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Outdoor living
A condo makeover
Wine tasting party

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After

A mirrored wall, framed by ebonized oak, recenters the living room. This allows for more room in the dining area and a better view of the television. A new wall unit—also ebonized oak—lengthens a short wall by incorporating the master bedroom's pocket door in the center (left). Cindy Ray's client requested organic materials, so cotton, silk and mohair were chosen for the upholstery. Frosted-glass accents, including an inset for the pocket door, are found throughout the condominium.





Before

The common area of this two-bedroom, two-bath condo had to function as a living room and a dining room, which proved to be a difficult task. Sliding glass doors took up an entire wall and part of another. A third wall was broken up by a bedroom door and a hallway, the fourth being a half-wall looking into the kitchen.

recentered spaces

This Hutchinson Island condominium was off-kilter, with not-wide-enough walls and unbalanced entryways. Decorator Cindy Ray took a Zen-like approach, changing how the home functioned without ever meeting the homeowner face to face.

BY LAUREN PERRY • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL NEWCOMB

designers redesign houses to make them feel like home to their clients. But it usually follows a lengthy one-on-one consultation, so the client and designer get to know each other's tastes.

Cindy West Ray's recent client, however, hired her without ever meeting her in person.

"We did everything over the telephone," Ray says. "I've never even met her face to face."

The client, a businesswoman from New Jersey, has owned an older two-bedroom unit in an open-air condominium on Stuart's Hutchinson Island for a number of years. She and her husband were in the

process of retiring, and wanted the condo to be ready for more-frequent visits to Florida.

The long-distance relationship was successful. Ray, ASID, of Cindy Ray Interiors in Palm Beach, sent the homeowner two design schemes by mail, one with color (drawing on the green already in the home), the other using a neutral palette. The homeowner chose the Asian-inspired, neutral color scheme—light, creamy colors with dark wood and frosted glass accents—then sent Ray the key.

Ray got right to work. The kitchen was gutted. A half-wall over the pass-through was removed,

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Before There wasn't a lot of dining space off the closed-in kitchen, which is entered through the hallway on the right. Track lighting above the under-used bar looked dated. The homeowner also wanted a new color scheme.

opening the kitchen to the living room and making it appear larger. The original white cabinets and mica countertop were replaced with frameless-construction mahogany cabinets and a granite countertop called Santa Cecilia Gold, which was set deeper to enhance the bar. Asian-style stools now provide extra seating at the bar. Shelves, backed with frosted glass, display pretty containers that are also functional. Recessed lights and glass pendants from Besa Lighting illuminate the work areas, a stylish change from the original track lighting.

In the living room, a stepped soffit makes the ceilings appear higher, and hides additional recessed lighting around the room's perimeter. Walls were kept light, painted in a creamy tone that matches a silk-upholstered sofa and loveseat from Ray's boutique, CindyRay Palm Beach. Chocolate mohair chairs and two leather-and-ash ottomans flank the coffee table, which is actually two leather-and-walnut tables pushed together.

Ray put two square tables in the dining area, too. "I had done that in another home, and my client saw it in a picture and asked me to do the same for her," Ray says. "They have a convertible feel—they can be for dining or for playing cards. Or they can be pushed together to create one big table."

The dining area was able to accommodate the two



tables, thanks to a new wall constructed in the living room. Ray wanted to recenter the living room space, but wasn't able to push out walls, it being a condominium unit. So she custom-built a fake wall, stained it to match the other furnishings, and placed it in front of the old wall and part of one of the windows. Then she fitted mirrors into the wall to reflect the ocean views.

Opposite the mirrored wall, Ray also custom-designed an entertainment unit for a flat-screen television. That wall was short, though, because the master bedroom's door was in an awkward spot. Ray moved the opening and incorporated a new pocket door directly into the wall unit, using the same frosted glass found throughout the home.



After

The kitchen looks larger after Cindy Ray removed the half-wall over the bar and expanded the countertop out to be more functional. The light from the kitchen's sliding glass door also permeates into the dining area. Dark woods were used throughout the home, contrasting with light-colored walls. Two ebonized ash square tables provide more intimate dining options, as well as a place to gather for a game of cards. Dining chairs from Holly Hunt are upholstered in a creamy cotton and brown-striped viscose fabric from Brunschwig & Fils. New stainless steel appliances—including a built-in steamer—are from Sub Zero, Bosch and Wolf.

To this day, Ray still hasn't met her client in person, although she's getting a good review: "The space is easier to live in," the homeowner says. "The quality of the woodwork and the furniture—it's just beautiful." ■