



IN PERFECT HARMONY

An Oceanfront Landmark Home In Palm Beach Becomes An Eclectic And Relaxing Retreat

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At the time interior designer Katherine Shenaman was hired to outfit this 14,000-square-foot, two-story Palm Beach landmark home on the ocean, there were no fabrics or colors chosen, only the well-traveled homeowner's extensive antiques collection, which needed to be incorporated into the decor. That worked out just fine, since the house was a Colonial built in 1936 by renowned architect John Volk. "When he built it, it was an 'L' shape," Shenaman says. "The owners wanted to add on to it, but because it's a landmark house, they needed approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission, which is very strict in Palm Beach. The condition for that approval was that we make the house into a perfect 'U,' so we had to add a whole new wing."



The exquisite 18th-century French panels by artist Jean Pillemont were the starting point for the Chinoiserie-themed dining room; in fact, the ceiling in the two-story house had to be raised one foot to accommodate their height. Because they had sustained water damage, Shenaman worked with well-known Tequesta conservationist Jane Haglund to restore them. The 18th-century English table is mahogany, while the chairs are 19th-century French. The blue-gray millwork is subtle and doesn't overpower the panels.



Then came the interiors. When Shenaman started the project, the home was owned by a married couple, and the wife wanted a more formal ambiance; when the situation changed and the husband became the sole owner, he had different ideas. "He was excited to put his stamp on the house. He wanted something more livable and casual," Shenaman says.

ABOVE: The domain of the homeowner's full-time chef, the black and white kitchen combines toile fabric, antique 10-inch-square tiles laid on the diagonal, statuary marble on the counters and backsplashes, and Virginia Mist black granite with an antique rather than glossy finish on the island. Touches of red accent the window treatments and lend interest. "This kitchen is very appropriate for a Colonial or Georgian Revival home, but we didn't want to make it too typical," Shenaman explains.

RIGHT: Architect John Volk, legendary in Palm Beach, selected the white brick for the house, which bears a small oval plaque denoting it as a landmark home. At the center of four large columns is a piece of decorative wrought iron, above which hangs an antique neo-classical style lantern from an antiques dealer in Connecticut; it was part of the homeowner's original collection. "It works well with the Colonial Revival architecture," Shenaman says.



Architect Jeff Smith specializes in trellis rooms and designed this one located just steps from the pool and tennis courts. Six French doors—one of them mirrored—allow the outdoor environment in, creating the feeling of being in a garden. A faux finish was applied to the dark green walls, followed by a white trellis. The antique marble flooring is the same one used in the kitchen, minus the black. Wicker furnishings complete the look.

The centerpiece in the master bathroom is a tub for two from Waterworks. The wall paneling was designed locally, then constructed and installed by a Parisian cabinet company. To achieve an aged effect, walls were given a dry brush strié finish. The floor is a gorgeous combination of two separate white marbles, with mother-of-pearl cabochon inlays. Curtains of Corragio silk were custom-made by local draper Paul Maybaum and allow the morning sunlight to filter through.



Shenaman did have a few obstacles to overcome during the two and a half years she worked on the house. For one, since it has virtually no hallways to serve as buffer zones, all rooms transition into one another, so it was critical to maintain a cohesive flow between them. Also, the homeowner was deeply involved in the selection of materials, which meant they didn't always jibe with the designer's vision. And one challenge that might seem strange was the client's certainty that he didn't need a TV anywhere in the house. "But his friends finally convinced him that when you live in a 14,000-square-foot house, you have to put one somewhere," Shenaman explains. He ended up with two — one in the family room and one in the master bedroom. ○



TOP RIGHT: The living room is done in a soft palette of blue and green tones. The sofas are upholstered in a dove gray-blue Corragio fabric and sit atop a rug purchased in New York. A Nagler painting hangs over the English fireplace mantle that the homeowner purchased in London. A second seating area (at left) features a sofa in ivory wool damask, two 19th-century Bergere chairs and a gilded coffee table with a marble inset from Cedric DuPont Antiques in Palm Beach. There's also a piano, which Shenaman says the homeowner "plays beautifully." Striped silk drapes combine rose with the green and yellow shades found in the adjacent dining room.



RIGHT: In the entry, tropical-themed yet elegant Gracie wallpaper serves as a backdrop for an ottoman covered in beautiful, coral silk velvet by Clarence House. Flanking the window are mirrors done in the Chinoiserie style; they were white-washed rather than gilded for a softer feel, as were the green marble-topped 18th-century side tables with their anthropomorphic legs. The floor is black and white honed marble that Shenaman found in Miami, but feels original to the house.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Located on the second floor, the master bedroom faces the ocean and has his-and-her bathrooms and closets en suite. The soothing apple-green palette plays out in the de Gournay wallpaper, with its airy foliage and floral pattern, the linen velvet settee, Scalandre fabric on the windows, and a rug by Patterson Flynn & Martin. The bench at the foot of the bed is a TV cabinet so it's hidden.

