

Holiday House Tour highlights need for historic preservation

BY KAREN F. BUCHSBAUM

Hundreds turned out on Dec. 7 for the Villagers' 36th annual Holiday House Tour, focused on five distinctive homes in the Pinecrest area, built from the 1950s through 2012.

The theme "Inside Out – A South Florida Lifestyle" showcased how to creatively bring the outdoors in.

Fresh Christmas trees surrounded the hall at Christ the King Lutheran Church providing the perfect setting for the gift boutique and Attic Treasures vintage shop as well as complimentary goodies and savory snacks. One lucky person won the raffle for a hand-crafted quilt with the theme "Biscayne Bay Regatta."

From families with deep ancestral roots in Miami to transplanted homeowners, the homes each reflected a love of the South Florida lifestyle with beautifully landscaped yards to complement their homes. Striking art, kitchens to die for, and unique accessorizing wowed visitors.

In a mid-century modern makeover, homeowners cleverly used glass barn doors to separate spaces, and made the floors all one level to create a comfortable open-concept home for a growing family. In a home from the '60s, the architect-homeowner completely opened up the spaces adding light and creating a charming Balinese-style estate.

Tour-goers were treated to an historic-inspired home, filled with carefully curated antiques and photos from their ancestor, one of Miami's early founders, Ralph Monroe. Interesting and unusual nautical elements were threaded throughout the décor.

Elegance met South Florida playfulness in an expansive home redesigned with cozy corners, covered sunrooms, and balconies. Porch swings held up by thick ropes



Ralph and Gabriele Lipp are pictured with architect-homeowner John Medina.

contrasted with interior spaces featuring French antiques and formal elements. Throughout, design touches like framed vintage Hermes scarves continued a tropical motif.

An '80s home was completely renovated with eclectic touches providing an exceptional contrast for the streamlined, spacious kitchen and butler's pantry, loaded with every convenience. Entertainment areas seamlessly continued into the backyard with an outdoor kitchen and dining area. Interior décor featured Moroccan-style rugs and a one-of-a-kind root ball repurposed as a chandelier and the husband's home office displays his collection of bipartisan political campaign memorabilia.



Villager Joanne Meagher, pictured with guests Janet Perez, Kathi Toft-Nielsen and Joanna Lopez, is ready to show them into one of the homes on the tour.

Proceeds fund local historic preservation projects and scholarships for university students studying preservation. The Villagers is Miami-Dade County's oldest historic preservation organization, founded in 1966. The group has helped restore and preserve much of Miami-Dade's unique history, including donating more than \$1 million to support preservation efforts of 70-plus local organizations. An additional \$500,000-plus has been awarded for college scholarships to students studying historic preservation at Florida universities, as well as graduating seniors from the award-winning Design and Architecture Senior High (DASH) in Miami.

The Villagers' fund preservation efforts with a variety of events and projects and are well-known for their popular house and garden tours. For more information about The Villagers, projects funded, events, and membership, visit online at www.thevillagersinc.org. The Villagers' next event will be their annual Garden Tour scheduled for Saturday, Mar. 7, 2020.

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