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DESIGNING WOMEN

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Coming Home:
A Very Personal
Re-design Project

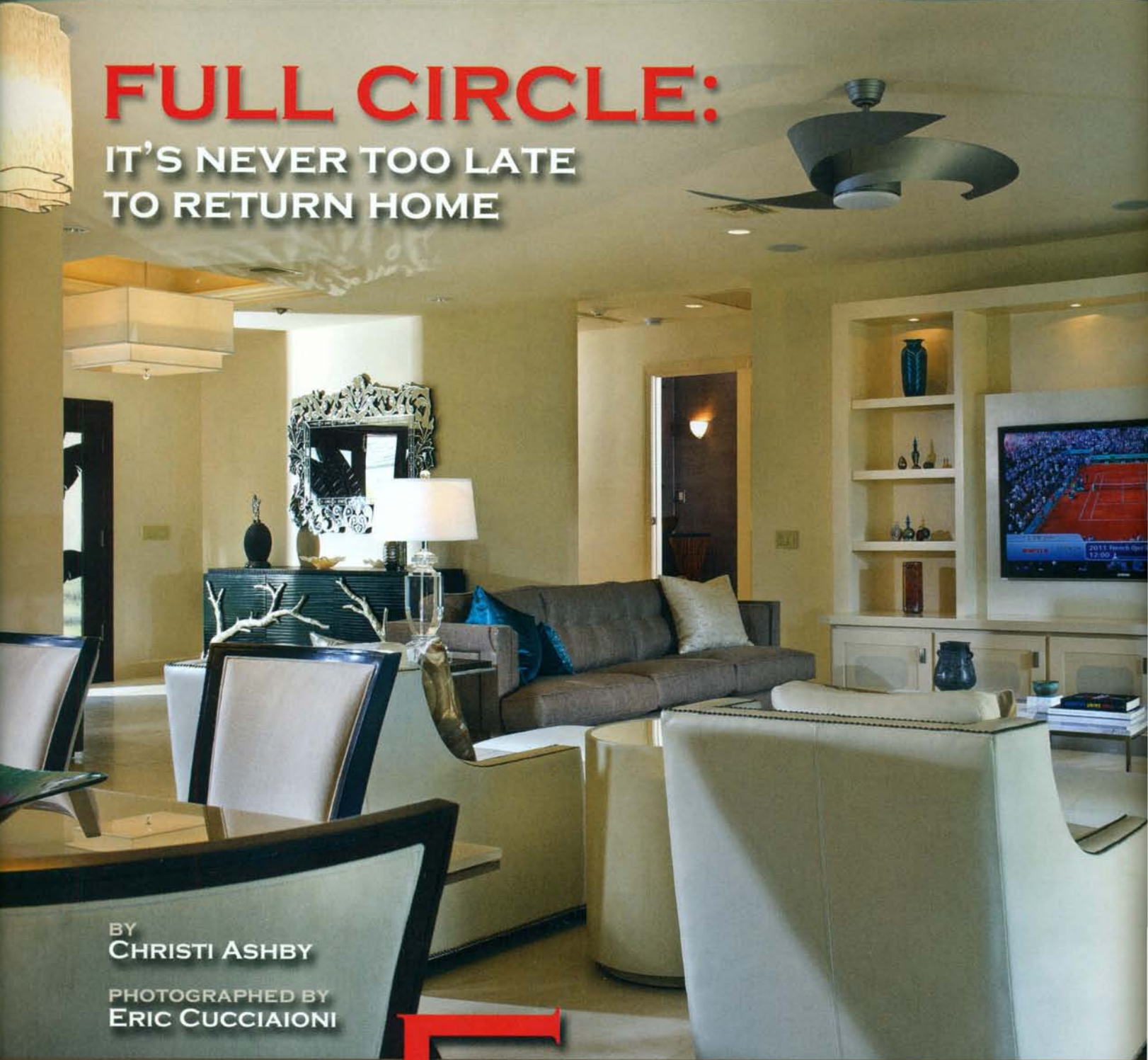
Wonderful Weddings

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FULL CIRCLE:

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE
TO RETURN HOME



BY
CHRISTI ASHBY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ERIC CUCCIAIONI

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OR ONE CENTRAL FLORIDA WOMAN COMING HOME HAS NEVER BEEN SWEETER. AFTER MAKING SOME LIFE CHANGES AND WATCHING HER CHILDREN GROW UP AND LEAVE, SHE KNEW IT WAS TIME TO CREATE HER "AGE IN PLACE" RESIDENCE. AND SO SHE WENT BACK TO HER CHILDHOOD HOUSE TO START OVER.



Interior Design:
Jose J. Cabrera, C & L Studio, Inc.

Kitchen Design:
Joan DesCombes

Architect:
Karen Kassik

Builder:
Victor Farina, Farina & Sons

Landscape Design:
Miriam Kersey

“I originally moved into this house when I was 8,” she remembers. When her parents, who had still been living there, passed away, she decided she did not want to lose the lakefront property. “I was now an empty-nester and had friends in this neighborhood. It made sense,” she adds.

What did not make as much sense was the condition and layout. It was an early-1960s design that had not seen much in the way of updating over the years, so some serious gutting began. It was a bit of a challenge as her builder, Victor Farina, explains, “There was a sunken living room, an enclosed patio, steps up to the bedrooms – four levels in all.”

Some things worked — like the 9-foot ceilings — and others (old columns and walls) did not. There were structural issues to be addressed before even considering the cosmetic changes. The owner chose Farina & Sons because of its longstanding reputation as a Central Florida builder, without even realizing Victor’s father had built some of the homes in the neighborhood.

The footprint of the house remained the same during construction, but “she got everything she wanted — a new master bedroom and bath, a new deck and outdoor shower, an enclosed garage and lots of open, flexible space,” Victor adds. He is clearly proud of the finishing work — detailed trim around the energy-efficient doors and windows, white marble in the baths, power operated blinds and shades, and custom built-ins.

The biggest architectural change let in the whole lake view. The owner says when she grew up, heavy curtains covered the back windows and most of the “living” took place in the front part of the house. Now from the entry way, there is a clear, unobstructed scene of the backyard down to the water, made possible with the wall of floor-to-ceiling sliding doors.

For the interior, the owner knew she had to select the right designer who would incorporate her style and collections. She began the process with an out-of-state designer friend who had to leave the project in the early stages. Her kitchen designer, Joan DesCombes, was already on board and planning the sleek Siematic SL system. The horizontal channel eliminates the need for hardware.

“We chose a beautiful horizontal grain wood laminate in Titan Walnut mixed with a gloss in a truffle color and for the wall cabinets we used a gloss lacquer in greige. There were three tones in all that complement each other and are in the same mood,” Joan says.

The kitchen is incorporated into the living area and not treated as a separate room — you can see it from most of the main space as it is totally open on either end and has a large window opening into the dining room. The large island and counter tops are granite. But perhaps the most impressive thing about the kitchen is that there is functional storage for virtually everything — a key quality of Siematic designs.

“The owner wanted contemporary with warmth. She needed it to be comfortable and since she works from home, it also had to convey her image,” Joan adds.

INTERIOR DETAILS:

FOYER

Console – Global Views
Mirror – Neiman Marcus
Art Glass – Client, Private Collection
Lighting – Stonegate

LIVING ROOM

Sofas, chairs and ottomans – Michael Weiss Collection
Pillows – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.
End tables and cocktail table – Michael Weiss Collection
Lighting – Visual Comfort
Shagreenaccent table – Made Goods
Rug – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.
Artwork – TangorenHolf Gallery
Glass – Client, Private Collection

DINING ROOM

Lighting – Trend
Table – Tonin Casa, Italy
Captain's chairs – Bernhardt Furniture
Side chairs – Vanguard Furniture

MASTER BEDROOM

Bed – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.
Bedding – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc. and Ann Gish
Pillows – Donna Karan, Anne Gish
Nighstands – Henredon
Lighting – Crestview Collection
Art – Jamali Fine Art
Drapery – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.

OFFICE

Lighting – Client, Private Collection
Desk – Marge Carson
Desk Chair – Workscapes
Guest Chairs – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.
Accent Table – Global Views
Art – TangorenHolf Gallery

KITCHEN/BREAKFAST NOOK

Table and Chairs – Tonin Casa, Italy
Rug – Calvin Klein
Lighting – George Kovacs
Art Glass – Client, Private Collection
Drapery – Custom designed by C & L Studio, Inc.
Cooktop, oven, convection microwave – Wolf
Refrigerator/freezer, dishwasher – Miele
Sink – Elkay
Faucet – Kohler Simplice





For the rest of the house, the owner had to make a decision on a new designer. She kept hearing a certain name over and over. He had been hearing about her as well.

Now they complete each other's sentences and playfully spar like siblings. "Since the colors, cabinets and finishes in the kitchen had already been chosen, I really needed to design the rest of the house with those elements in mind," says Jose Cabrera of C & L Studio, Inc.

The serene feel was created through the use of zen-like, natural hues and textures — soft gray-taupes and hints of pale lavender

with rich creams dominate. "Very elegant colors," Jose adds, "with the lighting fixtures [each one different] acting much like pieces of jewelry on a simple Calvin Klein sheath. "

"I kept pushing Jose to find a vision that would work for me. Many fabrics and styles that he presented were wonderful but did not hit the note that I wanted. He kept advising me that it was 'perfection' but I kept reminding him that there were many ways to achieve perfection. I had a vision, and I would recognize it when it appeared," the owner says.

He replies, "We challenged each other in

the right ways. You have clients, but in this case I gained a friend."

She adds that throughout the process, when his ideas were questioned, "he was always respectful and went back to search to make me happy. He kept coming back with solutions until I found those combinations that created this wonderful home."

It has been a glorious ride on the circle of life for this independent empty-nester. "I woke up on my 56th birthday and thought; 40 years ago I was right down the hall thinking 'I am getting my driver's license today.' " She smiled contentedly.