THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Story Behind This Fort Lauderdale Home Begins With a Naked Guy

The Tuckmans planned to build a waterfront home, until they came face to flesh with a nudist neighbor. So they purchased a new plot of land and ended up with this house.

The Fort Lauderdale home of Brad and Shona Tuckman was designed by architect Max Strang, who is known for his tropical modernist aesthetic. CLAUDIO MANZONI

By Drew Limsky
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The naked guy was a bad omen.

Architect Max Strang was scoping out the canal-side lot in Fort Lauderdale that Brad and Shona Tuckman had purchased for $2.25 million in 2014. The enviable waterfront location was where the couple planned to build their home. Mr. Tuckman said Mr. Strang was especially meticulous and looked at every inch of the Las Olas Isles property.

Mr. Tuckman said that Mr. Strang even climbed trees to examine the views. “He gets into it,” Mr. Tuckman said. “And as he’s doing it, some dude across the canal is walking around naked—he’s a nudist guy—around 150 feet away.”

Mr. Tuckman said that the architect had envisioned a certain type of property for him and his wife, who are both 49. (Mr. Tuckman is an entrepreneur and Ms. Tuckman is in the film industry.) But after the exhibitionist incident, Mr. Strang began designing the home without many canal-facing windows, “because he didn’t want to see the naked guy,” said Mr. Tuckman. He thought the design was beautiful and would have happily lived there with his family, which includes the couple’s two teenagers.

Owners Shona and Brad Tuckman in the home's second-floor hallway. The row of canvases was deliberately left blank so as not to detract from the architecture. 'The house is the art,' Mr. Tuckman says.

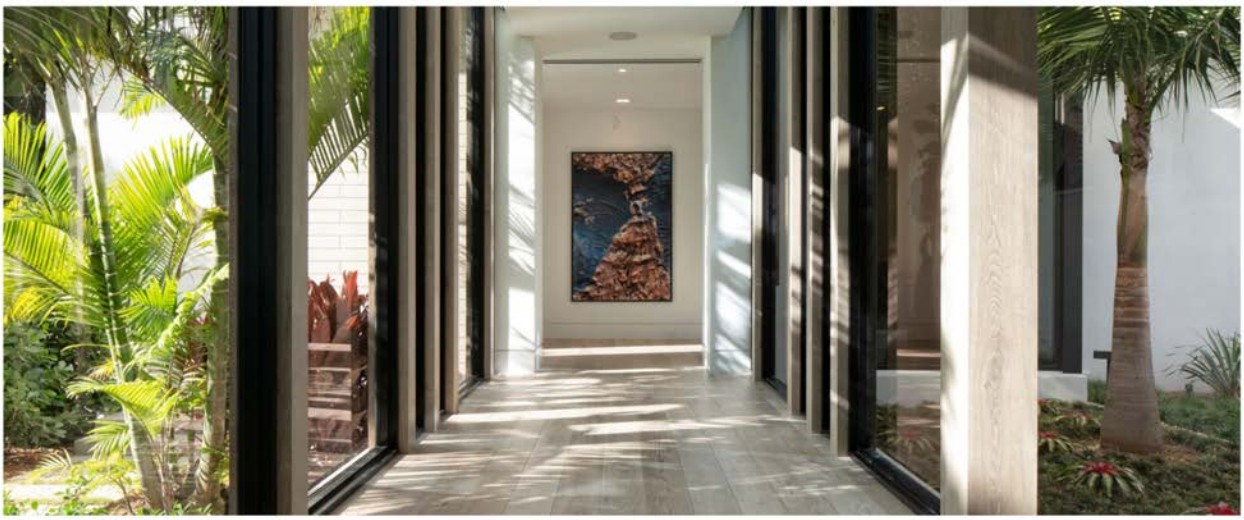
PHOTO: ZAK BENNETT FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

But then, he had a change of heart. Mr. Tuckman recalls he was touring his father-in-law John Richardson, also an architect, around in a boat, and Mr. Richardson asked why they hadn't considered the point lot—on the tip of the peninsula right on the New River.

"I have a father-in-law who always likes me to spend my money," Mr. Tuckman said. Mr. Richardson told him that the peninsula lot would be a much better investment.

"Let's do it," was Mr. Tuckman's response, he said.

Tropical Modern



The Tuckmans were insistent that the home's interior not look like a museum. Mr. Tuckman adapted a piece of wall art from a NASA photo, and hung it at the end of a sun-bathed corridor the owners call 'the bridge.'

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“Clearly this end section was the high-value plot,” Mr. Richardson said. “As Brad is frighteningly clever, he realized this was the correct option and I was delighted. I, of course, regularly remind him it was entirely down to me—well, apart from the providing dollars, of course.”

The Tuckmans paid $7.845 million for the point lot in 2015, but Mr. Tuckman said he sold off a piece of it for $1.65 million. For their home, 1.25 acres remained.

The week that the permitting came through for their original property, Mr. Strang said Mr. Tuckman called to say, “I have some good news and some bad news. Bad news: We’re not going to build that house. Good news: I bought the lot next door to build a cooler house.”

There was a glitch with the property, however. Mr. Tuckman said the whole peninsula was especially susceptible to flooding. After demolishing a roughly 8,700-square-foot house and a garage that was already on the lot, at a cost of about $100,000, he spent about $1 million to haul in dirt to raise his sea wall and the lot. In the end, the house is 6 feet higher than the original estate, Mr. Tuckman said.

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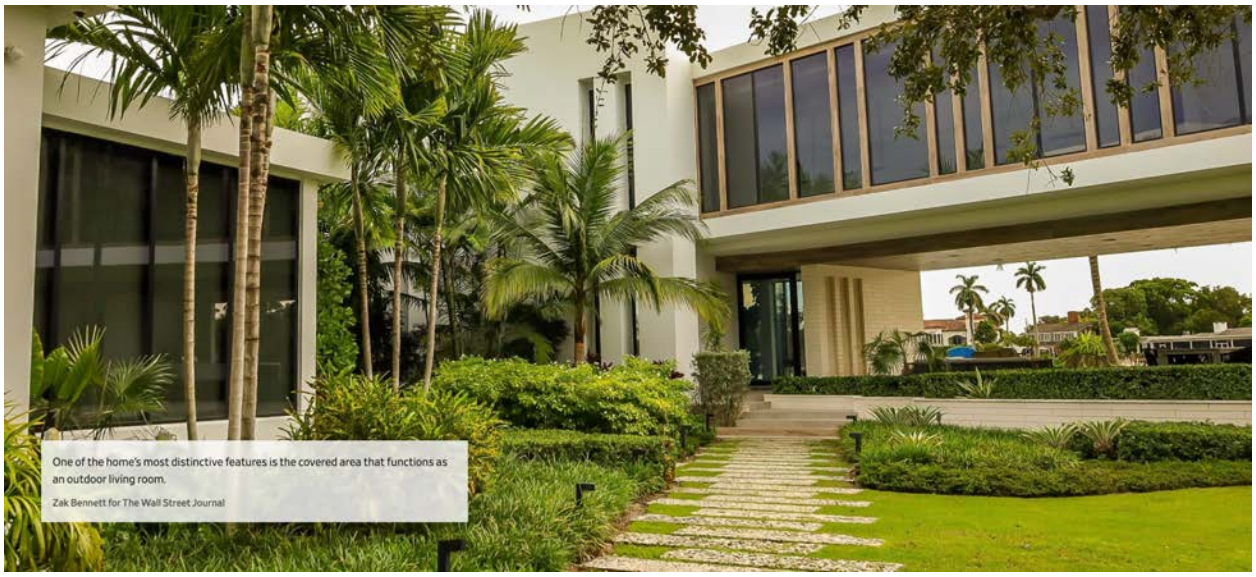
What resulted was a seemingly gravity-defying home cantilevered over a dramatic double base: 10,000 square feet, under air, plus more than 4,000 square feet of outdoor shaded area. The six-bedroom house—the land has around 800 linear feet on the water—cost around $6 million to build and was completed in 2020 after four years (including one year to raise and prepare the sea wall and lot).

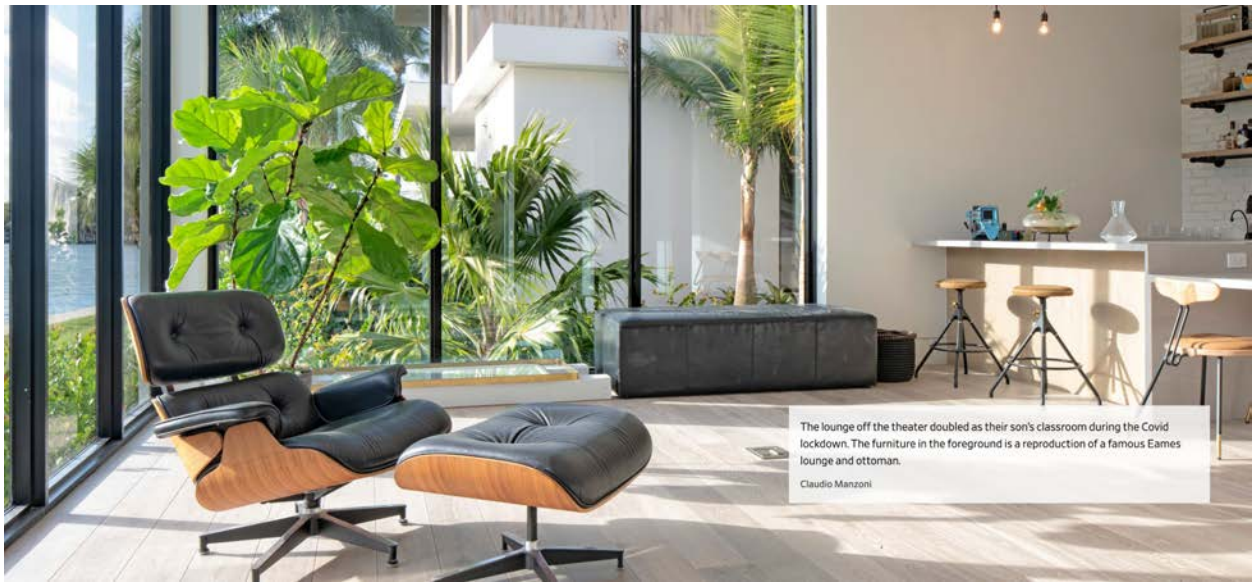
Unsurprisingly, the visually inclined couple had a very specific idea about what they wanted Mr. Strang to design: Balinese-modern with a Midcentury twist. “When I’m outside, I want to feel like I’m inside, and when I’m inside, I want to feel like I’m outside,” Mr. Tuckman said. “I want our house not to feel like a museum. We have this big house, but we want it to feel like a home.”

On the exterior, the organic aesthetic owes to the woodsy walls, slats and soffits. But it isn’t real wood. “Max always wanted ipe,” Mr. Tuckman said, referring to the durable Brazilian hardwood popular in tropical modern homes in South Florida. “But ipe turns gray. So, we actually did porcelain tile.” He said he spent six months finding the right porcelain tile.



One of the home's most distinctive features is the covered area that functions as an outdoor living room.

Zak Bennett for The Wall Street Journal

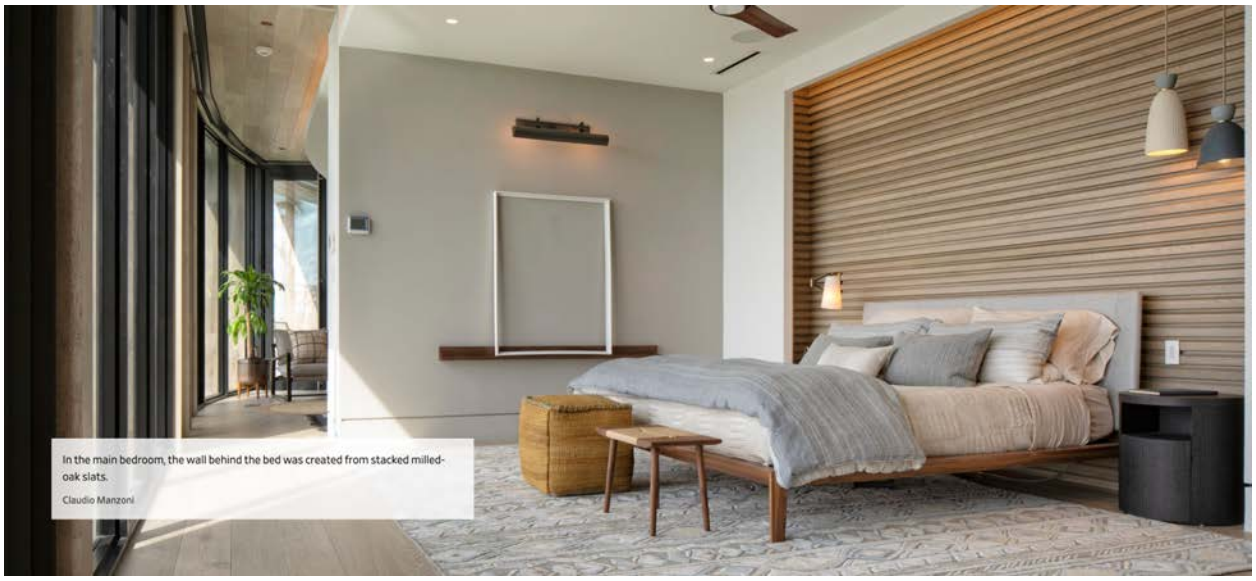


The lounge off the theater doubled as their son's classroom during the Covid lockdown. The furniture in the foreground is a reproduction of a famous Eames lounge and ottoman.

Claudio Manzoni

A pickleball enthusiast, Mr. Tuckman holds a paddle as he and Shona enjoy their L-shaped sofa in the waterfront living room.

Zak Bennett for The Wall Street for Journal



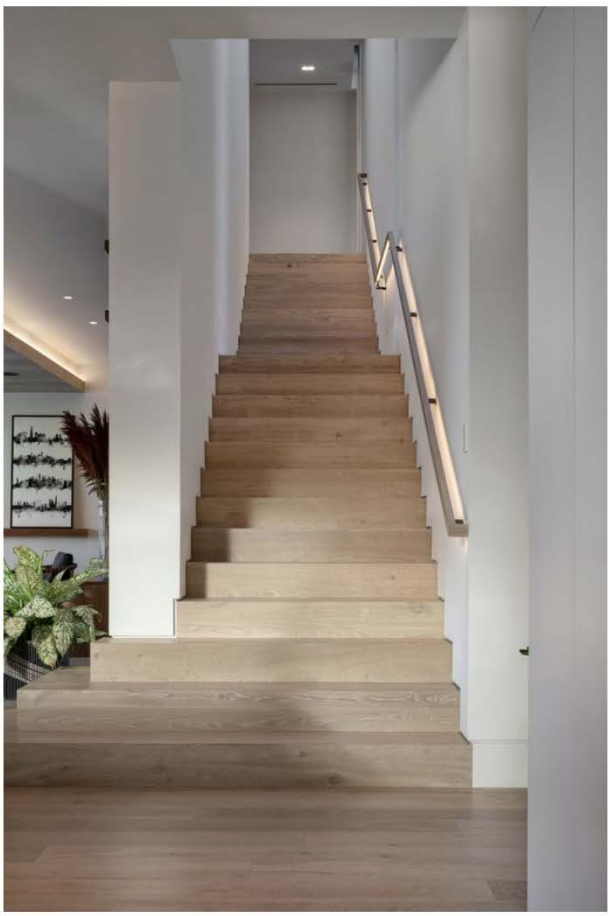
In the main bedroom, the wall behind the bed was created from stacked milled-oak slats.

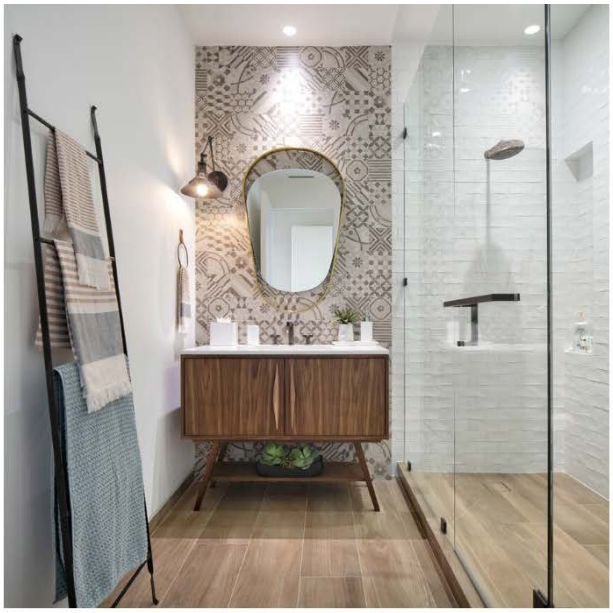
Claudio Manzoni

Mr. Tuckman spent about $1 million to haul in dirt to raise his seawall and the lot.

Claudio Manzoni

The Power of Negative Space





Mr. Tuckman didn't feel the need, like some new homeowners, to cover every wall with art or decoration. 'Negative space is good,' he said.

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On the interior, the tile transitions to natural wood. Glass rails enclose the terraces. “We didn’t want anything to get in the way of the lines of the architecture,” Mr. Tuckman said. Many of the outdoor pieces were sourced from Restoration Hardware and Teak Warehouse.

Mr. Tuckman said that although the home has a few pricey details, such as a 120-foot-long thin blade of a swimming pool that cost $250,000 to build, for “the rest of it, we found furniture that we loved” that wasn’t especially costly, considering the home’s worth. The L-shaped sofa in the living room is from Design Within Reach, and cost around $13,000. The oak dining table was custom-made for $4,000, and the four Melt LED pendants that hang over it, which start at $1,250 each, are from Tom Dixon. The interior designer was Dkor Interiors, based in North Miami.

Mr. Tuckman said that a real-estate agent came to him with a $35 million offer in the fall of 2021, but he said the family is staying put. Mr. Tuckman grew up in Rockland County, N.Y., while Ms. Tuckman was raised outside London. When they came down from New York on the autotrain in 1995, they were anticipating a two-year stay. “That plan changed,” Mr. Tuckman said. “It’s been 27 years.”

Mr. Tuckman said the family has experienced no flooding issues since their expensively elevated home was built and occupied. Hurricane Ian, which devastated towns on the state’s west coast, was a non-event locally. “We fared fine,” he said, noting that on the day of the hurricane, it was barely raining in Fort Lauderdale. Had the storm taken a turn toward Florida’s east coast, “the house is high enough where we would not have had an issue,” he said.

As for the original lot they had planned to build on, the Tuckmans sold that, in pieces, for nearly $3.3 million in 2016. That is a gain of more than $1 million—and a loss of one naked guy.