The home features contemporary architecture that is warm and carries horizontal lines with a ranch twist, with a tropical feel through indoor/outdoor integration, lots of covered terraces, much natural light, floor-to-ceiling windows, open spaces and an open floor plan. The proportion is much more window than wall.

THE THRILL OF DISCOVERY

WANDERING THROUGH THIS SPRAWLING, YET UNCONVENTIONAL PINECREST HOME IS AN ADVENTURE FOR THE SENSES.

BY ROBIN HODES
The concept of indoor/outdoor living is arguably South Florida’s biggest draw. The couple and their four children, who reside in this 6-bedroom, 5,000-square-foot home with 2,000 square feet in exterior terraces, wanted to capitalize on this concept, and with a full acre of land to work with, endless possibilities existed. As so many are nowadays, they were drawn to contemporary architecture, but wanted to add the twist of a ranch style, which is noted for its elongated profile. That, combined with lofty ceilings soaring to 22 feet contributes to the residence’s uniqueness. Upon seeing her website, the homeowners turned to architect Stephanie Halfen of SDH Studio, an award-winning architecture and design firm based in North Miami Beach.

“The owners are a lovely, down to earth family,” says Halfen. “They wanted a home to enjoy with their kids, which was livable, cozy, and allowed for frequent entertaining.” Instantly grasping the desired aesthetic, Halfen set out to create a structure where indoor/outdoor integration would be made effortlessly. Intending to take advantage of every ounce of natural light, she used floor-to-ceiling windows in abundance. “When you consider the proportion of the home, it is much more window than wall,” explains Halfen. This was an especially refreshing change for the owners who had previously resided in a house that was by comparison darker and more traditional.

The assimilation of nature into the design was a fundamental aspect of Halfen’s vision, and when it came to specifying finishes, she heavily considered her selections which included Brazilian Ipe wood and Carrara marble. Courtyards and gardens are present throughout to perpetuate the theme. You never quite know where one will pop up, but it always brings a pleasant surprise, as do other elements placed around that serve as captivating focal points.

Halfen’s comfort level with the style of the home—contemporary being one of her favorites to work in—combined with the sheer size of the property, allowed her to spread her wings and let her creative mind run free. “There are many tendencies within contemporary architecture, but when you have the rare opportunity to work on an acre lot in Miami, you can really explore movement and volume,” she says.
Perhaps the most engaging aspects of the home are its layout and flow. Paying close attention to the family's way of life, Halfen crafted spaces that allowed for personal privacy, such as an intimate wing of bedrooms where the members of the family each have their own place to retreat, and an additional wing with ample social areas where everyone can congregate. To that point, there are not just one, but two family rooms! “Everyone has their own personal space, but also, many places they can enjoy together,” comments Halfen. The separate wings are joined together by a corridor which creates a functional bridge allowing for transition from one end of the home to another, while simultaneously offering a significant glimpse at the wonders of nature, such as a vertical living garden. Yet a third wing houses a private cabana suited for the kids’ recreation or as guest quarters.

Undeniably, the most enviable aspect as well as the most necessary to fulfill the homeowners’ desires, is how the entire home wraps around the backyard, thus allowing it to be easily viewed from virtually every interior location. “This is truly the most beautiful feature,” confirms Halfen. “When your own backyard becomes like a painting, it becomes the most beloved piece in your art collection.”

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On the Cover
SDH Studio explores movement and volume in this contemporary home in South Florida.