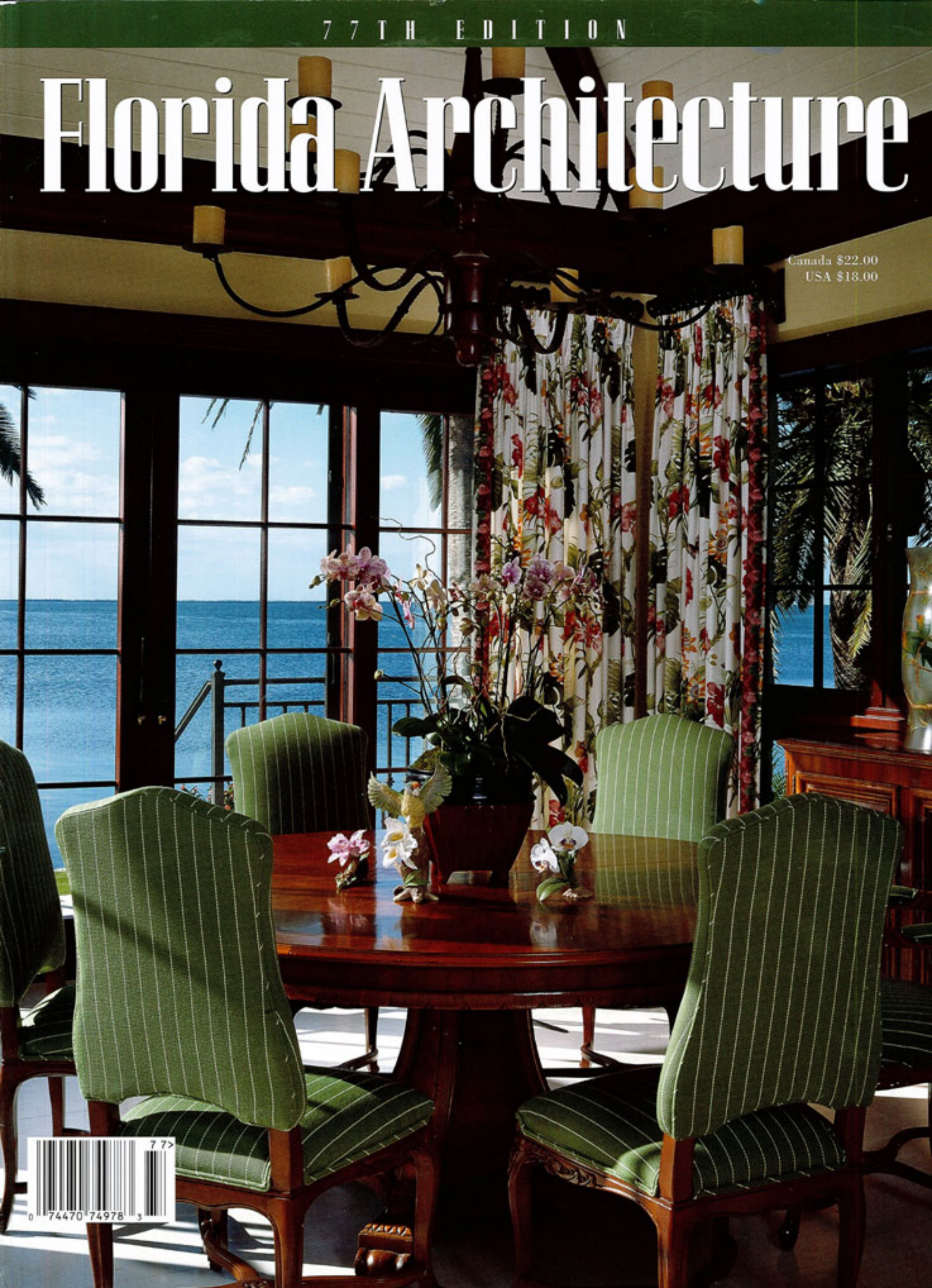


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OCEANFRONT RENOVATION

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Cindy West Ray, Allied ASID, Cindy Ray Interiors,

There's not much to complain about if the Atlantic Ocean is your front yard. But even a 30-year-old condo on the water in Palm Beach needs a little fluffing up over time.

The vacation home of Lawrence (Laurie) and Beverley Fein of Toronto, Canada, has 2,100 square feet, modest considering the size of some of the luxurious condos popping up all over

South Florida today. The ceilings were just eight feet high, the rooms closed off from one another, and the kitchen was far too small for casual entertaining.

The couple considered moving to a newer condo, but none they visited could match their spectacular ocean view. So the Feins, who spend four months of the year in Palm Beach,





A narrow hall leading to the master suite was widened and the doors were designed without casings for a recessed look. The large, colorful oil painting is by artist Paul Jenkins.

decided their apartment was ready for a total make-over.

Cindy West Ray, a designer headquartered in Palm Beach, "went straight to the concrete," says Lawrence Fein, who is "quasi-retired" from the entertainment industry, primarily production and distribution of TV programs. The couple had seen some of Cindy's work in the area and decided to engage her for the project.

"We hit it off. It's different working with Canadians. You really have to earn their trust. But having lived in Montreal for almost 13 years, I understood that," the designer recalls of their first meeting.

"We've done renovations often up north," says

Laurie Fein. "Basically we're somewhat control freaks, but as involved as we like to be we paid only two visits to the condo throughout the entire renovation. When it was finished it had what I call the 'wow' factor. We walked in and said 'Wow!'"

When Ray first visited the apartment she realized the construction aspect of the renovation was going to be extensive.

"The ceilings were on top of their heads and it was a very compartmentalized apartment. The low ceilings and fluorescent lighting, typical of apartments built 25 or more years ago, really dated the apartment. It was time for an open plan and multi-functional living areas," the designer notes.

The Feins are avid collectors of art and they own a



number of striking, colorful abstracts by artist Paul Jenkins.

"I didn't design around the art, but the art did influence the concept that the apartment should have clean lines and be sophisticated and contemporary," Ray says.

But the designer also realized that this is their beach home. "It's warm because of the wood and the fabrics are all natural. There is a glimmer in the fabric and glass here and there that reflects their oceanfront location," the designer says.

It was a big project but it couldn't be a leisurely one because "Palm Beach has a strict time limit of six months for construction," the designer explains. "We got a little extra time because there

was a hurricane which held up the project briefly."

The designer indeed "went straight to the concrete." She took down all the interior walls and plumbing stacks, raised the ceilings wherever possible, and installed new plumbing, electrical, A/C, flooring and walls. Where the ceilings couldn't be raised, Ray installed dropped soffits with recessed lighting to create the illusion of higher ceilings.

Not one piece of furniture was retained. "We emptied out the apartment and it was taken down to its shell," the designer asserts.

In addition to the open floor plan, Ray also wanted a functional room arrangement. Upon entering, she created the illusion of a foyer by designing mirror-clad panel doors that camouflage a built-in

Mirrored panel doors create the illusion of a foyer while concealing a built-in bar. At the same time the panels delineate the space, they also reflect the adjacent kitchen and dining areas opening up and unifying the living areas.





bar. While the doors define the entry space, they also visually open up the living areas by reflecting the dining room and kitchen to the left of the entrance. When the panel doors are open, they serve both the kitchen and dining area, as well as the living area making it ideal for entertaining. A private hallway leads to the master suite and powder room. The den easily converts to a guest suite when needed.

In the kitchen the granite-topped cabinetry is paneled in sycamore wood “which gives the kitchen a sleek but warm feeling,” the designer says. Ray also insisted that most of the appliances, including the dishwasher and the double refrigerators and freezer be covered in the same light wood giving the space a clean, crisp aesthetic. The backsplashes are covered in a laminated glass furthering the seamless design. At the bar a structural







column that couldn't be removed was paneled in glass and framed in dark wenge wood, a lush contrast to the light sycamore. Wall cabinets framing the cooktop area are also framed in wenge.

The oceanfront windows and doors adjacent to the long sycamore dining table are treated with two layers of draperies, a metallic linen with an overlay of ivory netting. They are by Donghia and are "earthy and beachy, sophisticated and glamorous," the designer declares.

True to her goal of opening up the apartment, Ray removed a wall between the living room and den and installed pocket shoji-style, wenge doors. All the upholstery in both spaces is by Donghia and is neutral, a nod to the sycamore wood that was used in the kitchen as well as an entertainment center.

The TV and other electronics pop up for viewing; when concealed the cabinet can serve as a buffet or a place for art objects.

The den, which converts to a bedroom when the homeowners' children and grandchildren visit, has ample clothing storage in twin cabinets with drawers beneath that flank the sleep sofa. The door fronts are kidskin with stainless steel moldings, "like piping," Ray explains.

A narrow hall leading to the master suite was widened. Here, doors opening to a guest suite are wenge wood and have no casings, giving the illusion of recessed doors. A large, abstract painting in oil by artist Paul Jenkins hangs at the hall entrance. Double glass doors at the end of the hall open to the large master suite which gained an

The serene feeling of the apartment continues in the master bedroom which has a kingsize bed upholstered in ultra suede. Custom designed nightstands in wenge wood flank the bed.



The monochromatic color scheme continues in the master bedroom and master bath.

entry foyer as a part of the new design renovation.

The monochromatic color scheme continues in the master suite where a king size bed upholstered in ultra suede takes center stage.

The wall behind the bed, a Ted Boerner design, is covered in a glistening mother-of-pearl tile. Ample nightstands, again in wenge wood with limestone tops, frame the bed. Gleaming crystal lamps from Donghia add drama to the otherwise ethereal bedroom, providing the homeowners a restful retreat.

Ray gave the powder room a glamorous look with a custom moiré wallcovering, a mahogany lavatory cabinet with a woven basket weave façade and polished nickel hardware from Waterworks. For the counter top, Ray handpicked a slab of a cappucci-

no-colored onyx stone for a striking effect. Shell sconces from Holly Hunt illuminate a limited edition black and white print of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Working for clients who are 3,000 miles away could be a daunting task. But designer Cindy Ray established a great working relationship with her clients early on.

Ray found that she picked up quickly on their needs for the new apartment, as well as their taste.

"They trusted me and were easy to work with," Ray says. "Overall the experience was grand. When they walked into the finished apartment they immediately felt as if they were at home." What more can you ask?▲

