

PREMIERE ISSUE

oceanhome

a tuscan villa

AN ITALIAN MASTERPIECE
TAKES CENTER STAGE ON THE
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his \$125 million dream

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venetian style

When the owners of a new 20,000-square-foot seaside palazzo wanted to imbue their home's interiors with a Venetian flavor, they turned to award-winning designer Perla Lichi. One of Florida's most talented interior designers, Lichi transformed the home in Nokomis, Fla. (near Sarasota), into a masterpiece that would fit in just as well on the Grand Canal as it does on the Gulf of Mexico.

by hope harold

Situated in prestigious Casey Key, the Italianate estate is just one example of Lichi's impeccable taste and talent. Along with her 30-member team, Lichi recently nabbed 52 "Best of Florida" awards from the Builders of South Florida, and her firm, Perla Lichi Design, is regularly commissioned to design the interiors of homes for prominent sports figures throughout Florida.

In conjunction with Sarasota-based architect Clifford Scholz and builder Michael K. Walker, Lichi relied on her own love of Italian style to create an authentic replica of a Venetian palace, complete with a variety of different textures, faux finishes, stone applications, Venetian plaster and frescoes on the walls, mosaic borders, detailed ceilings, and silver and copper leafing designed to glitter "like jewelry," says Lichi. A grand entryway and staircase with cast-stone balustrades leads to a living room "so high and grand and with custom-detailed ceilings that it makes you feel like you are in Venice immediately," says Lichi.

But it's not all about form. Lichi's favorite room in the house is quite functional as well. "We

perla lichi's love for italy

shows in this palatial seaside palazzo





space-planned it with two seating areas that look like one," she says, "and the views are just drop-dead gorgeous."

According to the designer, what truly sets this spectacular home apart is the level of detailing. "Every fabric is coordinated, every fringe and tassel match, the walls blend with the mouldings, the mouldings blend with the carpet, and everything is designed to flow perfectly," says Lichi. "It took almost three years from start to finish, and the key was to work as a team [with the architect and the contractor] to ensure that we all stayed on the same page, and that we shared the same vision."

A rich color scheme of sage green, cinnamon, copper, gold, eggplant and silver is used throughout the six-bedroom oceanfront house, which features water views from nearly every room, beautiful Murano glass accessories, a hand-painted fireplace, and a separate guesthouse. Leather chairs, dark woods and classic styling imbue the library with the feel of a gentleman's club. Corbels, dentils, burl-wood panels and other details embellish the mahogany custom cabinetry.

"We took into consideration that this is an oceanfront house, so we did interesting window treatments—Romans that you can

close off to block the light if need be, for example," says Lichi. The designer also took care to choose the proper hardware on the doors to best withstand salt water. "You need to consider all of this when working on a waterfront house."

The Italian theme is carried through to the spacious kitchen, which replicates a Venetian villa. Custom Old World-style cabinets with rich wood carvings are accented with metallic tones, and custom Venetian glass panels with display lights add to the authenticity. The refrigerators are cleverly hidden behind custom built-in cabinets that resemble hand-carved armoires, and an oversized island and top-of-the-line appliances again add function to form. The Venetian plaster walls, rustic granite countertops, and the mosaic backsplash perfectly complement the detailing throughout.

"It is a very casual but gourmet state-of-the-art kitchen that goes with the rest of the house," says Lichi. "This truly is the most gorgeous house." •

THE WINNING TEAM

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