

HIDDEN GEM

An interior designer unearths the
colorful potential of a 1989 Tequesta house.

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Hearing interior designer Jackie Armour tell the story about the diamond-in-the-rough home that caught her eye in Tequesta sounds like the beginning of a Nancy Drew novel.

“I had always been intrigued by the house, because it sits back from the road,” she says. “The vegetation was very overgrown, and you really couldn’t get a good view of the property.” Living around the corner, Armour often passed the site—nearly an acre—during evening strolls around her neighborhood.

When the abode hit the market, a realtor friend invited her for a tour. “Once I walked through, I thought, ‘Oh God, this has so much potential,’” the interior designer remembers. Although the 1989 split-level required some updates, she saw good bones and myriad perks, including high ceilings and rows of sliding glass doors opening to an umbrageous pool deck. “I felt really good in the house, like I was home,” Armour says. Soon enough, she *was* home: She and her husband, Alan, sold their family residence of 34 years, and the empty nesters embraced the challenge of starting over. “I was very empowered by some of my clients in their mid-60s and 70s who were building new homes and taking on big projects,” the interior designer says, “and I felt like I could do this, too.”

Although the house the couple had built in 1987 sits down the street from their new address, the two structures couldn’t be more different. Their previous residence had an old Florida aesthetic with a wraparound porch, compartmentalized layout and traditional design with estate antiques. The new home, meanwhile, presents a modern-coastal feel with shiplap siding and a tin roof. So the couple decided to welcome the change and make a departure from their previous style. “I knew this house could be really great for entertaining,” Armour says. “Spaces were large and open to each other, and it had great potential for a relaxed, cool, party beach house.”

The work began outside, where she tackled the rampant overgrowth and revitalized specimen trees, including a weeping yaupon holly. The process yielded a surprising discovery: a buried pond once inhabited by koi fish. Now fully

restored, the pond waterfall serves as a backdrop for cocktail parties and alfresco dinners.

Next, the interior designer drenched the formerly yellow exterior in bright white, complemented with blue shutters. Inside, she installed French oak flooring and treated ceilings with nickel joint for a modern touch.

Armour originally envisioned a white backdrop for the interiors. However, “I never met a pattern or a color I didn’t love,” she admits. “I had a vision for a palette that was going to be light and airy, and I wanted it to feel more tropical.” That’s when the interior designer came across a citron botanical-print fabric that would shape the design of the entire residence. “I always like to start with textiles,” she explains. “That was my jumping-off point for the whole interior of the house.” Armour used the material for draperies in the living, dining and sitting areas, all within view of each other from the entry. “Seeing that fabric repeated everywhere brings the spaces together and gives you a really nice, cohesive feeling when you walk in,” she explains.

Similarly, “I didn’t want a standard white kitchen,” the interior designer notes, opting instead for blue cabinetry. To define the space—which opens to the dining, living and sitting areas—she applied a blue tribal-style wallpaper on two walls, repeating the pattern in the nearby stairwell for more cohesion.

The staircase leads to the main bedroom, where once again, Armour embraced pattern on the walls—this time columns of foliage in tranquil pinks, greens and whites. A pagoda-style bed and retro-looking ceiling fan inject midcentury modern sensibility, while the room’s pink draperies frame window views of tall oaks. “I feel like I’m in a treehouse,” she muses. Outside, the interior designer balanced the magnitude of white space on the L-shaped loggia with durable seating fabrics blocked in aquas and mustard yellows. “If I didn’t know this was a home, I might think this is a resort area,” she says. “It’s very island-like but very luxurious.”

Now, having undergone a redesign of her own—and all the emotions that come with it—Armour says the experience was a reminder of the gratitude she holds for clients having confidence in her capabilities. “It’s a big leap of faith,” she reflects. “I’m really thankful they’ve put a lot of trust in myself and my team.” **U**





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Above: Velvet Modway stools stand below Ballard Design's Adelaide pendants in the kitchen, by Cammi Werling Designs. Christopher Farr Cloth's Africana wallpaper complements the marble backsplash and countertops from Ceramic Matrix. The JennAir appliances, Signature Hardware faucet and Moen faucet are from Ferguson.

Opposite: The interior designer upholstered the living area's Lee Industries armchairs in Schumacher cotton and sofas in Romo linen. Paloma Hinojosa artwork from Onesimo Fine Art hangs between Ballard Designs mirrors; a Fibreworks Bakari rug defines the space. The side table, coffee table—painted Sherwin-Williams' Inspired Lilac—and blue rug are vintage.



Right: Armour enveloped the main bedroom in Sanderson's Calathea wallpaper. In a nook, a Modway chair pulls up to a mirrored desk holding framed vintage botanical prints and a pink quartz Regina Andrew Detroit lamp. The draperies are made of Kravet's Petticoat material.

Opposite: The main bedroom's Minka-Aire fan from Capitol Lighting presides over a bed from Circa Who, dressed in Dea linens and Schumacher fabric pillows. The vintage stools—upholstered in a Grey Watkins textile—are in a Grey Watkins textile—nightstand and lamp, topped with Ballard Designs' Lynx shade, are from Palm Beach Regency. The Masland rug is from Flor Source.





Above: California Umbrella's Sun Master umbrella shades Polywood's Nautical Curveback Adirondack chairs by the pool. Armour painted the trunks of the Christmas palms in white latex, a trick she discovered in the Bahamas. "It's very common on tree farms, because it protects them from invasive bugs," she explains.

Opposite: West Elm's Paradise lounge chairs join a Lee Industries sofa—topped with pillows from Patrick Day—by a Pottery Barn rug on the loggia. A vintage elephant table from Palm Beach Regency and a Lane Venture side table offer places to hold drinks. The Sunbrella draperies close when desired.

