

GLAM SLAM



WILLIAMS, POOLSIDE IN GUCCI AND SERENA WILLIAMS JEWELRY. THE TERRACE IS CLAD IN WHITE FALDA PORCELAIN TILE. LANDSCAPE DESIGN BY LUCIDO & ASSOC. FASHION STYLING BY KESHA MCLEOD. OPPOSITE THE INFINITY POOL CREATES A CLEAN TRANSITION BETWEEN INDOORS AND OUT. FOR DETAILS SEE RESOURCES.

HAIR BY ANGELA MEADOWS; MAKEUP BY NATASHA GROSS USING DIOR BEAUTY; MARKET EDITOR: ALEX MANGAT

At home in Florida, *Serena Williams* holds court in a house designed in collaboration with her sister *Venus*

TEXT BY ELAINE WELTEROTH PHOTOGRAPHY BY LELANIE FOSTER STYLED BY MIEKE TEN HAVE

It's

yet another cozy Sunday afternoon during quarantine, and Serena Williams is lounging in her newly decorated home office on Zoom with her big sister Venus. It's just two months after the tennis titans went toe to toe at the Top Seed Open in Kentucky, which was their first time back on the court since the forced hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The world-famous pair, who have played many roles in each other's lives in the 23 years since their first match against each other—best friends, former teammates, competitors, and longtime roommates—are giggling as they reflect on the five-year journey of collaborating on their greatest joint effort yet: designing Serena's dream home.

After co-owning a Palm Beach Gardens property where the Grand Slam duo lived together on and off since 1998, with Serena splitting her time between secondary homes from Bel-Air to Paris, she purchased a sprawling waterfront property of her own, with breathtaking views in a coveted enclave north of Miami, just minutes away from Venus and their parents. To help make the house ideal for her own family, naturally she turned to V Starr, Venus's world-class design firm.

"I was moving away from Venus for the first time in my life, so I wanted it to be really meaningful," Serena says. While mixing family with business can be risky, the secret to their success as siblings and creative collaborators is simple: "You have to know your lane. I'm really good at playing tennis; I'm not as good at interiors. But I was able to learn through just watching Venus."

As with any other client, Venus says, her priority was catering to Serena's vision—which did a complete 180 during the design process. After she purchased the 14,500-square-foot Spanish Mediterranean-style home, Serena's traditional tastes suddenly felt out of step with this new phase of life. She credits her love of modern art and technology for ushering in a more modern, minimalist aesthetic. Then, of course, there was the burgeoning romance with tech tycoon Alexis Ohanian. The high-profile couple had only recently begun dating just after Serena embarked upon this massive real estate project, but Sonya Haffey, principal of V Starr, says Serena's future family goals were an integral part of the design plans all along.

Last July—after three years, including a gut renovation—Serena finally moved into the completely reimagined, ultra-modern, intracoastal property with a husband and toddler in tow. As the old adage goes, "If you build it, they will come."



THE SÉRÉNADE KARAOKE ROOM FEATURES A BESPOKE NEON SIGN DESIGNED BY V STARR. WALL COVERING BY PHILLIP JEFFRIES; CUSTOM BANQUETTE AND FAMA CHAIRS IN A BRENTANO VELVET.

Though, they all maintain, it was mostly Serena's singular imagination—with guidance from V Starr—that spearheaded the design.

"We had just met," Serena says regarding Ohanian. "And I wasn't going to be like, 'Hey, let's do this together.' That would have been really weird for him," she says with a chuckle. "Yeah. That would've been kind of creepy," Venus chimes in.

WHILE OHANIAN PLAYED the easygoing, supporting role to Serena's more hands-on approach, one space the dotting dad took the lead on perfecting was their three-year-old daughter's bedroom. Both parents agree the pièce de résistance of their entire home is Olympia's pink custom-designed castle bed complete with a built-in slide and an equally spectacular, one-of-a-kind chandelier created by blown-glass artist Josh Fradis. Indeed, it is positively fit for a princess.

"She goes down the slide every night while we're thinking, Man, we shouldn't have done that, because now at bedtime, she just wants to slide," Serena admits. "But whatever makes her happy makes me happy."

While Olympia's room is decidedly the most extravagant space in the house, Serena insisted on exercising a bit more restraint in other areas. The marriage of sleek, clean lines and

A GROUPING OF PENDANT LAMPS BY TOM DIXON (BRASS) AND SIMON LEGALD FOR NORMANN COPENHAGEN (GLASS) SETS THE TONE IN THE DINING ROOM. ARTWORK BY SERENA WILLIAMS.



ABOVE RH PENDANT LIGHTS HANG ABOVE A TRAPEZOIDAL TABLE. OFFICINE GULLO APPLIANCES; BRIZO SINK FITTINGS; CAESARSTONE COUNTERTOP.

high-end features with warm woods and casual touches that complement Serena's laid-back vibe resulted in a cohesive visual narrative that embodies Serena's newly evolved design aesthetic, which Haffey calls "livable luxury," adding that the client was a well of creativity, serving up references from hotels she's stayed at all over the world.

"Serena is not formal," Venus notes. "She's fun-loving; she's very free, and not someone who wants to sit in a chair and serve someone tea. So it had to be a very welcoming space."

At Serena's request, the V Starr team came up with an out-of-the-box design solution to refashion what was once a classical Floridian-style foyer and formal sitting room with beautiful chairs no one sat in, into a colorful art space with eccentric pieces on display. "When you walk in, it's like walking into an art gallery," says Serena. "That's my favorite part of the house. It's so unique. I've never seen anything like it."

Venus adds: "I am not a fan of just having spaces to have them. Maybe some people use their formal living rooms, but we don't. So we created a space that she can actually use and enjoy and live with the art, and invite other people to absorb it and have that emotional connection as soon as you walk in. It sets the tone for the rest of the home."



LEONARDO DREW, RADCLIFFE BAILEY, DAVID KRACOV.



ABOVE ART ON DISPLAY IN THE GALLERY INCLUDES WORKS BY (FROM LEFT) LEONARDO DREW, RADCLIFFE BAILEY, AND DAVID KRACOV, AS WELL AS A KAWS X CAMPANA CHAIR, A LIVE-EDGE WOOD BENCH, A PIECE FROM THE KONYAK NAGA TRIBE OF INDIA, AND A VINTAGE WURLITZER PIANO.

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