

Tropic

LAUDERDALE LIVING & DESIGN

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OUTSIDE-IN

Glavovic Studio
explodes a
70s era townhome
in Wilton Manors

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When Patrea St. John looked for an architect to transform her 1970s townhouse, she was seeking someone who would share her love of architecture and landscape – someone who could make a fairly ordinary townhouse into a showcase for St. John's own well-known talent in landscape. She didn't have to look far. Margi Nothard of Glavovic Studio was already well known to her. The two had met when Nothard served on the Public Art & Design committee and St. John was a public arts administrator. Later the two would share studio space where St. John could admire firsthand Nothard's striking and thorough approach to design.

The choice of Nothard was obvious in 2006 when St. John decided to begin renovations on the townhouse. Located just off Wilton Drive, this 1,200-square foot townhouse is part of a cluster of homes typical of their time. An innovative approach would be necessary in order to transform such

RIGHT: Looking a bit like a German Expressionist movie set, the new facade uses a few tricks like deep window frames and eyebrows creating an almost chiaroscuro effect with light and shadow.

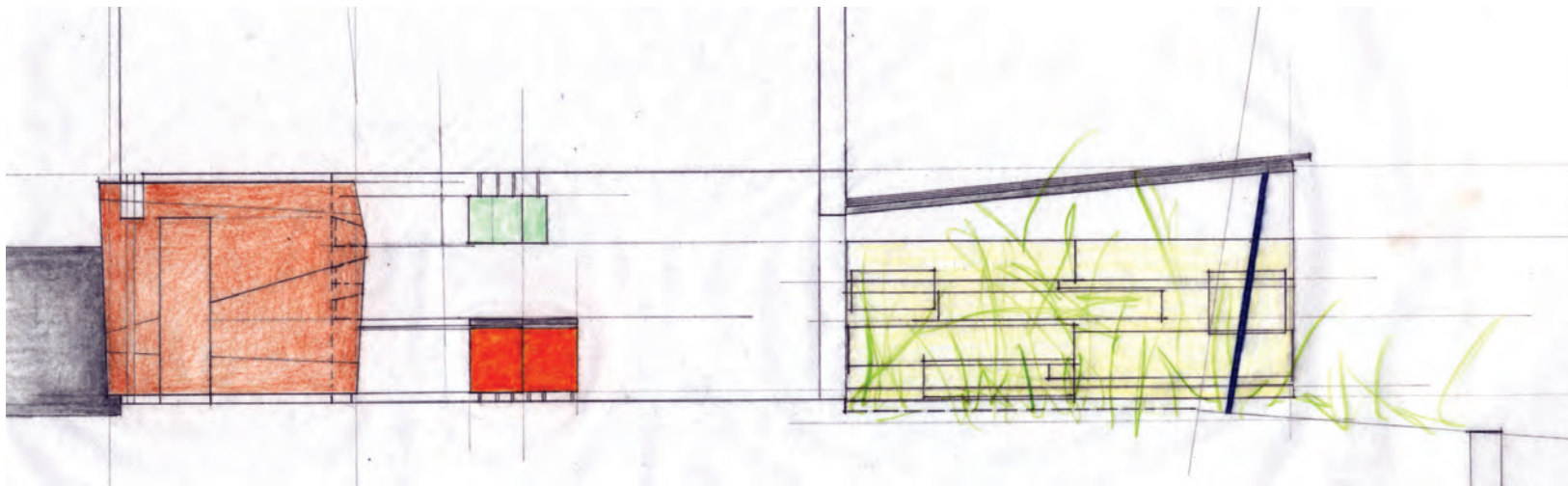
basic material into something extraordinary. Working together, Nothard and St. John married indoor and outdoor spaces that combine landscape, light, natural materials and graceful lines that produce a thoughtful, serene whole – fully reflective of its owner.

Working together, Nothard and her client married indoor and outdoor spaces that combine landscape, light, natural materials and graceful lines to produce a thoughtful, serene whole.

Florida living has at its core the glorious capacity to connect the beauty of nature, fine weather and gracious homes. These need not be huge spaces, as this project elegantly proves.

Space can feel ample even when modest in size. Unfortu-





ABOVE: Cutaway elevation drawing shows the townhouse from front entry to the Prodema-clad powder room, through the kitchen & dining to a canal-side terrace.

nately, many homes built in prior decades did not have that vision. This townhouse renovation definitively proves that with some well-considered re-imagining the average can be transformed into the delightful – and it doesn’t even have to cost that much.

First, Nothard knew that St. John was someone who appreciates the serene, so Nothard created open space and employed clean, simple materials such as lava stone. The lava stone works seamlessly in the front courtyard and within the building. Warm wood finishes, such as in the downstairs powder room (done in a wood-like laminate – Prodema) integrate nature with the interior spaces. She transformed the upstairs from two bedrooms to a single loft, office and open bathroom that all receive plentiful natural light. Situated at the water’s edge, the house now has visual continuity from outside in and inside out. Nothard notes, “We floated cabinets so that no walls go to the ceiling—instead they work as partitions and pivot the orientation.”





LEFT: In plan form, Nothard's use of a connecting axis and continuation of materials is clear. **RIGHT:** Nothard added an open, floating staircase with simple, brushed stainless steel rail. Underfoot is a basalt or lava stone flooring.



It helps when the client can act as co-designer. And when that patron is an experienced landscape architect with the ability to envision how to remake the grounds of the house to integrate structure and landscape, you really have a team. St. John's expertise led her to develop, "a garden that had year-round interest and would not require extensive water or maintenance." Instead of an automatic sprinkler system, St. John uses a rain barrel to collect water from the roof. She entirely remade the grounds, removing almost all existing plant material, except for a single guava tree, which had been planted as a memorial to her mother. She brought in blue bamboo at the end of the entry's path, which screens the path from the building's front windows. An Asian accent is achieved by the inclusion of Bauhinia flowers. Bromeliads and wart fern are used as under plantings.

Working with nature architecturally, St. John used a cabada palm to hide the view of the air-conditioning unit and also to give height to the visual composition (located next to the car-



ABOVE: The use of the laminate material Prodema continues from the facade right into the interior. The floor pattern in lava stone is established and leads through to the canal side.

port), which serves as the backdrop to the courtyard. Color is achieved through the use of tropicals: Alocasia, bromeliads, caltheas, and anthuriums add interest to the garden.

St. John is someone who adores entertaining. The structure had to work both as a beautiful retreat for its owner and also as the right container for social gatherings. Nothard stressed that the goal of the project was “to connect all of Patrea’s world and people into this particular place and then to make us all look out with renewed vigor – refreshed and peaceful.” The completed project, according to Nothard, “just exudes Patrea.”

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BELOW: The master suite is quiet and spare, continuing the floating cabinetry and recessed baseboards from the ground floor. The flooring inside and outside the bedroom are the same, but in the dressing area the stone is ribbed for texture.

