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Some of their priceless finds during their travels: The tray-top table was purchased in Malaga, Spain and the "tree of life" wall candelabra was found in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Madeline Weinrib rug and the silk John Robshaw pillow (top right) are all from Calypso Home, Bal Harbour; while the leather poufs and embroidered pillows are from Sheherazade, NYC.

When Adelto Pons bought his 1,200-square-foot cottage in Coral Gables in 1993, he was looking for a historic house with good bones and room to grow. "Then I spent so much time looking around wondering, 'How should I grow it?'" he says. "I loved that it had so much potential. The question was, for what?"

Built in 1927, the cottage came with a pedigree (it was designed by Phineas Paist, the renowned architect behind the Venetian Pool and nearby City Hall). It was also frozen in time, with virtually all of the original architecture and finishes intact. A salon owner and renegade spirit, Pons didn't feel like he had to stay married to the Spanish hacienda look. "Still, I wanted what we added to look authentic," he says. "It was important to bring everything into the new millennium while keeping that classic feel. Plus, it needed to work with the rest of the neighborhood."

In swept his friend and neighbor Luis Jauregui of Eastshore Architects. Together, the pair transformed the cramped bungalow into a Moroccan-themed courtyard villa with ample space for Pons, his partner Michael Brown and their twin toddlers.

THE APPROACH

Instead of fighting the original architecture, the duo opted to inject it with a Moorish vibe. "It gives