

FOLLOWING

A Little Foresight And A Lot Of Ingenuity Turns A Quagmire Into A Castle

THE LEEDS



The Leeds residence

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Happy homeowners Luz
and Marshall Leeds.

WHEN MARSHALL AND LUZ LEEDS HAVE A GOAL, THE ENTERPRISING COUPLE GOES AFTER IT. SO WHEN THE LEEDS WANTED A HOME THAT OFFERED AMAZING VIEWS, COVETED PRIVACY AND ENOUGH SPACE TO ENTERTAIN 300 GUESTS COMFORTABLY, THEY WOULD SETTLE FOR NO LESS. THE LEEDS HAD FOUND THE IDEAL LOCATION FOR THEIR DREAM HOME: LOCATED IN AN EXCLUSIVE BOCA RATON COMMUNITY, THE SITE OVERLOOKED A PRIVATE MARINA (PERFECT FOR DOCKING THEIR THREE BOATS) ON THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY WITH A PROTECTED BIRD SANCTUARY JUST TO THE NORTH. TOWERING TROPICAL FOLIAGE TO THE WEST AFFORDED THE PRIVACY THEY SOUGHT. IT WAS PERFECT.



Multiple terraces offer superb views of the Intracoastal Waterway and a private bird sanctuary.

Except for one little problem: The site already had a home under construction – and it was sinking into the ground. The Leeds were fully cognizant that the land on which they were about to build came with inherent risks. Undaunted, the couple consulted the experts: The dream team included builder Terry Cudmore of Cudmore Builders, architect Ron Rickert of Affiniti Architects, and interior designer Curtis House of Louis Anthony & Associates. "All three looked at us kind of funny," Marshall admitted. "There was this house under construction and it was sinking. No one wanted to buy this lot."

Still, propelled by an exotic license to explore the boundaries of space, the Leeds shared an innate response to follow their gut despite conflicting reactions from the experts. "We bought the house, tore it down and started with raw land. We wanted a bigger house than the lot could handle."

It took ample planning and foresight to create the incredible 11,000-square-foot manse that exists today. Take the backyard, for instance:

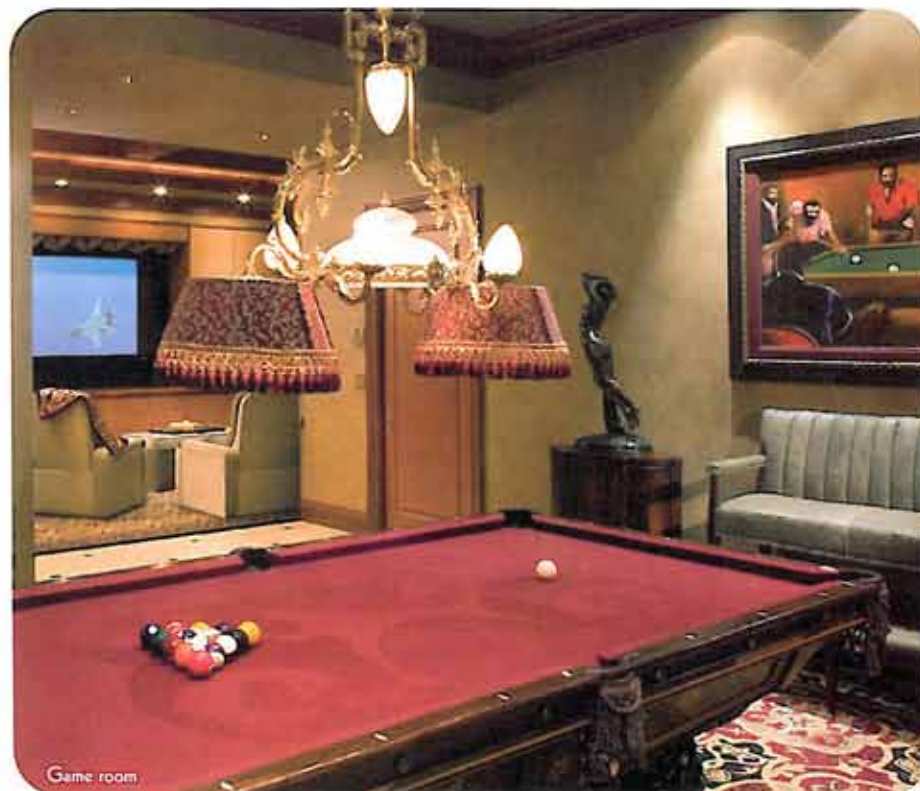


Marlene's design prowess is evident throughout the home, and a harmonious balance of architectural rhythm and stylish sophistication can be seen at every turn.

The 110-foot-long, Infinity-edge pool is the backyard's foundation, a direction that the builder had taken just once before. The pool simply vanishes into a deepwater canal, leaving no room for indigenous foliage.

From a logistical standpoint, the east side of the house also bears mentioning. After plans were practically signed off it became apparent that if Luz wanted a glass of water after retiring to bed, she would have to walk all the way from the master bedroom and through a hallway leading to yet another hallway which fed to either an elevator or a staircase. Once on the main level, the trek would lead through the formal dining area and theater before stopping at her final destination. So, a spiral staircase extending from the third floor office above the master bedroom to the kitchen below was implemented.

"Timeless architecture is achieved through great detailing and listening to the owner," Ron Rickert explains. "Then you have to apply site constraints, which have special features that need to be discovered."



All told, the Mediterranean/Italianate-style home took 15 months to complete. But it was worth the wait – visual artistry greets visitors at every turn. Upon reaching the driveway, one's sensory receptors quickly hone in on strips of Bermuda grass strategically placed between white stones. This green-and-white checkerboard effect is reminiscent of Palm Beach residences sprinkled about a certain famous island due north. Well-manicured Syzygiums and Ilex work in tandem with Spanish Shoal, topiaries and Jasmine. Varying shades of green mimic certain landscapes in London, an effect Luz deliberately created.

Once through the iron gates and past the award-winning landscape (executed by A. Grant Thornbrough & Associates), an imposing set of wood doors beckons and you realize: This is no ordinary domicile, and the Leeds are no ordinary homeowners. It's one thing to entertain a budget with no economic restraints; it's

entertaining. And indulge they do: The Leeds are known for hosting lavish parties several times per month, as well as for an annual, extravagant Christmas party. One can picture the incredible black-tie affairs where well-heeled partygoers sip champagne and feast on epicurean delights.

Festivities aside, Luz took the home's design very seriously. Her design prowess is evident throughout the home, and a harmonious balance of architectural rhythm and stylish sophistication can be seen at every turn. "A sense of fashion is something I was born with," she says matter-of-factly.

An asymmetrical placement of columns in the foyer is genius in its spatial design. However, the circular, 31-foot-high foyer's *piece de resistance* is a hand-blown, 20-foot-high Murano glass chandelier, which represents the epitome of Italian perfectionism. In fact, there

Marshall is an avid fisherman and enjoys using the library for relaxation when he's not in the Bahamas trolling for catches. The room is filled with fishing trophies from previous Wahoo and Marlin tournaments.

another to pull it off with class. The Leeds exude both high style and modesty, which becomes apparent in both tone and body language.

Marshall Leeds, a native Miamian, is the chief executive officer of Summit Brokerage Services Inc., which sells financial products to high net-worth individuals. His business acumen is leveraged by a proven track record of turning around under-performing companies. In 1989, he bought a securities firm in Boca Raton and sold it to Wachovia 11 years later. "I'm the kind of person who takes what people think is garbage and try to turn it into gold," he says, referring to the plot of land he developed.

Luz is the rock behind their 21 years of marriage. She shares her husband's passion for saltwater fishing and affectionately dubs him the "Wahoo Man," thanks to a host of trophies from tournaments' past. The pair also shares a fondness for philanthropy, and has been actively involved with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the American Cancer Society and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The couple has one son, who is away at medical school. That leaves them with a large, empty house in which to indulge a love of

are many Murano light fixtures and sconces scattered throughout this home (hundreds of bulbs, all told); still, none illuminate quite like this chandelier. It took one year to complete, at which time two installers flew in from Italy in order to hang the fixture.

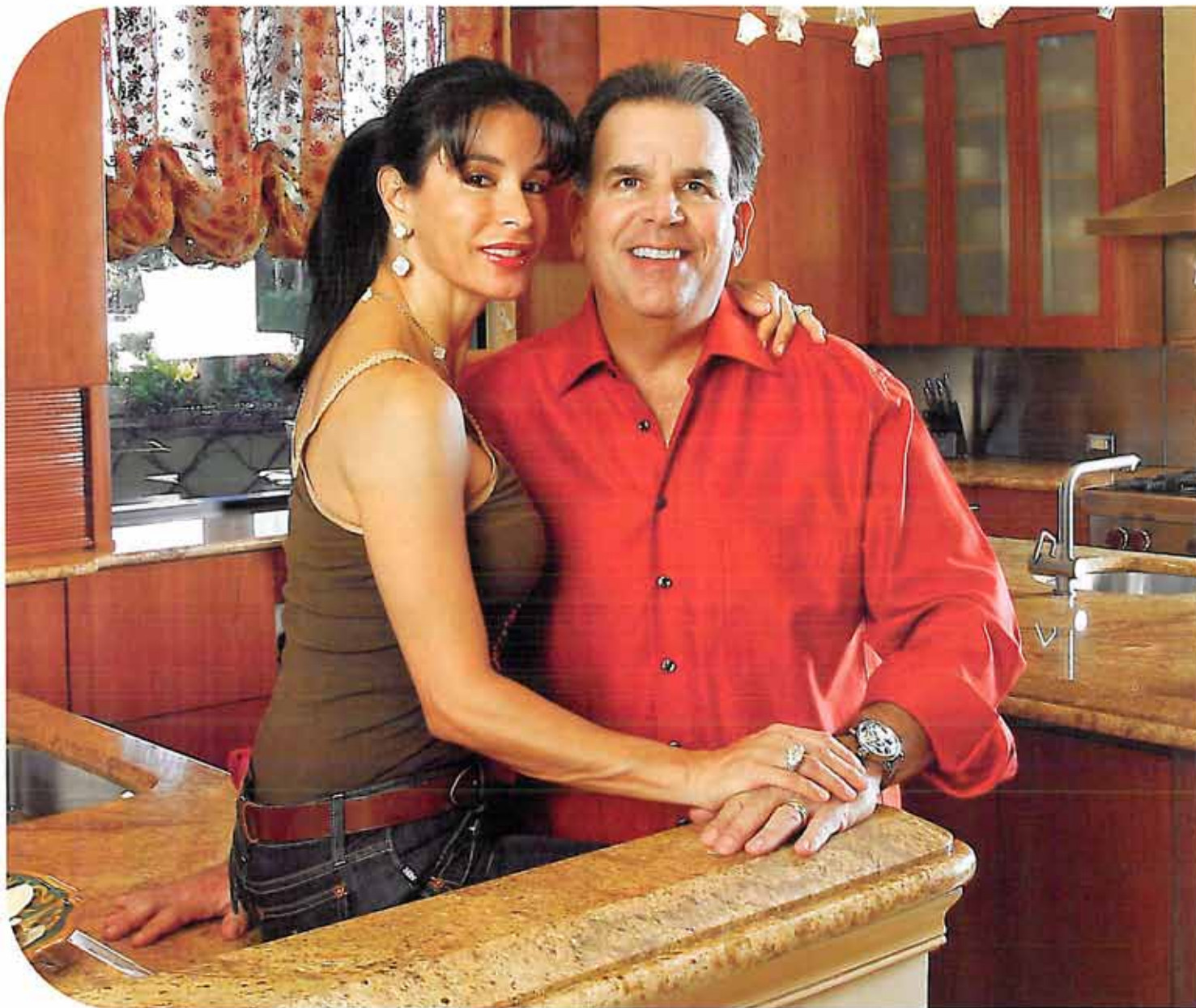
Another of the home's aesthetic standouts is its use of red, gold and green, a color scheme that provides a seamless transition throughout the space. The Florida room is grand in scale, with South American art work holding court on the main wall. An antique chest provides just the right touch next to a marble fireplace adorned with exquisite detail.

In the nearby bar area Marshall chose to eliminate the need for ice chests, electing instead to incorporate two concealed sinks below water-jet cut tops. Lined along the bar are chairs with carved Dolphin motifs; an expansive glass wall affords striking, panoramic views of the private bird sanctuary and Intracoastal. Adjacent to the bar, a Schumann & Sons piano is capable of playing hundreds of pre-programmed titles via remote control, an elegant touch when the lights are dimmed to a candlelight hue.



The library pays homage to Marshall's beloved pastime, fishing.





A few paces from the piano resides the library, Marshall's favorite room in the house. It is in this space that Marshall pays homage to his beloved pastime, fishing. He's an avid fisherman and enjoys using the room for relaxation when he's not in the Bahamas trolling for catches on one of his boats. The room is filled with fishing trophies from previous Wahoo and Marlin tournaments.

Antique reels harking back to the early 1800s (think Vomhoff) also are showcased here, with Kovalovsky, and Fin-Nor reels adding authenticity to his esteemed collection. A unique, stained-glass sequence based on Ernest Hemingway's first edition of *The Old Man in the Sea* brings a definite cadence to the room, with a 9-foot-high oil painting hanging above a

marble fireplace. Cherry-wood floors and walls contrast with a custom, Persian carpet that anchors a leather Manhattan maraschino sofa.

When it's time to filet a catch in the kitchen, Wolf appliances take care of business. The large island in the center of this modern kitchen instigates interaction, while Sandstone granite countertops add a masculine touch and Sub-Zero refrigeration keeps the sous chef's stock cool. The breakfast area accommodates featured Murano light fixtures and an upholstered bench, with imperial red leather bar stools by Swaim; custom banquet seating covered in paprika-colored fabrics surround a 66-inch round table by Hickory White. Two TV sets allow diners to watch different programs at the same time.

And while Luz enjoys entertaining in the kitchen – where she says a little spontaneous dancing is known to occur at the smell of delicious food – it's in the theater and game room where the real action takes place. The theater boasts a 110-inch flat-screen TV; at the touch of a button a door closes and curtains recede for optimum viewing pleasure. In the game room, a 1830s-restored Monarch billiard table reigns supreme, while antique sconces made from chandeliers add a unique design dimension. Inside the room, behind a discriminate door resides a private stock of wine with enough bottles to please your favorite sommelier.

When it's time to retire to the upstairs, a grand elevator with opaque doors and walls upholstered with Pindler & Pindler fabric



The Leeds enjoy entertaining in their fully equipped designer kitchen.

awaits. The second level boasts three guest suites, all decorated differently. What they all have in common: From the bolster pillows, headboard fabrics and queen duvet covers to the custom ottomans, topaz drapes and end panels, everything here is top of the line.

The same goes for Luz's personal exercise room, where sweeping views of the Intracoastal, marina and bird sanctuary provide inspiration.

headboard, and a palette of colors ranging from Merlot Tea and Contessa Passion to bronze and gold cultivate the mood. A concealed flat-screen TV can be revealed at the press of a button, while a covered balcony provides a more natural, romantic view. The right balance of hue, scale, texture and translucence truly sets the master bedroom apart. "Mrs. Leeds was heavily involved in the design process," House explains. "She was the perfect client."

"Timeless architecture is achieved through great detailing and listening to the owner."

— Ron Rickett of Alfiniti Architects

Luz uses the gym for weight training, yoga and dance; it sports the latest equipment from Cybex. When it's time to rejuvenate the senses, there's also a sauna and steam room.

Speaking of rejuvenation, the Leeds' master bedroom is a retreat for the senses. The hallway leading up to the suite features a grand, Louis

And no grand master suite is without a superlative master bathroom. Here, a large Jacuzzi tub takes center stage; a shower speaks to the pre-planning stages, as the heads were all measured according to the couple's height. In order to provide the utmost convenience, there's a private bath area for Marshall, and he can even check the latest financial ticker while shaving.



Home gym



Home sweet home

XVI two-door credenza, which then leads one to His-and-Her walk-in dressing rooms. But it's the sleeping quarters where designer Curtis House's work truly dazzles. Here, even the window treatments are engineered works of art, with four layers of draperies featuring decorative Pindler & Pindler topaz-colored end panels and swags along with motorized sheers and black-out lining. Murano glass again appears in sconces and chandeliers.

Five upholstered burgundy panels comprise the

Indeed, the Leeds home is the ultimate blend of luxury and convenience: A total of 20 Crestron screens are located throughout the home; this one-touch system manages everything from temperature and lighting to fireplace ignition. Every dream house starts with a plot of land and a drafting pencil; it takes the vision of a few determined individuals to pull it off. Asked if their home met expectations after 15 months of construction, the Leeds responded the way one would expect. They agreed, "This is our dream house." ○