

Silberstein Architects, *delray beach, florida*

Foght Residence, Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

The island of Bonaire in the Netherlands Antilles is located 38 miles north of Venezuela. After spending ten winters on the island, the owners of this house bought property on which to build a permanent winter home. Bounded on three sides by residential lots and a two-lane road, the house faces west toward the ocean.

With 3,000 square feet of floor space, the two-story house has three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the first floor along with family room, storage and kitchen and a large master suite and library on the second floor. The plan resulted from a clear program and specific site conditions. For reasons of noise, privacy and security, the front of the house has two wings, garage and guestrooms, connected by a privacy wall that creates a barrier between the house and the public road. The house can be entered through an ornamental doorway leading into the courtyard or through the garage. The courtyard is enclosed by the guest wing on the north, the living room on the west and the garage on the south. A stairway leads from the courtyard to the master bedroom suite on the second floor. This suite is directly above the living room and fronted by a terrace on the west that overlooks the court-



Photo, top: West elevation of the house as seen from the ocean; Above: Second floor terrace on the west that overlooks the courtyard and ocean. Photos by Chuck Wilkins.

yard as well as the ocean beyond. The courtyard, with its 30-foot long fountain fringed with seven water-spouting frogs on each side, acts as a buffer against roadway noise while providing privacy for the three guest bedrooms. The guest bedrooms have access to the main living room from the courtyard, as well as to the ocean.

The floor plan is axial. From the ornamental courtyard gate that serves as the front door, there is a direct view of the ocean through the courtyard, living room and terrace. The terminus of the axis between the front door and the sea is a radial cedar deck that cantilevers over the cliff. This deck is edged with cedar bollards housing indirect lights. Below the deck are lights that illuminate the sea.

Views from the house were important to the client so most of the rooms have direct views to the sea. Windows and doors are typically located opposite one another to allow cross ventilation during the months when air-conditioning is not necessary. All of the floors and bathrooms are finished in limestone and all other surfaces are painted stucco. Doors and windows were custom designed and made of mahogany by craftsmen on the island.

Photo, top: Courtyard and 30-foot fountain with water-spouting frogs acts as a noise buffer for the guestrooms. Photo by Chuck Wilkins. Plan and elevation courtesy of the architect.

