



# FIFTY SHADES OF BLUE

Sexy Sophistication in the Woods of St. Johns County

words by **Juliet Johnson** // images by **JEFF WESTCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY**

You hear much of the new home construction in St. Johns. Rarely do you find a 21st Century, urbane contemporary house cloaked by towering live oaks.

For **Dianna Likens and John Hazle**, the trade-off was land vs. house: more land and less house or the other way around. They owned several traditional homes in past, most recently in Fleming Island. For their forever home, they wanted a mid-century modern contemporary. More specifically, they wanted a Mark Macco contemporary. On a trip to the beach, they had seen Macco's own home (see it in Jax Mag, April 2015) going up and snapped a photo for later reference. When they found a secluded lot in St. Johns, Macco was their first call.





Macco was surprised. It's not often he gets a call from folks who want one of his beachy contemporaries in the middle of a forest. St. Johns is filled with huge, old live oaks dripping with Spanish moss, especially between the river and Route 13. Up until very recently, it was one of the more rural sections of Northeast Florida, with lots of woods and horses in people's front yards. Since the couple intends for this home to last them a long time, if not for the rest of their lives, the house was to be built with aging-in-place principles. This meant all on a single level, with three-foot-wide doors and an even floor throughout, from the front door all the way into each shower. For Macco, then, the challenge became "How do you make a modern house warm and inviting, and nothing like those old libraries from 1965 that you see in every small town across America?"

But the couple had done their research. They knew precisely what they wanted and that was space pared down to only what they would use. What Macco, Likens and Hazle settled upon was something of a Prairie Style without the hip roofs. "It's lyrical and welcoming," he says. Likens has a background in construction, so she GC'd the project. Hazle, a fixer-upper guy, did much of the carpentry. Their involvement was terrific, says Macco, as it streamlined the process and kept things on track. "It's like these are people who have seen the movie before and know how it ends."

With three different types of exterior finishes, the mod-ish structure fits around a striking physical axis: a large feature wall of white stacked stone cuts the home in half, uniting the front to the back and each side to the other. It is the highest point on the roof line, the same stone inside and out. Today's vernacular of contemporary architecture of glass and chrome, which prevail as you would expect, but with whimsical versions in some places and unusual proportions in others.

The finishes and predominant furnishings adhere to a color scheme of blues, grays, black and brown offset by the shimmering white stone. As a result, the home feels like a forest glade on the edge of a lake. Not all of the shiny surfaces are glass, though most of the tile is glass in the kitchen and bathrooms. The countertops feature glass too; they are Vetrazzo, a solid surface comprised of recycled architectural glass.

The kitchen features high-gloss Spanish cabinet doors with oversized rectangular handles in brushed chrome. Over the substantial island sit

three ribbon metal fixtures that add a sculptural feel and welcome circular shapes to all of the rectangles in the space. It is when you see the curved leather and chrome bar chairs placed neatly at the island that you realize a watery, rippled decorative motif is at play in this chic dwelling.

When you first enter the home, there is a feature wall in the foyer. The front door opens into a side-ways-oriented transitional foyer so that passers-by can't look straight into the house. The facing wall is covered in a three-dimensional, wavy surface from Modular Art, called Dune. No matter the time of day, light plays on the sculptural element to create shadows. The waves look like ripples of water. More ripples head down the walls in curvilinear chrome sconces that highlight the great room's high ceilings. The motif continues into a cheerful guest room where matching end tables appear ribboned and fluid, thanks to a mirrored surface. Concrete floors throughout are treated in a multi-shaded brown, covered in an epoxy, that evokes a woodland floor.

*Clockwise from top left: A player piano in the great room; Spanish cabinetry in black is the same online source as the high gloss blue in the kitchen; the white stacked-stone wall frames the kitchen and is the backing for the island.*



Lighting is a key design element adding pools and shadows to the home's exterior view; Fire and Ice play out with a fountain beneath the outdoor gas fireplace.



The water theme continues outside with a fountain set into the white stone wall, where there is also a cutout containing a sexy boxed fireplace. The garden out back is currently a pristine lawn backing onto their own private citrus orchard.

Bursts of color mostly come from pop art portraits of former canine family members and Hazle's collection of steampunk artwork by David Uhl. The well-stocked bar, tucked between the stone wall and the foyer, also adds color and demonstrates that this house is beautifully suited to entertaining.

Both Likens and Hazle work from home. Her work space is a comfortable office, with sleek cabinetry and lots of floor space for the couple's two dogs, Trinity and Wraith, to keep her company. Hazle is in the garage and out back in a separate building that also houses the couple's substantial collection of Christmas decorations that includes life-sized Santas and vintage Holiday-themed toys.



Deep turquoise blues in the powder room; blue-gray in the master bedroom offset by a silver shag rug; rippled mirrors in the master bathroom; cornflower blue in the guest room is Sherwin Williams #6535.

The den is not only for lounging but doubles as a gallery featuring Hazle's father's desk, his family's collection of early American antiques and his burgeoning collection of model cars.

Often homeowners will go all-in with a decorative "pow!" in the powder room. Likens does opt for a strong statement here, but stays within the blue directive she set for the home. The sink is a stunningly dramatic turquoise-to-black Kraus Ladon Vessel Sink in glass, which sits under a bright cerulean Nicole Miller mirror.

Mirrors in similar undulating waves in the master bathroom recall the ripples motif that began at the front door. The luxurious shower has an accent wall of dark navy glass tile, which, it turns out, is a tough tile to match with grout. The Vetrazzo counters are pearlescent white.

Throughout the home, sleek modern seating tends to be leather, in white or black. Shag area rugs offset the concrete floors in apt textural contrast.

"Architecture when done right works just as well in a pastoral setting as anywhere else," says Macco. For Likens and Hazle, who savor their privacy, and would not mind at all if the neighborhood was even quieter, this sleek, sophisticated home shaded by moss-laden oaks is the perfect retreat. ✨

