

another time...



Vizcaya Museum & Gardens



Inspired by the Past

by Beth Dunlop

In an era when most grand buildings had architecture borrowed from Europe, the Mediterranean Revival was an invented style, not an imported one. You might call it a pastiche, as it draws on elements of Italian, Spanish, French, Moorish, and Arabian design. The idea was to conjure up images of the Old World in a tropical “New World.” Most architectural historians look to the beautiful El Jardin, designed by Richard Kiehnel in 1918 and now part of the Carrollton School, as the first true Mediterranean Revival building, but others soon followed. The visionary developer George Merrick drew up plans for his near-utopian City of Coral Gables. It was in Coral Gables in the mid-1920s, that the Mediterranean Revival-style flourished with houses, buildings and fountains—all designed around another time and place. The wonder was that it became the emblematic architecture of an era in Miami, and indeed throughout Florida.



Vizcaya Museum & Gardens



A Sampling of Mediterranean Revival...

Vizcaya Museum & Gardens *by Holly Blount*

3251 South Miami Ave • www.vizcayamuseum.com • 305/250-9133

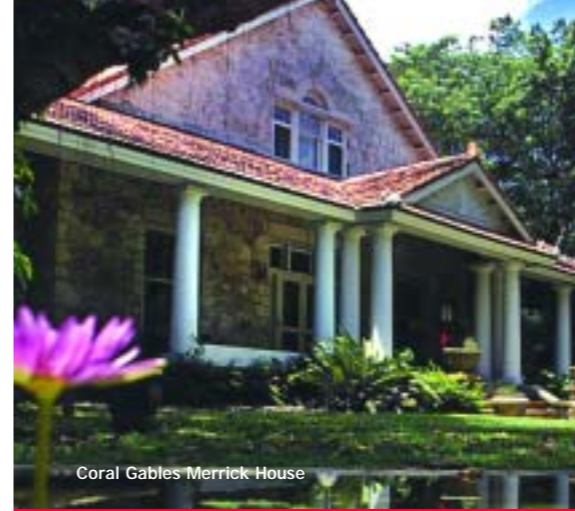
Vizcaya is an American realization of an Italian Renaissance Villa and an American industrialist's dream. It is one of Miami's most well-known historic sites; the legacy of James Deering and his Gilded Age. It launched a love affair with all things Mediterranean and remains a major influence on the region's architecture. Completed in 1916 in the midst of a pristine sub-tropical hardwood forest on Biscayne Bay, Vizcaya has 34 rooms open to the public. The villa's creators, architect F. Burrall Hoffman and interior designer Paul Chalfin, traveled to Italy with Deering to study Italian country villas that would serve as models for his magnificent winter estate. The final masterpiece represents the composite of several periods and styles. It incorporates a priceless and unparalleled collection of decorative arts that provide an uncommon glimpse into four past centuries. The 10-acre formal gardens with ancient statuary, pergolas, decorative urns, fountains and pools add to the ambiance. The picturesque village, now under restoration, has a variety of outbuildings that include a dairy barn, blacksmith shop, garage, chicken coup, stable and superintendent's quarters. (NHL)

El Jardin/Carrollton School *See pg. 36*

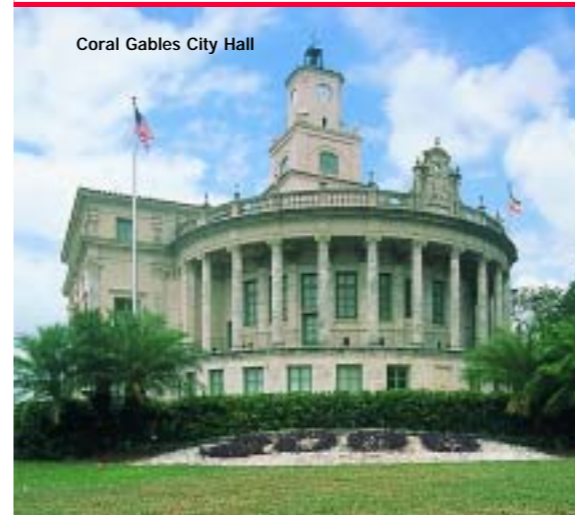
Coral Gables *by Dona Lubin*

1 Coral Gables Merrick House **907 Coral Way • 305/460-5361**

No tour of Coral Gables can be complete without a visit to the Merrick House, the original home of the Merrick family and the genesis of George Merrick's vision for Coral Gables. Now a house museum owned and operated by the city, the imposing 1907 "coral rock" home is an elegant addition to the original wood frame structure—now the living room, dining room and kitchen area—that the Merricks found on the property when they purchased it in 1899. Designed by Althea Fink Merrick, George Merrick's mother, the family named their new home "Coral Gables." It contains original furnishings and artwork by members of the talented Merrick and Fink families. (NR)



Coral Gables Merrick House



Coral Gables City Hall

Entrances, Plazas and Fountains

The beauty and charm of Coral Gables is experienced in the city's numerous plazas, entrances and fountains that set the original "Spanish" style of the carefully planned community. The entrances include the Douglas Entrance (*Puerta del Sol*) that also included a planned Spanish village, the Granada Entrance, the Commercial Entrance and Country Club Prado. The plazas and fountains include Balboa Plaza, Columbus Plaza, Desoto Plaza and Fountain, Ponce de Leon Plaza and Granada Plaza. Denman Fink designed all the original entrances and plazas with nationally known landscape architect Frank Button. Walter DeGarmo also contributed to the Douglas Entrance. Charles Merrick, George Merrick's brother, did much of the stone masonry. (NR)

2 Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District

The Country Club of Coral Gables Historic District is comprised of the Country Club Building, the Granada Golf Course and 85 adjacent residences. George Merrick built the Country Club in 1922 to serve an important role in entertaining prospective buyers for the germinating development. Designed by the nationally known firm of Langford and Moreau, the golf course opened on January 1, 1923. The residences that overlook the golf course are some of the finest in the city and include representative designs by such pioneering architects as H. George Fink, Martin Hampton, Kiehnel & Elliott, Phineas Paist, Walter DeGarmo and John and Coulter Skinner. A majority of the homes reflect the Mediterranean Revival architectural character. Many of the original residents played an influential role in the developing city. Collectively they represented the fields of finance, medicine, politics, real estate, and commerce. A great concentration of early Coral Gables-style residences can be seen in the neighborhoods between Tamiami Trail (8th Street) and Bird Road (40th Street).

Downtown Coral Gables

3 Coral Gables City Hall **405 Biltmore Way**

Phineas Paist and Denman Fink designed Coral Gables City Hall in 1927-28. The cornerstone was laid on November 10, 1927. It is constructed of oolitic limestone, commonly called "coral rock." Inside, the multicolored mural in the bell tower, painted by Denman Fink, can be viewed. It depicts the four seasons. The faces of young women represent spring, summer and autumn while winter is recreated as an old man. (NR)



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Coral Gables Elementary School

4 John M. Stabile Building 296 Aragon Ave

One of the earliest commercial structures in Coral Gables, it is characteristic of the Mediterranean Revival-style with its elaborately framed entrance and balcony overlooking Salzedo Street. Constructed in 1924, it was originally an ornamental concrete block shop.

5 Old Police and Fire Station 285 Aragon Ave

Designed by Phineas Paist, in 1939, the Old Police and Fire Station was built during the Depression by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to provide a public safety headquarters, and jobs for local construction workers and artisans. Paist used the simple lines and mass of Depression architecture combined with Mediterranean Revival details. The three-arched bays on the west side originally housed the fire trucks. Above these bays are sculptures by Jon Keller depicting two Coral Gables firemen and a typical family they protect.

6 Weiland Clinic/Books & Books 265 Aragon Ave

This building, now a bookstore, was built as the Coral Gables Medical Center in 1927 and housed the offices of local physicians. Designed by Lee Wade with a 1936 addition by Phineas Paist and Harold Steward, it consisted of two wings connected by an arcade supported by four simplified columns. There is a courtyard within.

7 Hotel Seville/Place St. Michel 162 Alcazar Ave

Originally constructed in 1926 as an office building, it was soon converted into the Hotel Seville. The first floor (now a restaurant) included retail space. Now a hotel called the Place St. Michel, the interiors have interesting 1920s-style broken tile on the floor and on the vaulted ceilings. The St. Michel is the last of four beautiful small hotels that once characterized tourist facilities in the Downtown Coral Gables area.

8 Coral Gables Elementary School 105 Minorca Ave

In July 1923, George Merrick sold this site to the Miami-Dade County School Board for \$10,000. Designed by Kiehnel & Elliott, this Mediterranean Revival-style elementary school has classrooms with wide doors rimmed by arched loggias, two impressive central courtyards and a large auditorium. In 1983, George Merrick's wife, Eunice P. Merrick, participated in the dedication of a courtyard to commemorate her role in its founding. (NR)



Cla Reina Hotel/La Palma



H. George Fink Studio

9 Cla Reina Hotel/La Palma 116 Alhambra Circle

Now called La Palma, and converted into offices, it was one of the earliest hotels in the city. Designed by H. George Fink, George Merrick's first cousin in 1924, it has a large interior courtyard and interesting decorative ironwork.

10 Colonnade Building 133-169 Mirade Mile

Designed by Phineas Paist in collaboration with Walter DeGarmo and Paul Chalfin, James Deering's interior designer for Vizcaya, George Merrick built it in 1926 to house his growing sales operation. The structure is a mixture of Spanish Colonial and Baroque. Since the 1920s, the Colonnade has had many tenants including the Colonnade Movie Studios and a World War II parachute factory. Today, a new hotel and office building designed by Spillis & Candela adjoins the original structure.

11 H. George Fink Studio 2506 Ponce de Leon Blvd.

This 1925 church-like building was the office of prominent architect H. George Fink, who is credited with coining the term Mediterranean Revival to describe the unique Coral Gables-style buildings. It is an outstanding interpretation of this style and an excellent example of Mr. Fink's prodigious talent. Of particular note are the Gothic arches surrounding the three leaded glass windows and the row of carved eaves on the balcony's arched pediment. Fink was one of Coral Gables' earliest and most prolific architects.

12 Coral Gables Art Center Building 2901 Ponce de Leon Blvd.

Situated in the heart of the Crafts Section, an area originally planned exclusively for craftsmen and artisans, the Art Center Building was built by George Merrick in 1925 to house the offices and studios of his architects and artists. The most noted among them were its designers Phineas Paist, Denman Fink and Paul Chalfin. Merrick's artist-brother Richard also worked out of the building.



The Biltmore Hotel

Enduring Landmarks

13 The Biltmore Hotel 1200 Anastasia Ave

Designed by internationally known architects Schultze and Weaver, this impressive National Landmark can be seen for miles. The 26-story tower is a replica of the Giralda Tower of the Cathedral of Seville, Spain. Schultze and Weaver also designed New York's Pierre and Waldorf-Astoria Hotels, Palm Beach's Breakers, Miami's Ingraham Building and the Freedom Tower (Miami News Tower). The January 1926 grand opening included the arrival of two deluxe trains carrying 1,000 VIPs from New York. Venetian gondolas traveled from the hotel through the Coral Gables waterway to Tahiti Beach (now Cocoplum). Guests also enjoyed a polo field, two golf courses, tennis courts, a bridle path, fox hunting, a casino and a gigantic pool. During World War II the hotel became an Army Air Force Hospital and later a Veterans Hospital. After a protracted preservation battle, the city acquired the building under Nixon's Legacy of Parks Program and the Historic Monument Act of 1972. In 1985, the city signed a 99-year lease for renovation and management of the structure as a 286-room luxury hotel and office complex. (NHL) (NR)

14 Coral Gables Congregational Church 3010 Desoto Blvd.

Designed by Kiehnel & Elliott and patterned after a cathedral in Mexico, it was the first church built in the city. It was dedicated on Palm Sunday, April 5, 1925 and included an out-of-door pulpit. George Merrick, whose father was a Congregational minister, donated land for the church and dedicated the building to him. He and his wife also donated the Spanish sanctuary sconces. The church's interior—with polychrome beams and massive chandeliers—is the best remaining example of pristine Coral Gables style. (NR)



Venetian Pool

15 Venetian Pool *2701 De Soto Blvd. • 305/460-5356 • www.venetianpool.com*

Originally a rock quarry for the oolitic limestone used in many of Coral Gables' earliest buildings, Denman Fink transformed it into what was dubbed "the world's most beautiful swimming hole" in 1924. It resembles a Venetian lagoon featuring rock outcroppings and caves, a waterfall, Venetian posts and a small island connected to the casino by a bridge. In the early days, Merrick used the pool as his sales center and hired renowned orator, William Jennings Bryan, to extol the virtues of Coral Gables to willing customers. (NR)

16 Coral Gables Water Tower *Intersection of Alhambra Circle, Greenway Court and Ferdinand Street*

Advertising his planned community as "a city without a scar," Merrick commissioned his cousin, architect H. George Fink in 1924 to hide a necessary, albeit unsightly, four-story water tower by transforming it into a beautiful lighthouse. It remained in use until 1931.

The Villages of Coral Gables

Although George Merrick's original mandate for Coral Gables was strictly Spanish and later Mediterranean Revival, his vision expanded to include several unique "villages" scattered throughout the city. Although many more were planned, including English, Moorish, Persian and Swedish, only seven were built.

Pioneer Village *Santa Maria Street*

Designed by John and Coulton Skinner, the homes are inspired by the Greek Revival period and have tall white pillars, two-story porticoes, wide verandas, slate roofs, and white picket fences. All the homes back up to the Riviera Golf Course, which was originally part of the Biltmore Golf Course.

French Normandy Village *LeJeune Road and 400 block of Vizcaya Avenue*

Designed by John and Coulton Skinner, these homes are in French Normandy style found in 15th century towns in England and France. The houses are constructed of hollow tile with stucco walls supported with timber beams. Now single family residences, in the 1930s they were men's dormitories and fraternity houses for the University of Miami. Soldiers lived here during World War II.



Chinese Village



French Country Village

Chinese Village *5100 blocks of Riviera Drive and Menendez, Castania, Maggiore and Sansovino Avenues*

The Chinese Village is made up of eight Chinese Compound-style residences designed by Henry Killam Murphy in 1926. They are brightly trimmed and roofed in red, yellow, blue and green. Decorative gates and walls provide security as well as a sense of communal living, typical of the Chinese style.

Italian Village *Montserrat, Palmarito and Altara Avenues*

These imposing residences can be identified by their street-fronting entrances, walled gardens and exterior stairways. Frank Wyatt Woods designed them in 1926 in a style typical of Italy's 17th century villas.

French City Village *1000 block of Hardee Road*

These homes were modeled after 18th century French town homes. They have enclosed courtyards and kitchen gardens, open-air porches, French doors and ornate moldings. Mott B. Schmidt designed the homes along the north side of Hardee Road and Philip Goodwin designed those on the south side.

French Country Village *500 block of Hardee Road*

Designed by Phillip Goodwin, Frank Forster and Edgar Albright, the homes were inspired by country farmhouse estates and 18th century chateaux. All were built country style with big backyards. Some distinctive qualities include round and square towers, carved wood and wrought iron balconies, red brick, keystone and tall ceilings.

Dutch South African Village *LeJeune Road, Riviera Drive, Maya Street*

Designed by well-known Palm Beach architect Marion Syms Wyeth, these homes resemble the farmhouses of wealthy Dutch colonists. They are L-shaped and U-shaped. Exterior features include high domed arches, walled gardens, scrollwork, and steeply pitched roofs.



Grand Concourse Apartments



Miami Shores

Miami Shores *by Warren Bittner*

On December 4, 1924, at the height of the Boom, Hugh Anderson, Roy C. Wright, Ellen Spears Harris and James B. Jeffries of the Shoreland Company set a Florida real estate sales record with the sale of \$2,509,170 in lots from their development dubbed Miami Shores: "Americas Mediterranean." Their grandiose Italian-style sales office at 125 E. Flagler Street, the Shoreland Arcade (which can still be seen from its NE 1st Street side), was located in the midst of the offices for three other major Boom era developments—Boca Raton, Hollywood-by-the-Sea and Coral Gables. At the time, the Miami Shores development included part of what is now North Miami, Bay Harbor Islands and Indian Creek Village. By the end of 1925, the Shoreland Company boasted more than \$75 million in sales—second only to Coral Gables. Many Mediterranean Revival-style homes remain with an impressive group on NE 96th Street (then known as Shoreland Boulevard).

107 NE 96th St.

This two-story house was built in 1925 for Henry C. Nelson, Director of Operations of the Shoreland Company. (NR)

262 NE 96th St.

The firm of Kiehnel & Elliott designed this beautiful home for Shoreland Company executive Roy C. Wright in 1925. It is one of the few structures in Miami-Dade County retaining its original historic Cuban tile roof. (NR)

287 NE 96th St.

Ellen Spears Harris, a Vice President of the Shoreland Company and a leading South Florida businesswoman, built this residence in 1925. In the Harris family until 1985, much of its original contents remain. (NR)

Grand Concourse Apartments *421 Grand Concourse*

The Shoreland Company planned many grandiose hotels and apartments in Miami Shores. This multi-story structure, designed by Robert Law Weed, was the first and only one completed before the collapse of the Boom in late 1926. (NR)



Ancient Spanish Monastery

540 NE 96th St.

Built in 1925, and designed by Walter DeGarmo and Phineas Paist, this was the 101st home built by the Shoreland Company in Miami Shores. (NR)

577 NE 96th St.

Designed by Walter DeGarmo and completed in 1927, this home remains as one of the most impressive of the original Miami Shores Mediterranean Revival-style homes. (NR)

Hialeah and Miami Springs...

Hialeah Park *East 4th Avenue between East 22nd Avenue and East 31st Street • 305/885-8000*

World-famous aviator Glenn Curtiss and his partner James Bright launched Hialeah in 1921. It was known for its sports facilities including the nation's first greyhound pari-mutuel track, a jai-alai fronton and the Miami Jockey Club (1925). Joseph E. Widener purchased the Jockey Club in 1930 and hired architect Lester W. Geisler to transform the small facility into beautiful Hialeah Park that opened to rave reviews on January 14, 1932. (NR)

Fair Havens Center *201 Curtiss Parkway*

Glenn Curtiss and James Bright also developed Country Club Estates, now Miami Springs, in Southwestern Pueblo style. Only a few buildings were constructed in this genre before the Boom ended. The most extravagant, the Pueblo Hotel, became Harvey Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium. Today, it is the Fair Havens Nursing Home.

Farther Afield...

Ancient Spanish Monastery *16711 W. Dixie Hwy. • 305/945-1461 • www.spanishmonastery.com*

Built in Segovia, Spain in 1141 and reconstructed in North Miami Beach in 1952-1953, the Monastery Cloister is the oldest building in the Western Hemisphere. Purchased by William Randolph Hearst in 1925, it was reconstructed by Allen Carswell, who built the Cloisters in New York. (NR)