



A MASTERPIECE ON LAS OLAS

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ISLES



When John Osher first laid eyes on his current home on Fort Lauderdale's coveted Las Olas Isles, he wasn't exactly awestruck by the house itself. But he immediately fell in love with a magnificent 120-year-old banyan tree in the backyard and the sprawling 120-foot dock, a rare find in South Florida.

"The house was charming but not a good house, so we basically kept our tree, kept the dock space and built a new house around it," Osher recalls. The one-story home on Nurmi Drive was transformed into a dramatic

three-bedroom estate that few have seen in east Fort Lauderdale.

"We started renovating the kitchen, and one thing led to another. Millions of dollars later, we gutted the house entirely – all new windows, roof, infrastructure and very specific and strong design decisions," says Bill Bentz, president of W.A. Bentz Construction, who spearheaded the rebuild.

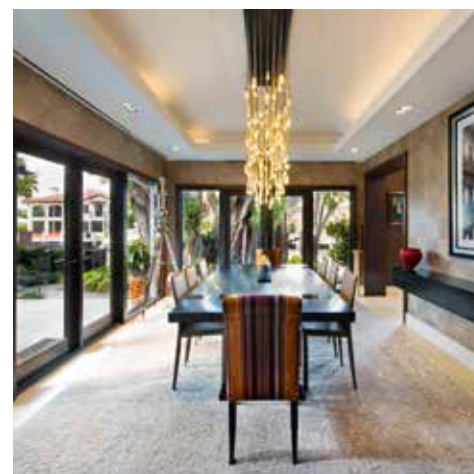
Osher tapped Fred Furze and Linda Bard of Furze-Bard and Associates in Hollywood to design the home, and the result is an artistic oasis full of wonder. While the home looks unassuming from the street, a bright

graffiti wall of flowers and leaves on the right side of the house serves as a tease to the creativity that awaits inside. The team took luxury to another level, creating a lavish "smart house," where everything from the cabinetry to the windows is controlled electronically. Every detail, from the custom handmade metal gate, which resembles an intertwined vine, to the bronze woven-pattern front door, is unique. Each wall in the home, too, is adorned with different, exciting textures, which adds another layer of intrigue.

"I'm fascinated with the combination of textures. I like to mix



Left: Kitchen featuring custom-made blown glass pendant lights and cabinet doors that are motorized and open or close with a single touch. Below: Infinity pool facing a 120-foot dock; master bedroom hallway with his-and-hers closets that leads to master bath with Jacuzzi tub; dining room with view of the banyan tree. Opposite page: Theater room with colorful Roche Bobois furniture.



rough materials such as natural stones and wood with polished metals and smoother finished materials... and introduce velvets with heavier woven fabrics to give a feeling of highlighting and contrasting," says Furze.

The granddaddy design of the house belongs to the master bedroom. There's a coffee bar, a Zen workout room that faces a bamboo garden, a huge bathroom with a Jacuzzi tub, and grand his-and-hers walk-in closets. But these aren't just any closets – sliding doors showcase a walnut wood frame inserted with glass and linen fabric on its interior. "So the long hallway doesn't feel like it's just a hall; It's an interesting area in itself," explains Furze.

While bathroom interiors are sometimes a second thought for designers, Furze gave them

each a personality. Folded strips of a newspaper's comics section are weaved into wallpaper in one bathroom, while a powder room stands out with a sleek sink complemented by a faucet that pours into a tilted slab so that the water drains invisibly.

Art is everywhere you turn. One of the bravest moves was hiring a graffiti artist to paint the mural on the front of the home, which can best be viewed from the guest room. "This is one of a kind," says Susan Rindley, an estate agent with Sotheby's International Realty. "Art Basel has come to Las Olas Isles."

How to classify the style of the home is as intriguing as its contents, and that's just what Furze intended. "You can't say it's traditional, modern or Oriental, it's an eclectic mix of all

those," he says.

But even with all the elaborate bells and whistles, the home, which is now for sale, is inviting and comfortable. That's most evident in the bright theater room with a 172-inch television screen, fun artwork and colorful Roche Bobois furniture. "I use every room and I feel like everything is exactly where it's supposed to be," says Osher. His favorite area of the home, though, always comes back to his first love: the backyard under the shade of the old banyan tree. Osher loves lounging in the sleek infinity pool. "I'm in the pool every day. I have coffee and watch the morning news on my outdoor TV." ■

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