

referring to the view of Biscayne Bay, which greets visitors as they enter the front door. At Wallner's insistence the existing kidney-shaped pool was replaced with a 60-foot-long model that he finds ideal for doing laps. Johnny Turchin, the builder, persuaded him to raise the pool two inches above the sea wall in order to give the visual impression that the pool continues into the bay.

Inside, a frosted glass staircase custom-built by the Conti Glass Group of Miami leads up to a futuristic glass-floored hallway on the second floor, which can be seen from the living room below. "We wanted to emphasize the sense of walking on water," Antrobus said, "like a floating bridge."

Malinka prefers to think of it as a "catwalk."

"Some guys have a fantasy to look up girls' dresses when they're walking on glass," Constantine said.

"But it's not like that," Malinka said. "This glass isn't see-through." It also isn't for preening in stilettos. Even the fanciest guests are required to remove their shoes before climbing the stairs because any stray dust—to which Malinka and Wallner are allergic—is liable to create scratches on the so-far-unblemished glass surface. The footwear fatwa also applies to the host and hostess. And Constantine.

On the ground floor, workmen installed new white terrazzo embedded with blue flecks and little silver screws—a witty reference to Wallner's prowess as an engineer and inventor. "The terrazzo is our tribute to Deco," Antrobus said, referring to the house's Art Deco exterior, "and the silver screws give it a modern edge."

The silvery theme is picked up in the kitchen, where walnut cabinets with stainless steel countertops match the three clocks that are lined up horizontally on a wall. The first tells the time in Sydney, Australia, where Wallner spent many years and started his business; the second is Miami time; and the third is the hour in St. Petersburg, Malinka's native city. The most startling time divide, however, is that between the couple. "George wakes up at 7," Malinka said. "By the time I wake up it's 12, just in time for lunch."

The gleaming splendor of Casa Malinka is a welcome contrast to her early years in Russia, where she endured what she described as a "gloomy" childhood under the Soviet regime. According to the biography posted on her website, "Malinka was not like other children, and she did not like other children. She was embarrassed to go to the park with them and get dirty."

American capitalism represented a beacon of hope for Malinka, who saved money to pay the necessary bribes to obtain an exit visa nearly 12 years ago. "I came to the U.S. as a tourist and forgot to come back," she said. She has since become a citizen.

In 2002, after 10 years of modeling, she left Los Angeles and moved to Florida, where she now feels at home. "It was time to move on," she said, gazing at Biscayne Bay. "Miami is the perfect place to retire." ■



THE TEAM Alison Antrobus, above, was the designer working with Malinka Max and George Wallner, below. The house, right, is Art Deco; the stone walkway in the forecourt was made an extra foot wide on each side for what Antrobus calls the "coefficient of drunken swagger."

