

SARASOTA[®] MAGAZINE

Casa de Familia

Ilene Denton

Last summer, with eight active young grandchildren and one more on the way, Ruth and Galen Manternach threw themselves into finishing their big new family retreat on Sarasota Bay.

"This is where the kids will spend all their time," Galen predicts, pausing at a railing on the bridge above the freeform swimming pool that opens up for a diving platform. "And here's where you can find me," says Ruth, moving down the bridge a few yards to her elevated "sunset deck" that projects to the farthest setback, allowing stunning views up and down the bayfront.

Third-generation custom home builders in Wisconsin who decided to set down deeper roots in Sarasota after vacationing here for five years, the Manternachs knew exactly what they wanted from their new Florida home: a place where the entire growing brood could gather to create lifetime memories, but with plenty of private spaces to give everyone an occasional respite. They named their new home Casa de Familia.



The Manternachs found a spectacular two-acre property thick with moss-laden live oaks and royal palms on 140 feet of Sarasota bayfront near the Ringling Museum; then they hired architect John Potvin to design the house. Potvin literally camped on the site for two days. "I set up my lawn chair and enjoyed the breezes and really paid attention to where the breezes were coming from, what the sun was doing, what the glare was doing, where we needed large overhangs," says the architect. "I wanted to make the home as friendly to the site as possible."

Potvin and the Manternachs decided to tuck the home on the southern half of the property and keep the northern half with its canopy of trees undeveloped. The new home has that ultimate luxury: room to breathe; and one can imagine great games of hide-and-seek among the oaks. "My goal was to make the grand old trees look like they grew up around the house," Potvin says.

Casa de Familia itself is a quietly restrained Mediterranean Revival in yellowy gold, two stories, with a beautifully landscaped front courtyard and a cypress-ceiling breezeway separating the main house from a spacious two-story guest suite. Galen insisted on authentic materials: red barrel-tile roofs fired in Colombia, hand-hewn walnut floors. "My dad was a logger," he says, "and these have memories for me."

Ruth designed the detail-filled interiors and even plotted out the swimming pool, which was modeled after the shipboard pool on a Disney cruise they took the whole family on. "Galen had me jump in the ship pool with a ruler to measure the dimensions," she says.

In the grandchildren's playful bunk room, Osprey-based trompe l'oeil artist Joe Barron created a magical cloud-filled ceiling and soft sky-blue and white striped walls. Painted on the bright yellow walls of the adjoining bathroom are red, white and blue life preservers, each with USS and a grandchild's name.

Barron also painted the range hood in the kitchen to look just like hammered copper, to match the kitchen sinks; and he painted the powder room walls a harlequin pattern in faux antique chamois leather. In the kitchen pass-through niches, he painted Tuscan farm and vineyard scenes.

For the children's parents, there are four guest bedrooms inside the main house, each planned for maximum guest-friendliness with a large attached full bath with handsome onyx countertops, coffee bar and drawer-refrigerator.

The home is designed for entertaining as well as family time; 50 people can easily mingle in the handsome open-plan kitchen and family room, which overlook pool and bay. "Every home I design takes on the personality of its owner," says Potvin, "and this is a friendly home, a party home, a family home, a fun home."

This is the fifth home the Manternachs have built together for themselves—and perhaps the most special to them, since, at Casa de Familia, spending quality time together with the people they love most has taken on a whole new meaning. z

Casa de Familia Resources

Lighting Design: Ruth Donovan Interiors
Floral Arrangements: Carla Flammini

Participating Trades:

Architectural Stone Cladding: AAA Cast Stone

Audio/Video: Working Radius

Cabinetry: AlliKriste Fine Cabinetry

Carpeting: Manasota Flooring

Central Vac/Iron Centers: CJ Central Vacuum Systems

Dock and Wall: Storm Safe Consulting

Driveway Pavers: R. Webber Inc.

Drywall Finish: Gulf Coast Drywall

Electrical: United Electric

Faux Finishing: [Joseph Barron](#) and Faux Real, Cynthia Semerar

Fencing: Sarasota Fence

Fire Safety: Dolphin Fire Sprinklers

Fireplace: Sarasota Fireplace

Garage Doors: D & D Garage Doors

Granite Tops: Angelina Granite and Marble

Home Elevator: Florida Elevator

HVAC : Tri County Air Conditioning

Landscaping: Grant's Gardens

Live Oaks Preservation: Biological Tree Services, Tammy Kovar

Lutron Homeworks Lighting Control: Douglas H. Kresge

Mirrors/Shower Doors: Kauffman Glass & Mirror

Ornamental Iron: A-1 Metal Craft

Painting: Preferred Painting

Patio Doors: Kitchen and Window Design Center

Plumbing: Aqua Plumbing

Pool: Pool Design Concepts/ Phil Hess

Staining: Sarasota Premier Painting

Stucco: Mode Plastering

Tankless Hot Water Heaters: Reno Power Inc.

Tile (exterior): Angelina Granite and Marble

Tile (interior): Davis Tile

- ** Tile Pool Deck: Décor Tile Design
- ** Tile Roof: John Feeney Roofing
- ** Window Treatments: Cindy's Custom Drapery
- ** Wood Floors: Bast Floors & Staircases

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