

FLORIDA DESIGN

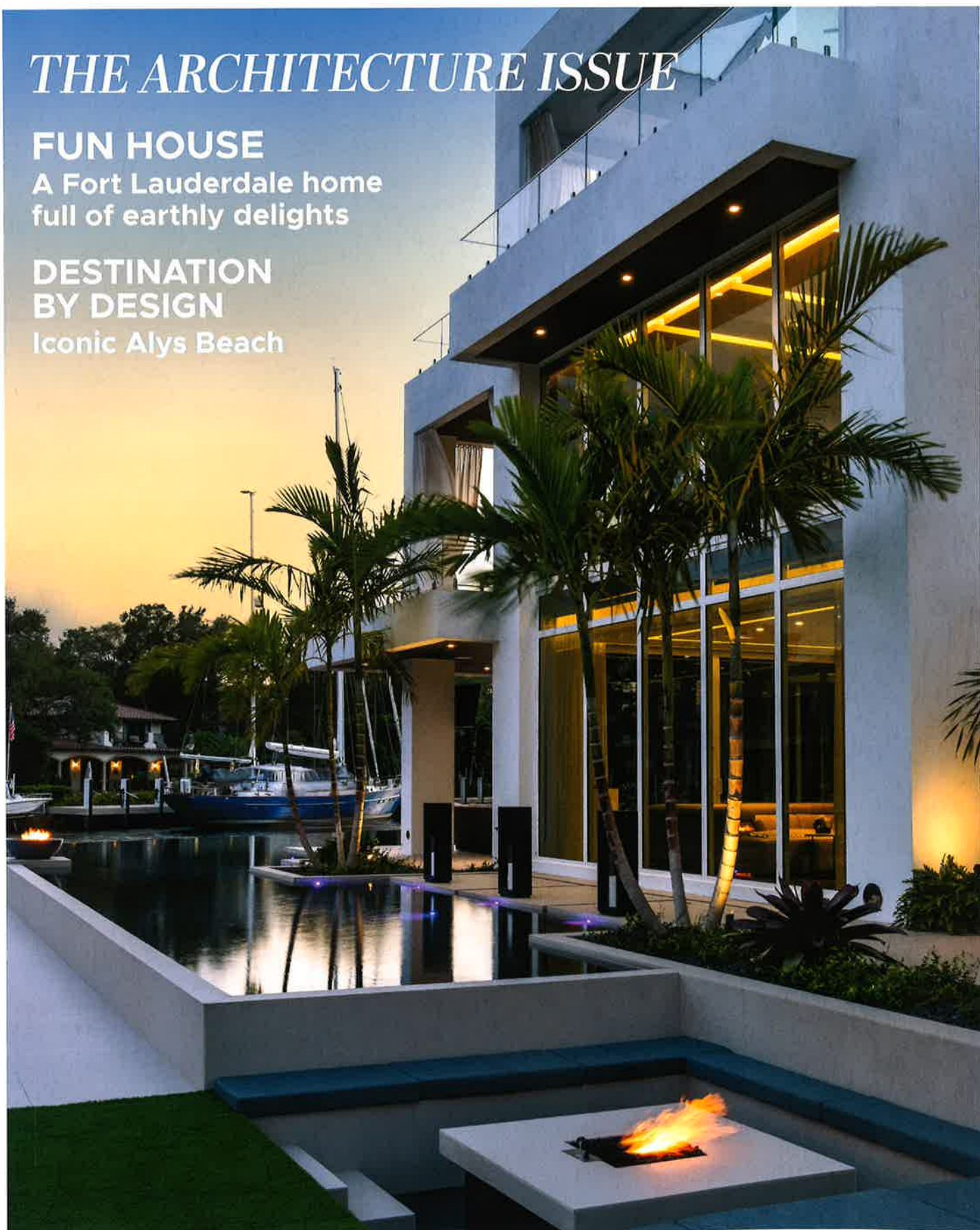
THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

FUN HOUSE

A Fort Lauderdale home full of earthly delights

DESTINATION BY DESIGN

Iconic Alys Beach





TEXT KRISTEN DESMOND LEFEVRE

ABOVE: Alys Beach's phalanx of white roofs are coated in a limestone wash that consolidates the tiles into a single form. The scalloped masonry parapets and heavy masonry stepped forms speak the town's Bermuda-inspired language.

BELOW: Whitewashed walls, native vines, and a pool that disappears into the Gulf beyond evoke Alys Beach's sophisticated charm.

Destination by Design

A MASTERFUL MASHUP OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLES COMBINE TO MAKE ALYS BEACH STAND OUT FROM THE GULF COAST CROWD

On Highway 30A in Florida's panhandle, a pair of white minaret-like structures announces that you've arrived in Alys Beach: a town that's elegant, serene, and utterly different from anything you've seen...well, anywhere.

That's on purpose. But Alys Beach didn't start out with such intentionality: Elton and Alys Stephens (founders of EBSCO Industries) purchased the land for \$1.2 million on a whim in the late 1970s. When they decided to develop it several decades later, they were determined to create a destination with a serious sense of place.

Enter Miami-based architect and urban planner Andrés Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ). In 2003 Duany sketched out a new, sustainable architectural





ABOVE: Khoury-Vogt says Alys Beach's emphasis on courtyard spaces gives her "an opportunity to design outdoor rooms that are extensions of the public living rooms of the house."

RIGHT: The master plan for Alys Beach strikes a delicate balance between the town's stark white fortified, masonry dwellings and the natural, fragile beauty of the beach to the south and the wetlands to the north.



language that stands up to the Gulf Coast's threats of hurricanes, heat, humidity, and termites—and offers a soothing antidote to the perfectly pastel exteriors of nearby Gulf towns like Seaside.

The resulting plan is a New Urbanist dream fashioned in white concrete, with architectural elements inspired by a mashup of vibes from Bermuda, Greece, Antigua, Guatemala, and Morocco. Homes are built around zaguan type courtyards or laid out in neat rows. Streets are situated to invite cooling beachfront breezes, and are paved with permeable stone to reduce runoff. Public art installations and water features are accessible whether you're walking or biking through the 158-acre town.

"Duany was committed to providing a design that was enduring—a legacy project—and he deserves a lot of credit for that," town architect Marianne Khoury-Vogt says.

Khoury-Vogt and husband Eric Vogt, owners of Khoury Vogt Architects, have been instrumental in



LEFT: Utterly walkable, Alys Beach offers green spaces filled with art. Its newest installation is German artist Christian Peschke's *Tänzerin*—a marble, resin-coated sculpture of a dancing woman.

BELOW: One of Alys Beach's most beloved civic spaces, the sculptures, fountain, and water-course in Turtle Bale Green honor the local ecology of the Gulf Coast. Kentucky-based artist Dan Dutton sculpted the turtles.

BOTTOM: Terraces or courtyards with plunge pools like this one are a way for residents and guests to enjoy outdoor spaces in privacy.

keeping Alys Beach true to Duany's vision. The pair joined the town's design efforts in late 2003. Ground broke on the first 15 homes in 2004, and they became so entrenched in working with the clients and community that they became Alys Beach's first (and longest) residents.

"It's been such a privilege, living where we work. We've been able to help shape the civic realm," Khoury-Vogt says. "We get to see the plans other architects are coming up with as well as our own designs, and we can make the landscape responsive to that. The ultimate effect is harmonious. It feels episodic, but also cohesive." alysbeach.com.

