

CHIC MODERN COASTAL

A diamond in the rough is transformed into a contemporary gem.
Story by Meryl Siegman | Photography by Brantley Photography



The renowned interior designer Jackie Armour has lived in the village of Tequesta, FL, for more than 30 years. An incorporated village in Palm Beach County, Tequesta was founded as a planned community in 1957 by a real estate developer who purchased 86 acres of land. The area is known for its beautiful beaches, the Loxahatchee River and the Intracoastal Waterway, a 3,000-mile inland waterway stretching from Massachusetts, around the southern tip of Florida, to Brownsville, Texas.

On her frequent walks through the neighborhood, Jackie, the owner of JMA Interior Design in Jupiter, had always admired one house in particular. Once owned by a landscape architect, it sat back from the road surrounded by impeccably designed grounds that became





more overgrown over the years. Each time she passed it, she thought the house could be spectacular if it had an owner with the right eye, talent and experience. In 2018, the house landed in the right hands: hers.

The “Before”

Built around 1990, the 3,800-square-foot, four-bedroom, four-bathroom split-level home is sited on a very private three-quarter-acre lot. When Jackie and her husband purchased it, the house was in its original condition, having never been renovated except for a kitchen remodel and new flooring at some point in time. “It was built in an early 1990s style and existed in a time warp,” says Jackie. “It had brown-toned finishes on the cabinetry, reddish brown flooring and beige walls, with dated soffits throughout. But thanks to my being an interior designer and my experience in construction, I immediately knew this house, with its soaring ceilings and good bones, was a diamond in the rough with tremendous potential.”



Before moving in with her husband, Jackie guided the house through a seven-month-long renovation project, which included removing soffits where possible, adding nickel joints to the ceilings, installing new flooring, gutting the bathrooms, replacing the lighting with decorative fixtures, and updating all the hardware and finishes. “We were able to take out some walls that were nonstructural in order to open up the space,” says Jackie. “And we used lots of white paint.”

The couple’s previous home of 30+ years, just around the corner, was much more traditional, with a compartmentalized layout offering plenty of wall space. One of the challenges was figuring out what to bring with them to their new home, with its abundance of open spaces and fewer walls. Deciding to go with a modern coastal design with a sophisticated beach house look and feel, Jackie left some furniture pieces behind and reupholstered others in a calming, beach-colored palette of cerulean blues, coral pinks, soft greens and crisp whites. As Jackie explains, “We didn’t have much in the way of modern furniture, but I chose pieces that would work in the context of the new house. I used the shape and silhouette of the furniture to help soften the angular lines of the structure’s architecture.”

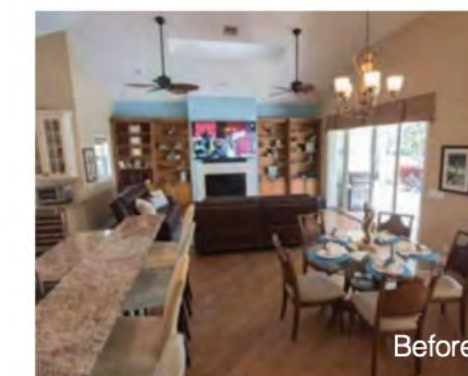
The “After”

The Exterior

Over time, the ugly duckling was transformed into a beautiful swan. Starting with the exterior, Jackie changed the house’s color from yellow, which she described as a “thing”



The blue paint on the cabinetry matches the color of the front door. The designer mixed and matched hardware and handles for a more interesting look. The Adelaide brass pendants are from Ballard Design, by Cammi Werling Designs.



Before

10 or 12 years ago, to white. Inspired by a colorful Key West look, she added blue shutters. She retained the original tin roof.

The entire backyard received a make-over. The original pool area was, of course, brown. Jackie whitewashed it and eliminated a retaining wall to create one large, open space. She removed all the original plants except the palm trees.

White Oak Floors and Paint
The designer installed wide-plank European white oak flooring throughout the home, updated the ceilings with nickel joints, and whitewashed most of the walls with Benjamin Moore's Super White. Because the home has an open floor plan, Jackie employed a color blocking technique by the using the same blue color in multiple areas throughout the house, to create a sense of flow and bring the spaces together. Blue can be found on the inside of the front door and on the kitchen cabinetry. In a similar manner, the same wallpaper appears in multiple areas of the house to contribute to a cohesive feel. The beautiful soft-gray marble around the fireplace was left over from the kitchen counters and backsplash but, due to its location, appears to be a different hue.



Shiplap paneling was chosen for strategically-located walls, and a citron botanical-print fabric evoking the tropics, which contributed to the modern coastal design, makes a number of appearances. Slab door cabinetry and white marble on vanity tops are used throughout the house.

Jackie transformed the entryway—whose unusual shape made it difficult to place furniture—by removing the existing octagonal soffit and a wall, to create a stylish and welcoming sitting area complete with sofa and two arm chairs.

The Kitchen

The original kitchen, which opens into the dining room, living room and sitting area, was completed gutted. Jackie was thrilled to donate the unwanted old doors, hardware, hinges, cabinetry and appliances to Habitat for Humanity, so they could be repurposed in another home. “The kitchen was strangely shaped, with old-school granite counters and a tiny little island,” Jackie explains. “We were able to reconfigure the entire kitchen by removing the island and part of the octagonal wall, and creating an L-shaped design. We added a 10-foot-long island and replaced all the cabinets and hardware.” Jackie chose blue Christopher Farr Africana wallcovering, which she also used in the stairwell, and gray marble on the countertops and backsplash. Thanks to the



high ceilings, the kitchen has lots of natural light.

The Living and Dining Areas

The living and dining areas also received a complete facelift. In the living room, Jackie removed the “clutter,” including the original brown bookcases and a small window that prevented the wall from being used to display artwork. She tore down nonstructural walls, added new cabinetry, installed TruStile interior doors with two simple panels, and replaced the interior trim with one that was a lot cleaner for a simple modern coastal look.

Jackie removed another soffit in the dining room and opened up the space to make it much more open and airy. The wallpaper echoes the one in the kitchen to visually connect the two spaces.

The Master Bedroom

The lackluster original master bedroom matched the rest of the house with its columns, soffits and brown floors and cabinetry, so that was the next room to be gutted. Jackie opted to keep the original wood floors, but they were bleached and restained to match the French white oak used throughout the rest of the house.

Additional work included adding tongue-and-groove nickel joint to the ceiling, and moving the bathroom doors to make the bathroom more private. The pink, green and white floral wallpaper is complemented by coral pink draperies.

In the bathroom, the contractors removed the old tub, shower, floors and cabinets, placing the new fixtures in the same position. The shower stall was opened up, and the freestanding bathtub was raised off the floor to

offer views of the beautiful oak trees outside. The result provides a more modern and airy feel, with new soft taupe colors, instead of dark wood, prevailing.

Dual Roles of Designer and Client

As for being both the interior designer and the client on the same project, Jackie discovered how hard it was. “We designers are our own worst client,” she says. “I had to make decisions very quickly, keep things on track and stay on budget. I do this day in and day out for my clients, helping them make difficult decisions. My experience of being the client gave me a lot more empathy when it comes to understanding and identifying with my them. I gained a new respect for them as I went through the process myself.”

She concludes, “I told myself, ‘If they can do this, then I should be able to do it.’” Like her clients, Jackie is enjoying the fruits of her labor, relishing every moment in the house she transformed into a dream come true.

Resource:

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