

# GLASS HOUSES

Sarasota Architecture Firm, DSDG, Is Creating Modern Masterpieces

By: MACKENZIE MOUNT

A car idles outside of the Picture Frame House. The passengers stare. Architect Mark Sultana grins, watching them watching it.

With a street view just hinting at Picture Frame's near-4,000 square feet of glass, people pause to absorb Sultana's 6,400-square-foot addition to Modern House Row, a nickname he and colleagues at DSDG, Inc. Architects call the congregation of avant-garde architecture in Sarasota's Lido Key.

The 41-year-old New York native has built private and commercial projects in and outside of Sarasota since 1994. Picture Frame is Sultana's first house on the Row.

The owners—whose beautiful claim to privacy is a four-car garage and mounted guesthouse frontloading the property—made Sultana work for it. "The client could have hired anyone he wanted to, and he said to me, 'Look, why should I hire you, the young guy on the block compared to some of these other very established architects that have been around doing modern for a long time?'"

Sultana said he wouldn't build more of the same, and in a rare move, he offered to prove it: "I don't do this very often, or really ever, but I wanted this job really bad. So I said, 'I'll design the guesthouse and the garage before you hire me. And if you love it, you hire me, and if you don't, you move on to somebody else.'"

Deal.

The Picture Frame House has nearly 4,000 square feet of glass.

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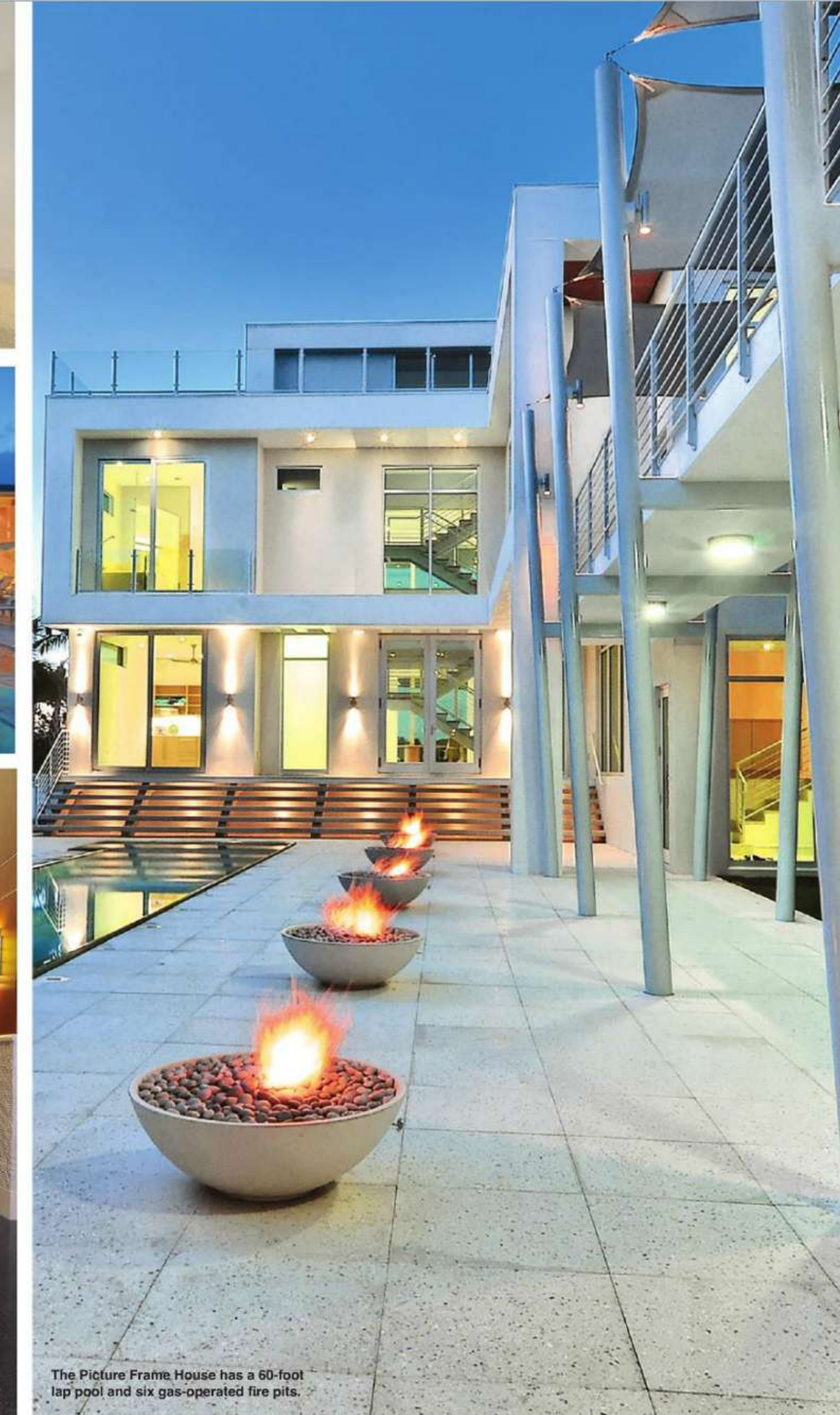
The Picture Frame House kitchen.



Sultana used cypress accents in the Picture Frame House to warm the space.



The Sarasota Yacht Club pool.



The Picture Frame House has a 60-foot lap pool and six gas-operated fire pits.

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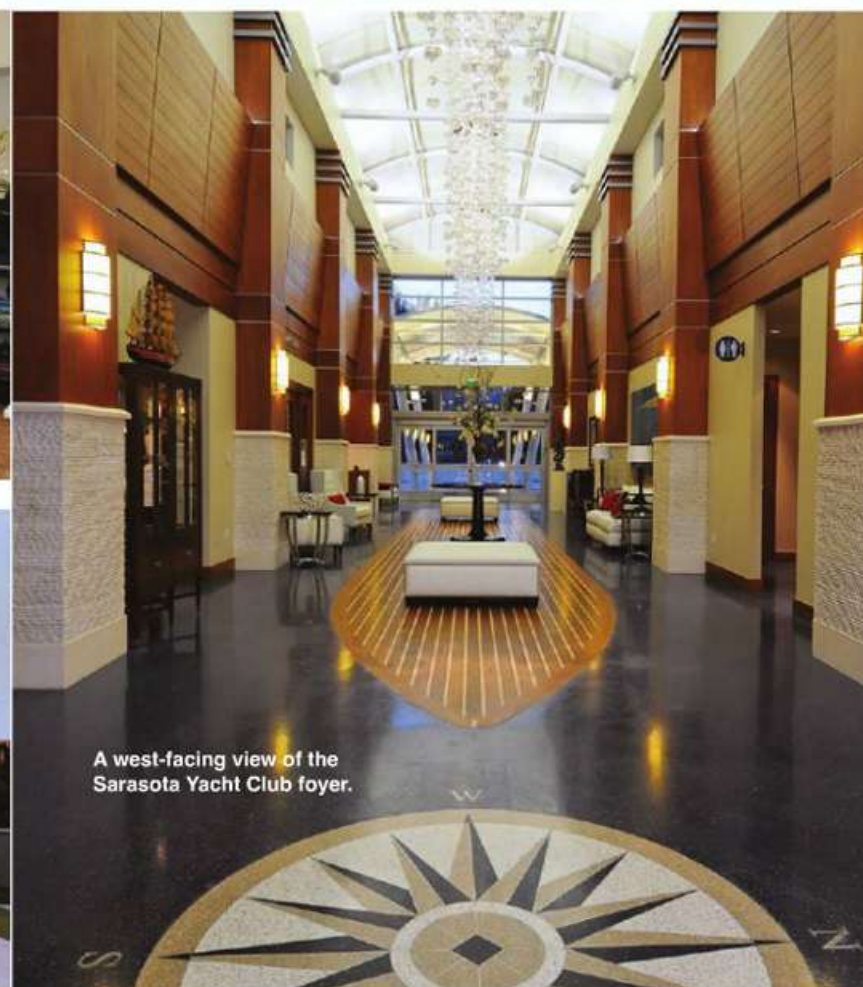
Sultana's former personal home.



The living area of one of Sultana's earlier homes.



These hurricane-approved glass garage doors are some of the first in the state.



A west-facing view of the Sarasota Yacht Club foyer.

Two weeks passed. "I presented it to him, and he was really quiet—poker face, no smile, nothing. His wife's sitting next to him. They must've read each other's minds, because they didn't even say anything. I got through my presentation and I was like, 'Oh boy, I don't think he likes it.' I said, 'Well, what do you think? Do you like it?' He looked at me. He looked at his wife. He goes, 'We don't like it. We absolutely love it.'"

To even get to the table, though, to talk modern with an oeuvre based on

clients settled in a Mediterranean comfort zone, Sultana had to build himself a modern masterpiece. "I made my own," he emphasizes. "I had to, because I couldn't get a client to let me do it." It worked.

Sultana's resultant home led to projects in his dream vein—modern structures polished with white, sand-finished stucco, wood accents for warmth and green glass. He became the modern guy, but not to exclusion. "Not all clients feel warm and fuzzy in a modern design," Mark describes. "I can do it all, and I

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have done it all—everything from little, tiny house-additions to large, high-rise office buildings."

In 2010, Sultana and DSDG partner Tom Denslow won a competition to design the Sarasota Yacht Club with their coastal contemporary answer to the call for "an iconic building that would last forever and never go out of style."

"We did the canvas roof to create the feeling of a sail," Mark explains. "And it's actually a fully translucent roof, so inside the building, the light comes right

through it during the day. You never have to turn the lights on."

At night, the interior lights piercing through the canvas create a sort-of dorsal phantasm for viewers from nearby John Ringling Bridge. "These lights illuminate it, so as you're coming over the bridge, you see this glowing spine. The light kind of gets into the fabric and the whole thing glows."

Striking, but projects a la Picture Frame really beckon. "The Frame House is super modern. That's my love. If I could do that all day long, I would." ■