Photographs by Claudio Manzoni

MODERN MIAMI HOME BY MAX STRANG OVERLOOKS BISCAYNE BAY

A newly built modern masterpiece by Max Strang looks to the skyline and sunset over Biscayne Bay in Miami.

J. MICHAEL WELTON (HTTPS://WWW.OCEANHOMEMAG.COM/AUTHOR/JMICHAELWELTON/) × AUGUST 13, 2021

The inspired masterpiece, a five-bedroom Miami mansion with a courtyard, looks to the skyline and sunset over Biscayne Bay. Strang designed the home for a client who likes entertaining and soaking up Miami's magic.

A Max Strang-designed spec house planned for West Di Lido Drive in Miami Beach was snapped up by a Brazilian buyer before the architect could even break ground.

It quickly turned into an 8,000-square-foot, custom-built home. Raised five feet above grade on a quarter-acre lot, it anticipates sea-level rise with a seven-foot-high seawall. It's got vistas to die for, too – because Strang turned it to the southwest.

"It's on one of the Venetian Islands – a quintessential Miami Beach house with views across Biscayne Bay, with the growing skyline," Strang says. "It's well positioned for the sunsets."

The home evolved into a two-story essay in poured-in-place concrete that's covered partially in stucco –an open, lush, tropical garden at its heart. "A house that large needs a courtyard to breathe light and air into it," the architect says.

Though it's built for a single owner, it welcomes visitors with a total of five bedrooms and baths. All are located on the second floor, including the master for the client. "This home was designed for him – he wasn't building for anyone else," says Alex Mangimelli, partner and director of Strang's interior design division. "The master covers the entire length of the second floor on the water line – about 80 feet."

An honest, straightforward design, the home is expansive but scaled down for the human experience. "It has a horizontal, low-slung feel, and the roof accentuates that," Strang says. "Seen from the water or the street, the roof is cantilevered, and that conveys the depth of the house."

The first floor interior opens up to the pool and vistas, with floor-to-ceiling windows that merge indoors and out. "The club lounge area is connected to the living room, and all the doors open up," says Mangimelli. "You pass through, and we didn't close anything off – so he can entertain and use both spaces, and it feels open."

Interior designer Bea Pernia, who specializes in projects in Miami, Aspen, and the Caribbean, focused on making the outdoors visually accessible from inside. “I created the layout of each room in a way that the user would be able to admire the view from any area of the house,” Pernia says. “To integrate the architecture with the design, we added mirrors that reflect the green in the courtyard into the lounge bar area.”

The client brought with him no shortage of good taste, along with modern furniture, art, and a collection of Persian rugs. “The fun aspect was his art collection, which was very expansive – and he wanted to bring that into the house,” Mangimelli says. “He painted an entire wall with graffiti from the artist Kobra. It’s called “Yoda on the Side,” and it’s on a hallway that’s not even a prominent location.”

Pernia paid close attention to the home's interior finishes, the client's art collection, and the furnishings, many of which were custom-designed for the house. "We collaborated with a few contemporary artists like Federico Uribe, who created a river of bullets inside a waterfall," she says. "The custom furniture pieces are made of dark oak with inlaid bronze, including a monumental buffet table, end tables, and headboards with leather, bronze, and wood."

The interior designer says her main challenge was the fabrication and installation of a chandelier suspended over the entrance, one she made herself in Italy. "It has over 800 Murano cylinders in degradation of blues that had to be installed, piece by piece, at 25 feet high," Pernia says.

Mangimelli views her client as both eccentric and bold. "He'd seen our work – and he knew we were true to natural materials like stone, and that we're not super-bold with color, but a little more natural," she says. "One bath is gold Calacatta marble, and we clad the whole wall with it."

Strang says that when an architect begins to design a house on spec, there's a lot of role-playing that goes on inside his head, while he wonders: "Is it for a family of six? A single? A gay couple?"

Here, it turned out to be a client who likes to entertain – in a home where site and climate dictated indoor and outdoor rooms that soak up the Miami magic.

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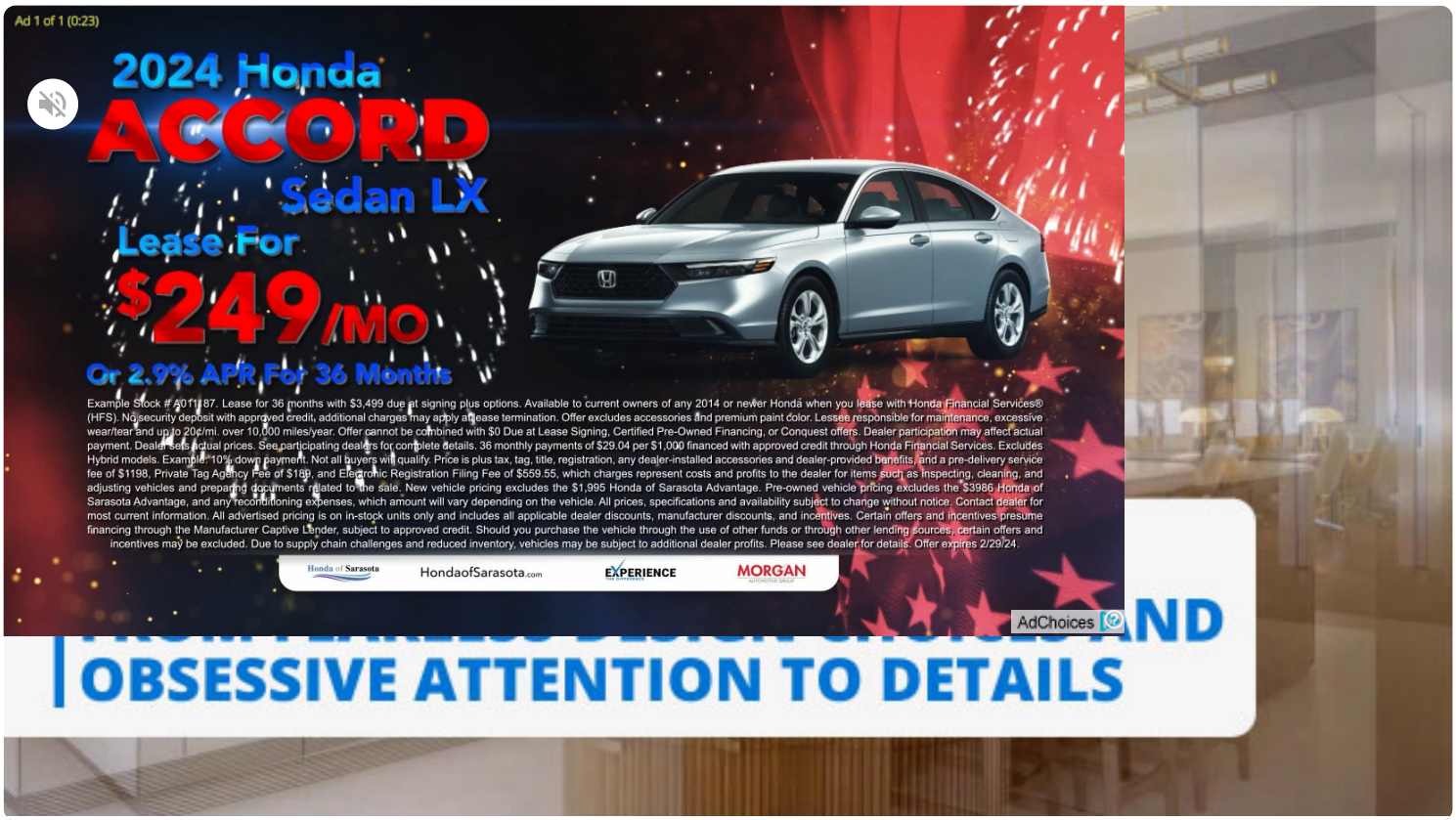

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