

Contemporary Tree House

210 Florida Avenue

Florida natives Gwen and Buzzy (Forest) Hughes are 25-year residents of New Smyrna Beach. Their dream of building a contemporary home followed renovations of several prior residences. Realizing the dream rested on all the needed ingredients gracefully combining: *the location* - a Coronado historic district lot containing *Goliath*, the 250+ year old oak presumed to be Beachside's largest; *finding forty-year NSB resident Thomas F. Wheeler* who designed the residence and *meeting their new neighbor Dan Hughes/Hughes Construction* who brought it about.

Resting beneath the limbs of Goliath, the house (just under 2,200 square feet) divides into two main living sections to the right and left of the entry. Daylight dances throughout due to 8' tall doors and windows designed so that window treatments are unnecessary. Many open onto private garden patios that augment the interior and include an outdoor kitchen. A separate private screened patio opens off the master bedroom.



To the right, a generous, open entertainment space includes the kitchen, dining, bar and living room areas. Soaring ceilings and clerestory windows welcome the ancient oak into the rooms, including a loft library/sitting room atop a floating staircase. The loft then opens onto a wrap-around deck nestled amidst the oak's branches that cover the 75' lot. Below the main steps adjacent to the

dining and bar area is the entry to the guest quarters. The Hughes' private rooms (bed, baths, TV and offices) complete the left wing, down the hall from laundry, storage and a fabulous walk-in pantry. Nine pocket doors contribute to space-saving effects throughout the house.





Patience, always necessary with construction, certainly played its part in this project. This simple space required two years to complete. Some time went into careful maneuvering around the giant oak, necessary for its protection, but the quality of work and materials largely reflect the time invested. Stacked custom-block walls remain exposed inside and out, complemented externally by a metal standing-seam roof and a vertical metal exterior around the deck. The soaring ceilings, stair treads, and

beams are lightly stained to reveal their natural pine characteristics. The ceilings and the white plastered interior walls have high R-factor insulation, greatly reducing heating and cooling costs. Another wonderful touch: the polished concrete & aggregate flooring in the main area cleverly updates traditional beachside terrazzo, while floating bamboo flooring stained to match the ceilings and all other woodwork give a warm touch to the private areas. The contemporary home is exactly what they always wanted and living one block off Flagler and four from the beach, plus wonderful neighbors, combine to make their beautifully-landscaped lot ideal.

