

BLEND 2014 Submission

Project Description: "Light in Context"

This Spanish-Colonial house, bordering the canal between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, is home to two devout Modernists. The challenge involved the addition of a very modern Sunroom and Wine Cellar to the front of the house, while retaining the vernacular Mediterranean style on the exterior of the home.

Light: The design approach for the addition of the sunroom and wine cellar below focused on introducing natural light into the existing dark interior of the home. The sunroom features sliding doors and floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides. Motorized privacy shades are concealed by a "slotted" soffit that floats around the perimeter of the room. Additional light is brought into the home through a large skylight in the Sunroom.

Massing and proportion: The design seeks to balance a desire to create light filled interior spaces and maintain the solidity of the Mediterranean character of the house through a strong expression of the exterior corners. This expression extends upward with a roof and railing design that enhance the historic home and conceals the simply sculpted skylight which was specifically designed to be invisible on the exterior of the home, maintaining and the integrity of the Spanish-Colonial style of the exterior while providing a modern, clean design aesthetic and much needed natural light in the interior.

Palette: Old windows with aluminum storm windows were replaced with the new windows, restoring the look to a more authentic sensibility. With a new coat of stucco and a color palette selection for the windows and doors that complements the red tile roof, the entire house is rejuvenated with a welcoming fresh façade.

Integrity: While wine cellars typically do not benefit from natural light, the client wanted a visual connection to the sun. The Sun Room floor/Wine Room ceiling houses a structural-steel "light-slot," with a mirror finish, which bounces diffused light into the Wine Room, washing the wall. Access to the wine cellar is through an underground tunnel that connects to the existing basement, concealed below grade and allowing the exterior façade to retain its existing depth and character without being further altered by the addition.