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Fall 2021



# HIDDEN GEM

THE BACKYARD OF THIS COASTAL FARMHOUSE HOME CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF PRIVATE RESORT LIVING

Copper finish gas lanterns from Bevolo greet you at the entrance of the large circular driveway that arcs around the existing oak tree. Lucas Lagoons designs and builds this spectacular 360-degree flat rock water feature, of which Lucas Congdon, pool and landscape designer of Lucas Lagoons, says, "Your senses are teased by the sounds and visuals of the front water feature, and when you look through to the back of the house, you can see the majestic waterfall and everything ties together." The standing seam metal roof pairs well with the black window frames. These befitting-style windows are from Andersen Windows & Doors by Naples Lumber.





In a quiet neighborhood, steps away from the Cocohatchee River, a warm-hearted family envisions a coastal farmhouse resort-style home as a haven for fellowship. “The very first time I saw the site, I called it the hidden gem,” shares Nate Johnson, builder and partner of Potter Homes. Lush foliage and large oak trees fill this seclusive oversized lot.

The clients enlist Architect Steven Jallad of MHK Architecture & Planning to design a home that is a departure from the normal Florida aesthetic — Jallad describes this style as coastal farmhouse. Alex Thies, owner and lead interior designer of the boutique design firm Adelyn Charles Interiors, shares, “You can walk into this house, and besides the palm trees, you wouldn’t realize you were in Florida. It feels more like a house that belongs up north.” To create a restorative vacation-level experience for the backyard, the clients turn to Lucas Congdon, pool and landscape designer of Lucas Lagoons. ►

**Family Room:** Potter Homes and their team of carpenters create the intersecting ceiling beams and use a CNC machine to custom design and mill the curvilinear segments. Mounted to the whitewashed brick fireplace is a 150-year-old barn-wood mantle. Resting in front of the television are two custom Vanguard chairs with a textured blue fabric on the back. “These chairs bring in color and interest, but the seat itself is in a performance fabric — everything has an elegance, but is very forgiving,” expresses Thies.



**Stairs:** Thies shares that the iron and glass star-shaped pendant symbolizes safe harbor — like a guiding star. Fusing farmhouse with coastal style, a painted white nickel gap surrounds the wood X-beam on the ceiling crafted by Potter Homes. This X shape repeats on the entry way landing zone below — done in a European white oak flooring from Real Wood Floors. The rustic wood and industrial metal elements blend on the stairs and are a purposeful architectural moment that can be seen through the front windows.

**Bar:** Gunmetal door frames and brass hardware balance the medium oak cabinet bar from Ruffino Cabinetry, while a whitewashed brick backsplash can be seen through the glass-front cabinets. Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery provides the undercounter beverage center, and beside it, Potter Homes converts a reclaimed whisky barrel, transforming it into a sink that features a hammered copper basin fitted with an industrial style copper faucet. For this playful recreation space, Thies selects durable wood-like tile floor from DeMarco Tile.





Jallad comments, “In line with the farmhouse style, we compartmentalized the home into smaller elements so that it feels more pedestrian in scale.” Jallad reinforces the farmhouse appeal with gable walls and arched trusses that highlight the gable peaks. White mortar between the earthy stone cladding complements the board and batten siding, while steep roof lines and dormers add to the dynamic exterior. “I respect the opinions of everybody, and I research what architectural materials and interior finishes make up the palette,” shares Congdon, who carries those stylings through to the backyard for a cohesive design.

Thies and her design team, Rachel Spadavecchia and Emily Schlimm, collaborate on projects frequently. Here they fuse industrial style with farmhouse charm for an eclectic, inviting modern farmhouse interior. Honoring the coastal setting, Thies incorporates blue hues amid a neutral backdrop. “Splashing color here and there to give the design personality, we embraced deep navy, green, and pink,” delights Thies, who layers textures, rich woods, brick, and black accents. ►

**Dining Room:** As a chic alternative to the enclosed wine room, Thies incorporates Sub-Zero wine towers from Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery into the bleached oak built-in from Ruffino Cabinetry. As a house warming gift, Potter Homes presents a solid dining table with smokey-gray epoxy that fills the natural crack in the black walnut table top for an astonishing artistic expression. This element ties into the black base and the adjacent black frames on the glass-front cabinets. Much like the elegant abstract art, the two powder-blue host chairs from Century add a touch of color and a dash of class.







**Kitchen Range & Hood:** The gray and white marble mosaic backsplash from DeMarco Tile marries a geometric pattern with a traditional medium. This magnificent, pure white La Cornue range from the CornuFé series is polished with brass accents, courtesy of Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery. Providing no upper cabinets here on purpose, Thies lets these stunning elements shine. “The hood has a traditional notion but is done in a more modern, clean-line way,” shares Thies. This bell-shaped hood is custom made by Ruffino Cabinetry.



*“The hood has a traditional notion but is done in a more modern, clean-line way,” shares Thies.*

**Kitchen:** This airy farmhouse kitchen is a combination of white and bleached oak cabinets from Ruffino Cabinetry with a stunning gray, white, and beige quartzite countertop containing a large apron sink. An uncommon and adorable feature is the pooch-feeding station clad in the same quartzite. Potter Homes integrates this custom, unfolding cafe-style window from Andersen Windows, sourced through Naples Lumber, to better service the outdoor living space. The wood base counter stools with woven-robe back add a coastal vibe.





**Master Bathroom:** Lucas Lagoons designs a private garden and water feature outside the master bathroom. “The homeowners are not just looking out at nothing,” explains Congdon. “They have a view that brings the outdoors in. They get to peek into nature, but no one can peek in!” Thies uses a large format, white onyx-like tile for the back wall, and a marble mosaic from DeMarco Tile that flows down the partition walls to the shower floor. The washbasin tub from Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery pulls in the farmhouse style, while antique brass sconces from Wilson Lighting add an industrial element.



**Master Bedroom:** A modern ceiling fan from Lighting First hangs from the vaulted ceiling, from which painted white nickel gap paneling flows down to surround the three-sided DaVinci fireplace from Southern Coast Fireplaces. “We decided on a fireplace for ambiance, and with the noise from the waterfall outside, it elevates this space from master bedroom to master retreat,” says Johnson. The custom-made bed from Vanguard with a delicate iron canopy garners the feel of a traditional four-poster bed.





**Bedroom Nook:** To create this cozy reading nook, Thies designs a window seat with drawer storage below and two built-in bookcases, both from Ruffino Cabinetry. The finish on the brass library lights tie into the brass pulls on the drawers, while cream and powder-blue accent pillows create a pleasing palette on top of a dusty-rose cushion. The scheme carries into the adjoining bathroom with a warm-white, furniture-style vanity from Ruffino Cabinetry, an aqua blue vinyl wallcovering, and contemporary brass pendants.

**Bunk Bedroom (Below):** This forest-themed bunk room features an ebony stain bunkbed with trundle. Modern elements like the Lighting First ceiling fan and the pewter-gray bedspreads add a sophistication to this whimsical woodland space. A series of thin wood slices are applied like tile to the headboard wall, and a watercolor mountain range mural on the adjacent wall solidifies the rustic nature of this room.



**Bedroom (Right):** An ivory-white drapery with a gold brass rod inspires this sweet country bedroom and offers balance to the engaging wallpaper print. Thies adds a neutral grasscloth wallcovering to the vaulted ceiling for added warmth and texture to the playful palette of teal, soft pink, and olive green. This winsome bed is a dream with a plush creamy-white carpeting for comfort underfoot.



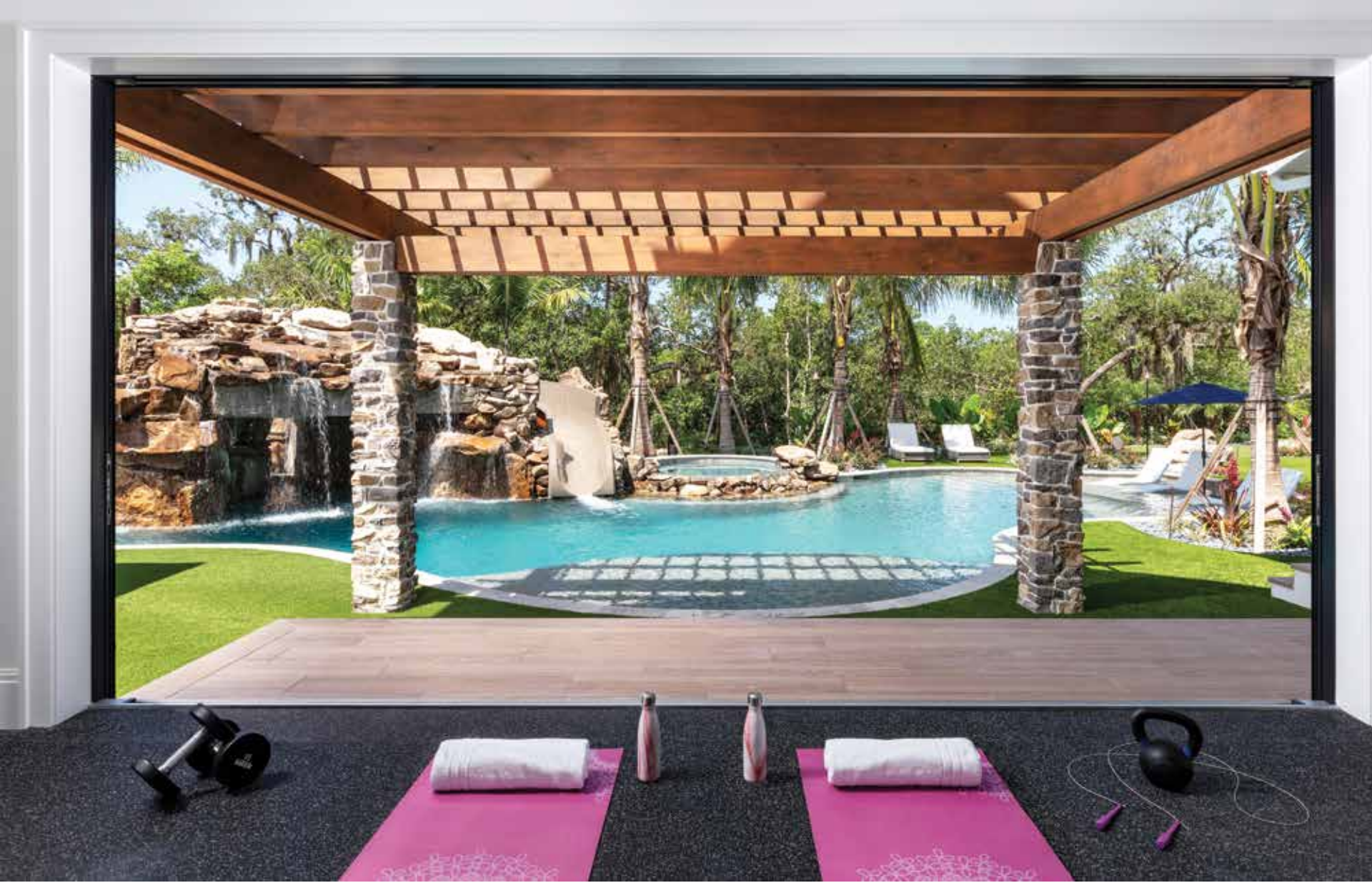




**Laundry Room:** Blue, gray, and cream hues fill this luxurious laundry room that features a laundry basket storage system, a craft center, and a built-in ventilated litter box. The blue-gray cabinets from Ruffino Cabinetry have brass hardware and are a delight atop the mod-fashion style tile floor. For a Florida vibe, Thies selects a brass Serena & Lily capiz shell pendant.

This home wouldn't be a destination without its vacation-style backyard. Huge fans of Congdon's reality television series "Insane Pools Off The Deep End," the homeowners knew Congdon would be the perfect choice to design their oasis hideaway. Growing up in Vermont and working off the land gave Congdon an appreciation for mountains, rivers, rock formations, and streams that inspire these imaginative, interactive outdoor designs.

Before the work begins, Congdon invites the homeowners to his rock yard in Tennessee to get to know them, their style, and tastes. "There's nothing more iconic than a coconut palm to symbolize relaxation," says Congdon, designing this tropical escape to include open areas that serve as gathering spaces near the fire pit where the family enjoys playing games. There is also a resort-style pool with a slide, a tranquil waterfall, and an enchanting grotto. ►



**Indoor Gym | Pool:** This spacious exercise room looks out under the pergola that connects the architecture to this resort-style pool by Lucas Lagoons. The free-form pool features a gargantuan commercial slide, yet Congdon masks it in Tennessee rock. 48 tons of rock wraps around the slide to create the waterfall and grotto. "The experience of swimming through a waterfall and ending up in a cave is magical — the feeling is intoxicating and relaxing," conveys Congdon. Water from a luxurious hot tub spills over the rocks and splashes into the pool like a natural spring.





“This home has southern charm you can’t find anywhere else in Southwest Florida,” rejoices Johnson. It’s a cozy, tropical getaway worthy of its moniker, the “hidden gem.” ■

**Rear Elevation:** Lucas Lagoons places a Tennessee field stone stepping path that draws the eye to a feature where four up-lit palms with low-lying vegetation set a tropical mood. Interlocking Tremron retaining blocks create the fire pit structure, also designed by Lucas Lagoons, with seats in the same coping as the pool. The black steel lanterns from Wilson Lighting tie into the black window frames of the house and add to its rustic charm.

**Lanai:** “Out here we wanted to adopt the feel of an indoor living space, and so we added plenty of comfortable seating and a cozy area rug,” states Thies. The same wood-like tile floor from DeMarco Tile runs across this space and down the country-style porches for continuity. Large roll-down screens extend from the underside of the arched opening. Jallad adds, “We increased the heel on the curved truss to incorporate the tall roll-down screen system.”





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Southern Coast Fireplaces  
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**Rear Elevation & Aerial:** The natural-green fronds of the palms are a stunning contrast to the vibrant artificial turf and putting green, while blooming red bromeliads and flowers in rosy hues complement the lush landscape from Potter Homes. Congdon elicits a fresh water color in the pool waters by using a natural French Grey Pebble Sheen interior finish from PebbleTec. "That color brings in deep blue tones that are so refreshing that it draws you right in," says Congdon. Twelve truckloads of native Florida limestone form the massive retaining wall that separates the recreational yard from the Cocohatchee River.





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