

# all in one

A HOMEOWNER TAPS A DESIGNER TO DELIVER BOTH FUNCTIONALITY AND AESTHETIC SURPRISES FOR A FAMILY HOME IN CORAL GABLES

INTERIOR DESIGN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ AND LEANDRO LANTIGUA, MODPLAY STUDIO, MIAMI, FL  
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*SHORTLY AFTER STEPPING THROUGH* the narrow entryway of his clients' future Coral Gables home, Carlos Rodriguez had that sixth-sense jolt all interior designers hope for when approaching a new project. "I felt a kind of pressure from both sides, then the house suddenly opened up," he explains. "I was immediately connected to how light it was and how fresh it felt."

Rodriguez had first met the couple through a mutual friend years before. At the time, he and Leandro Lantigua, who co-own Modplay Studio, a Miami interior design firm launched in 2016, were taking on smaller projects. Back then, the homeowner

BELOW: Totemic lighting, seating doused in rich, earthy hues, and an antelope print rug bring exotic references to the living room. A photograph of an adolescent in tribal costume and makeup looks down from her perch above the fireplace. "She's the queen of the room," says designer Carlos Rodriguez.



In the entryway, an ornate shell mirror and antique console balance an authentic church pew and a wild horse painting from the homeowners' collection. Beyond the front door, a pathway composed of concrete pavers leads to a grass driveway.



*“I think they really appreciate the home now,” says designer Carlos Rodriguez. “It was like having a child who wasn’t perfect, but now she’s grown up and has a beautiful soul.”*

and her husband needed a designer to renovate one of the living rooms in their Miami Beach residence and they loved Rodriguez’s idea of transforming the space into a sitting room with a serene, greenhouse-style effect. It wasn’t long before Rodriguez’s phone rang again. “This time, she called to say she was looking for a new house and wasn’t having any luck,” he recalls. “She needed a home large enough to accommodate her large family.”

After sharing an MLS listing he found for a 1975 Spanish-style, mid-century modern house with an open floor plan, ample amounts of natural light, and a picturesque pool deck, the couple was smitten. After that aforementioned visit with Rodriguez, they snapped up the 5,000-square-foot property and tapped him to spearhead the home’s redesign.

Despite being well-maintained by its previous owner, the split-level spread had a myriad of design challenges, including a sprawling open floor plan without architectural character and low ceiling heights. “The living room and family room were just one wide open space,” recalls Rodriguez. “There was no millwork, so you didn’t know where furniture would be set up, and the ceilings were not very tall.”

The Modplay Studio team went to work by first addressing problem zones. Lantigua customized millwork in linear shapes to visually connect the rooms and guide the eye away from focusing on height and toward the long row of windows



In the kitchen, bold checkerboard flooring, one of the homeowner’s suggestions, adds a graphic element to the room. Brass light fixtures and cabinetry bring the shine.





Capiz shell chandeliers exude coastal élan above the dining room's live-edge table. Behind it, a bar with art deco influences beckons guests for before-dinner cocktails or a nightcap. "We wanted the bar to feel sexy, so that at night, when everything's dimmed down and the room takes over, you feel like you're in a different place," says Rodriguez.

overlooking the backyard. "We wanted to make it feel as if you were outdoors at all times," says Rodriguez.

Next came vivid textiles, textured carpets, and a smattering of art pieces to bequeath each space its own personality. The family room, for instance, is all about letting one's hair down. On either side of a floating TV center, shelves proudly display the homeowners' collection of books, photos, and treasured mementos. A seismic glass coffee table holds yet more books and family albums. "This is where they all like to hang out," says Rodriguez, "so it had to be lounge-like and effortless; a place to jump on the couch, watch TV or listen to music, and be completely relaxed. This room is an echo of their life."

The living room is more formal in tone, yet still welcoming thanks to its generously sized sofa and armchairs. Above the electric fireplace, a photograph of a young girl in tribal makeup commands the attention of all who enter. "We used the hues in that photo to guide the colors and fabrics, which feel masculine and brooding," says Rodriguez.

When the husband found out Rodriguez had been on the design team of the Faena Miami Beach hotel for six years before launching

BELOW: Floral wallpaper and custom shelving anchor the breakfast nook off the kitchen. Furniture here includes a tulip table, antique chairs, and a scalloped sofa in green velvet.





his own firm, he told the designer of his desire for a bar to spotlight his vast tequila collection. Rodriguez complied and delivered with a spirits corner marked by the art deco touches that fans of the Faena will instantly recognize. Steps away in the dining room, a live-edge table the couple purchased from the previous owners hosts both dinner parties and large family meals. Rodriguez maintained the green vibe of the space with rustic light pendants made with rope and capiz shells.

Of all the rooms in the house, the kitchen was the biggest quagmire and Rodriguez's favorite room to tackle. "It had been renovated into a show kitchen, which wasn't what the homeowner wanted," he explains. "She's a talented cook, so everything had to be functional and easy to navigate." To that end, the remodeling plan included bold black-and-white checkerboard tile flooring and relocating the island to an empty pocket by the sink. The refrigerator, freezer, and coffee bar are all concealed behind doors paneled in a walnut veneer, and a new wall was built for the pantry. A cozy breakfast nook (with a backdrop of Cole & Sons wallpaper) completes the space.

With the interior envelope addressed, Rodriguez then turned his attention outdoors. Once wildly overgrown with vegetation, the backyard now showcases native floral plantings and potted lemon trees around the pool. "It's a polished, al fresco look," says Rodriguez. "Very Palm Beach."

Looking back on the experience, Rodriguez sounds like a proud parent. "I think they really appreciate the home now," he says. "It was like having a child who wasn't perfect, but now she's grown up and has a beautiful soul."



ABOVE: Cantilevered umbrellas and black-and-white patio furniture with contrasting welting give the pool deck resort-like appeal.

LEFT: The sitting area in the master bedroom mixes rattan essentials and a sofa Rodriguez playfully calls "bulbous and almost meaty."

#### SOURCES

##### ENTRY

Console – Owner's collection  
 Mirror – Made Goods, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Lamps – Visual Comfort, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Bench – Owner's collection  
 Wallcoverings – Elitis, [elitis.fr](http://elitis.fr)

##### LIVING ROOM

Sofa – Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Fabric – Pierre Frey, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Club chairs – Owner's collection  
 Fabric – Kravet, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Cocktail table – Design Within Reach, Miami, FL  
 Side table – Design Within Reach, Miami, FL  
 Bench – Julien Chichester, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL

Wall sconces – Kelly Wearstler, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Area rug – Stark, SFDP, Hollywood, FL

##### KITCHEN AND BREAKFAST AREA

Cabinetry and island designed by Modplay Studio and fabricated by Italkraft, Miami, FL  
 Stools – Palecek, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Pendant lighting – Kelly Wearstler, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL

Table – Design Within Reach, Miami, FL

Chairs – Owner's collection

Banquette – George Smith, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Wallcovering – Cole and Sons, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Flooring – Marmol Export, USA., Doral, FL

##### DINING AND BAR AREA

Dining table – Owner's collection

Chairs – Safavieh, [safavieh.com](http://safavieh.com)

Hanging lighting – Palecek, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Bar cabinetry designed by Modplay Studio, Miami, FL

Stools – Monica James and Co., Miami, FL

##### MASTER BEDROOM SITTING AREA

Sofa – CB2, [cb2.com](http://cb2.com)  
 Cocktail table – Made Goods, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Side tables – Arteriors, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Lamps – Kelly Wearstler, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL  
 Bench – Curry and Company, Monica James and Co., Miami, FL

##### BACK EXTERIOR

Lounge, seating, and cocktail table – Restoration Hardware, Miami, FL  
 Fabric – Sunbrella, [sunbrella.com](http://sunbrella.com)  
 Umbrellas – Tuuci, [tuuci.com](http://tuuci.com)