

79TH EDITION

# Florida Architecture

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# DECO MEETS TROPICAL

A SOPHISTICATED BACHELOR PAD IN PALM BEACH

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Photography by Joseph Lapeyra



Cindy West Ray, Allied ASID, Cindy Ray Interiors Inc, INTERIOR DESIGN

*W*hen designing the waterfront apartment of a Palm Beach bachelor, Cindy West Ray had the luxury of time - that is, she began the project pre-construction, and continued working on it until the completion date three years later.

In many ways, that was a good thing. "The original layout was vacuous and cold, so we had the opportunity to adjust the floor plan," the designer says. "And we were able to let the design evolve over time."





A birdseye maple and walnut built-in houses audio-visual equipment as well as providing display space for a collection of art glass.

**OPPOSITE:** The living room is light and bright, with cream linen fabrics accented by splashes of blue. Fine art photograph is by Stephanie Gonzalez at Group 306, Inc..

When given a long lead time, it is not always easy to maintain focus. But for Ray, it was an opportunity to let the client take his time deciding what he did and did not want, and to let the design happen in layers.

“He wanted this to read as his southern retreat - tropical with Anglo-Indian elements, but also tailored and masculine,” she says. “But when I showed him pieces and materials reflective of that style, he didn’t like it as much as he thought he would. We ended up evolving into what he also loved, which is art deco.”

The first order of business was to reconfigure the plan to make it more open and offer greater access to the views of the ocean to the east, and the Intracoastal Waterway to the west. “The dining

room was originally too far from the views and tucked into a dark corner,” she recalls.

“We moved it into a space designated for the family room, and placed a home theater where the dining room once was. And the orientation of the master bedroom didn’t make sense, so we changed that to make the room more private.”

With the spatial dynamics rearranged for better functionality, Ray concentrated on the interior architecture. Where there once was a hallway that read as “a long, open nothing,” she created a series of arched doorways lined in mahogany and surrounded by a Venetian plaster wall finish. That defined the transition into different rooms while keeping the plan open. She also added plenty of millwork in the form of crown moldings, ceiling







coffers, beams and custom-made niches, such as the ones in the living room displaying art glass and alternating with frosted, backlit glass panels.

The living room is an articulation of the owner's taste and preferences. Because he loves blue, Ray used splashes of the color, notably on the draperies and pillows, made of a Lee Jofa linen fabric, and on the bench, which is upholstered with a tapestry surrounded by indigo blue fabric. A pair of blue glass mirrors installed into wall niches and art glass, circa the 1930s, add more blue accents in the otherwise neutral space.

The owner also has a fondness for wood, particularly in light and medium tones. The built-in unit in the living room is made of light yet richly grained birdseye maple trimmed in walnut. Panels slide open to reveal a television screen or closed to show off a collection of art glass procured in Paris.













The dining room, which was repositioned to have an Intracoastal view, is a continuation of the design concept.

The tropical touches are evident in the grasscloth covering the walls and ceiling panels, and on the sisal rug. But Ray ups the sophistication level with satin lacquer applied moldings, an antique buffet from France, and an elegant Donghia mirror of dark and clear glass.

The same grasscloth is used in the adjacent kitchen to provide a cohesive look. The jewel in this room is the aquarium, an object the owner insisted on.

"The client brought me a photo of this fish tank made by a company in Montreal," the designer explains. "It's 12 inches deep, and very special. The kitchen wall was closed originally, so we had

to create an opening for it and then suspend it."

The office, which doubles as a guest room, is one of the more unusual spaces in the apartment. Clad entirely in zebrawood with mahogany trim, it is exotic yet warm. The shape of the built-in desk alludes to the Art Deco period, while maintaining the contemporary look.

Exotic wood also is used in the powder room. The vanity and crown molding are made of rosewood. "The vanity is designed to look like a piece of furniture from the 30s, down to the style of the hinges," Ray says, pointing out that the piece sits on a black base and silver-leaf balls.

To create a transition into the bedroom, Ray created a bar, defined by columns and arches. The bar itself is made of mahogany with ebony inlay and onyx knobs, and topped with black granite.

The owner's cabana, situated on the pool level, is designed to look like a yacht's interior, down to the Flex Teak flooring and bolted-down ship's table.

**OPPOSITE:** A rosewood vanity is topped with white onyx and adorned with blue lapis faucets in a nod to the Deco era. Stone throughout is from Keys Granite.



**ABOVE:** The office, which doubles as a guest room, is one of the more unusual spaces in the apartment. Clad entirely in zebrawood with mahogany trim, it is exotic yet warm. The shape of the built-in desk alludes to the Art Deco period, while maintaining the contemporary look that characterizes the space.



**LEFT:** The home theater is high-tech yet comfortable and warm. The mahogany trim is consistent with the overall decor, and acoustically correct fabric is disguised to look decorative.



Moving into the bedroom, it is evident that this is a space designed for a gentleman - masculine but not overly dark. Ray custom designed a headboard of raffia with nailhead trim, and complemented it with a pair of leather and mahogany night tables from British Khaki. The wall behind the bed is covered in a deep cherry wallpaper, but the other walls are painted a rich butter shade to keep the room light.

The theater is in the space originally designated for the dining room. "The goal here was to have the most sophisticated theater imaginable, without looking cold and high-tech," Ray says. "We kept the feeling of the wood, and even used an acoustically suitable fabric that looks like woven linen. These elements, and the red leather chairs, warm up the room considerably."

The owner's cabana, located at the pool level, is a

departure from the home's design, but is perfectly suited to its use and to the oceanfront setting. Ray wanted to make the space look like a ship's salon, complete with highly polished woods, captain's chairs, "porthole" mirrors and Flex Teak flooring.

The owner was thrilled with the results. "Even though he knew exactly what was happening and had approved everything, in the end he walked in and kept saying, 'Wow,'" Ray says. "It took a lot of time, but so much went into it. It's very sophisticated, but still has a low-key, livable quality." ▲

## RESOURCES

<b>Stone Floors &amp; Countertops</b> Keys Granite 8788 NW 27th Street Miami, FL 33172 305 477 7363	<b>Fine Art Photography</b> Group 306, Inc. 4611 S. University Dr. Ste. 130 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33328 954 864 5919
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**The master bedroom is done in rich shades of butter, rust and chocolate brown for a look that is masculine but light.**