

# CONTEMPORARY CLASSIC

BUILDER PAUL COURCHENE CREATES A TRANQUIL, ZEN-LIKE RETREAT FOR HIMSELF IN DELRAY BEACH

*D*uring the course of his career, which spans more than 25 years, custom builder Paul Courchene has created three homes for clients in every possible style imaginable. Having worked with a variety of architectural programs, design schemes and material palettes, Courchene has developed an instinct for what makes a project most successful. This is a good thing, since his clients are some of the most sophisticated and demanding individuals in the world.



**SHOULD BUILT, LLC**  
General Contractor  
Architect  
Landscape

**JILL THOMAS**  
Mary McDonald  
Interior Design  
Landscape

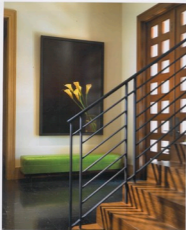
**ERIC WILSON, MBA**  
Steve Wilson Design  
Landscape

**PAUL COURCHENE**  
Courchene  
Construction Group  
Builder

Recently, Courchene completed a project for the most demanding of all clients: himself. His new residence, in Delray Beach, is the culmination of all he has learned and experienced during his career. Not only is it a reflection of his personal taste, it also is a testament to the finest, if sometimes unusual, materials available.

Being worked with hundreds of professionals, Courchene chose his team carefully. He worked with architect/should built, whom he regarded as the right person to create the vision of a contemporary classic. "In my opinion, the Mediterranean style is timeless," Courchene explains. "I wanted





In the home, instead their marble floors and the wood stair case with an open, minimalist feel can be replaced or redesigned in other places to reflect specific materials.

to get away from the style you see all over Florida and do something different, but still classic.”

“I have worked with Paul for a long time on different projects, so I know he had a high level of taste,” Hall says. “His personal taste leaned toward a contemporary palette, but he didn’t want to do something that was too modern for the neighborhood.” Hall designed a classically proportioned staircase inspired by Italian Renaissance

architect Andrea Palladio, one of the greats. “The rhythm of the columns and pilasters that run along the main street of Vicenza,” shows the Palladian style defined.

Hall calls his program for the Contractor home “an interpretation of classical Palladian architecture,” a design defined by columns of varying, classical classical pilasters that define the entry and the southern living areas in the rear eleva-





The great room, composed of a living and dining room, exemplifies a new idea: how often does a designer create a space that was in style with people?

vision. "While I still used classic proportions, he told me I should mix the old in with to infuse the home with Casareto's personal sensibilities. Casareto, who travels frequently to Asia, admires the elegant, minimalist elegance of contemporary Asian design and wanted that to be reflected, albeit in a subtle way, in the interiors."

"Paul didn't want direct access to the entry, so we designed a private courtyard," Hoff says. "The entry through a redwood walkway and courtyard is a water feature as you come in the front door. It's a modern-day Japanese style type of feel, but the elements of Asia are it."

Inside, the contemporary furniture got full room more strongly. The light makes a dramatic introduction to the space, framed, starting from the

this is a contemporary home with a strong connection to nature. Wood, black, marble floors, detailed finishes and a wood staircase with an open, minimalist iron railing suggest an allegiance to natural, organic materials, while contemporary art walls and these accents lend it the traditional, cultured bearings.

The great room, composed of a living and dining room, exemplified by a massive, four-sided Casareto Bamboo marble fireplace, is an Asian fusion piece it, "very intimate, very embracing. We wanted something that was in style with people."

The intimate feeling is due in large part to the design and the finishes materials. Interior designer Jeff Weaver painted the walls with silk ink, a specialty used not only natural, creating





The architectural setting in the kitchen continues through to the family room and "flows through" to the kitchen living room, so that it feels like one large, continuous space important only to a great eat.

a room, involving feeling. He kept his palette neutral, but added quality with a pair of waterfall crystal light fixtures in the dining room, and treated with lacquer, north fabric.

"There is an built-in table experience in the space," Strasser says. "The fixtures and colors are more natural, so they relate to the outdoors. When you come in through the front door and look toward the living room and toward the windows, you feel like you are part of the environment."

The large windows, separated by a slender, square yellow element that appears on the exterior overlooking the pool and spa area and the driveway landscaped garden. There is only a slight visual separation between indoor and outdoor, granted by slingshot design that "create a prop-

tion between spaces," according to Strasser. The doors, he adds, "had a certain resonance especially a night with the dramatic lighting."

The side bar, an elsewhere in the house, has an temporary table underneath. The table is an outdoor, adding that table feeling to frequently used in Asian traditions. As an example, in the master suite, Strasser created a floor-to-ceiling headboard with three panels of wood, flanked on either side by wood gridded, semi-circular windows. A similar screen element appears in the master bath, dividing the shower and tub. "The screens are very economical, and have a calming quality to them," he notes.

One of the main gathering areas of the home is the kitchen, which is connected with the family room





The style in the house has a modern, contemporary feel, with a focus on clean lines and a mix of materials. The kitchen was designed to be interactive, with lots of seating around a large island and an open plan. The bath has a walk-in New York tub, with exposed brick and a wood-burned tubhead ceiling. "We like to look at old spaces and put a contemporary kitchen in it," Stewart says. "We added wood, brick, the stone like a window glass background, these kind

of textures and a modern range hood to give the space its identity."

The wood-burned ceiling continues through to the family room and "spines through" to the outdoor living space, so that it looks like one large, contiguous space separated only by a glass wall.

The outdoor living space, or loggia, overlooks the pool, a courtyard, and the space that makes coffee and breakfast. The design is clean and min-

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Smith designed a classical program based around inspired by Italian Renaissance architecture. He collaborated with architect Robert Pollalis, an architect in the South of the United States, and architect Robert Smith to design the program for the residence from "an interpretation of classical Italian architecture," a design that reflects the architecture of some other great architectural traditions that influence the city and the art and living space in the new situation.





meal, relating to both the architecture and the interior scheme. The spa, which abuts the living room, spills into the pool via an infinity edge, so the view from indoors is of one large, expansive body of water. "The spa appears to be an extension of the living room, and there is a seamless border between the spa and pool," says landscape architect David Wickham, who also conceived the hard-scape. "It all connects physically and visually."

The landscape is finished in finished concrete, adding a femininity to the outdoors, particularly when juxtaposed with the tropical tones of the pool and outdoor seating. These steps create a transition between the spa and pool, and four planters, situated symmetrically, appear to be floating on the far corners of the pool. The planting material was equally important to the overall design. "There is a really rich interplay of tex-

ture," Wickham says. "We used a nice variety of tropical plants, ferns, a shrubby canopy, without going overboard." The overall feeling, both inside and out, is at once classic and contemporary. "It's a very livable home," Strauss says. "Even though it has some edgy moments, there is a timeless quality to it."

For his part, Greenberg is thrilled with the end result. "The house works in a way that one can be better than the best," he says. "Every room has its own personality. We truly have created something special in every sense." ■

#### RESOURCES

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**Is the house yours?**  
 Strauss wanted a floor-to-ceiling wood finish with these panels of wood. Finished in either oak or walnut, the look is classic and warm.

