

# A HAPPY HOME BASE

BY LINDSAY LAMBERT DAY | ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY BY JERRY RABINOWITZ





## San Diego Padres pitcher Brad Hand and his young family find respite from life on the road in their coastal Florida home



For Major League Baseball players and their families, hopping between airplanes, hotels, cities, and states for months on end is part of the job. Having a cozy home base is key to staying grounded.

Pitcher Brad Hand was playing for the Miami Marlins when he made that haven in South Florida. In 2015, he and his new wife, Morgan, purchased a home in Palm Beach Gardens before welcoming their baby girl, Lila, later that year.

Despite their Miami ties, Brad and Morgan had sentimental reasons to house hunt in Palm Beach County. They met at the now-defunct Dr. Feelgood's Rock Bar & Grill on Clematis Street in 2011. Four years later, they exchanged vows in front of a couple dozen guests at Palm Beach's Café Via Flora. Beyond these romantic connotations, they ultimately selected their home for practical reasons.

"We liked that [the house] was not in an actual neighborhood and that it had a lot of privacy with the landscape," says Morgan. "We didn't want a complete fixer upper, and this house only needed a little facelift. We loved the location close to the beach, I-95, and all the main roads. The size and layout is perfect for us. The two bedrooms upstairs are identical, which is perfect for kids."

As it turned out, a major change would come before the couple could completely settle down. In April 2016, they faced a cross-country move when Brad joined the San Diego Padres. Rather than uproot altogether, the Hands chose to turn the Florida house they love into an off-season retreat.



JESSICA LORREN ORGANIC PHOTOGRAPHY





THE HANDS USE THE OFF-SEASON MONTHS TO CATCH UP ON FAMILY MEALS. "I LOVE TO COOK AND MAKE EVERYTHING FROM SCRATCH," MORGAN SAYS.







## ★ “OUR HOME IS AN OASIS FOR US AFTER BASEBALL SEASON ENDS.”

“We get burned out from traveling all during the season and always enjoy coming home in October to relax, unwind, and be together as a family,” Morgan says. “I’m looking forward to watching Lila play [in] our home. She isn’t walking yet, so we’re hoping she takes her first steps here.”

“This is our first home together,” Brad adds. “I love that we’ve started our family here.”

During the Padres’ most recent season, Brad and Morgan rented a two-bedroom apartment in San Diego’s Little Italy neighborhood. The rental was an easy decision, given its proximity to the stadium and good restaurants, but it never felt like home.

“There is always a feeling like you’re living out of a suitcase and boxes,” Morgan says of the couple’s bicoastal arrangement. “While San Diego is a beautiful city and we love being there over Miami, it still isn’t home. You are never really settled during the season.”

When in Palm Beach Gardens, Brad and Morgan like to entertain friends and family, and they wanted their home to fit that lifestyle. They

turned to West Palm Beach-based interior designer Cindy West Ray of Cindy Ray Interiors Inc. to create a comfortable yet stylish sanctuary.

Working mostly with Morgan while Brad was playing ball, Ray outfitted the home with furnishings, art, and accessories in a modern, neutral palette with subtle gold and metallic accents for sheen and texture. For Ray and the Hands, form wasn’t the sole factor to consider. Function had to play a part, as well, given the couple’s young daughter and the frequency with which they host guests.

“Our home is an oasis for us after baseball season ends,” says Morgan. “Brad’s schedule is so chaotic during the season that we really don’t get to spend a ton of time as a family, and with games taking place at night, we’re never able to enjoy dinner together.”

When in Florida during the off-season, the couple makes up for that lost time by grilling in their waterfront backyard (Morgan claims Brad is an excellent grill master) and hosting “Sunday Fun-Day” festivities for their close-knit circle of friends.





"We always have a big group of friends come over on Sunday for football," Brad says. "I grill wings and Morgan will make some appetizers and desserts. Everyone hangs out by the pool and watches the games on TV outside. Some of us go paddle boarding in the canal. Most of our friends here are baseball families, so being able to get together during our short off-season is always a lot of fun."

Whether entertaining friends or simply being together as a family of three, the Hands wanted their home's interior to be as fun as the backyard. Right off the bat, Ray determined that the cavernous, double-height living room needed to be reined in to establish a cozier ambiance.

"When I walked in the door, I thought, 'We've got to do something to bring [the height of] this room down,'" she says. To create the illusion of a more horizontal and, in turn, intimate space, Ray installed a midcentury modern chandelier with brass arms and glass globes, dropping it low into the seating area. "I wanted to fool the eye," she

says. To enhance this *trompe l'oeil*, she positioned two identical gray velvet sofas and a matching pair of narrow, rectangular coffee tables face-to-face—a technique she describes as mirror-image seating—to dilute the room's height and build a sense of width. Accessories, including lavender ottomans and oversized, abstract art prints, lend a glamorous appeal.

That same aesthetic continues in the dining room, which Morgan says is reserved for more formal dinner parties. Ray incorporated a mother-of-pearl buffet Morgan already owned and added another dramatic chandelier with chains that swoop and dangle from a gold frame. "We wanted [the lighting] to pop," explains Ray. "This chandelier was like jewelry."

In addition to pearl pieces, golden hues appear throughout, most notably in a custom wallpaper used to spruce up a powder room. A local artist hand-screened gold-leaf flowers atop a charcoal background, resulting in a one-of-a-kind creation. "I fainted for this paper," says Ray.







## ★ “EVERYTHING LOOKS RICH, FEELS GOOD, AND FUNCTIONS WELL.”

Given the home’s arguably feminine aesthetic, the need to provide Brad with a more masculine escape was not overlooked. While Brad was playing baseball, Morgan worked with Ray to convert an extra bedroom into what Ray teasingly calls a man cave. There, Brad displays framed jerseys he brought along from his one-time bachelor pad.

Regardless of the room, the Hands love hosting holiday festivities and gatherings for visitors, including Morgan’s mom, who lives in Savannah; her dad, who lives in Ponte Vedra; and Brad’s family, who are from Minnesota. “We live in such a destination town, everyone loves to visit,” Morgan says.

The couple spent their first holiday season in the house in 2015, just weeks after their baby girl’s arrival. “Lila was born on December 8, so we had a 2-week-old at the time,” says Morgan. “Both sides of our family were here, so there was a houseful. Everyone [loved] spending time with Lila and each other. It was nice to finally be able to enjoy a glass of wine.”

Despite an early curveball for the young pitcher and his family, Brad believes this Florida abode has turned into a home run. “No matter where I play, we will always call the Palm Beach area home,” he says. “I love this house and look forward to creating memories in it. It’s the perfect fit for our family, and we plan on remaining here for a long time.”

Morgan agrees, adding, “I grew up in coastal Georgia and loved that I was able to conveniently go to the beach and [spend time] on boats. I hope Lila gets to experience the same.” ◀◀



DESIGNER CINDY WEST RAY STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF STRIKING A BALANCE BETWEEN BEAUTY AND LIVABILITY. WHILE SOME ROOMS OOOZE STYLE, OTHERS, LIKE BRAD’S MAN CAVE, ARE ALL ABOUT COMFORT. THIS SPACE IS DECKED WITH DURABLE FURNITURE IN WELCOMING FABRICS AND MEMORABILIA FROM HIS PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL CAREER.

