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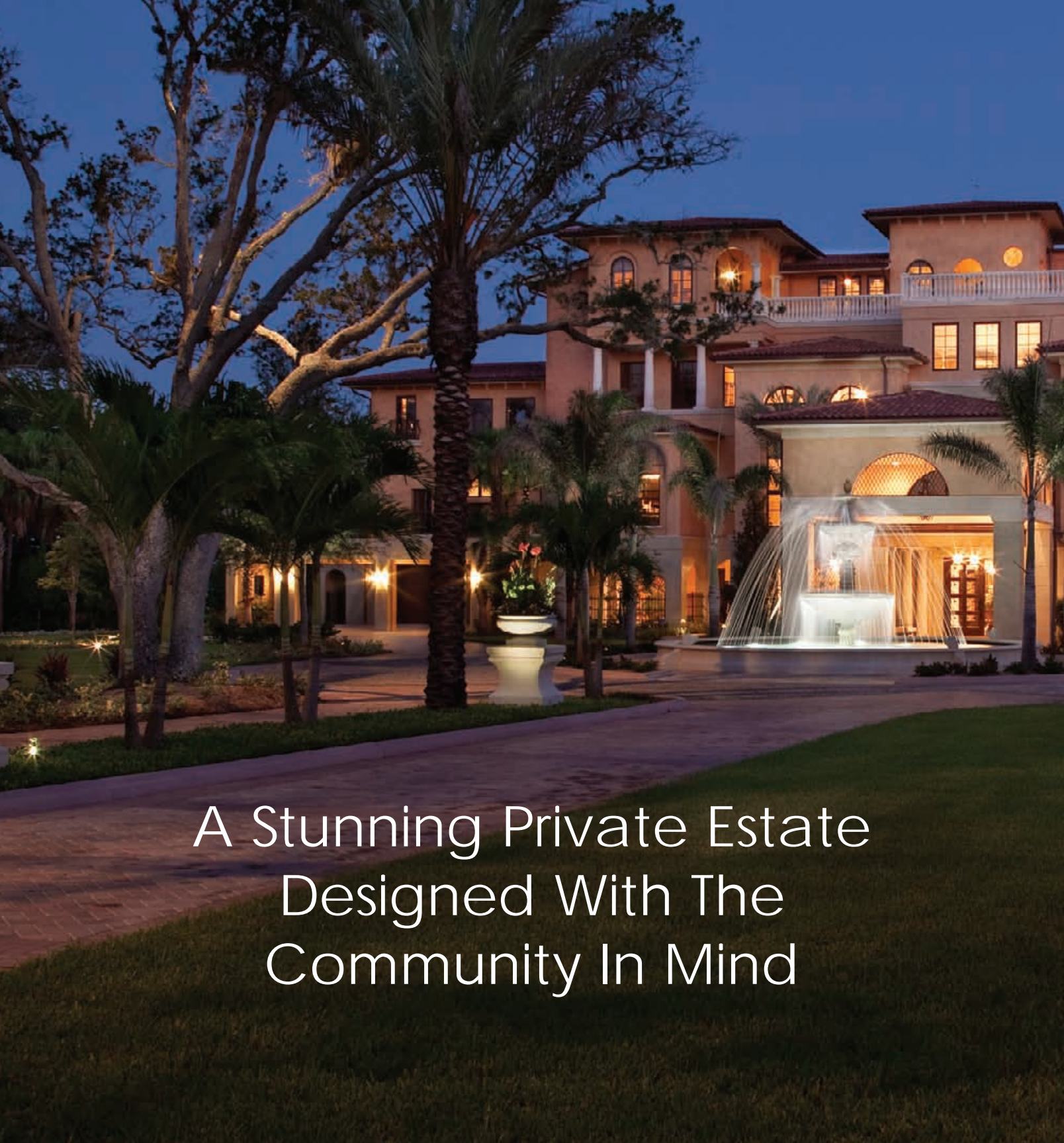
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# A Stunning Private Estate Designed With The Community In Mind

By Mary Lou Janson | Dennis Eckel Photography

The newly constructed, four-story, staggeringly stunning Tuscan-style residence that now occupies a 4.5-acre waterfront parcel on the Central coast of Pinellas County, represents a home that's been designed with more than its occupants in mind. The tan and



Tuscan Orange painted, hand-glazed stucco estate that took nearly three years to conceive, construct and complete finally became the residence of a local couple last May.

But it was more than an upgrade to a larger living environment

that the new owners envisioned. They wanted a home where others would be comfortably accommodated whether it was generations of family members dropping by for a visit or generous benefactors invited to a private dinner party held for a worthy cause.





**“Part of what the clients wanted to do with this particular house was to be able to give back to the community,” said Robert Herrmann, the project architect. “They wanted to comfortably live here and also accommodate fundraising events.”**

“This home’s challenge was to portray the warm, extending and welcoming personalities of the client within a structure of magnitude,” adds Herrmann. “The interesting functional requirement that intrigued me as an architect was to incorporate and render in close proximity the areas to

accommodate large entertainment and private home necessities. These functions needed to be separate, yet relate to each other.”

The design and décor of this custom built domicile speaks volumes about the homeowners’ personal style, generous spirit and preference for making their place not just a centerpiece, but a center for all sorts of get-togethers.

Some ideas required innovative solutions. With sweeping views of the intracoastal waterway and the sparkling Gulf of Mexico most accessible from well above ground level, decisions were made to focus the formal entertaining areas and pool on the third floor and functional family living spaces on the top tier.

That placement freed the ground floor to be dedicated to enclosed parking areas (three- and two-car garages), an outdoor deck with a fire pit overlooking one of the property’s two ponds, a children’s customized playground complete with slides and swings and even putting greens, all conveniently located beneath the house.

Ensuring the safety and durability of the house was critical so 173 concrete pilings — nearly four times the number normally used in residential construction — were installed. In fact, a structural engineer was hired specifically for this project due to its size, scope and special requirements. Not only will the concrete-reinforced walls withstand a Category 5 hurricane, all windows have been tested to sustain 175-mile-per-hour winds.

“This project was more like a commercial project than a residential build based on its complexities and the amount of concrete floors and walls used in the design,” said Dan Karcher, owner/president of Dan Karcher Construction of Largo, FL. “It was a challenge to build the pool on the third floor but, over the years, we have built multi-story condos and buildings on the beach so we were able to apply what we previously learned to this project.”

The project’s dream team of architect and builder had previously worked professionally in some capacity for the couple which must have made the months



of meetings, and what had to have been millions of decisions, go more easily. Working collaboratively, the owners, architect, builder and Jill Colledge, senior project manager for Karcher Construction, met regularly to review progress from the moment the first pilings were driven into the ground until the final touches were made on the interior's more than two dozen dazzling hand painted wall and ceiling murals that feature blooming gardens, swirls and twirls of color and one that resembles a burst of sunlight.

Among the structure's many customized features are:

An Atomic clock that ensures blinds are lowered to prevent glare and control interior temperatures as needed. It automatically raises the blinds daily just in time for sunset.

Solar-heated water, LED lighting fixtures and energy efficient appliances are among the environmentally conscious elements incorporated in the design and décor.

Saltwater pool with infinity edge on the third level deck that includes a full outdoor kitchen and wet bar with grill, icemaker, refrigerator and cooktop.

A salon with a two-story fireplace handmade in Mexcio that was shipped and painstakingly assembled on site.

Two-story tall dining room with seating for 20 that's accented by a groin vault ceiling.

Master bath with his and hers walk-in showers, his and hers vanities with televisions built into the mirrors, whirlpool tub and makeup area.

Player grand piano with sound that can be piped into every room.

Stained dark walnut wood, imported Jerusalem limestone and Crema Maya stone that create a rich mix of interior finishes.

Guest suite with private entrance, kitchen, breakfast nook, bedroom, walk-in closet, washer/dryer unit, bathroom and great room encompassing 900 square feet that could rival any 5-Star hotel.

The end result? A house that lacks nothing but still feels quite livable.

"At first the home seems overwhelming to most but once you enter and spend a little









time wandering around you begin to feel as comfortable as you do in your own home,” Colledge said. “This is a very warm and inviting home.”

Upon arrival, the home gradually reveals itself to guests as they turn down the quiet residential street leading to its gated entrance. Above the mature live oak treetops emerges the first hint and glint of warm, inviting color. Proceed closer and the enormity of the 16,500-square-foot estate comes more fully into magnificent view.

Judging by the sheer number of win-

dows incorporated into the design and wealth of balconies wrapped around its frame, this is the sort of home that wants to exist in harmony with its environment, keeping views clear and uncompromised and allowing all available sunlight in.

There is nothing rigid about its shape. Instead of simply stamping out a uniform frame that would have created a more box-like look and feel, walls were staggered in a way that leave some setbacks, a design element that the architect describes as “punched openings.” In fact, its passage-

ways and pass-through areas seem to invite exploration and seamlessly interconnect each space, maintaining an effortless flow throughout that allows for intimacy and privacy that also feels spacious and gracious.

“I thought this was a great project to be on for three years,” Karcher said. “It had its ups and downs and challenges, from design to completion to move in, but it went much smoother than most. Some projects, when they are finished, you are ready to move on. When this one was done, I didn’t want to leave.”



Builder: Dan Karcher Construction

Architect: Robert Herrmann

Interior Designer: Nancy Phillips

Landscape Architect: Graham-Booth Landscape Architects