

Modernist icon on Casey Key on the market for \$7.65M

A storied Gulf-to-Bay modernist home designed by acclaimed architect Toshiko Mori has come on onto the market for \$7.65M.

Marsha Fottler

Correspondent



West Wind is a 7,000-square-foot estate with Gulf-to-Bay views that includes a main house, a two-bedroom recently renovated guest house, a one bedroom pool house, swimming pool, three-car garage and gardens on 1.6 acres on exclusive north Casey Key.

The home was custom designed and built in 2002 for Renee and Mike Silverstein, New Yorkers who were looking for the ideal Florida winter vacation retreat. The architect for the project was internationally acclaimed Toshiko Mori, a Japanese architect who is the founder and principal of New York-based Toshiko Mori

Architect, PLLC and Vision Arc. She is also a Professor in the Practice of Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Construction was done by Michael K. Walker & Assoc. With the homeowners now deceased, the four children have decided to put the estate on the market for \$7,650,000 through Kim Ogilvie of Michael Saunders & Company. The Silverstein home appears on Mori's website as one of her achievements in residential design.



“At the time my parents built this house they had the family home in Sands Point, New York and an apartment in Manhattan, and they had worked with noted architects before,” said daughter Nanci Gelb. “Friends had alerted them to Casey Key and when they came to stay and look at property for a vacation home, they were totally taken with the island. My dad just loved the site and the fact that it was on water with Gulf to Bay views. It promised privacy and a sense of being away from the world and yet all the amenities they could want were a short drive away. They bought a lot and then contacted Toshiko Mori to work with them.”



The Silversteins were art collectors and wanted the modernistic house to be a place where they could properly showcase paintings and also sculpture both inside and in the garden areas. They also collected 20th century furniture. “My father was all about the location and the land,” said their daughter. “He wanted to create gardens and private spaces with lots of plants, flowers and trees and he wanted there to be a great outside view from every room in the house. My mother just loved architecture and she worked closely with the architect to make a house of light and space that felt right on the property. She wanted large airy communal spaces for relatives to gather but she wanted private areas inside the house and elsewhere on the property where everyone could find a personal retreat of peace and calm. My mother understood architects, admired their talents and for her this collaboration was nothing but a joy. She named the property West Wind.”



The house has indeed been hailed by experts as a sublime study in space and light. One of its unique features is dichroic glass prism, that diffuses daylight from clerestory windows into the entry stairwell creating a dramatic spectrum of colors. It was designed by architect James Carpenter. Along the entrance staircase at the central atrium, a glass floor allows natural light from the skylight above to penetrate down to the ground level entry. At night the space is illuminated by fiber optic lighting. Carpenter also designed the Silversteins' honeycomb glass dining table especially for the space.



This home at 316 N. Casey Key Road is constructed on pilings, with living spaces on the second and third levels. Walls of glass bring in sunlight and views of the Gulf and Little Sarasota Bay. The property has five bedrooms and six bathrooms. Most of the bedrooms have built-in furniture and all have inspirational views to the outside. Throughout the home, there is exposed block on some of the interior walls. Built-in long linear ledges are meant to display paintings or photographs. The floors throughout are primarily marble.

The long galley kitchen is intentionally understated, efficient and simple with stainless steel lower cabinetry and pale blue uppers done in a minimalist style. A center island/eating bar holds the sink. The counters are dark, the appliances are stainless. One wall is exposed concrete block.



The dwelling was built to be naturally energy efficient. The concrete block construction provides thermal mass, absorbing heat during the day and re-radiating it at night when it is cool. The design of the overhangs, windows and glazing further conserve energy, allowing the house to be naturally ventilated. Terraces, covered patios and balconies integrate the house to the outdoors along with walls of sliding glass and large windows.

Former Herald-Tribune Real Estate Editor, Harold Bubil, who is a frequent lecturer and tour guide of historically important homes has this to say about West Wind. “The house is an outstanding example of what I call millennial modernism – that which has been built since 1990. This is not the delicate modernism of the 1950s, but the beefy contemporary iteration to meet recent codes. Toshiko Mori did an excellent job of making the house respond to its site, with the western façade providing unsurpassed views of the Gulf.”



Part of the estate is a two-bedroom guest house which has been repurposed from a Coast Guard barracks that once occupied the property. This guest house is set above the three-car garage and thus has private Gulf of Mexico views from every room and a terrace. The one-bedroom pool house, at the edge of the open-air rectangular swimming pool, is positioned away from the main house on the other side of a meandering garden.



Nanci Gelb said that the property has worked perfectly for their whole family. “There are four of us children and 12 grandkids and the Casey Key house has been the favorite gathering place for all of us. We used the house as indoor/outdoor living space, eating outside and always gathering to watch the remarkable sunsets. But, when we wanted to go off on our own there was that private bedroom space too and walks in the garden and, of course, the beach. It’s always been a wonderful house for crowds and yet intimate and livable for two people.”





Gelb said her parents loved the home so much, they lived in it more than they originally intended. “Over the years they would come and stay longer and longer and they became part of the community. Dad was on the board of the Sarasota Ballet and the Sarasota Film Festival. And he was on the board of the Casey Key Association. They supported the arts and culture community enthusiastically. After my dad died in 2012, my mother spent even more time on Casey Key. She passed in 2019. I can honestly say my parents appreciated every single day that they spent at West Wind. They knew just how special it was and they never took that for granted.”