

BREAKING TRADITION

WRITTEN BY SAXON HENRY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY CAMPBELL

GIFTED DESIGNERS HAVE A WAY OF BRINGING A MÉLANGE OF SENSIBILITIES TO ANY GIVEN PROJECT. For Jenny Peters and Rachel Mbiango, of Miami's Peters & Mbiango Interiors, style, substance, sophistication and serenity are the forces that intermingle in their work, particularly in this Spanish Mission-inspired residence in Coral Gables. "Our approach to luxury advocates simplicity," Peters explains. "For instance, we stay away from patterns or mishandled colors that break the calm mood we are determined to achieve."

The classically chic home by the design duo could easily be dubbed serenity central, though the pops of color and eclecticism they brought to the project make it anything but ho-hum. "This is a prime example of the interiors we like to design," remarks Mbiango. "We set out to make them appear as if they have evolved over years, not months. This particular client wanted a sophisticated traditional look, which we feel we achieved, but, as always, we added a bit of an edge."

The designers collaborated with Rafael Portuondo, of Miami-based Portuondo Perotti Architects, to update the home, squaring off interior archways, which were curved; adding cabinetry and wall panels; inserting tongue-and-groove detailing; and cladding the exterior of the home in South Florida keystone. The designers made many a bold move with the furnishings, placing a queenly 18th-century Dutch-Portuguese mirror on a wall covered in a baroque Bennison fabric in monochromatic swirls of gray in the sitting room, for example. The broad variety of elements they brought to the interiors includes crystal chandeliers, seashore accents, 19th-century ginger jars, contemporary art and antique curiosity cabinets. Though stylistically disparate and not of the same period, these accoutrements commingle to bring a perfect blend of classical restraint to the home. "We don't do thematic design," says Peters. "Themes are much too 'one note' for our tastes, so we stay away from anything overly contrived."

INTERIOR DESIGN Jenny Peters and Rachel Mbiango,

Peters & Mbiango Interiors

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Jorge Sanchez and Phil Maddux, ASLA,

Sanchez & Maddux, Inc.

BEDROOMS 6 **BATHROOMS** 8 **SQUARE FEET** 6,800







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Given the fact that Peters is from Haiti and Mbiango is from Belgium, their ability to create globally rich aesthetics is no surprise. To the neutral linens that serve as the mainstay of their fabric choices, they added Indian motifs for color and contrast, which brings interest to the traditional English-style interiors and reinforces a subtle British Colonial vibe. "With each project we approach, we do what is right for the homeowners, reinventing our take on design for each one," says Mbiango. "We don't have a formula." Peters and Mbiango travel the world to gather the personable furnishings they implement.

SITTING PRETTY

The Bennison wall fabric in the sitting room is an elegant backdrop for the 18th-century Dutch-Portuguese mirror with its fluted crown from Michael Connors International in New York. The Rose Tarlow Melrose House sofa from Holly Hunt is covered in a classic stripe, the perfect perch for playing chess on the antique game table with ivory pieces, which the designers purchased in Belgium.





WELCOME HOME

The antique sculpture on the pedestal in the entryway is a find that Peters and Mbiango picked up in Belgium. The English rosewood table from Yale R. Burge Antiques in New York complements a rare Indian ebony chair purchased at Newel in New York. The artwork is by Kito Mbiango in Miami, and the antique, French chandelier is from Cedric DuPont Antiques in West Palm Beach.



DINE IN

The designers bought the 19th-century English sideboard in the dining room in Belgium. They paired it with an antique table and Dennis & Leen guest chairs purchased at Jerry Pair and Dennis & Leen guest chairs purchased at Jerry Pair in Dania Beach. The chandelier is from Nestle in New York, and the ceramic Chinese ginger jars are from William R. Eubanks Interior Design in Palm Beach.



COLOR POP

The James Nares painting—purchased at Michael Kohn Gallery in Los Angeles—with its squiggle of bright red is a counterpoint to the antique furnishings and natural coral in the dining room.

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"In Belgium and London, for instance, we're always looking for intriguing objects, curiosity pieces and vintage furniture," Peters explains. "In New York and Los Angeles, we're on the hunt for antique furniture and accessories, as well as modern furniture."

The outdoor rooms they added to this haven—which they asked Jorge Sanchez, of the Palm Beach firm Sanchez & Maddux, to surround with lushness—act as seamless transitions to the home's tropical surroundings. He brought in feathery palms; colorful knots of climbing bougainvillea; and textural pavers, which he



SLEEP TIGHT

The bed by Gregorius | Pineo holds court in the master bedroom. The designers placed a George Smith sofa purchased from Monica James & Company in Miami at the foot of the bed to add softness and color to the room. In contrast to the rounded sofa is the angular Ashanti stool that perches on the 19th-century Tabriz rug from Art of the Knot in Miami. The chandelier is from Kentshire in New York.



SWEET ESCAPE

A 19th-century English crystal chandelier is a delicate element in the master bathroom. Blue limestone wainscoting on the walls from Waterworks in Miami adds a textural element, while the Syrian-style table from John Rosselli Antiques & Decorations in New York and the 19th-century Italian stool purchased in London add warmth to the pale space.

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edged in soft, sensual green. These exterior spaces are comfortable and welcoming, even while the grandest of them—like the gazebo with stone pillars that flank a roomy bench for lounging—are statuesque.

The makeover of the house and grounds, which took two years to complete, strikes just the right balance for Peters and Mbiango. “As you move through the house, the eye is constantly intrigued and everything flows,” remarks Mbiango. “We aim for timeless interiors with elegance and edge—spaces that are inviting yet sophisticated and fun.” Peters adds, “The right touch of formality is key in this home, but it is still fun and never fussy.” **L**