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ELEGANCE *inside and out*

Rich in unexpected pleasures, this courtyard home possesses an understated, graceful style.

Florida was never on their list of places to live. Carole and Robert Tiemeyer were quite content in Connecticut.

But that was before they visited some friends who had recently built a house at Windsor, a new village near Vero Beach, Florida, which takes its design cues from historic districts in Charleston, South Carolina; St. Augustine, Florida; and towns in the Caribbean.

“The village plan and architecture are unique,” says Bob. “We were captivated with the place.” It wasn’t long before the couple was heading South (and not just for the winter but

for good) and setting out to build a place they could call their own.

Carole and Bob turned to architect L.M. Silkworth. He understood Windsor’s architectural guidelines—which are derived from historical models and local building tradition. But more importantly, he recognized that the house needed to respond to the way the Tiemeyers live. One of the first questions L.M. asked in the early planning stages was, “How do you like to greet your guests?” Bob says, “It was obvious we were going to work well together.”

The house L.M. designed mingles old and



PHOTOGRAPHS: JEAN ALLSOPP

Unmistakably loyal to classical and vernacular precedents, this veranda evokes a timeless grace.





In the courtyard, sun and shade play over the pool and garden at various times of day. The pool's curved sides and dark, lagoon-style bottom instill a certain drama.



(left) The open and inviting kitchen features ample work surfaces for two cooks and easy conversation distance from the seating area. **(below)** The family room offers a tapestry of blended influences—easygoing textures and simple lines. French doors open onto the veranda; three tall windows focus on the courtyard garden.



(above) Materials, such as the granite used for the kitchen countertops, were chosen with meticulous attention to detail.

new, refined and relaxed, familiar and unexpected, yet its basic plan is straightforward and utterly livable. The ornamental details on the exterior include deep overhangs, exposed rafters, textured roofing, cantilevered balconies,

brackets, and windows with small panes. The house shows that functional and simple features can appear the most refined when particular care is given to scale and proportion.

Because the architecture has such character, designer Rod Mickley let it set the tone for the interiors. Throughout the house, the design is restrained and pared down. Shots of soft yellows and greens enliven the neutral-toned interiors, and furnishings bring out the beauty of the home's elegant proportions.

The living room has an airy spaciousness, but even in this most formal room, Rod relaxes the mood and introduces surprises. "Staggered seating clusters, rather than a symmetrical or aligned arrangement, loosen up a space and make it much more inviting," says Rod. Window treatments are simple. Their height adds drama, but in a casual way—like a long flowing dress on a summer night. "And nothing brings a room down to earth like a sea grass rug," Rod adds. A painting on the wall behind



(above) The living room exudes the same relaxed elegance as the courtyard and foyer. Upholstered chairs are as comfortable as a swimsuit cover-up; a sea grass rug doesn't show the sand.



(above) Starting with the foyer, the house mingles the formal and informal. It's large enough to be gracious, but simple enough that friends on the way back from tennis or the beach feel comfortable.

double-beaded, French board vaulted ceiling was crafted with the precision of a fine wooden boat; the countertops are made of Brazilian granite that looks

like the bottom of a mountain stream. "Rod found it in our belongings and said we should hang it in the living room," says Carole.

The true spirit of the house converges in the kitchen/family room, a large, open space with 14-foot ceilings. The details and materials are quite beautiful to look at and, like the best old-fashioned materials, they promise to stand the test of time.

like the bottom of a mountain stream.

Echoing the architecture of the house, the pool and courtyard garden reflect a casual and ordered approach. Sensuous curves and delightful "accidents" occur in the landscape, just as they do in nature. "When we realized our garden here would be very different from Connecticut, we relished the possibilities," says Carole. "We would never try to fight the climate." Queen palms, waxleaf ligustrum, and fern podocarpus lend the essence of a natural landscape to the cultivated garden. The textures, fragrances, and forms of the plants are emphasized.

The casual elegance of this home is less about objects and architecture than it is about lifestyle and philosophy. It all comes back to the way Bob and Carole like to greet their guests—graciously.

Lynn Nesmith