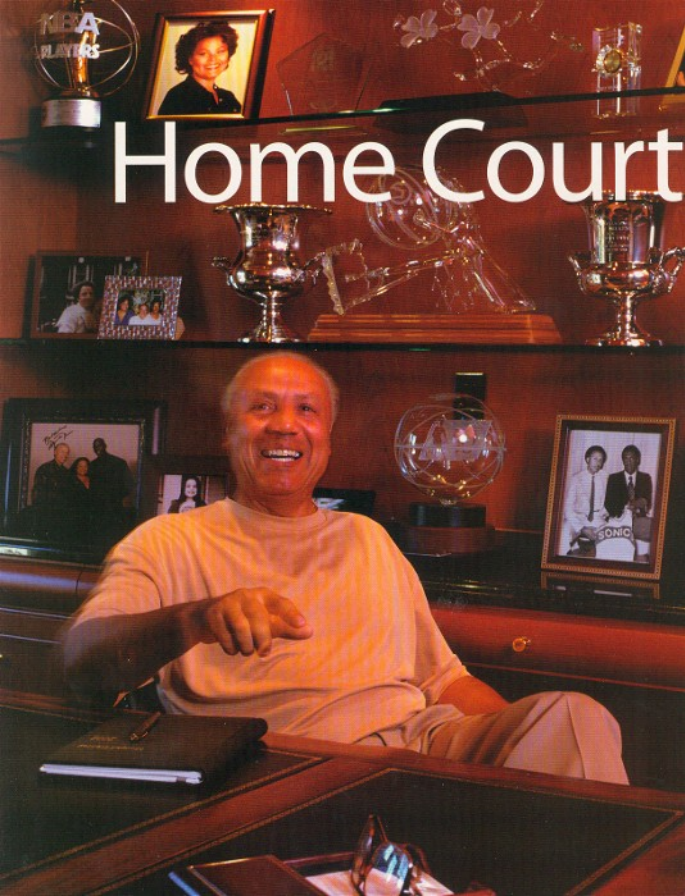
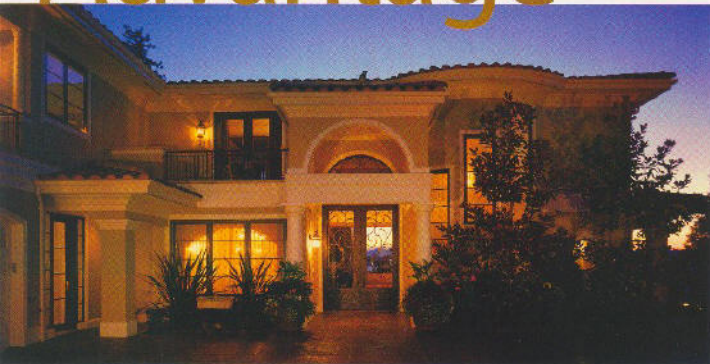


Home Court



Advantage



FOR BASKETBALL LEGEND LENNY WILKENS, HAPPINESS IS A HOME GAME

It's a long road from tenement housing in Brooklyn to a Mediterranean-style villa in Medina.

And for former Sonics coach Lenny Wilkens and his wife, Marilyn, it didn't happen overnight.

"I come from a staunch Roman Catholic background, and my mother prayed every day," says Lenny, whose 40-plus-year basketball career includes more wins than any coach in NBA history and two Olympic gold medals. "I'm a living testament that prayer works."

Currently the head coach of the Toronto Raptors, Lenny was commuting between homes in Atlanta and Seattle's East Side three years ago when a half-acre parcel overlooking Lake Washington came on the market. He and Marilyn decided to tear down the old rumbler on the property and build their dream home.

"We wanted a formal house that was comfortable," says Marilyn, who grew up in the Bronx. "I wanted Mediterranean style with a contemporary flair."

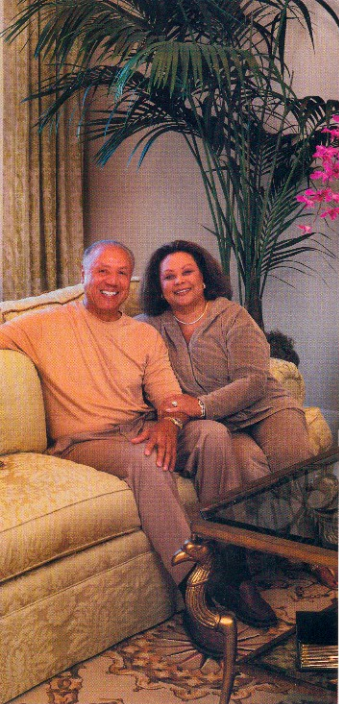
LENNY AND MARILYN WILKENS
MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE HOME ABOVE
FEATURES 12-FOOT WROUGHT-IRON
DOORS AND AN OFFICE (OPPOSITE) WHERE
LENNY IS SURROUNDED BY MEMENTOS
OF HIS NBA CAREER



FORMALITY BRINGS PURE
LIVING ROOM 227, AND
LIVING ROOM 207,
DINING ROOM AND
BATH 215 AND
BATH 216 INSPIRED
BY HER FORMER HOME
IN ATLANTA.



"WE WANTED A FORMAL HOUSE THAT WAS COMFORTABLE," SAYS MARILYN, "MEDITERRANEAN STYLE WITH A CONTEMPORARY FLAIR."



Bothell architect Dana Ponce replaced the rambler with a new 7,300-square-foot home with yellow stucco siding, stone trim, a red tile roof and wrought-iron verandas.

The stone recalls the limestone trim on European houses, explains Full City-based interior designer Laurie Christ, who worked on finishes, master bedroom furnishings and window treatments.

Twelve-foot-tall glass-and-wrought-iron doors open into an entry adjoining a dramatic two-story living room. An Aubusson carpet shoulders down-filled sofas in gold-and-cream brocades. Another Aubusson hangs above the honed marble fireplace. Ornate window dressings conceal motorized sunshades on the two-story Palladian windows. Thick moldings halfway up the walls help humanize the room's scale.

"She wanted it to feel like her home in Atlanta," says Sherry Meeks, an Atlanta-based interior designer who decorated the Wilkenses' Georgia home and selected the Medina home's furnishings and tan, celadon and gold color palette. "We went with big, plump, squishy sofas with damask fabrics, and skirts and draperies with swags and trim."

Pence lowered the ceiling to one story in the adjoining family room, where a taupe sectional faces a large-screen TV.

"If you want to lie on the couch and watch the game," says Pence, "that's where you do it."

The adjacent kitchen overlooking the family and living rooms features maple cabinets, granite counters, honed limestone floors and more fat crown molding.

"You know the old saying, 'Everybody's always in the kitchen,'" says Mardyn.

"This way, there are no walls between the kitchen and the other rooms."

Also off the foyer sits the dining room, where built-in cabinets house Mardyn's glass collection, and an opulent crystal chandelier illuminates a mahogany dining table adorned with satinwood and ebony inlays and gold leaf.



BALCONIES BRACE HIGH CEILINGS OF THE BEDROOMS LET IN THE WILKINSONS' CAROLINA WARMING SUN AND MISTY HILLS VIEWS. GUESTS ARE WELCOME IN THE KITCHEN (BELOW), WHICH IS OPEN TO BOTH THE FAMILY ROOM AND LIVING ROOM.

"I LIVE A VERY STRESSED LIFE WITH THIS MAN," CONFIDES MARILYN. "MY BEDROOM IS VERY COOL AND CALM."

"This is the Rolls Royce of the house," laughs Marilyn, pulling out one of the 14 gold damask-upholstered chairs to demonstrate its springiness.

Leary's office is tucked into the northwest corner of the main floor. Cherry paneling, a granite fireplace, a coffered ceiling and wrighty leather furniture create a luxurious setting to showcase Leary's numerous awards and photographs.

"This room and the downstairs rec. room are probably my two favorite rooms," says Leary, browsing through mementos commemorating everything from his NBA championship to his blessing from the pope. "It's very peaceful."

A sweeping spiral staircase off the foyer leads to a bridge connecting Marilyn's office with the master suite.

"I live a very stressed life with this man," confides Marilyn, who sits on the board of the Odessa Brown Children's Clinic. "My bedroom is very cool and calm." Tripe parchment-style walls with subtle metallic highlights form a cozy backdrop to the sitting room and bed room, where a mohair-covered headboard faces a cast-stone fireplace that's a delicious milk chocolate color.

A backyard pool, an apartment above the three-car garage and basement guest rooms allow the Wilkinsons to accommodate the most important element of their life: their family.

"We have fun in this house," says Marilyn. "We're very family-oriented folks, and it's a very family-oriented home."

When asked what his 86-year-old mother thinks of his new home, Leary strikes a terrible chord.

"My mother is not in awe of anything. She probably would say, 'I knew he was going to do fine.'" ■



Contributing Editor David Allen Zimmerman is a Seattle freelance writer.

S408 OF THE CLOSET

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