

# Florida Classic Home

Tropical living in traditional style

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## Hello and Goodbye: It's All Said in a Foyer

No longer a place to stash your keys, foyers are a formal introduction to a homeowner's design statement.

Text by Sara Liss Photos by Robert Brantley



Consider the foyer a prologue to the story each house has to tell – a teasing trailer for the feature attraction. Sometimes glimpsed only fleetingly by the local mail carrier or delivery man, the foyer buffers the confines of the house, offering privacy and a pause. It is a multi-purpose space functioning as both an entryway and a place to display unique decorative pieces that might otherwise be overshadowed in other rooms of the house. It is a place to greet guests, to check the mirror one last time before leaving, to enter grandly from a staircase above. It is the first and last part of the house you see, and as such, it unifies the decor of the house, leaving an impression of the owner's taste to whoever passes through.

A home's entryway can also affect the mood of the home as well as its dwellers. According to Feng Shui specialists, the foyer sets the tone for the lives of those in the house. This manifests itself in various ways; often the first thing one sees when they enter the house can either positively or negatively impact the person passing through.

Space is also another consideration when designing a foyer. An open and spacious front entrance allows for greater flow and transition between the outside world and the home. If the front doors open directly onto the living space, it can symbolize the outside world's intrusion.

The scale of a foyer is also important, as the grandeur of the entryway should be proportionate to the site. Mitch Kunik, a principal with Affiniti Architects in Boca Raton offers an architect's insight into the importance of the foyer in homes being designed today. "The foyer creates a sense of scale for the rest of the home," says Kunik. "Even smaller homes today are designed with large foyers. Some homes that are 2,000 sq. ft., and designed for entertaining, are creating foyers the same size that a 5,000 sq. ft. house would have." An often understudied but important element of home design, foyer design has taken on more significance as home owners realize a striking entryway can add value and design mileage to the home. Trends in foyer design vary according to the goal, some choose to bring the outdoors in by including stones, plants, or even water features into the entryway décor. Other foyer designs maintain functionality and give the foyer a lived-in look by incorporating everyday items by including a place to hang coats, remove shoes, and check the mail. At the other end of the spectrum, some homeowners use the foyer as a gallery, displaying works of art, collectibles, antiques, or other acquired treasures.



ISL ESTATES BY MITCH KUNIK  
THE CIRCULAR SHAPE OF THIS ENTRY  
IS MIRRORED IN THE INLAY ON THE  
FLOORING AND THE DETAIL AROUND THE  
SECOND LEVEL ABOVE.

*Foyers*

HANSON BY MITCH KUNIK  
THIS FOYER HAS ALL THE RIGHT  
ELEMENTS FOR A DRAMATIC ENTRY: A  
BEAUTIFUL GLASS DOOR FOR LIGHT AND  
ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST, MARBLE FLOOR  
WITH INLAY, STAIRCASE WITH COLUMN  
DECORATIVE RAILING AND CHANDELIER.



FILIGREE DOOR BY MITCH KUNIK  
THE CURVES OF THE RAILING ON THE  
STAIRCASE ADD INTEREST TO THE FOYER  
AREA, ALONG WITH MOSAIC TILE INLAY AND  
THE DECORATIVE IRONWORK ON THE DOORS.

**Large bay windows on a grand scale give the entryway an airy clean feeling. Tasteful chandeliers dimly lit also buttress the welcoming glow of a foyer, piquing the interest of the design possibilities within the home.**

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Foyer design can also dictate divisions of space. Often the foyer is not separated by a wall, but by a staircase or mosaic tiling in the flooring. This guides the visitor through the space without resorting to conventional division. Light is equally potent in dictating the space by drawing a visitor towards a window or skylight, or by setting a cozy mood with tasteful sconces. Chandeliers are also figuring prominently in foyer design as many homeowners find that the focal point of the entryway is both the ceiling and the flooring. Kunik adds that a staircase can accentuate the foyer by giving the entryway shape and majesty. "Stairs working with a foyer also adds drama," says Kunik. "A staircase can take the encircling shape of the foyer; which is especially beautiful. Or they can be adjacent, but visible from the foyer creating its own special architectural feature in the same way a foyer can." Yet staircases can also exceed many design budgets and that decision may depend on the amount of money to be spent. A dramatic staircase can be very expensive ranging from a minimum of \$20,000 to \$50,000. Homebuyers may choose to design the stairs out of the foyer area where it does not require decorative rails, complex shapes or materials.

Beau Genovese, president of Genovese-Brandt and Cabelka Design Group, Inc. based in Boca Raton, emphasizes the importance of the foyer in creating an impression of the home. "It's the space you enter first, and it dictates the feel for the rest of the home. It's a statement as to what the house is about, what the owner is about."

Genovese adds that homeowners are finding that entryways are as necessary as any other design features of a home. "People don't want to

enter directly into the living room. They need a transitional space." As for trends in foyer design, Genovese emphasizes glass inlay tiling, noting that the Italian tile manufacturer Bisazza is in high demand for mosaic designs. Genovese also stresses the value of including a staircase in foyer design. "If it's a Spanish or Mediterranean house an iron staircase is integral to the house. It adds a graciousness to a house and how the staircase is designed, whether its circular can make or break the space."

The foyers pictured here utilize scale and light to enhance the homes rather than overshadow them. Large bay windows on a grand scale give the entryway an airy clean feeling. Tasteful chandeliers dimly lit also buttress the welcoming glow of a foyer while piquing the interest of the guest about the design possibilities within the home.

Organic design is making a comeback in the form of filigree doors and staircase railings. Adding plants and natural materials such as dark wood and warm colors strengthen this natural-leaning look. The common use of marble and mosaic tiling can also work toward the organic look, and often, the tiling will highlight a piece of furniture such as a mirror or antique table, drawing the eye to the ornate detailing of both design elements.

The foyer is the one space of the house where the entire essence of the home is on display. The homeowner's design sensibility is distilled down to the choicest elements such that anyone coming or going will leave knowing they have visited a truly unique place. As homes are quickly becoming about more than just habitats, foyers encompass the progressive movement towards the completely designed home. 