By Robin DeMattia

Island Castle

Simon and Emma Garnham live in Buckinghamshire, England, known for its open countryside and historic manor homes. Yet they found their castle on Marco Island.

Visitors to the island for more than 20 years, the couple bought their 6,500-square-foot, four bedroom, five-and-a-half bath new construction house at 560 Conover Court for $3,250,000 in 2007, one year after Simon sold his pharmaceutical industry business.

The couple – sometimes accompanied by their children, now ages 27, 25, 23 and 16 – "crosses the pond" up to six times a year, typically spending six weeks in summer, three weeks at Easter, and a couple of weeks around Christmas.

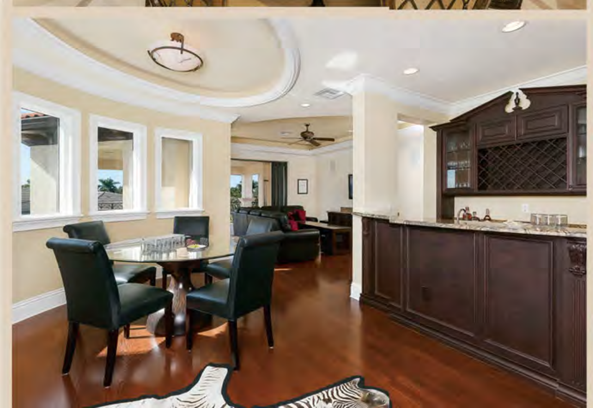
"You can never ignore the weather, which is lovely" Simon Garnham says, acknowledging the often gray skies outside London. "We like the outdoors, play a lot of tennis, cycle, walk on beach, fish and enjoy water sports such as boating and kayaking."

Simon attended primary school in the United States, and Emma lived in Orange County, Calif., for five years, so they consider themselves "Americanphiles" as well as "good advocates for Marco," who convinced one of his brothers to also buy a house here.

The expansive, canal-front home the Garnham's purchased is called Decadence, a nod to the luxury inside. At the entrance are large "fee-fi-fo-fum" wooden doors – a humorous nickname offered by a UPS delivery driver – that lead through to dramatically arched doorways, soaring Roman columns, a two-story fireplace, travertine, hard wood and marble floors, and abundant light through 16 pairs of French windows.

Garnham describes that home as a "slightly Italian feel, fairly luscious and very chilled. We prefer bare feet and a relaxing atmosphere."

The generous space, he says, is perfect for large families or a few couples to enjoy. "The great room can house 20 people quite happily, and you could have the same



number on the deck and wouldn't even know they were there."

The interior includes an office, media room, dining room and several wet bars. Decorated primarily with items from Robb & Stucky, the décor includes a personal touch with framed international bank notes from the Garnham's travels to countries such as Libya, Mongolia and Zimbabwe.

The master bedroom suite offers two large walk-in closets, separate powder room, his-and-her sinks on opposite sides with granite counters, wet room with six shower heads, and jetted bath ringed with steps and large, green plants. "I particularly like waking up, pulling back the sliding pocket windows and curtains, and listening to the sounds of the water," Garnham sighs.

The exterior features an outdoor kitchen, resort-style pool, hot tub and private boat dock. A pool table upstairs sits on a covered patio.

Technological elements include ceiling-mounted speakers in six separate zones, two wall- and ceiling-mounted home theater systems, three large screen HD televisions, LED rope lighting in pocket ceilings, and high-speed WiFi from three access points.

Starting this past December, the house is now available for weekly rentals from $7,000-$9,000 per week. "It was silly to leave such a nice asset sitting there doing nothing," Simon Garnham says. Rental details can be found at www.marcoescapes.com. ■