LINES IN THE SAND

ON A QUIET STRETCH OF COASTLINE IN UPPER KEY LARGO, A NEW BUILD EMBRACES SITE-DRIVEN, CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS DESIGN, RELYING ON BOLD STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION AND HONEST MATERIALS

INTERIOR DESIGN LOES SLOKKERS, SLOKKERS DESIGN, AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
ARCHITECTURE MATTHEW COHEN & MAX STRANG, STRANG, MIAMI & WINTER HAVEN, FL
CONSTRUCTION STEVE SOTO, TRITECH CONSTRUCTION, CORAL GABLES, FL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE STRANG, MIAMI, FL
TEXT JEANNE DE LATHOUDER
PHOTOGRAPHY KRIS TAMBURELLO, MIAMI, FL & RYAN LESTER, SARASOTA, FL

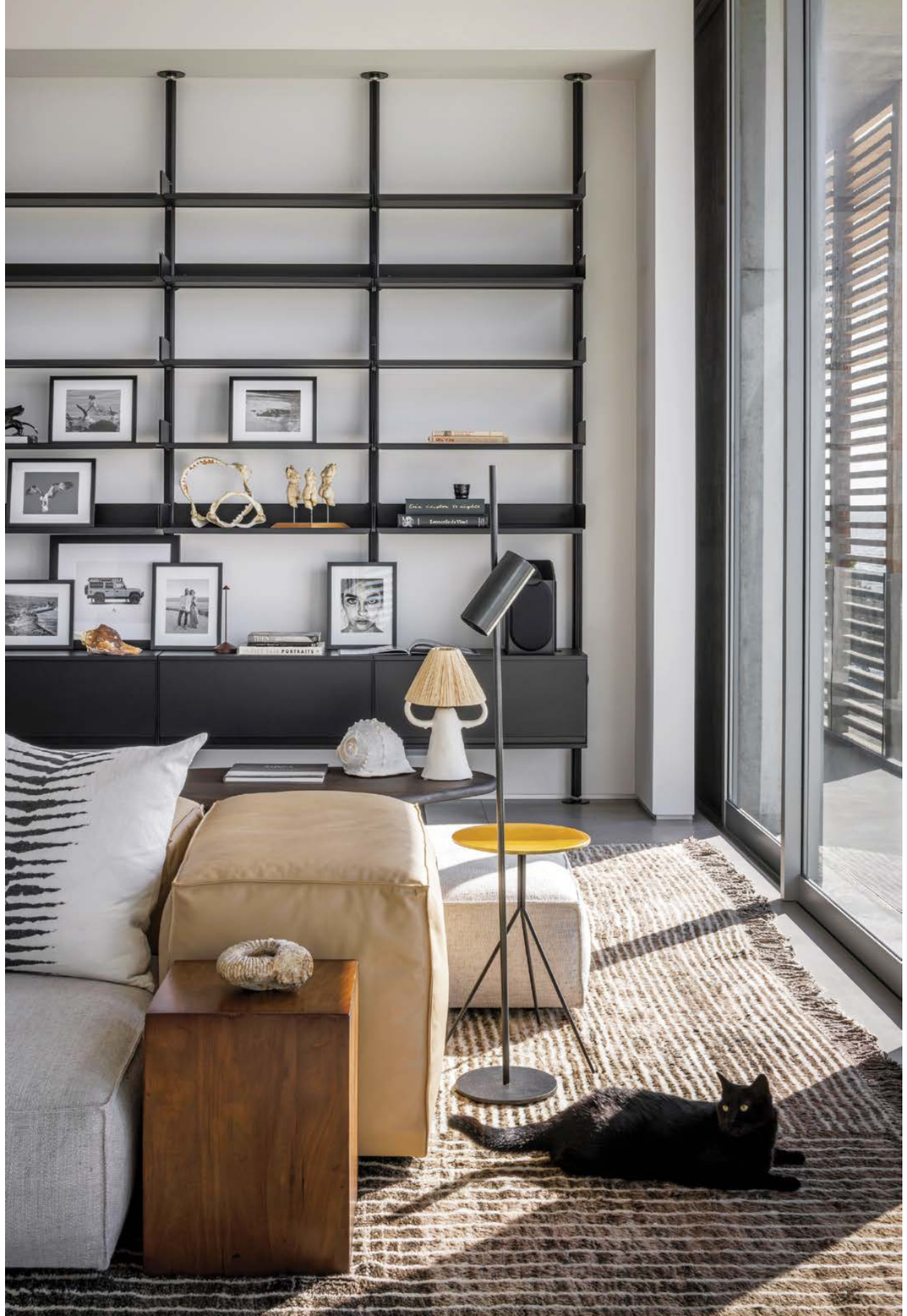
The residence is raised 10 feet off the ground to accommodate storm surge while improving exposure to the southeasterly trade winds. Louvered screens help protect and shade glass exposures while preserving the immersive views. The dwelling embraces natural daylight and cross-ventilation to further connect the occupants to the outdoors.

Varied cylindrical columns supporting a portion of the home create a boldly playful moment and a great hangout spot for family and guests. The organic forms of bubble seating and soft lounges from Paola Lenti complement the structure's raw aesthetic.

BELOW: The breezeway, or "outdoor foyer," as architect Max Strang calls it, serves as the main entry to an open-air spiral staircase finished in microcement, which ascends to the main level.

WHEN WILL VAN DER VLUGT came upon the site where his robust home now stands, he was certain it was too good to be true. The windswept, remote stretch of land on upper Key Largo looked intriguing enough, but the lot's online description featured only one aerial photo.

"We went to see it immediately, not expecting too much, but we were wrong," says Van der Vlugt, a Dutch transplant who previously resided in Coconut Grove with his wife and children. "We fell in love the moment we drove up through the hammock and onto the wide open area on the ocean. The out-of-the-way location and environment called for a resilient building capable of withstanding strong winds. I had already collected architectural images



RIGHT: A cozy living area, bordered by wall shelves from De Padova, creates an inviting space for relaxing, with a lounge grouping from Living Divani. Sharing space with the family cat, a plush area rug from Soufiane Zarib anchors the room.

that showed concrete homes fully shuttered and barn homes with wood all around, which all became part of my mood board.”

The location, immersed in nature yet close enough to civilization, immediately won over architect Max Strang as well. “It’s a unique and natural site that offers an unhurried counterpoint to the intensities of the nearby Miami metropolis,” says Strang, who designed the residence with his managing partner, Matthew Cohen. “The home partially engages a pre-existing berm while also demonstrating a certain degree of freedom from the low-lying landscape.”

Said home sits on an exquisitely desolate stretch of coastline, spanning 5,800 square feet across just over two acres. Elevated 10 feet above ground to account for sea-level rise and potential damaging storm surge, the first level includes a covered terrace with an open-air gym facing the water and a cluster of concrete columns that support the 50-foot cantilever. On the second level, a staircase dividing the living spaces acts as the joint connection of the home’s curvature, where both axes meet to mimic the site’s waterfront boundary. Massive glass doors and windows allow natural

LEFT: The spiral staircase takes you up to the great room, where the staircase actually divides the living area from the kitchen and dining spaces. Tall jars from Mud Studio create textural contrast, while sleek finishes continue beyond with Boffi kitchen cabinetry, Henge linear lighting, and a custom dining table made in the Netherlands.

ABOVE: "We explored many different variations of the home before we ended up with the curving 'boomerang' footprint," says Strang. "This gentle curve responds to the coastline while maximizing preferred views."

BELOW: Past the living room, on the main floor, the primary bedroom's bathroom is located at the end of the house, a "counterintuitive move" according to Strang. This allowed for the bed to be placed centrally, offering panoramic views of the Florida Straits.

ABOVE: Encased in sliding glass doors with views of the water, the primary bedroom features a Piero Lissoni bed against a feature wall with metallic imprints of the board-formed concrete. A white Mongolian fur Nepal chair from Baxter softens the look.

light to pour into the house while strategically placed louvers help with shading and cooling. The third level hosts two additional bedrooms for the children and a home office, as well as a covered terrace overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

"The structure's austere aesthetic represents design choices, including sly references to Paul Rudolph and Gene Leedy of the famed Sarasota School of Architecture," notes Strang. "That includes using the space beneath the house as a covered outdoor living area."

Pulling in their longtime friend, Amsterdam-based interior designer Loes Slokkers, the homeowners exchanged photos and ideas with her throughout the building process. "I have worked with Will on several previous projects, and we complement each other well in the

sense of our sleek yet atmospheric vision," says Slokkers. "I used natural materials that blend with the environment, so we were able to keep the interior from interfering with the building's extraordinary architectural design."

Described by Strang as "pretty raw aesthetically" because of the structure's exposed concrete, the board-formed treatment adds texture and is used throughout the interior, complementing Slokker's understated vibe. Each space is carefully curated with design classics, handcrafted elements, and custom furniture that Slokkers herself designed.

"Our previous home had been very minimalist, and we felt this house should have more atmosphere—be more *gezellig*, as the Dutch say," says Van der Vlugt. "This is our full-time home now, yet we feel like we're on vacation every single day."

BELOW: Vintage outdoor furniture feels right at home in the rustic dining space tucked under cover on the home's lower level. Rugged stone walls contrast with the smooth concrete floor and a pair of sculptural vessels at the perimeter.

SOURCES

LIVING AREA
Sofa grouping – Living Divani, Miami, FL
Floor lamp – Sofisticatonr16, *serax.com*
Wall shelves – De Padova, *depadova.com*
Area rug – Soufiane Zarib, *soufiane-zarib.com*

KITCHEN AND DINING AREA
Cabinetry – Boffi, *boffi.com*
Stools – Knoll, Miami, FL
Table – Custom, Homeowners' collection
Chairs – Poltrona Frau, Miami, FL
Lineal lighting – Henge, Miami FL

STAIRWAY
Stairway – Designed by Max Strang, Strang, Miami and Winter Haven, FL
Tall jars – Mud Studio, *mvninteriors.com*, and Atelier Vierkant, *ateliervierkant.com*

PRIMARY BEDROOM
Bed – Piero Lissoni, Living Divani, Miami, FL
Wall – Designed by Loes Slokkers, Slokkers Design, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
White fluffy chair – Baxter, *baxter.it*
Area rug – Soufiane Zarib, *soufiane-zarib.com*

EXTERIOR
Table, chairs, and console – Vintage, Homeowners' collection
Bubble seating and soft lounges – Paola Lenti, Miami, FL

The organic forms of Paola Lenti lounge chairs integrate seamlessly with the beachscape, creating a contemplative moment at the rear of the property. Windswept sea grasses and tropical foliage dot the quiet landscape.