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STANDISH RESIDENCE

The Harbor Acres home of Mark and Kim Standish was built in 1998. Designed by Phil Skirball, it was originally the home of Robert and Mollie Nelson.

BY MARTY FUGATE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG WILSON

A quiet, canopied street in Harbor Acres offers a study in contrasts. One front lawn is a carefully crafted tapestry of date palms and ancient live oaks; the multilevel house is a clean, white expression of modernist geometry. It's monumental and slightly imposing. Walking up to it feels like you're approaching a significant structure — perhaps a museum of modern art. And in

a way, you are.

The owners meet me at the door and welcome me inside.

Mark Standish is the former president and co-CEO of RBC Capital Markets; Kim Standish is retired from a 28-year career as a counterterrorism officer with the CIA. They're a warm, down-to-earth couple. And fearless art collectors.

Striking works of art immediately draw my eye. This is definitely not your grandmother's art collection. Cheeky, edgy, sexy, contemporary

pieces. As cutting-edge as a new razor blade.

Mark and Kim happily take me on a guided tour of their live-in art gallery. Powerful art works command strategic spaces throughout the home. They pause before their favorite pieces, and tell me the stories behind them.

There's Ann Carrington's striking portrait of Queen Elizabeth II — created entirely from safety pins and bracelet chains. An homage to Sid Vicious, perhaps.

Dustin Yellin's "Psychogeographies" sparkle in

several rooms. These are colorful human figures, encased in solid glass. On closer inspection, you see they're three-dimensional collages. Each figure is comprised of hundreds of tiny images. Fragments of clippings, buildings, people's faces, the Greek flag. The sheer density is hypnotic.

Santiago Montoya, a contemporary Colombian artist, created an intricate money collage — a mash-up of Cuban and American currency. “I think he’s saying money talks,” Kim says with a

laugh. “It’s the universal language.”

Alexis Silk’s glass-blown figure is both beautiful and unsettling. A lithe female torso in hot-red glass hanging from a meat hook. The convergence of beauty and exploitation, perhaps.

Ron English mocks the icons of advertising and popular culture with several subversive works. These include a photo of the pudgy Ronald McDonald statue he created for “Supersize Me,” a painting of Marilyn Monroe with Mickey

Mouse-faced breasts, and a recreation of the Rolling Stones “tongue logo” using two intertwined, painted female figures.

Mr. Brainwash (aka Thierry Guetta) weighs in with portraits of Madonna (as seen on the “Celebration” album) and Charlie Chaplin (holding a can of pink paint in front of a graffiti-layered wall).

Colin Christian’s “Love Bunny” is a bunny-eared female figure mounted on one wall. A



Wine lovers take note: The dining room is home to a glass-fronted wine vault, with more than 2,000 bottles in plain sight.



As seen from the bay, the house seems to float in a field of green, with dramatic stairways rising to meet the elevated living areas.



A modern art collection — with cheeky, edgy, contemporary pieces — lines the walls of the dramatic home.

silicone sculpture, all white except for the flesh tones of her face. She looks back at you with the big eyes and the inviting expression of an anime heroine.

Most of these artists reflect the pulse of street art, graffiti art and the whirlwind of contemporary pop imagery. But that's not the only flavor here. Sarasota-based artist William Kelly offers more traditional meditations on scenes of Tuscany in the dining room.

"We love Bill's work," says Kim. "He creates such colorful tranquility in his paintings. I could get lost in them."

That's just some of their stunning sculpture and paintings. Unconventional work, although it fits the standard definition of visual art. But, in the Standish house, the boundaries of art, architecture and furniture design blur. It's impossible to tell where one ends and the other begins.

Take the Orb chandelier in the master living space. It sounds like something out of "Star Trek" — and looks like it, too. A spidery geodesic dome with an intricate mechanism. If you think you've seen it before, you probably have — or a smaller version. The Orb is a large-scale variation of Chuck Hoberman's spherical toys. But this mechanized globe isn't child's play. Push a button, and it expands from 18 inches to an impressive 6 feet in diameter. And it comes with its own multicolored light show.

In the living room, the sculpture of a floppy-eared Playboy Bunny on all fours supports the weight of a glass coffee table. (A piece by Paul Insect — and, yes, that is his name.) It's not as sexist as it sounds; it's more of a mordant memento mori. The figure is a skeleton. She gazes into a hand mirror on the floor. Remember, Playboy Bunny. Thou art mortal.

Each piece stands out. The artists make their edgy statements — and they come through loud and clear, thanks to the house's open plan and cool, white color scheme. House and art seem made for each other.

Actually the house was remade to be the showcase it became.

It was not so much a renovation as a transformation.

Tale of transformation

In the early 2010s, Kim and Mark were part-time Sarasota residents with a place in the Ritz on Lido. They went looking for a more permanent home base. They found much they liked. With this Harbor Acres residence, they found a lot to love.

Mark fell in love immediately. He's a tech-savvy, forward-looking guy with a contemporary style. Kim had a more delayed reaction.

"Modern architecture isn't my usual cup of tea," she says. "Most of it strikes me as sterile. But this place grabbed me. It's warm in a way you seldom find."

The house was built in 1998. Architect Phil Skirball had designed it for Robert Nelson,



the late Sarasota media entrepreneur, and his wife, Mollie Nelson. Mark and Kim bought the structure in 2013. They loved the integrity of the house, but wanted to open it up and repair some damaged sections. In 2014, they launched a two-year transformation. They tapped Rick Oswald to be the interior architect and Pamela Hughes as the interior designer.

I call them both a few days later to get the details.

Hughes recalls their initial creative discussion.

“When we first met, Mark said, ‘I’ll describe what I want you to do in one word.’ I asked, ‘What’s that?’ and Mark said ‘Wow.’ And that’s what I went for.”

But ‘wow’ never happens overnight. The first step?

As Hughes puts it, “We took it down to the bones.” As she recalls, they opened up the back end, re-did all the lighting and electrical work, opened up walls, eliminated the wall between the family room and living room, created a see-through fireplace and reinvented the master bathroom. It’s now an inviting open plan with gleaming Calacatta marble on counters, floors and in the shower.

Like many of the home’s functional details,

The kitchen and dining room are frequently filled with guests, from their three grown children to major fundraisers for area nonprofits.

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Oswald's fireplace is a work of art in its own right. Its hearth is cut from a meteorite's black stone — a detail from the original house. Oswald's redesign removed the wall that originally enclosed the chimney. Now, the fireplace is in plain sight. His new chimney is wreathed in a stainless steel mesh over a steel flue; the metal elements float above the jet-black hearth like an inverted T. The gas-fed fire creates a thin sheet of flame, warming both the main living room and the informal dining room.

Oswald redefined the entrance with a dramatic, translucent glass door on a pivot — a massive, perfectly balanced door that moves with the push of a finger. When fully open, the door stands at a right angle to its frame, creating a cross shape. The architect echoed that shape with acrylic crossbars on the stainless steel sconces flanking the front door. Each cross is backlit with LED lighting — any color, depending on the season or the owners' mood. Call it functional sculpture. Or another boundary-defying work of art.

Once the walls and structural elements were in place, Hughes added her own artistry, working closely with Kim. Interior design meant creating new interior pieces. Much of the furniture is Hughes' design — sleek, softly colored

The bedroom is a cool, comfortable space with views overlooking the bay and skyline beyond.



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pieces in the mid-century-modern tradition.

Kim points them out to me as we continue our tour.

“We love the pieces Pamela created,” she says. “Our favorites are the entryway chest and the chests in the dining room.”

Kim adds that her favorite room in the house is the one she happens to be in at the moment.

Mark’s favorite room is the man cave / media room, complete with a mosaic of Iron Man, a cartoon collage created by Stan Lee, and an oversized, stainless-steel replica of an AK-47.

“It’s non-functional, in case you were wondering,” he says.

Finding a place to relax is easy here. The open layout is filled with cozy seating areas and intimate nooks. And if you feel like a glass of wine, you’ve come to the right place. Other homes have wine cellars. The Standish home has a glass-fronted wine vault, with more than 2,000 bottles in plain sight.

There’s spectacular art in every room.

And spectacular views of nature.

Where everything comes together

Panoramic windows and sliding glass walls reveal the stunning drama of sky and water throughout the house. Outside, beyond the infinity pool’s coup d’œil horizon line, the waters of Sarasota Bay glimmer. Across the bay, you see the silhouettes of Lido Key, Bird Key and Siesta Key. And the clouds of a late afternoon sky.

We walk outside to get a better look.

The house is opaque and private from the street: clerestory windows up top and translucent glass on the lower levels protect from prying eyes. The bay side is all about clear glass and openness. Skirball’s original exterior concept shows affinity to Paul Rudolph’s work — and an

The Orb chandelier in the main living space expands from 18 inches to 6 feet in diameter, and comes with its own multicolored light show.



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Comfortable seating surrounds the infinity pool, with those amazing views of Lido Key, Bird Key and Siesta Key.

intimate relation to the waterfront site.

As seen from the bay, the house seems to float in a field of green. Dramatic stairways rise up to meet the elevated living area.

Skirball's design is symmetrical, with a few variations. A concrete structure, painted bone white. Rows of floor-to-ceiling windows — with two rows of windows in the center. The roof extends over the elevated pool patio to create shade. Five wide overhangs reach out to embrace the bay. Not solid slabs: the overhangs are punctuated with rectangular openings. Concrete, but seemingly weightless. A tracery of openings and brise de soleil.

We head down the steps and stroll to the water.

Faile's pensive "Bunny Boy" sits by himself on a corner of the lawn. A larger-than-life marble sculpture of a boy, protectively cradling a rabbit.

Mark says they're looking for another monumental work of art for the exterior. They're considering commissioning a work from a Ringling

College student or faculty member.

It's one of their many connections.

They're rooted in the local not-for-profit community. Forty Carrots, Moffitt Cancer Center and Asolo Rep Theatre are just some of the organizations they actively support. Now that they're spending more time in Sarasota, they plan to support even more.

Not a full-time job. But it could be.

On the day of this visit, Kim took a break from her strategic planning for a large fundraising event for Forty Carrots — a benefit party they're hosting tomorrow evening at their home. Maybe it's her professional background, but she seems pretty cool, calm and collected for someone who will be hosting 100 people the next day.

The couple loves big parties — and also small celebrations with friends and family. Their three grown children are frequent guests.

Their openhearted nature shines through in the home's open design. No accident, of course. Oswald and Hughes both told me that their work was informed by the high-energy, art-loving, life-celebrating, open-minded personalities of Mark and Kim.

According to Mark, their transformed home brings all their joys together. "Everything intersects right here," he says. "Art, architecture, nature and family — it all comes together."



Thierry Guetta's portrait of Charlie Chaplin is just one of the many dramatic works of art in the Standish home.

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The master bath features gleaming Calacatta marble, as well as this distinctive bathtub.

Did the transformation create the “wow” effect the couple was looking for?

“Definitely,” says Kim.

The sun dips out of sight. We say our goodbyes.

As I pull out of the driveway, the steel panels flanking the entrance come to multicolored life.

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