Miami's sublimely subtropical architecture is a hot commodity among film and television producers.

Picture Perfect

by Paspar González

Officially speaking, Location Resources is just that—a location resource for film, television, and print outfits looking to glean some of Miami's glam. Unofficially, you might say the company is in the business of helping others create a good impression, using South Florida as the backdrop. On a recent weekday afternoon, a rep at the company's Lincoln Road office advises a potential client on the viability of shooting a Jeep commercial in Flamingo, in the Everglades. "You could put some dirt down," she offers, "make it look like you're off-roading." The caller says they'll consider it, and promises to call back.

"Sometimes people just need the library, other times they need us to scout," says Christina LaBuzetta, president of Location Resources and a location scout and manager in Miami since 1988. The company's library, which covers Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties, is huge—more than 7,000 locations and counting, all viewable via the internet (at locationresources.com). As a rule, locations make their way into the database one of two ways: They've either been scouted by LaBuzetta and her staff (and thus cataloged for potential future use), or owners (of buildings, homes, boats, whatever) approach the company because they think their properties would prove attractive for shoots.

Oftentimes, scouting is little more than old-fashioned shoe-leather work. "Music video [producers] love mansions," says LaBuzetta. "So we walk up and down streets and knock on doors and people let us in—which is kind of surprising in this day and age." If the location meets the producers' expectations, LaBuzetta goes about the delicate work of negotiating. "People think that their house is never going to look the same [after the film crew has been there and moved everything

Max Strang's Coconut Grove home

Just another of Location Resources' more than 7,000 offerings.

[in Miami Vice]

"It was the South American druglord's house," says Strang.

around]," she says. "but it always does. We take photos of everything before we start, down to the books on the shelf."

That might help explain why even some of Miami's most prominent (and famously fastidious) architects have listed their private homes with Location Resources. Max Strang's Coconut Grove home, for example, made a recent cameo in Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*. "It was the South American druglord's house," says Strang, who adds that the house has also been featured in a number of magazines, including *Ocean Drive* and *FHM*. "The still fashion shoots are probably the least intrusive," he says. "*Miami Vice* was probably the most intrusive, but also the most professional."

One reason that producers might be drawn to the Strang residence is that both interior and exterior space is so fully realized. "In most houses, the exterior space is almost an afterthought," he says, "but in this climate, you have to give the interior and exterior equal importance." Strang's design not only achieved that, but managed to bring some of the outdoors in. "The fireplace is made from oolite [limestone], which is the bedrock of Miami. All of the stone in the fireplace came from our yard."

Professional pride aside, says Strang, his motivation for listing the home with a location library is pretty obvious. "It's exciting to see your house on the big screen—or to see some scantily clad models walking around." (Mrs. Strang was not contacted for comment.)

Of course, adds architect Chad Oppenheim, putting your house in the movies isn't bad for business, either. Having his home, Villa Allegra, featured, like Strang's, in *Miami Vice* (it's the house a SWAT team storms into), is "exposure for what we try to accomplish with our architecture," he reasons. "The house captures the essence of Miami—all that Miami has to offer—but it's also transmutable. People can change it, almost like a stage set. It allows for flexibility, which is always something I focus on [in my work]." Oppenheim estimates that in the past two and a half years, he's hosted

Opposite: Strang and family get in on the act during the shooting of Miami Vice.