

Tropic

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FLORIDA LIVING & DESIGN



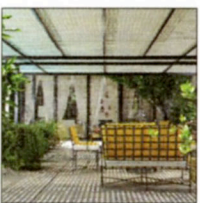
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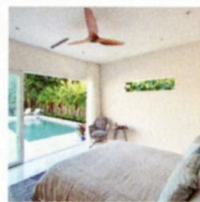
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Tropic

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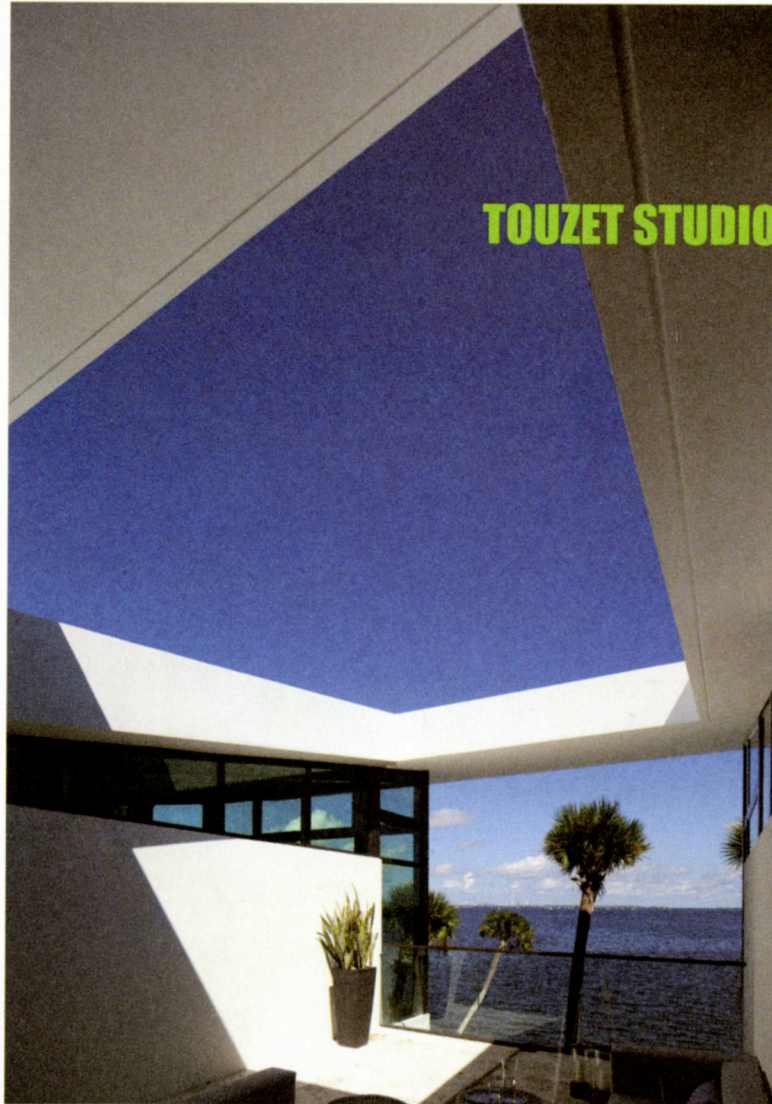
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TOUZET STUDIO REDEFINES CORAL GABLES

Text Jillian Whitaker **Photos** Robin Hill

In a city that is synonymous with Mediterranean Revival-style architecture, a strikingly modern home by Touzet Studio is both unexpected and inspiring. Some firms might shy away from erecting such a structure in Coral Gables, a city with a zoning code that visibly favors historical styles over contemporary design. Instead, Carlos and Jacqueline

Touzet, founding principals at Touzet Studio, allowed the dissonance to dictate the design.

“When we were first interviewed by our client, he described his desire for a modern house — very much in the Palm Springs modern vein,” Carlos says. “At the end of the conversation, he mentioned that he was looking for property in Coral Gables. We were a little surprised!” Nevertheless, they were up for the challenge.





On the street side, the home presents a rather conservative façade that hides its true nature and allows it to blend in with nearby structures. It's constructed of two interlocking volumes of stone — coral rock and a dense, honed limestone — and has just three openings. "The front of the house speaks to the Gables and the architecture of mass," Carlos says.

However, on the water side, overlooking Biscayne Bay, its modernist spirit shines through. "We allowed interior spaces to pour out into the landscape, capturing vistas from within and without the site, using vegetation to light rooms by filtering and reflecting, capturing breezes to cool," Carlos says. They designed the roof to capture rainwater and redirect it to large cisterns underground. They also covered it with anamorphic photovoltaic panels to make good use of the region's year-round sunshine and build efficiency. They chose natural, modern materials, such as sustainably forested, American walnut for the custom millwork and cabinetry and locally quarried, oolitic limestone for the kitchen as well as throughout the southern portion of the house. "The use of appropriate materials for our climate and our environment is very important for us. Mindfulness is a practice that is at the core of our process and our commitment to design," Carlos says.



For the Florida room, they stepped up the ceiling to 13 feet so that the view included the full length of the palm trees swaying outside in the Biscayne Bay breeze. This large expanse of glass also offers gasp-worthy, wide-water views, stretching from Coconut Grove past Downtown Miami out to Key Biscayne and the Atlantic beyond. Both the Florida room's and the dining

Left: Streamlined, modern furnishings — the Kilt Sectional by Zanotta, Snake chairs by Poliform and the orange Womb Chair by Eero Saarinen — add elegance to the Florida room. Right: All millwork and cabinetry in the home was custom designed by Touzet.





room's side walls are glass sliders that open up to the outdoors, allowing for a seamless transition for indoor and outdoor entertaining. "This allows both rooms to more than double their size when the walls open up," Carlos says. An impressive assortment of contemporary furnishings, including the vast *Kilt Sectional* by Zanotta and a pair of starkly elegant *Snake Chairs* by Poliform, finish off Touzet's modern interpretation of the Florida room.

The clients have two young daughters, so it also had to be "welcoming and focused on their family life," Carlos says. They designed a small terrace on the second floor, which, according to Carlos, is a play on the small, classical atrium seen in early Mediterranean homes. Its location, between the master suite and the children's bedrooms, make it an ideal family gathering spot, so they furnished it with comfortable, playful pieces, such as the *Landscape Sofa* and *Puff Zig-Zag* by Kettal.

Thanks to a clerestory window located above the terrace roof, this courtyard brings abundant natural light down the main stair and into the center of the home.



In its final design, the project is a stunning coral rock and glass house that melds perfectly with its serene, sub-tropical surroundings. "We love calling this simply the Coral Gables house because when people search up Coral Gables from now on — they get this very modern house of coral rock and glass which is not what one would expect," says Jacqueline Touzet, "but seemed very appropriate to us for Coral Gables in this century." ■

Left: In the dining room, six *So Chairs* by Ligne Roset surround a dining table custom designed by Touzet. The *Splugen Brau* lighting pendants are by Flos. **Right:** The lavatory counter in the master bathroom is made from slabs of Thassos marble. The stone is a dense limestone called *St. Croix*.