

# Tommy Hilfiger lists Palm Beach house at \$35.9M after a stylish update

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REAL-ESTATE

## 'We miss it' says Tommy Hilfiger about the Palm Beach house he is selling for \$35.9M

After giving the Mediterranean-style lakeside house at 313 Dunbar Road a bright update, the fashion icon and wife Dee Ocleppo Hilfiger lived there while renovating their oceanfront estate across town.

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Special to Palm Beach Daily News



Fashion designer Tommy Hilfiger is famous for putting his own stylish stamp on American apparel with designs that nod at the classics but embrace an up-to-the-minute attitude.

Perhaps true to form, he has taken the same approach to updating a lakefront Palm Beach house built in 2006 with Mediterranean-inspired architecture, a style ubiquitous on the island.

Working closely with interior designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard, Hilfiger and his fashion-designer wife, Dee Ocleppo Hilfiger, created a home with interiors graced by Mediterranean-style details but given a lighter-and-brighter feel that seems well suited for today's lifestyles.

"We felt that it was dark and dated, so we wanted to brighten it and modernize it," Tommy Hilfiger explains about the house at 313 Dunbar Road. "It was in need of an update, so we did that and simplified the design and the décor."

He adds: "We did a complete redecoration and updated some of the mechanicals."

## **Dunbar Road house is one of two the Hilfigers own in Palm Beach**

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The house on the near North End served as the Hilfigers' interim Palm Beach residence while they were renovating their current home, a Georgian-style ocean-to-lake estate across town. The latter turned out to be a three-year project.

The Hilfigers have since moved into the South Ocean estate, and as a result have listed the Dunbar Road house for sale through broker Christian Angle of Christian Angle Real Estate.

With three bedrooms, four bathrooms and three half-baths, the Dunbar Road property is priced at \$35.9 million. In all, the house has 6,175 square feet of living space, inside and out, with about 100 feet of frontage on the Intracoastal Waterway.

"We love homes, we love decorating and we love the process, but we are particular about design," Tommy Hilfiger says.

Yet the couple doesn't seem fixed on a particular style of architecture. Perhaps that's a contributing factor that inspires their creative efforts. The Hilfiger's Golden Beach estate in Miami-Dade County, for instance, was contemporary in style; their 1930s-era Connecticut home was inspired by an English manor house.

In Palm Beach, a home they recently sold on Fairview Road had Bermuda-style elements, and Hilfiger calls the oceanfront house they owned several years ago on Casa Bendita "somewhat Mediterranean."

"But 313 Dunbar, made of coral stone, is authentically Mediterranean," he says.

The house's exterior charms — coupled with its location, several blocks north of Royal Poinciana Way — caught their attention when they were house-hunting in 2021.

“We loved the architecture and we loved that it was on the lake,” Tommy Hilfiger says. “It was a perfect home to reside in while we were embarking on a much more complicated project,” he explains, referring to their South Ocean Boulevard renovation.

## **Two courtyards are key to the layout of the Hilfigers' home**

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Typical of the Mediterranean style, the rooms of the house on Dunbar Road are arranged around courtyards. The living room, dining room and breakfast room front a lakeview courtyard-and-loggia adjacent to the lap pool.

The foyer hallway and connecting gallery, in turn, partially frame a more expansive courtyard with a fountain and fireplace, which is also bordered by the entry loggia and a terrace.

Mediterranean-style elements in these areas include arched doorways and lakeview windows; pecky-cypress coffered ceilings; vaulted colonnades; and stone tile floors.

A fireplace, with a massive carved-stone mantelpiece, is a focal point in the breakfast area by the kitchen. And in the dining room and hallways, walls are clad in coral-stone wainscoting.

These are features the Hilfigers appreciate, but their renovation did not come from the traditional Mediterranean playbook.

“We actually gave the home a total whitewash,” Tommy Hilfiger says. “It was done in dark wood and mahogany, and we wanted our home to be clean and modern in an Old World setting.”

Also informing the update was the couple’s knowledge from the get-go that they would one day sell the property.

“We thought people living a more modern lifestyle would want lighter and brighter,” he explains.

Hilfiger says designer Bullard understood perfectly what the couple was after as they tweaked and updated the interiors.

“A lot of the bones of the house were not ‘amplified,’ so Martyn was able to bring out the best of the architectural details that are so beautiful, and he did that through lighting and his mastery of using subtle colors,” Hilfiger says.

“Dee and I as designers have worked very closely with the decorators we’ve (used) in the past, but Martyn brings a sense of ambience to a property that is very livable, fresh and unique. He can go to classical to modern to even sort of Turkish-Moroccan inspired. We’ve worked with him in the past. He’s known for his work for Elton John, Cher, the Kardashians and a lot of well-knowns in Hollywood. He has a very sophisticated design sensibility.”

## **Terrace off the master suite has outdoor fireplace, lake view**

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Tommy Hilfiger founded his eponymous company in 1985 and built it into a fashion and lifestyle empire with a focus on casual, American style. He sold the company in 2006 and it changed hands again four years later, when it sold to Phillips-Van Heusen. Hilfiger remains the company's principal designer.

His wife has designed handbags and other accessories for her eponymous label.

In addition to the public rooms on Dunbar Road, other spaces on the first floor include a family room and a guest-bedroom suite.

The lakeview main bedroom suite presides over the second floor with a bedroom, sitting room, two bathrooms and closets.

“Our bedroom has two terraces, one with a fireplace and the other looking south. For outdoor living, it was ideal,” Tommy Hilfiger says.

Above the attached two-car garage is a guest apartment.

The Hilfigers also refined the landscaping, he says.

“We updated it and cleaned it up a bit, but the hedges were well sculpted when we bought the house, so we left the exterior hedges alone. The overall privacy of the property was important to us and that was a big attraction.”

## **Hilfigers will miss parts of their life on the lake**

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While he and his wife are thrilled to finally to be in their new home, he says, he will miss some elements of life on Dunbar Road, including the easy access to the Lake Trail. The walking-and-bicycling path “is one of our favorite places to enjoy in Palm Beach, and our Dunbar home is right on the Lake Trail with a private gate.”

The couple also liked the house’s location — “close to town, so rather convenient.”

And then there’s the architecture that drew them to the property in the first place.

“We loved its Mediterranean vibe and its coral-stone columns, the pecky-cypress ceilings, the courtyard with the fountain — and of course, it was perched upon the lake with a beautiful dock,” he says. “It was a great house. We miss it.”

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*For more than 20 years, Christine Davis has written about Palm Beach real estate in the "On the Market" feature in the Palm Beach Daily news.*