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October 2008

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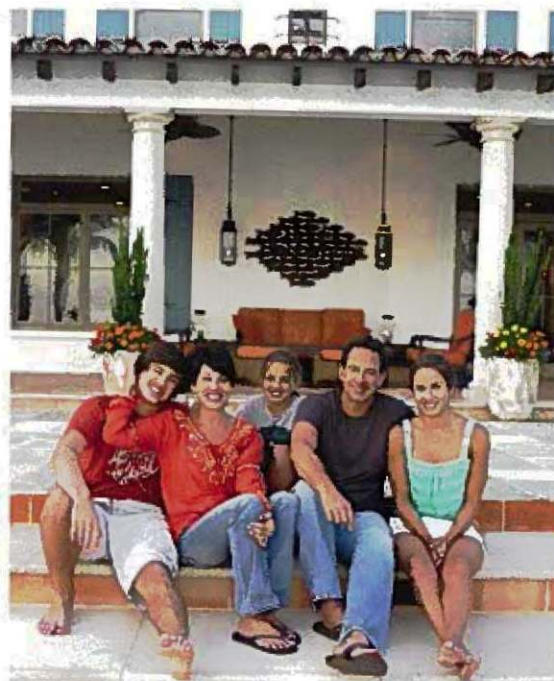


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MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL'S 2-YEAR MAKEOVER
BY CATHERINE ENNS GRIGAS | PHOTOGRAPHER ED HALL





Usually, it's the homeowners who seek out the perfect house, but when you hear the story of how Kim and Carl Spadaro and their three children came to live in one of the most stately riverfront estates in Jacksonville, it seems as if it was the house that found the ideal owners.

The Spadaros were thinking about simplifying their lives and downsizing when an Internet real estate listing caught their attention one evening more than two years ago. By 10 a.m. the next day, Kim and Carl had fallen in love with the sprawling circa-1934 Mediterranean Revival house sitting on nearly an acre and a half of land shaded by ancient oak trees.

It wasn't exactly love at first sight, though, says Kim.

"It was a grand Mediterranean style house, but it really had never been renovated," she says. "It was very formal and dark. We immediately

Kim Spadaro created a "barefoot house" for her family. The Spadaros (Above, from left), Stefan, Kim, Natalie, Carl and Niki, enjoy their home on the St. Johns River. Kim's before-and-after photos tell the tale of how completely the home was transformed, but one thing hardly changed. Kim had the exterior painted white with pale blue shutters (Left) and later learned from an old painting of the house that those were the original colors. A loggia was added to provide shade and seating.

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See before photos
of the Spadaro residence at
www.waters-edge.com.



The home was a showcase of the best of Mediterranean Revival style when it was built in the Depression, constructed by some of the most skilled craftsmen available. In the kitchen (below) Kim says she used few overhead cabinets in order to keep the space full of light. French doors swing open to the riverfront summer kitchen, providing easy access when entertaining.

saw what it could be. It needed a lot of work, but it had so much potential.”

Built at the height of the Depression by the founder of the Jacksonville Paper Company, Clifford McGehee, the design was a collaboration of famed architect Addison Mizner and local architect Harold Saxelbye. The McGehees named their new home Heaven Trees after the family's plantation in Mississippi.

Kim and Carl were enchanted by many of the home's signature Old World architectural features – arched doorways and windows, thick walls, decorative ironwork, wood floors, beamed ceilings and a massive carved stone fireplace. The home's focal point was the circular staircase.

In the end, the labor of love that Kim undertook coaxed new life into the house. Orchestrating a renovation that took exactly two years – appropriately completed on Mother's Day – Kim designed the home's transformation, including coordinating more

than 40 contractors and even doing the interior decoration.

The unique house perfectly reflects the Spadaros' casual lifestyle that revolves around entertaining.

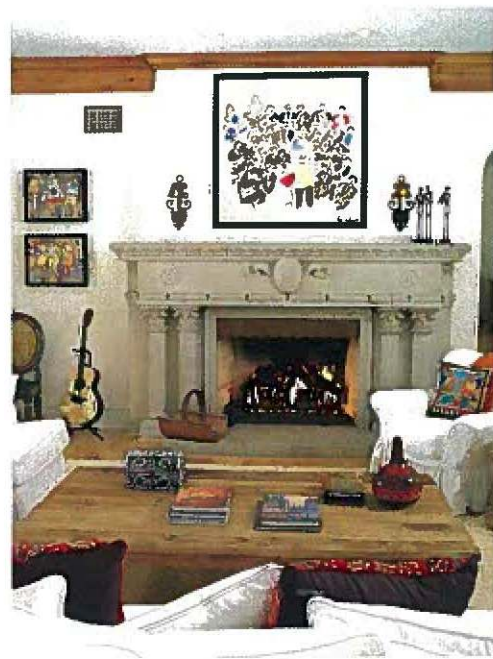
“I wanted a barefoot house,” says Kim. “I wanted the floors to feel good on bare feet. We also entertain a lot. My husband is part of a global company and at any time we can have people from five or six countries sitting around our dinner table. And I think everyone feels very comfortable here.”

Although Carl's heritage is Italian and the home was renamed Villa Cento Anni (One Hundred Years), Kim steered away from the typical Italian influences in redoing the home. Her inspiration came from places she has visited in Spain and Mexico. She incorporated large outdoor entertaining areas into the home's design, including a spectacular terraced riverfront with an infinity-edged pool and a casita complete with a fireplace





Instead of a formal space, the living room (Bottom) is casual, decorated with pieces the Spadaros found in their travels, including the bronze sculpture of an oversized hand. White slip-covered sofas mix with antique furniture from Mexico and Bali. Over the original carved-stone fireplace (Below) hangs one of Kim Spadaros' acrylic paintings.





Near the swimming pool is a casita (Above) made cozy with an Isokern fireplace and seating that's versatile enough to supply separate seats and a coffee table or ottoman, or be pushed together in a huge lounging bed.



made by Isokern, part of the product line made from Icelandic volcanic stone by Carl's company, Earthcore Industries.

The entry courtyard sets the stage for this house, where each door reveals one surprise after another. Beyond a gate, there is a fountain that looks as if it could be the water source for an Italian village.

Inside the impressive foyer, a tiny arched door that Kim laughingly says looks like a confessional – but actually was once a telephone nook – leads to a pine-paneled covered billiard room.

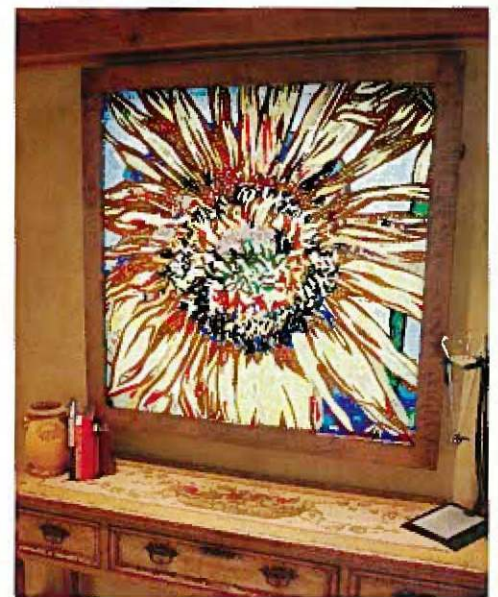
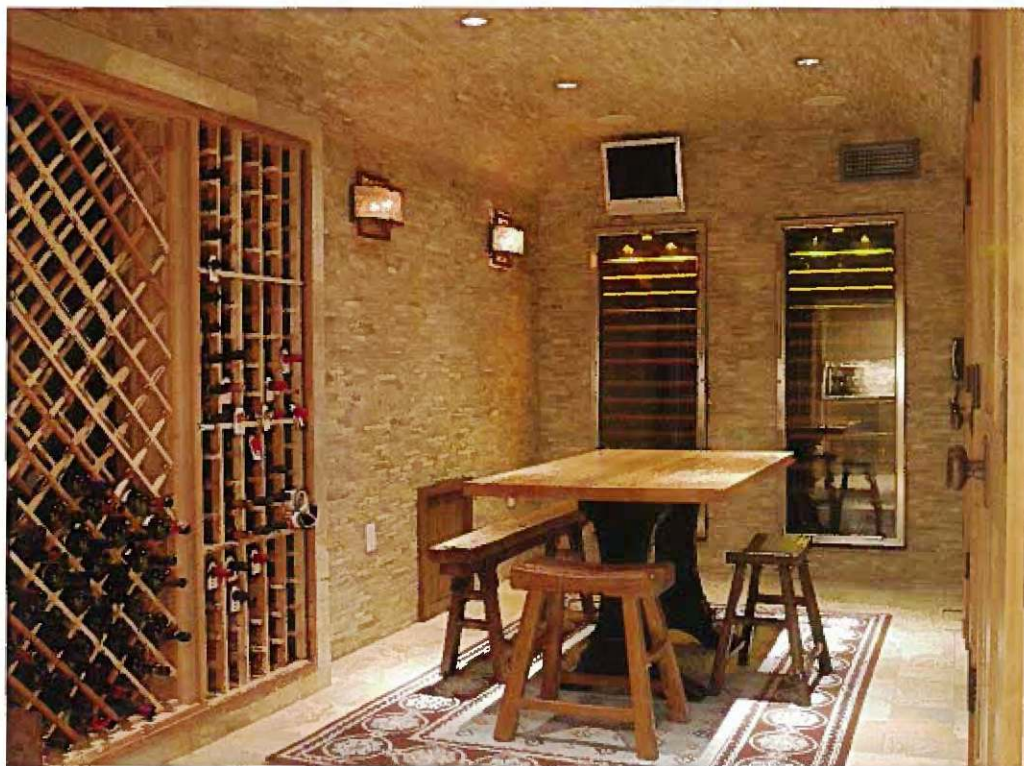
The thick, arched doorway opens to the family room, a nautically themed haven defined by a crisp white coffered ceiling where oversized sofas beckon.

Through yet another arched doorway is the open living room. Surprisingly airy



The front door, with intricate ironwork, opens into the foyer (Above, left) and the home's spectacular staircase that spirals up the circular tower. The stairs were newly tiled, the wood refinished and an iron and wood banister was added. Kim crowned the ornate foyer with a ceiling of pecky cypress (Above, right).





The terraced back yard provides several entertaining areas (Top). A stained glass, backlit sunflower (Above) welcomes guests to the basement where a furnace room (Left) was transformed into a sophisticated wine cellar with double wine chillers.



From the master bedroom window (Above left), the Spadaros have a view of their terraced backyard, dock and the St. Johns River. In the master bath (Above, right), Kim used marble and tile. An old-fashioned clawfoot tub was positioned to take advantage of the views. One of seven bedrooms (Below), the guest room is bright with white, organic fabrics.



ABOUT THE HOUSE

Homeowners: Kim and Carl Spadaro

Location: Old San Jose area in Jacksonville

Contractor: Richard Jinks, general contractor, assisted by David Washington, oversaw most of the work.

Interior decoration: Kim, an artist, decorated most of it.

Year-round residence or second home: Year-round.

Square footage: About 8,800 square feet

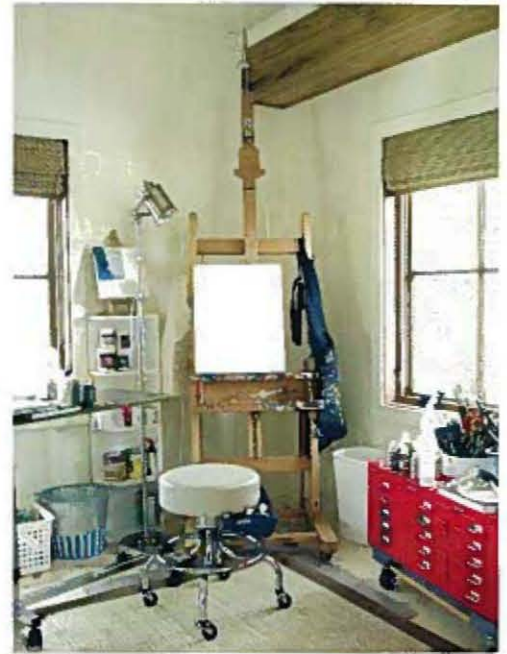
Favorite spot: "I love the dining room," Kim says. "I think people are so comfortable there, we can have guests and sit around the table for hours."

Quirkiest trait of the house: "The wood floors on the second floor are really creaky," Kim says. "You can't sneak around our house at night!"

Most practical feature of the house: "The cutting block in the kitchen. It not only looks great, it works so well!"

Other contractors:

- Rich Warchol (Kitchen) Design Inc., Jacksonville
- A&B Hardwood Flooring Inc., Jacksonville
- Pools by John Clarkson, Jacksonville
- Edwards Ornamental Iron Works, Jacksonville
- Earthworks Landscape and Sunscapes Landscape Design, Jacksonville
- Ed Hebert and Associates Inc., Jacksonville
- Turner Plumbing Co., Jacksonville
- Ocean State Air Conditioning and Heating, Neptune Beach, Florida
- E.C. Concrete Inc., Jacksonville Beach, Florida



The expansive outdoor kitchen (Left) is a few steps away from the indoor kitchen. Kim Spadaro put her art studio in the garage apartment (Above), a perk of the job, she says.

because wide windows open it to views out both sides, the room has a substantial wood-beamed ceiling. The fireplace, framed by Corinthian columns, stands at one end.

“Mr. McGehee brought in workers during the Depression,” says Kim. “Everything was handcrafted and hand done. I wanted the house to be very organic. I used all natural cottons, old pine furniture, just things that feel and look very comfortable.”

The dining room features more interesting pieces, including the 12-foot-long table made from old railroad ties. Around the table, Kim used rattan chairs from Pottery Barn. A long bench provides more seating when she’s entertaining a crowd.

“There was an old chandelier here and a plaster medallion, but I used these,” she says, pointing to a trio of contemporary lights. “I feel it balanced the weight, since everything is oversized in the room.”

Mirrored French swinging doors lead to

the kitchen.

“This is my spot,” says Kim. The island was built around an old copper sink and a thick chopping block. “I love distressed and aged things,” she notes.

One of the most unusual features of the house is the basement – a rarity in Jacksonville. Kim and Carl put it to good use, waterproofing the walls and transforming it into a wine cellar.

Upstairs, a long hallway leads to the seven bedrooms. All the bathrooms were redone, using a variety of tiles and marble. Kim kept away from more trendy materials, but made a statement with her clever use of tile in each.

The home’s riverfront would make even the most upscale resort envious. Along with the fully equipped summer kitchen and large dining area, there are shaded loggias with plenty of comfortable seating.

Set on a 30-foot-high bluff, the various entertaining levels take full advantage of the

150 feet of riverfront. The casita offers harem-like luxury with its fireplace and huge circular lounging bed.

One of Carl’s favorite spots is the casita’s outdoor shower. It also has a storage room for Kim’s lanterns and candleholders.

The pool looks as if it flows into the St. Johns River. At one end, it has a shallow sun step where swimmers can soak up the rays in inches of water or stay cool under an umbrella. Two firepits, which use Isokern products, add to the spectacular setting.

Looking from the top of the bluff over terra cotta roofs of two tiny cottages near the shoreline, an illusion of a tiny Mediterranean village is created. The concrete dock is covered with inlaid panels of tabby stone.

It was, says Kim as she surveys the commanding view, worth all the work.

“It’s everything I’ve dreamed of in a house,” she says. “It feels so good. I just feel safe and good – like this is where we belong.” □