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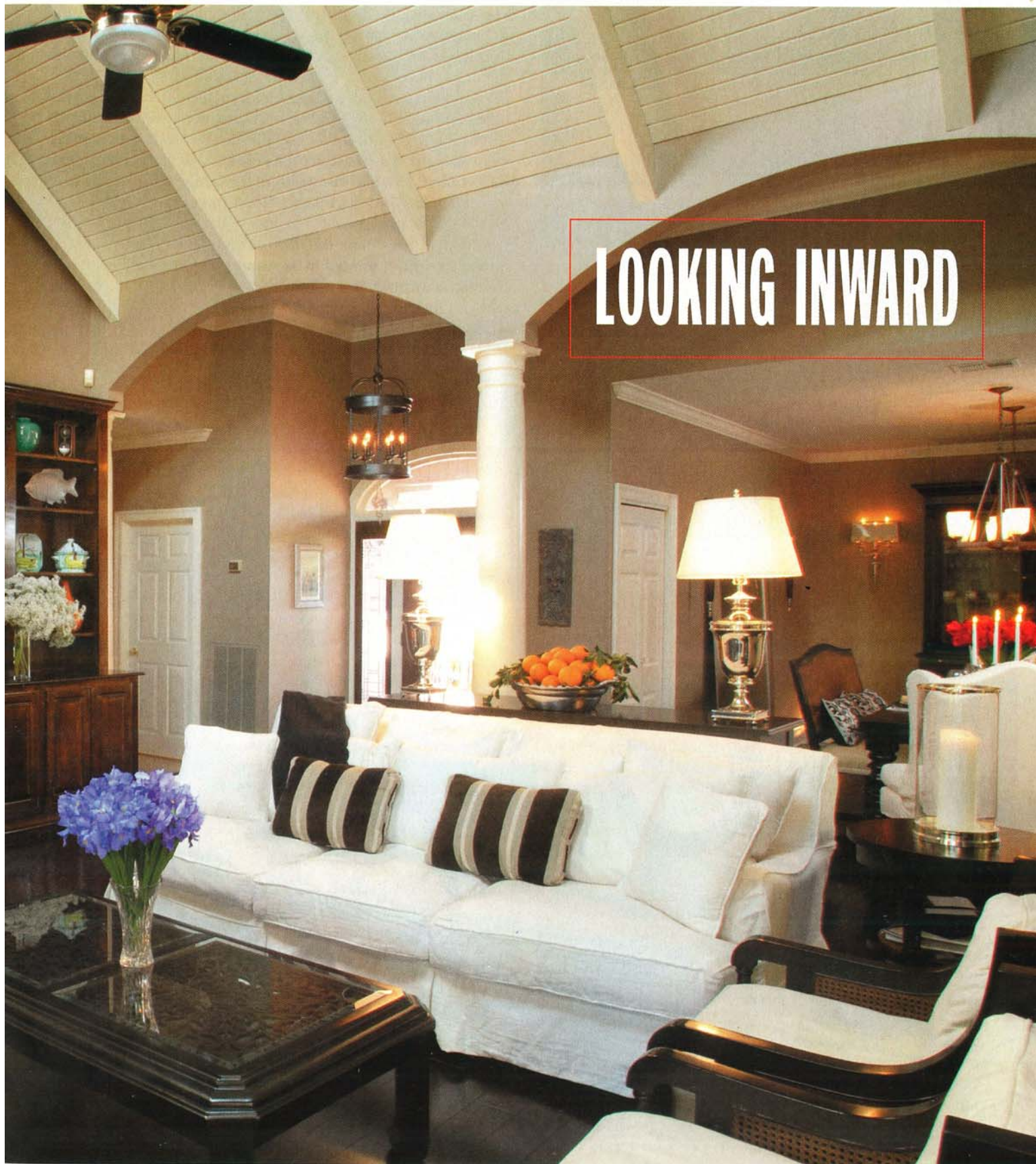
Some houses tell the whole story from the curb; others are like a secret, revealing nothing from a quick glance at the front exterior. "It's a mystery house from the street," says Charles "Cap" Caplinger, a landscape architect who designed the house.

Black and white and tranquil too

BY BONNIE WARREN

"It shows one face from the front and then it begins to reveal its secrets as you explore the inside and the backyard beyond. There is an interesting volume that you immediately feel when you open the front door and

Opposite page: Somewhat hidden from the quiet street in Stonebridge, the home of Sallee Pavlovich and Charles "Cap" Caplinger features palms and tropical plants. **Below:** The open floor plan features one large living space incorporating the great and dining rooms with a cathedral ceiling adding volume to the space.



LOOKING INWARD



encounter the cathedral ceiling in the great room."

Caplinger almost rhapsodizes as he elaborates on the house he built 14 years ago with his wife Sallee Pavlovich, part of the management team at the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau. "The house opens up onto the backyard where my friends the palm trees greet you as you walk out onto the porch and the patio that leads to the swimming pool."

Palm trees for friends? There is such a tone of sincerity in his voice that you wouldn't dare do anything but listen. "Palm trees are such a joy," he continues. "Yes, I do talk to them. I ask them to please keep growing. Have you ever heard the wind blowing through palm trees? It's a completely different sound - it's like the music of the wind becomes feathery and lyrical."

Located in the Stonebridge neighborhood of Harvey where pretend plantation houses are the norm, the house is full of surprises. "We covered a window in both the dining and bedroom to create a more intimate feeling," Pavlovich says as she provides a tour of the floor plan. The result in the dining room is a dramatic rectangular space with no windows and a pair of five-by-seven foot mirrors propped on the floor across from each other. Candlelit sconces flank the mirrors and the large china cabinet on the far wall. "I wanted to use candles, rather than electricity, to create a warm glow in the space," explains Lisa Roth, an architect and interior designer who is a partner in the New Orleans-Houston firm of Montgomery Roth Architecture & Interior Design, LLC. "The mirrors reflect the flame from the lighted can-





dles and the space feels very romantic." A bench is used on one side of the long table, instead of the usual two chairs. "It definitely adds interest to the room," Roth offers. "We also added upholstered wing chairs covered in a white duck cloth at either end of the table in keeping with the white couch in the great room that is covered in the same fabric."

Roth is a long-time friend of the couple, so it was natural that they would call her in to help with the interior design. "Lisa and I went to High Point together to buy furniture for the house and we came home with almost the entire collection of Postobello by Drexel-Heritage," Pavlovich says. "It was exactly the West Indies look that I wanted for the house."

The furniture was the catalyst for creating the black and white theme of the house. "I usually dress in black and white," Pavlovich says, "and the interiors just evolved into a black and white scheme once we selected the furniture. Although the wood in the Postobello line is a rich dark walnut that isn't actually black, it lends itself the theme of dark and light. Even the wide-plank floors were refinished with a dark stain to further enhance the beauty of the furnishings. Only the pair of wing chairs covered in a light tan flowered print veers from the theme."

The design team of Caplinger and Roth, along with Pavlovich's constructive input, ended up creating a warm and

exciting house that's indeed unique to the area. "We lived in Palm Springs for a few years and I liked the way California homes pay a lot of attention to the indoor-outdoor living aspects of design," Caplinger explains. "I became quite a disciple of Richard Neutra, the famous architect known for his great open-plan houses that incorporate landscape principles with interior architecture."

"Before we called the notion of seclusion 'California architecture,' we thought of it as 'Spanish style.' Right now our house is an L-shape, but we're already planning on adding a wing to make it a U-shape, thus truly capturing the indoor-outdoor concept that we both like. We even had the pilings for the wing added when we built the original house. We envision it as a multi-use space that will further enhance its functionality for entertaining."

"We both consider our home an tranquil oasis in our busy lives," Pavlovich says. "It's like living behind the iron gates in the French Quarter; our house is a secret hideaway behind our front door." Caplinger agrees, "Our home looks inward. It could be in California, the French Quarter or Spain, but the best part is that it fits us. It's very personal and peaceful." ❀



Opposite page, top: Dressed in black and white, the handsome bed in the master bedroom was placed in front of a wall draped with white sheers and silk fabric; **left:** To complete the design statement in the master bedroom, a comfortable chair and round wall mirror were added; **right:** The breakfast room provides a perfect vantage point of the pool and rear garden. **This page, top:** The house adjoins the porch and patio through French doors while the lush tropical growth around the pool adds privacy; **right:** Sallee Pavlovich.