

Villagers Holiday House Tour welcomes hundreds of guests

BY KAREN F BUCHSBAUM

Festive holiday decor and 'Architectural Gems South of Sunset' welcomed hundreds of guests to the Villagers' Annual House Tour in December. The event raised funds for historic restoration and preservation.

Six distinctive homes featured work by notable local architects, including Alfred Browning Parker, Charles Harrison Pawley, and Ted Tschumy. Several of these award-winning architects live in the homes on the tour, including Raul Rodriguez and husband and wife architects Carlos and Ana Maria Alas Gonzalez-Abreu. The original portion of the Gonzalez-Abreu home, dating from 1936, was said to have been visited by famed aviator Amelia Earhart.

Members of The Villagers served as docents for the tour explaining each home's distinctive history and features. It was an easy task for member Barbara Burdette

whose home was on the tour. The large property now features her family's contemporary home as well as a 1950 guest cottage built of Dade County Pine that served as the home of the property's groundkeeper when owned by an heiress to the Standard Oil fortune.

Home styles varied from Florida Vernacular, Miami Modernist, traditional Cuban, and contemporary.

"Each home, no matter the style, managed to successfully create an indoor/outdoor aesthetic," explained event co-chair Sweet Pea Ellman. "We are grateful for the community support over the last 30 years that has kept this event so popular."

Guests also stopped by the Riviera Presbyterian Church to visit a gift boutique and Attic Treasures, the popular Villager vintage shop, and to enjoy light refreshments. In keeping with tradition, a



Pictured are Villagers Kathy Marlin, House Tour co-chair Sweet Pea Ellman, and president Joan Bounds.



Anna Ehler and Villager Becky Makov are pictured with homeowner Villager Barbara Burdette. One of six unique homes featured on the tour, the Burdette home was designed by noted architect Charles Harrison Pawley.

historic-themed hand-crafted quilt made by members was raffled. Titled "Flamingo Run," this year's work of art honored the historic Hialeah Race Track.

Proceeds support the preservation and protection of historic sites in Miami-Dade County as well as scholarships for university architecture students studying historic preservation.

Ellman's co-chair was Maria del Carmen Mayoral and key committee members included Carole Johnson, Jo Mauk, Carolyn Reyes, Debbie Kavanaugh, Garth Fairbairn, April Matteini, Margie Palmer, Marlin Ebbert, Beverly Loftus, Monica Fidel, Renee Betancourt, and Bonnie Hutton. They were supported by the dozens of Villagers who served as docents.

The Villagers Inc. is Florida's oldest historic preservation organization. Founded in 1966, the all-volunteer organization is made up of almost 200 women and men who are passionate about local history. To

learn more about The Villagers' projects, history, scholarships, and events, visit <http://thevillagersinc.org>.

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— Sweet Pea Ellman,
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