationship between nature and buildings, AJO focuses on Coastal Island Homes and community projects, with an emphasis on designing spaces and places that are both environmentally sensitive and culturally appropriate for their place.”*

“Tropical Modern” focuses, as the name suggests, on designing coastal properties and Joyce Owens is considered today as one of the preeminent authorities in the field.

*“Coastal properties are built in harsh environments and the expertise comes through time and experience. Understanding what works and what lasts and equally importantly, what doesn’t work long term, is critical when designing high end buildings that are expected to look amazing and stand the test of time.”*

*“In South Florida in particular we also need to deal with high humidity and hurricanes and now flooding. All are critically important to consider from inception, as are endless environmental permits, a job that’s not for the faint-hearted. Above all, projects need to reflect clients’ needs and lifestyle, while quietly incorporating all of this expertise so that they don’t need to worry or even notice the inherent difficulties associated with coastal design.”*

**VILLA CAPTIVA**

(Facing page and above) Cross ventilation, light and air flow back and forth so easily because doors and windows are strategically placed to maximize views, increase daylight, encourage the flow of inside to outside. Photos: Josh Fisher

**VILLA CAPTIVA**

(Preceding page) Exterior entry of Villa Captiva. Example of Tropical Modern. Large overhangs protect large glazed openings from direct sunlight and shelter the front door from torrential rains. Numerous balconies increase the perception of floor space from inside to out. Photos: Josh Fisher



**CAPTIVA PEACE**

A unique beach front wood framed house that began its life in 1971 as the brainchild of renowned architect Charles W. Moore was respected and revived into an island modern masterpiece. The clients bought this beach front courtyard style house with the intention of renovating the property. In a day when so many older houses are torn down, their intention was to save this classic. The light, space, and materials were of utmost importance in this renovation. The original design was very conscious of light and space. AJO altered some of the layout but was done so by expanding on the original concepts and modernizing the living spaces inside and adding new spaces outdoors.  
Photo: Dan Cutrona

**CAPTIVA PEACE**

Most of the exposed wood framed ceiling was left exposed and painted white. The 48-year-old wood structural envelope was reinforced throughout to create a more resilient enclosure intended to stand tall for many years to come. All the doors and windows were replaced, and many of the doors were made taller where possible to create better views to the Gulf of Mexico. The new material palette was kept simple: concrete tile for the floors, white painted walls and cabinetry, and tile accents in the kitchen and baths. The natural wood incorporated throughout came from a walnut tree fallen and milled on the client's property in the northeastern US.  
Photos: Dan Cutrona



**MODERN CABIN IN THE WOODS**

When the owners purchased a heavily wooded 5-acre lot in Naples they had a vision: a sustainable cabin in the woods with a modern aesthetic. The home designed by AJO lies low and quiet with elongated planes that reach into the landscape. Modern Cabin settles in and embraces the natural environment, creating a real sense of place. Photo: Josh Fisher

Joyce Owens is a strong advocate of learning from vernacular architecture from a longevity and energy conservation perspective, the latter fast becoming a primary consideration to both coastal and non-coastal living.

*“The idea of referencing vernacular buildings is universally incorporated into an architect’s training. Unfortunately, many clients don’t weigh the benefits of, and invest in the future of their buildings. They build for the moment and for fast profit.”*

*“However, climate change is making everyone more sensitive to these matters and giving architects the opportunity to become educators and to shine. It is critically important to*

*understand regional vernacular architecture wherever you design and build. My motto is “look to the past to learn for the future.”*

**Definition of iconic design and guiding principles**

*“In architecture, true iconic design is rare. It must be uncompromisingly representative of building type that exhibits distinctive excellence. It must be ground-breaking, unique and influential, and MUST serve the needs of the client, the climate and its place.*

*I always “look to the past to learn for the future” and try to thoroughly understand and appreciate the site, the climate, the context where I am designing. And, I demand excellence of myself and my team.”*

**MODERN CABIN IN THE WOODS**

The owners envisioned a home that provided an extreme level of sustainability. A variety of passive and energy efficient mechanical systems, as well as considered sustainable materials are integral to the project design. Insulated Concrete Form [ICF] walls and pre-cast hollow-core concrete planks help create an enduring structure. Extended overhangs and clerestory windows provide ample protection from the Florida sunshine, reducing heat gain while managing the indirect natural light and exploiting the simple grandeur of the local climate and magnificent wooded site. Photo: Josh Fisher