

# On the market, this Palm Beach home made vacations a treat for the international owners

Making fewer visits to Palm Beach, a Swiss couple is reluctantly parting with their North End house at 221 Atlantic Ave.



When Egyptian businessman Fakhry Abdelnour and his wife, Hilda “Cuqui” Arias Abdelnour, sold the [Palm Beach](#) vacation condominium they had owned for 25 years and [bought](#) a home under construction on Atlantic Avenue in 2016, they were inspired by the house’s British West Indies architectural style, Cuqui says.

“It reminded us of a very old hotel with a lot of history that we love — Raffles in Singapore,” she explains.

Typical of English-inspired tropical architecture, [the Atlantic Avenue house](#) was awash in white, which contrasted with the dark-stained hardwood floors, she recalls.

It also featured “open spaces with lots of windows and double doors that open to the outside with beautiful tropical foliage. We live (abroad) in a different kind of climate, so the cross ventilation is very appreciated,” says Cuqui. The couple's primary residence is in Geneva.

The 11-foot ceiling heights also were a draw: “They are extraordinary and made us adore the house.”

The [arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020](#), however, brought their visits to Palm Beach to a standstill.

“After I flew back (to Geneva), America closed its frontier. That lasted for two years and broke our (travel) cycle. I’ve only gone to Palm Beach four weeks in total since then,” she explains. “Before that, we came to Palm Beach several times a year and for every Christmas.”

The change in lifestyle led to the Abdelnours’ decision to sell the house, which stands on a lot of about a quarter-acre on the near North End at 221 Atlantic Ave. The four-bedroom floorplan includes five bathrooms and two half-baths.

With 5,496 square feet of living space, inside and out, the property is priced at \$13.9 million, with some of the furnishings available separately. Sotheby’s International Realty agents James A. Cosel and J. Dennis Gallo hold the listing.

Palm Beach architect Patrick Segraves of SKA Architect+Planner designed the house, which was developed with an unnamed investor by Anderson C. Ohman Jr., according to previous reporting by the Palm Beach Daily News. The house was built by PalmCorp Construction Services, which is headed by

contractor Russell Palmieri.

Flanking the foyer and stair hall are the library and a guest-bedroom suite. The foyer provides access to the poolside living room, with the dining area and kitchen to one side and the family/sitting room on the other. These spaces open to the pool loggia.

Adjacent to the kitchen are a poolside half-bath and the laundry room, which accesses the two-car garage.

Upstairs, a gallery-style hall is bookended by guest bedroom suites, each sharing a balcony overlooking the front gardens.

The main bedroom suite encompasses more than half the second-floor layout and opens to a private pool-view balcony. The suite includes two walk-in closets and two marble-appointed bathrooms.

Since construction wasn't complete when they bought the house, the couple customized parts of the interior.

"We put another year of work into the house. We took the fireplace out of the living room because we didn't think we would use it. We also put in (interior) French doors in the living room, library and sitting room," Cuqui says.

To suit their casual lifestyle, the Abdelnours repurposed the dining room to serve as a library, adding built-in cabinetry and pecky cypress finishes. The breakfast room, an extension of the kitchen, serves as their sole dining area.

"We love the atmosphere of cooking and sitting in the kitchen, and having it open to the pool area," she says.

Details in the kitchen include white cabinetry with marble counters, although the work island/bar has a wood top. Backsplashes feature subway tile, and there are marble accents and professional-grade appliances.

"We built a lot of new cabinets and a bar in the kitchen to make it more of a self-service type of thing. While we sit at the dining table, we can serve ourselves from the center island. It's more of a friendly atmosphere, not formal at all," she says.

"That's the vacation-holiday feeling that we love. You don't have that in Switzerland — you have a chef in the kitchen, and you don't have the sense of whipping something up to eat."

Working with [Palm Beach interior designer Patrick Killian](#), they mixed new furniture with pieces from their former condo in the nearby Parc Regent, which had been decorated by [Kemble Interiors](#), another Palm Beach firm.

"Our house is compact and easy to keep," Cuqui says.

Before the pandemic, they refreshed the gardens, working with New Generation Lawncare. At the rear of the house, the loggia overlooks the patio and lap pool.

"There's a full-fledged barbecue (grill) and a table to eat outside in the garden," she says.

The poolside bathroom and outdoor shower were also pluses, she adds.

"After swimming, people don't come into the house wet, which was important to me."

She says she has missed spending time in Palm Beach, so in the future, they may return to the island and buy an apartment.

"The people are lovely here. [Worth Avenue](#) and the gardens (on the island) are beautiful. Palm Beach is an absolutely marvelous, beautiful place," she says.

"Switzerland is green but has a different kind of foliage. In Egypt, you have

palm trees, but it's a desert. Palm Beach has beautiful palm trees, and we have a lot of bougainvillea on our balcony. I think it's gorgeous."

\*

*To see more photos of 221 Atlantic Ave. in Palm Beach, click on the photo gallery at the top of this page.*

\*

*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.*