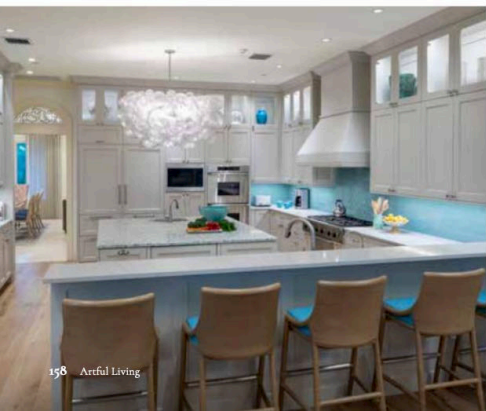
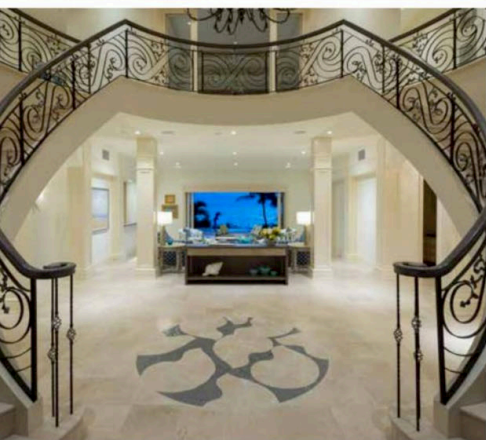


COASTAL CHIC

INTERIOR DESIGNER TALLA SKOGMO TRANSFORMS A GRAND
FLORIDA ABODE INTO A COMFORTABLE VACATION HOME.

BY MERRITT BARRICK

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY HINES



WHEN MARCIA PAGE AND JOHN HUEPENBECKER purchased their Florida vacation home more than a decade ago, they also bought everything inside it, from the furniture down to the silverware. "We just wanted to move in and start enjoying it," says Page. The couple looked to award-winning Twin Cities interior designer Talla Skogmo when they were ready to put their own stamp on it.

One of their main goals? Preparing the home for grown children and future grandchildren. "When they first moved in, their three daughters were in grade school," Skogmo explains. "Now they have college graduates." Planning for the future led to one of the most notable transformations. With the help of Hagstrom Builder, the team converted the living room, which boasted a 20-foot-high ceiling, into main and upper level family rooms, each with a 10-foot-high ceiling.

"It has completely changed the way we live," Page notes. "The upstairs rumpus room is perfect for games, movies and winter sunsets." The previous upstairs media room in turn became the VIP suite, including an en-suite bath and the best views of the gulf. And downstairs, Skogmo and colleague Jennifer Zirkelbach created a cozy living room with multiple conversation areas designed for hosting groups large or small.

"We went through every room of the home and asked: How can we make this better?" says Skogmo. The answer was often updates to make spaces feel more casual and welcoming. For example, the team bid adieu to the Tuscan-style interiors, starting with the foyer. "We replaced the elaborate marble floor medallions with a seashell mosaic," she notes. "We wanted it to look organic, like someone dropped shells on the floor." The team also honed the polished marble floors for a more casual matte aesthetic throughout the abode.

In the kitchen, design decisions were inspired by a vibrant artwork in the adjoining living room that depicts a swimmer in bright blue water. The ocean-blue subway tile backsplash is the perfect complement to the light gray cabinetry, a modern upgrade from previously dark, ornate cabinets. Terrazzo countertops made from recycled glass mimic the look of the water right outside. And just off the kitchen, the light and bright dining room is as appropriate for family dinners as it is for Page's executive meetings.

To complete the remodel, the team traveled to the Sunshine State every few weeks, exemplifying a collaborative spirit for the project. They also had the unique benefit of working with the home's original architect, George Merlin. "He helped eliminate surprises along the way," explains Peter Hagstrom, president of Hagstrom Builder, whose team collaborates on a few Florida projects each year.

"This is one of the most unique homes we've worked on," he notes, with a nod to the newly adjoining second story balconies that maximize outdoor living space and offer unrivaled views of the spectacular gulf sunsets. Adds Skogmo: "This was such a fantastic transformation. I love the part of my job that paints an idea of the future and what's next in my clients' lives." ●

