



southern comfort.

WRITTEN BY NANCY A. RUHLING | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TROY CAMPBELL

PERCHED ALONG BISCAYNE BAY IN SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, THERE'S A COMMUNITY OF MIDCENTURY MODERN HOUSES BASKING IN THE SOUTH FLORIDA SUN; THE ONE BARING THE FOR SALE SIGN THAT CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF PAUL AND JOYCE SCHARFER, HOWEVER, WAS IN NEED OF SOME TENDER, RESTORATIVE CARE, WHICH WAS MORE THAN FINE WITH THEM. The Scharfers, avid collectors of 1950s furnishings, wanted to brand this house with their personal aesthetic and make it their own. They were trading a Manhattan high-rise apartment and a Hamptons summer house for Florida so their sons, 12-year-old Jacob and 10-year-old Jesse, could be closer to relatives and learn to enjoy the great outdoors.

INTERIOR DESIGN Abigail Shachat, AJS Design/s

BEDROOMS 5 **BATHROOMS** 5 **SQUARE FEET** 3,800



ROCK CLIMBER
A vintage Charles and Ray Eames rocker leads the way up the stairs to the master suite, while an Arco lamp by Achille Castiglioni for Flos ushers the eye to the family room below. The balcony's original steel and oak banister was painted white to make it more contemporary.



TRUNK SHOW
In the open family room, a Vladimir Kagan couch is paired with a new live-edge wood coffee table custom made by interior designer Abigail Shachat. The wall behind is decorated with two 1960s-era metal starburst sculptures by Curtis Jere.

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Not wanting to fully leave the Northeast behind, the couple enlisted New York-based interior designer Abigail Shachat to both preserve and enhance the mod domicile they acquired, originally designed and built in '56 by renowned Miami architect Don Reiff. "We wanted to bring the house back to where it was when it was built," Shachat says. "The challenge was to create a strong relationship between the indoors and the outdoors."

STYLE SELECTION

This elegant glazed porcelain vase, crafted in 19th-century Japan, bestows feminine curvature and an alluring floral motif. *Large blue & white Meiping jar with Flying Phoenix, \$1,800; pagodared.com*



BRICK BY BRICK

For the dining room, which looks out to the backyard, brick-like white marble from Coverings, Etc., was used to clad the walls, artfully mimicking the home's exterior. A vintage spun-aluminum pendant shines the spotlight on a custom-designed tamarind wood table and its surrounding Ray Komai chairs.

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In the interior of the split-level, stucco and white-brick house, the layout of the original structure was retained, although windows were added to invite in more light and the master suite was reconfigured to include a walk-in closet—a feature not likely to be found in a home built in the '50s. Miami-based contractor Ricardo Bechik gutted the kitchen and baths, which were brought up to date and revamped to suit the homeowners' needs. Case in point: the highly functional dual kitchen islands, ideal for the Scharfers, who frequently entertain family and friends. The well-worn floors throughout were retiled with the same distinctive white terrazzo original to the home.

The most avant-garde, period-style change was effected in the dining room, where the main wall was covered with split-faced white marble that is evocative of the white brick of the home's exterior. "I used it to bring in texture and a hint of the outdoors," Shachat says. She also exposed a metal support column and painted it white to give the room an edgy, contemporary look.



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Most of the period furnishings, including pieces by Vladimir Kagan, Philip Laverne and Charles and Ray Eames, were repurposed from the couple's personal collection. "We just rethought the arrangements," Shachat says. "We created a lot of contour and movement from the juxtaposition of furniture and architectural elements." The designer filled in the gaps with new custom pieces, such as the live-edge wooden coffee table in the family room and the tamarind-wood tabletop with bold blackened-steel legs that sets the mood in the dining room.

"The object was to make the house look like it was lived-in, in a wonderful way," Shachat says, regarding one of the Scharfers' goals for the home. "This is a great party house," Joyce adds. "There are banks of glass doors in the front and back, so the whole house can be opened up. It's like we're living outdoors."

ISLAND NATION

White lacquer cabinetry by Henrybuilt in New York sets the stage for the kitchen's dual islands. The space is appointed with two Bosch dishwashers, a 60-inch Wolf range, Sub-Zero refrigerator and Dornbracht fixtures.

WATER PARK

A new set of steps connects the house to the swimming pool, adorned with mosaic tiles by Bisazza. The two main alfresco seating areas—one on the patio, one under the palm trees—are outfitted with vintage Walter Lamb furnishings by Brown Jordan with cotton-rope seats.

MASTER KEY

Shachat designed the master suite bed, which rests on a rug from ABC Carpet & Home, using tamarind wood from the Florida Keys. The vintage Lucite chair adds to the airy look, and the blue bed pillows, covered in fabric by Lulu DK, bring in the bay beyond.

WHITE BALANCE

A vintage glass-mosaic artwork grounds the master bath in midcentury mode. The Imperial Danby marble-topped vanity features a pair of Kohler sinks outfitted with chrome fixtures from Lefroy Brooks in New York, and the custom wall of mirrors includes a recessed medicine chest.

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And indeed they do. Almost every day, Paul jogs on the beach, Joyce rides her bike and the boys come home from school to go kayaking and paddle boarding in their backyard. "This house is a rare gem," Joyce says. "It's in a sweet spot. It has a 100-foot-wide exposure to the bay with incredible views. We can look out at Indian Creek, and downtown Miami is in the distance."

With all the merits of a Floridian lifestyle practically in her own backyard, Joyce declares that Manhattan life no longer holds an allure. "It's like we're living in a resort," she says. "And I feel right at home." **L**