

Southern Hospitality

This Florida couple walked a fine line between history and high style to create a dream home that rivals any luxury hotel.



From the street, Kelly and Kelley Slay's Tudor-style house looks as if it were built in 1916 rather than 2016. And that was precisely the point. They designed their dream home to fit the only available lot in the historic San Marco neighborhood near Jacksonville, Florida—and to blend in with the homes that surrounded it. “We wanted the exterior to be period correct and respectful of neighboring houses,” says Kelley. “So we used the materials that theoretically would have been available when the area was established.”

Kelley worked with local architect Scott Leuthold for 18 months to get the details just right, from the exterior stonework to the interior stairwell, and from windows to woodwork. Along with the locale's history, they were inspired by Kelly's English ancestry. “My mom was born in London,” she says, “and I always kind of fancied Tudors. We wanted to build something beautiful that spoke to some family heritage and to San Marco.”

Though they took their cues from the past, they weren't captive to it. Built on the banks of the St. Johns River, the structure's

On a quarter-acre lot next to the St. Johns River, Kelly and Kelley Slay found the perfect spot for their newly built Tudor, *above*. A black-and-white palette with classic-meets-contemporary furniture creates gracious and homey style in the living room, *left*. Large windows with traditional detailing invite in the light and the water views.



The living room's palette was cued from the Schumacher floral fabric on the pillows, *opposite*, which Kelly loved at first sight. The nearby armchairs gain focal-point status thanks to snappy oversize buffalo-check fabric. "When we opened up those chairs at installation I just squealed," says interior designer Lisa Gielincki. "You feel as if things are going to look good, but then, when they come out even better than you imagined, it's so exciting." The light-colored upholstery on the sofa and daybed is made to resist stains.

Dark wood floors anchor the interiors and bring richness to the design. French doors leading to Kelley's home office, *right*, reinforce the residence's historic sensibility. The green walls carry through the accent color found in the adjacent living room for design continuity.



classically styled windows were enlarged to welcome in the Florida sunshine and views. Traditionally dark woodwork was painted crisp white for an airier attitude, and the floor plan was opened up to better accommodate entertaining.

To get the furnishings, surfaces and finishing touches just so, Kelly worked with interior designer Lisa Gielincki, starting from the planning stages of construction. The two were on the same style page immediately, settling on a sophisticated black-and-white palette sparked with bright accents. Furniture has clean, traditional lines and hardwearing modern fabrics. Carved wood pieces and chan-

deliers imbue the space with elegance. All of the elements were chosen for their livability and personality. "It wouldn't have made sense to design some stuffy period house for this couple," Lisa says. "They're both so upbeat and welcoming, I just kind of channeled their personalities. I knew this had to be sophisticated but have a little bit of glam and a little bit of fun so it wouldn't take itself too seriously."

The resulting home fits so perfectly, the Slays find it tough to leave. "Even when we stay in luxury hotels," Kelly says, "nothing beats where we live. We've been here two years, and we roll over and high-five each other every morning."



Diamond-pane windows are common in vintage Tudor homes. Here, the beveled-glass beauties add sparkle and cleverly screen a view into the neighbor's house. The diamond motif is echoed in cabinet detailing and a tile backsplash for pleasing repetition. Dangling like eye-catching earrings, Schonbek crystal chandeliers are a fancy finishing touch.



A custom trestle table, *above*, is designed to serve a party of 12—ideal in a home without a formal dining room. Vivid accent colors make the space a pleasant place to be. “The water is all around you,” Kelly says, “the sun’s coming through, hitting the chandelier and making little rainbow patterns on the walls. It’s hard not to want to stay here the entire day.”



Kelly doesn’t find laundry to be a chore in this room, *right*, given that the cabinetry is painted her favorite color, iridescent tile sparkles away and a charming apron sink replaces a utility type. “My girlfriends come over and ask, ‘Can we just stay in here and drink wine while we do our laundry?’” Kelly says.

charming a new house

The Slays worked closely with local architect Scott Leuthold to bring historically respectful details to the newly built house. Here are the notable ones:

- **MULTI-PANED GLASS** The right windows can make or break a traditional design. The Slays chose theirs from the Andersen Architectural series in styles that mimic the Tudor era.
- **COFFERED CEILINGS** This grid design has a long history in architecture, making it a tried-and-true way to add depth and elegance to interiors. Coffers also buffer sound and create a greater sense of space.
- **THOUGHTFUL TRIMS** Include stately details to up a new home’s classic caché. Deep crown and base moldings, decorative archways, recessed paneling and fluted window casings give dimension and substance to interiors.
- **ELEGANT LIGHTING** Light fixtures are a home’s jewelry, so let them make a statement. From period pendants to graceful chandeliers, choosing wisely will elevate a room’s style.
- **HANDSOME HARDWARE** Make a big difference with small details, such as classic cup pulls, crystal knobs and faucets.



**“We got to create
our dream home.
We put everything that we
have wanted over the years into
this one place.”** —KELLY SLAY



In the upstairs master bedroom, *opposite*, the walls are a quiet gray green. Pattern is minimal: The focus is on the statement bed—and the great outdoors. “The curtains are really light and airy to keep the view,” Lisa says, “and a bay window created a nice sunny spot to sit and take everything in.” The area rug’s scroll pattern picks up the graceful movement of the carved bed for a finished look.

A floating marble-topped dressing table, *right*, is softly illuminated by light that’s filtered through the diamond-paned bay window. “The morning sun is just beautiful,” Kelly says. “It’s the perfect spot to put on makeup.” The acrylic chair adds a glam touch that doesn’t weigh down the design.

Marble floor tiles join with the marble countertop to bring elegance to the master bathroom, *below*. The dark wood trim and vanity add traditional notes. “We bumped out the front of the vanity to accommodate larger oval sinks,” Lisa says, “and we had feet put on it. The features make it look like a piece of vintage furniture.”



This inviting bedroom is reserved for one of the Slays' two daughters, college-age Meg. It's clad in her favorite colors, teal and yellow. Though it looks like elegant silk, the comforter can be tossed in the washing machine. Chandeliers crown the bedroom spaces too. "My husband and I agreed on a chandelier budget," Kelly says, "and then I chose to blow that because I am a person who loves chandeliers. In the end he agreed it was a budget well blown."



A mirrored bureau adds a pretty accent of French glamour to Meg's bedroom, *left*. The reflective surface is echoed in the adjoining bathroom's oval mirror. Below it, the vanity's glass knobs are also inspired by the shimmering dresser.

Black is used in most every room in the home in big and small ways. In this guest bedroom, *below left*, it outlines Roman shades, a comforter and the framed painting. "Black just automatically keeps a look from getting too sweet," Lisa says. "It anchors rooms in a sophisticated way."

An oval window and hexagon tiles lend vintage charm to the guest bath, *below*. The tiles continue the bedroom's black-and-white theme. Seafoam green makes a refreshing backdrop in both rooms.

