

Pinecrest

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Hundreds attend Villagers' annual holiday house tour

BY KAREN BUCHSBAUM

Six unique homes in Pinecrest and Coral Gables provided the backdrop for hundreds of local residents interested in architecture, history and home décor. This year's tour theme "Then and Now — featuring architectural changes throughout the years" set the tone for an interesting and entertaining event.

People were guided through homes beautifully decorated for the holiday season by members of The Villagers, an all-volunteer not-for-profit group dedicated to raising money for the restoration and preservation of historic sites in Miami-Dade County.

The Old Cutler property of Hank and Ilaria Barreto features two unique homes — the striking contemporary residence designed by famed architect Robert Bradford Browne, with lush gardens by the well-known landscape architect Raymond Jungles; and the 118-year-old Maud Black Cottage, first built as a stable and later used as a home by the Seibold/Black family. It now serves as a

charming guest cottage.

Visitors also enjoyed the renovated and expansively decorated Old Cutler home of Megan and Steve Weber, a casually elegant and ambient home in a classic traditional style. Favorite points for visitors included the framed menus from restaurants around the world in the dining room and the enchanting butterfly tree on the terrace among the three lovely Christmas trees.

Vintage cars were on display at the home of Gary and Rosemary Metal, whose house has been in the family for 52 years and is thought to be the oldest post-World War II residence in Pinecrest. Notably, it features "slump" brick, a brick-making process by the original builder in 1950. The slump brick is used on both the interior and exterior, and the fireplace surround.

Architect/artist Carola Bravo and her husband Cesar Prato have filled their Pinecrest MIMO-style home with an impressive collection of contemporary Latin American art, including work by Carola. Designed by prominent MIMO architect Robert Fitch-Smith, the 1952 home features red concrete floors and extensive use of wood and glass. As a bonus, there is a Cold War-era bomb shelter in the backyard.

Carlos and Liliana Allen bought a Pinecrest home in disrepair and renovated it to the beautiful family home it has become today. Visitors



Joy Borden and Sarah Kuhn discuss china patterns and cooking with homeowner and Villager member Ilaria Belloni-Barreto.



Villager Toni Garcia (left), shows off some of the Allen nutcracker collection to Ana Cristina Schaps, Anita Alvarez and Maggie Brenen.

particularly enjoyed their impressive collection of colorful Christmas nutcrackers. Guests were also invited to a garden setting to enjoy complimentary homemade refreshments and a holiday boutique offering some gift-shopping opportunities.

Villager President Beverly Loftus and board members worked with House Tour chair Kathleen Bowker and committee members Gayle Duncan, Desiree Anthony, Lynda Randolph, Sweet Pea Ellman, Alexis Ehrenhaft, Aleida Martinez-Molina, Kathy Marlin, Bonnie Hutton and Renee Betancourt to make the event a success. The next Villager event is the annual Garden Tour on March 7.

The Villagers were founded in 1966 and have contributed almost a million dollars in support of the preservation of local historic sites, as well as scholarships to students pursuing careers in architectural preservation.

For more information, go to <www.thevillagersinc.org>.