

# Miami Design

AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW



THE FALL ISSUE



# BRITISH COLONIAL MASTERPIECE

*POINT OF REFERENCE*

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Photography by Craig Denis Photography



Symmetry of design is evident in the design of the home's pool, outdoor living spaces and exterior elevation.

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he styles developed by our forefathers are some of the most enduring and popular home designs in this country, and have never completely gone out of fashion. Historical designs continue to be adapted to fit current advances in technology, electronics and construction.

This is the case with the interiors of this British Colonial home in Fort Lauderdale, designed by Equilibrium Interior Design.

While garages skew the symmetry of this British Colonial residence, the palm-framed entry gate and path to the front portico re-center the entry and balance the front façade.

In traditional British Colonial homes, a simple checked pattern was often painted on wood floors to suggest a marble floor.

#### ODE TO THE PAST

To understand the extent to which Equilibrium Interior Design worked to ensure its client's dream of building a British Colonial home was achieved, one needs to understand the core components of the style. While British settlements moved around the world throughout the 17th century, architectural characteristics of the time were exported to distant locations. This British Colonial architectural style was most dominant in the new colonies of North America, British West Indies, South Asia and Australia. As the Colonial period spanned many decades and across many continents, there are numerous interpretations, varying in layout, design and details. However, the trademark features of this style have been repeated time and again on buildings around the world and continue to be reincarnated and rejuvenated in today's British Colonial architecture.

"This Fort Lauderdale residence is a perfect reflection of a modern-day interpretation of British Colonial style, featuring intricate wood work, traditional architectural details and a colorful interior palette," says designer Voytek Faber, ASID, of Equilibrium.

Among the most distinctive features of the British Colonial style is the use of symmetry on the main façade and important elevations of the house. Entrance porticos and a central door with sidelights and transom are quintessential characteristics incorporated into the façade of this home. Hence, the entry, visible from the street, takes on a high degree of significance. While the home's garages are asymmetrical, the palm-framed entry gate and path to the front portico re-center the entry and balance the front façade.

Staying true to the British Colonial style are bay windows and round porthole windows, which have been cleverly incorporated by the architect throughout the house.





The three-dimensional ceiling with tongue-and-groove detail, centered Murano glass chandelier and area rug define the dining room.

#### QUICK CHANGE ARTIST

However, the home's architectural plans provided for an open plan and modern, oversized windows. These are popular modern-day elements, but are not in keeping with standard British Colonial architecture, and construction was already underway when the clients contacted Faber.

In fact, a current client of the firm recommended Equilibrium upon hearing a friend's predicament that the house was somewhat more modern than expected. Equilibrium's scope of work involved first taking the existing architectural plans and incorporating more traditional British Colonial style elements, then providing the design, layout and detailing of paneling, stairwell, moldings and ceilings, as well as coordinating the design of the baths and kitchen, and finally decorating the home with updates to existing furnishings and new soft treatments. The clients were downsizing from two homes and had most of their own furnishings, which Equilibrium would later refinish and reupholster to blend with the new home. "Certain periods call for specific details," Faber says. "That was the excitement in the creative challenge."

"This was an especially challenging job as the client called our firm very late in the construction process asking for help," Faber says. "We had just six months until the planned construction completion date. We quickly presented preliminary sketches, then CAD (computer-aided design) drawings of all woodwork and detailing, to get the project back on track. This allowed the builder, W.A. Bentz, to complete the job on time," he adds.

Specifically, the client wanted coffered ceilings in the main living areas, however ceiling-height windows were already being installed. Furthermore, the main living areas (living room, dining room, breakfast area and kitchen) were planned as an open layout. British Colonial style calls for rooms symmetrically arranged off of the main hall. "Our firm decided to use the coffered ceilings to define the spaces without interrupting the continuity of the space," he says.



White-paneled cabinets create a pure backdrop for rich green quartz counters and a colorful, hand-painted backsplash.

“We spent many hours coming up with various ideas to solve the coffered ceiling problem, while keeping the full-height windows that were specified. Our first mission was to find a solution that would make the client happy by giving them the ceiling details they desired,” he says. “The solution was very tricky to accomplish, but the result is nothing short of a miracle – coffered ceilings that look like they were designed and fitted from day one, and a thrilled client who got what they wanted.”

This British Colonial home is a juxtaposition of traditional interiors and tropical living. Rich dark woods of the traditional style dominate here. However, instead of heavy fabrics, flowing and lighter fabrics were selected. Even the color palette became more pale and soft to reflect the location of the home and the homeowner’s design aesthetic. This home is designed to be sophisticated but also light-filled and comfortable, with simple lines and elegant finishes.

In the British Colonial period, chair rails and floor-to-ceiling paneling defined the most elaborate rooms of the finest houses. The more formal the room, the more elaborate the wainscoting. Paneling carries throughout many parts of this

home and is especially dominant in the foyer, hallways and parlor. While in Colonial homes pine floors were sometimes painted in imitation of more expensive materials, the most common treatment was painting in a simple checked pattern to suggest a marble floor. In this foyer, the beauty of the pattern is presented in combination with extensive but delicate wall paneling.

#### GRACIOUS LIVING SPACES

“True British Colonial would look out of place in tropical Florida, so we brought in newer finishes to keep it fresh and lighter than the true style. We reinterpreted and enhanced the style,” he says. The white backgrounds give this residence a peaceful appearance while a color scheme of boysenberry, pale aubergine, teal and fuchsia infuse energy in the space, giving it a timeless, elegant presence. Marble was also used, but in a mix of different patterns, paying homage to traditional British Colonial style, and wainscoting of stone in the master bathroom was used in place of traditional wood.

A formal parlor would typically be used for welcoming important guests. However, in this reinterpretation of the



In this parlor, symmetry is accomplished through arrangement of furnishings surrounding the fireplace.

style, the parlor is an integral component of the main living area that spans the first floor.

A British Colonial style home must have a dominant chimney. This home is no exception, featuring a fireplace as a central focal point. In the parlor, symmetry is accomplished through arrangement of furnishings around the fireplace. Pairs of windows are grouped together and dressed in draperies with a floral motif balanced by the art and other elements in this space.

Every kitchen is the heart of the home, and it is no exception in this British Colonial residence. While in traditional colonial style, rooms are symmetrically arranged, modern necessities and design aesthetics dictated this kitchen be open to the main living space, allowing for bright spaces filled with natural light along with easy traffic flow from one area to another. White-paneled cabinets repeat details found in the paneled walls from the home's main foyer and create a pure backdrop for rich green quartz counters and a colorful, hand-painted backsplash. This colorful addition comes from the owner's love for color. Soft lavender hues accented with raspberry, violet and teal details add life and airiness to the room. Teal accents on the backsplash pick up lighter tones of the countertops and are repeated in the linen Roman shades

crowning the kitchen's large window. The backsplash accents cleverly introduce color from an adjoining room, and chrome pendants with ribbed glass and an enamel farm sink with gooseneck faucet complete the kitchen area.

Many times formal dining rooms are isolated from the remainder of the home, but here it is an integral part of the open concept, where every dinner is a festive occasion worthy of an elaborate set up. Richwood Queen Anne chairs dressed in colorful zigzag fabric combine traditional and whimsical elements into a single furnishing. The three-dimensional ceiling with tongue-and-groove detail, centered Murano glass chandelier and area rug define the dining room. A rich mahogany built-in buffet provides a practical storage solution and creates a focal point for the area.

The second floor hall acts as an axis that connects a private office, master suite and additional bedrooms in the home. The balanced space plan allowed Equilibrium to continue paneling from main floor foyer and stairwell. This yielded striking symmetrical arches that define a light-filled vestibule area overlooking the main foyer. Here, the single height paneling was cleverly transitioned from the two-story foyer visible through the arches. A dark stained console table crowned with lamps and art adds interest and creates a focal

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A dark stained console table crowned with lamps and art adds interest and creates a focal point at the end of the second-floor hallway.

point at the end of a hallway. Nearby, a pair of comfortable scrolled-arm and rattan-back chairs forms a cozy spot for resting or book reading.

“Proper proportions and consistency were critical for this flawless paneling transition, and we accomplished that by providing subtle details that cast changing light and shadow throughout various times of day, revealing the delicate white-on-white details,” Faber explains.

#### THE MASTER’S RETREAT

This bright master bedroom is filled with warm evening sunlight, but provides cleverly engineered total darkening solution. Blackout shades slide from underneath soft Roman shades and fit into guiding rails hidden behind the window’s decorative casing. While plantation shutters, characteristic of British Colonial style were used in remaining bedrooms, this room’s modern solution incorporated simple, neutral colors and lively splashes of blue. Pale blue walls beautifully coordinate with blue accents throughout the space. The prevailing white and blue color combination, contrasted with rich dark furnishings and floors, keeps this master bedroom light and elegant in true British Colonial style. The pale yellow area rug complements blue colors and contributes to the airiness of this room. “There is nothing more classic than a mahogany four-poster bed to adorn any colonial bedroom, and here it exudes elegance and sophistication alongside bright and soft surroundings,” Faber says.

“The master bathroom is the one place in the house where every day begins and ends,” he says. “It should be an intimate and sensual sanctuary inviting relaxation, refreshment and rejuvenation.” This traditional master bathroom exudes comfort, sophistication, and forms a tranquil private oasis designed to take advantage of the natural light, nicely filtering in through the room’s shuttered windows. Down lighting was supplemented with decorative and practical sconces evenly spaced over his and hers vanities.

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A white Calacatta marble background provides a light and feminine backdrop for the contrasting mahogany millwork that infuses a complementary masculine presence.

The design of the master bathroom is set to create a balance of space through the combination of tone-on-tone color, contrasting materials and symmetry. A white Calacatta marble background provides a light and feminine backdrop for the contrasting mahogany millwork that infuses a complementary masculine presence and adds energy to the space. To further balance the masculine and feminine influences, Faber utilized gently curved millwork against a rigid grid of stonework. The bathtub alcove and shower are framed in Calacatta slab openings, visually separating the areas and creating extensions of the main area of the bathroom. Wet areas of the floor are finished in mosaics to ensure safety. Wainscot-height stone characterized by subtle details and marble veining creates a luxurious backdrop.

The rear elevation and pool area of this residence incorporate many of the style's traditional influences. However, to meet the homeowner's modern needs and maximize the use of their new Florida home, the architect integrated covered terraces designed to provide shade from the tropical sun. Characteristic of British Colonial style, dark wood tongue-and-groove porch, or in this case loggia ceilings, mirror the dark floors used on the inside of the home. Curved wood brackets that would have historically supported a second-floor balcony, are incorporated as support for a copper-clad roof adorning the breakfast window.

The project recently won two ASID Florida South Chapter Design Excellence Awards – Best Single Traditional Space for the foyer and Best Traditional Bathroom. “Although such awards confirm our dedication to our work, the most prestigious awards Equilibrium Interior Design continually receives come from clients who return year after year for our talent, experience and reliability,” Faber says. “There is nothing more rewarding than clients loving their new home, as is the case with this project.” □

Project Team  
 Architect – Tuthill Architecture  
 General Contractor – W.A. Bentz Construction  
 Interior Designer – Equilibrium Interior Design (Lic #IB26001155)

## SOURCE LIST

Doors and windows – WindowMan of South Florida  
 Wood paneling and coffered ceilings – JM Custom Woodworking  
 Hickory flooring – Carlisle  
 Stonework – La Casa of Granite  
 Cabinetry and built-ins – Escobar Enterprise Master Cabinet Makers  
 Pool – Van Kirk & Sons  
 Landscaping – Dias Brothers Garden Service  
 Furniture and art – Client's own

### EXTERIOR

Sconces – Troy Lighting

### LIVING ROOM

Drapery fabric – Taffard Fabrics  
 Built-in cabinetry – Escobar Enterprise Master Cabinet Makers

### DEN

Drapery fabric – Taffard Fabrics  
 Sofa fabric – Samuel & Sons  
 Chair fabric – Colefax and Fowler  
 Ottoman fabric – Cowtan & Tout

### KITCHEN

Custom hand-painted backsplash – Mizner Industries  
 Countertops – La Casa of Granite  
 Cabinetry – Escobar Enterprise Master Cabinet Makers  
 Cabinetry hardware – Classic Decorative Hardware  
 Roman shades fabric – Taffard Fabrics  
 Lamps – Urban Archaeology

### DINING ROOM

Murano glass chandelier – La Murrina Murano USA  
 Built-in cabinetry – Escobar Enterprise Master Cabinet Makers  
 Area rug – J. Namnoun Oriental Rug Gallery

### SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY

Chair fabric – Jane Shelton  
 Pillows fabric – Rogers & Goffigon, Jane Shelton  
 Lighting – Visual Comfort & Co.

### MASTER BEDROOM

Bed and nightstands – Bernhardt  
 Roman shades fabric – Jane Churchill  
 Area rug – Oriental Rug

### MASTER BATHROOM

Cabinetry – Escobar Enterprise Master Cabinet Makers  
 Countertops and tile – La Casa of Granite  
 Sconces – Urban Archeology  
 Cabinetry hardware – Classic Decorative Hardware