

Architect William Taylor
outside the modernist
Hammock House he
designed in Coral Gables.



HAMMOCK HAVEN

ARCHITECT **WILLIAM TAYLOR** FOUND INSPIRATION FOR A MODERNIST HOME IN CORAL GABLES IN HIS TEENAGE MEMORIES.

BY CHARLYNE VARKONYI SCHAUB

An aptly named “Hammock House” isn’t exactly what most people expect to see in Coral Gables, George Merrick’s Mediterranean-inspired city known for its red tile roofs, arches, ornamental details, and wrought-iron balconies. In contrast, architect William Taylor’s modernist design for owner Sean Murphy’s house is a cubist collection of white masonry boxes with large expanses of glass and half a dozen towering oaks framing the home.

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EMINENT DOMAIN *Abode & Beyond*



The soaking tub floats on a serpentine marble floor with a private walled garden in the background, says interior designer Jeffrey Lamb. RIGHT, FROM TOP: Lamb designed the bedroom with walnut floors, walls papered in Romo wall coverings, a Dellarobbia daybed, and a custom channeled bed from Sharron Lewis; the exterior links cubist boxes of masonry with expanses of glass, framed by a stand of oak trees.



“I WANTED HAMMOCK HOUSE TO FEEL LIGHT AND FLOAT ABOVE THE GROUND.”

—WILLIAM TAYLOR

Taylor, who grew up in Sarasota, was inspired by the work of Paul Rudolph, a modernist and member of the Sarasota School, architects known for light-filled contemporary design. Taylor’s inspiration came from Rudolph’s Cocoon House, a one-story guesthouse with a concave roof on Siesta Key built in 1950 for W.R. Healy. “His work in Sarasota was modernism with lightness of scale, construction, and materials, combined with a lightness of spirit,” says Taylor. “It’s something I worked very hard to emulate in Hammock House. So much of modern design is heavy and sits on the ground like a structural weight. I wanted it to feel light and float above the ground.”

The property—built by Coastal Construction, with an interior by Jeffrey Lamb and landscape designed by Robert Parsley—is located on Hammock Drive, a private cul-de-sac with neighbors about one quarter of a mile away. Originally, the home was in a stand of oak trees that had to be moved to position the structure. Now, the repositioned oaks frame rather than screen the residence; some of the branches evoke the image of an umbrella over part of the roof. “The overall feel of the house is comfortable and chic,” adds Lamb. “Italian modern furniture is paired with vintage designer pieces from the ‘60s and ‘70s, while the art and accessories are a combination of vintage and modern as well.”

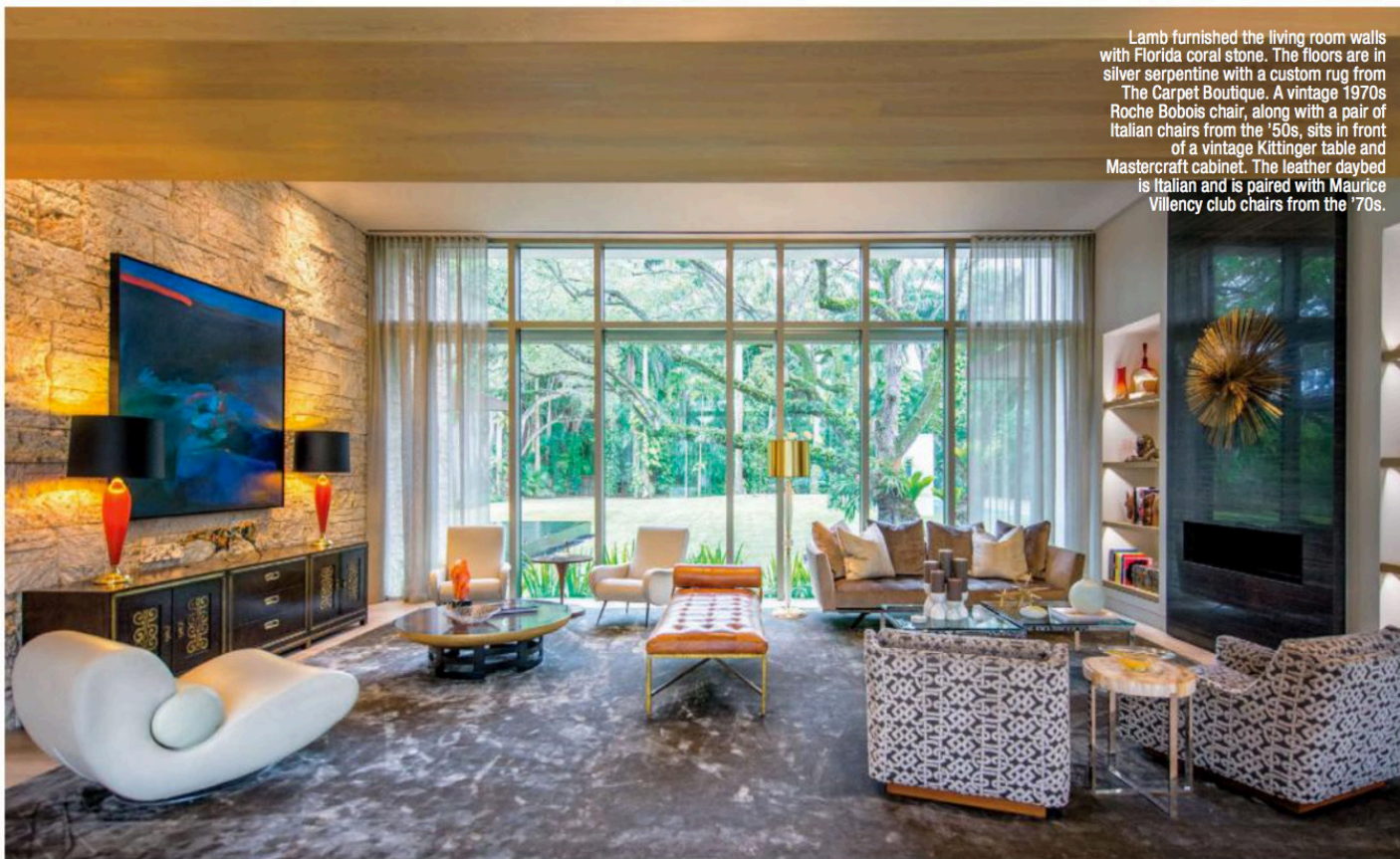
Art Deco-inspired concrete eyebrows are covered with lightly stained cypress that is carried inside on the wood ceiling to unify the exterior with the interior. Faces of the eyebrows are lined with copper that patinas to bronze immediately and then ages into green. “The copper and wood give an extra detail and extra richness to simple, traditional eyebrows,” says Taylor. “I wanted to dress it up a little bit so that it could be softer and lighter.”

Taylor, author of *Classic Florida Style: The Houses of Taylor & Taylor* (Monacelli Press) with his wife, Phyllis, and author Beth Dunlop, has designed everything from Italianate palazzos to Art Deco

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Lamb furnished the living room walls with Florida coral stone. The floors are in silver serpentine with a custom rug from The Carpet Boutique. A vintage 1970s Roche Bobois chair, along with a pair of Italian chairs from the '50s, sits in front of a vintage Kittinger table and Mastercraft cabinet. The leather daybed is Italian and is paired with Maurice Villency club chairs from the '70s.



"I don't like to stack rooms. I like the light to be seen from as many sides as possible," says Taylor, a fifth-generation Floridian.



District hotels and Key West bungalows. In his work, he always pays a respectful homage to Florida's sun and climate. "I have always been so much aware of the sun as a fifth-generation Floridian," he says. "I don't like to stack rooms. I like the light to be seen from as many sides as possible. Although the house is oriented east and west, it also gets north and south light in the living room. The light and shadows change all day."

Interior stone walls are the most salient detail. "I chose a pattern to lay the stone from Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. A local stone mason worked with us until we were happy with the design," says Lamb. Taylor designed the stone detail to make it appear as if the house is on a fulcrum and as a way to balance the second floor, similar to how the Cocoon House balances on its sea wall.

As most Miamians are aware, Coral Gables has a strict building code, and any design plans must be approved by a Board of Architects. "Most of the architects on the committee are modernists at heart," says Taylor. "They were pleased to see a modernist design in Coral Gables. I think part of the reason is this is not a neighborhood of Mediterranean bungalows. It is a part of the Gables out in the country. Something modern could exist without too much contrast."

Taylor's next project is another exercise in unconventionality; he is currently working on a design for a house in Sarasota with the client's only instruction: "I want a tree house." *Taylor & Taylor Architecture & Interiors, 1211 Alton Road, Miami Beach, 305-534-9862; taylorntaylor.com* **OD**