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# HOME PLAN IDEAS®

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Some high-end homes are exercises in excess, but this Florida dwelling is different. Its grand spaces, built in a timeless style with fine materials, show what money can buy when it goes toward what matters most to the owners.

# Money

WELL SPENT

By Gary Thompson

*Right:* A motor court with fountain makes an elegant entry. The driveway's multicolor pavers mimic the pattern of the clay-tile roof, helping create the Mediterranean look the couple desired.









*Prime real estate in Florida.*

Exclusive development. Golf course. Huge homes. Swimming pools. All of these factors add up to million-dollar views with home prices to match. It's a successful, albeit predictable formula, often with unoriginal architecture to match. Then you see the home of Marie and Frank Caroselli and you realize that not all luxury dwellings have to be shaped from the same golden cookie cutter.

The Carosellis' investment in their home earned them more than glitz and glitter. It bought a well-thought-out floor plan, large-scale spaces, high-quality materials, and finely crafted details.

The Caroselli home is part of the Gulf Harbor subdivision in Fort Myers. A certain amount of construction conformity is to be expected in this kind of development, thanks to neighborhood peer pressure and architectural review boards. But this couple had a specific design vision for their home. They liked the Spanish Revival look, picturing a home with stone walls, a clay-tile roof, multiple courtyards, and lots of arches. "We found that very appealing," Frank says. "It was more of a Mediterranean style of architecture, somewhat different than the traditional Florida style."

In addition to the look, the Carosellis also had a layout in mind. They wanted a long, low-slung, stretched-out



home—one that would take full advantage of a lakeside view in back and give them and their guests plenty of room for living. They valued plentiful personal space and wanted guests to enjoy the same freedom and privacy.

"We wanted areas that are independent living areas," Frank says. Plus, both he and Marie had their dream rooms. For example, Frank wanted a gym and Marie wanted to indulge her love of

*m o n e y w e l l s p e n t*

*Left:* In the living room, a huge arched window matches the shape of the home's interior arches. *Top:* From the entry hall, graceful arches open views to the spacious living and dining rooms. The loggia, an open hallway, offers passage to the kitchen and family room. *Above:* Homeowners Frank and Marie Caroselli had a set of fine dining room furniture they liked, so they asked home designer W. A. "Bud" Lawrence to create a room specifically to hold it all. Marie measured and photographed the pieces and Lawrence worked from the dimensions and images.





cooking and entertaining with a family room-kitchen combination.

The Carosellis spent months looking at different plans for their dream home, but no one seemed to be able to capture their vision. Then the couple hooked up with home designer W. A. "Bud" Lawrence, a Louisiana native with an appreciation of old-world architecture and a flair for bringing the European look into his designs. Working closely with Marie and Frank, Lawrence was able to draw a plan that met their needs, both spatially and stylistically.

"It had everything we wanted," Frank says. When local artist Steve Turner brought Lawrence's pencil drawings to life in a color rendering complete with landscape details, the Carosellis were sold. "I made up my mind that we were going to build the house as Bud drew it," Frank says. Turner's rendering made such an impression that it is now framed



and displayed above the fireplace in the family room.

Lawrence says the hardest part about the project was fitting the couple's dreams onto their wedge-shape lot. The finished space tops 5,000 square feet, while a

## money well spent

*Left:* When company comes, people tend to congregate in the kitchen, where the Carosellis have plenty of room for everyone. With the open floor plan, the kitchen, family room, and breakfast nook combined offer more than 700 square feet. *Top:* The family room's focal point is a cast-stone fireplace, a feature common in older Spanish-style homes. Set back built-ins hold a TV and other entertainment gear. *Above:* The breakfast nook projects into the veranda, generous windows offer views of the pool and lake. The octagonal shape of the space recalls the stair tower by the home's entry. A colorful valance stands out in the mostly neutral decor.



three-car garage, three courtyards, and a long veranda off the back of the house rack up another 2,000 square feet of unfinished space. Estimated costs are \$175 per square foot, excluding land costs.

"They wanted as much as possible on one level," Lawrence says. "It was a challenge to get it all in there."

The floor plan divides the living areas into three pods. At one end of the house are Marie and Frank's personal spaces: the master suite, the exercise room, and his study. The exercise and study areas share a private courtyard. In the middle of the house are the entry hall, living room, dining room, family room, and

kitchen. The open kitchen and family room is exactly the combination Marie wanted for entertaining. "I can have 50 people here for brunch and have room for all of them," she says.

At the other end of the house is a guest suite that allows visitors maximum privacy when desired, but also access to outdoor and common areas as needed. If guests want to keep their own schedule, Frank says, "they can do that without disturbing anybody else; everybody has their own space." The upper level, reached by stairs from the front entry, provides two additional bedrooms, each with its own bath. The two bedrooms

## money well spent

*Opposite:* A view from the back reveals the home's long, low shape and its extensive covered veranda. Stretching the home to setback limits keeps almost all the living areas on one floor and provides a view from every room. *Above:* This covered courtyard offers sheltered passage from the garage to the home. It's also accessible from the dining room and kitchen. With its columns, arches, and fountain, the courtyard gives outdoor dining the aura of an old-world sidewalk café.

## Spanish Exhibition



The Spanish Revival style that the Carosellis favor has its roots in Spanish Colonial and Mexican buildings built in California, Texas, and elsewhere in the Southwest during the 17th and 18th centuries. The look found new popularity in many parts of the United States, including Florida, during the 1920s and 1930s. Here are some of the common features in Spanish Revival homes.

- STUCCO OR PLASTER EXTERIOR WALLS painted white or a light color
- ARCADE ENTRANCES and porches
- ARCHED WINDOWS, often surrounded by elaborate decorations
- TWISTING COLUMNS and decorative terra-cotta shields
- CLAY-TILE ROOFS that are low-pitched, hipped, or curved-gable
- ROUNDED PARAPETS along the roof edge
- BALCONIES, TOWERS, OR TURRETS, usually capped by domes or tiled pyramid roofs
- WROUGHT-IRON detailing

Helping make this Mediterranean-style exterior possible is the use of cast stone. This highly refined form of precast concrete, made from a mixture of Portland cement and coarse and fine aggregates, can be used as a masonry product for walls and building facings or to create intricate architectural trim and ornaments.

One of the oldest forms of concrete, cast stone has been in use as a building material for centuries. In recent years, it gained acceptance as an economical alternative to natural cut building stones such as granite, limestone, and sandstone. Unlike natural stone, cast stone has consistent, predictable durability and weathering qualities, can be precisely colored, and can be reinforced with steel for added strength.



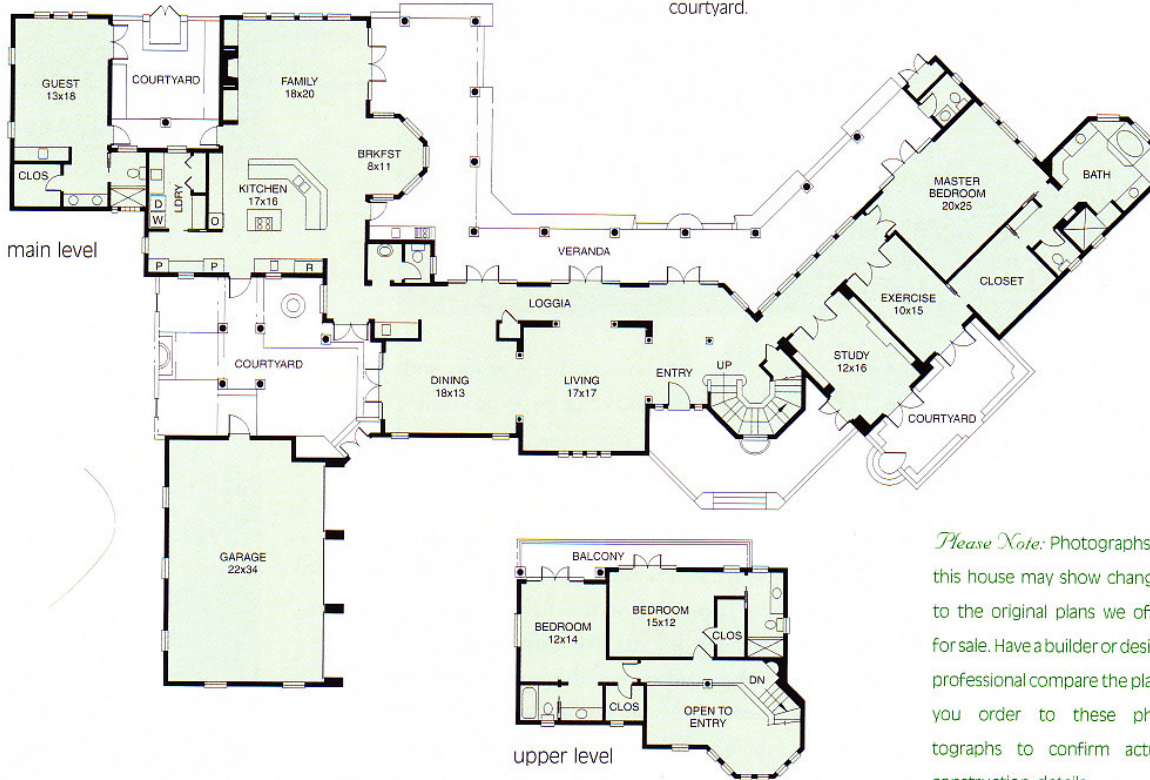
# Plan number 32355

Total Living Area: 5,102  
 Main Level: 4,157  
 Upper Level: 945  
 Bedrooms: 4  
 Bathrooms: 2½ + ¾ + ½ + ½  
 To Order Plans: Page 38  
 Blueprint Price Code: N



Frank's study has its own entrance from outside. The other set of doors leads to a courtyard.

The ceiling of the study is finished with crown molding for a three-dimensional effect.



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open to a shared balcony in back.

The heart of the three-pronged floor plan is the loggia, an open, gallerylike hallway running alongside the living and dining rooms. The loggia helps the two ends of the home “communicate” visually, Lawrence says. The loggia’s ceiling beams and vanilla marble tile floor are seen again in the kitchen, together with glazed maple cabinetry and golden granite countertops.

On the exterior, a combination of stucco, concrete, and cast-stone embellishments sets a European tone, from the arches, pillars, and balustrade to the small balcony off the stair tower and the bracketed soffit underneath the roof overhang. The roof tiles are real clay, a mix of three colors chosen by Marie and laid out in a pattern for an old-world effect.

The detailing continues inside, with more arches and columns, varied ceiling treatments, a cast-stone fireplace, and natural woodwork that stands out against a mostly neutral decor.

Marie is proud of her home’s woodwork, which was painstakingly stained by hand to just the right color. “My woodwork looks like satin,” she says.

Like a diamond, this home dazzles on first impression, but unlike some luxury homes, it doesn’t lose its luster on close inspection. Thoughtful design, quality materials, and attention to detail will let it sparkle for years to come. □

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 144.

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LANDSCAPE DESIGNER: TONY CEPPELLINI, TROPIC VENTURES  
FIELD EDITOR: SALLY MAUER

## money well spent

*Above:* The master bath continues the arches and columns found elsewhere inside and outside the home. The tub is elevated to allow a view of the lake. Separate vanities flank the tub.

*Right:* A golf course wraps around one side of the Carosellis’ home, and the master suite takes advantage of the view. The doorway near the bed leads to the master bath and a large dressing area. On the wall opposite the bed, French doors open to the veranda.



