

# DESIGN + DECOR

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA





# CONTEMPORARY COMFORT ON THE SEASHORE

Kira Krümm and Koastal Design Group give an older condo  
on Crescent Beach a much-needed modernization.

Story by Anestesia Storer | Photography by Elaine Johnston

A pair of custom-made sofas flank a custom ottoman upholstered in a metallic vinyl fabric, with O&B Biscayne Designs' (OBD) Aqua Pearl finish for the wood base and legs. The two electric recliner chairs were upholstered in a seafoam-hued woven fabric to match the ottoman and the custom cornices that hide the electronic solar shades.



“The voice of the sea speaks to the soul,” wrote author Kate Chopin, and from time immemorial, we have been drawn to the liminal space between land and sea, the sand-covered shore where we inevitably build on or near in order to be close to the ocean waves.

Amongst southwest Florida communities, Marco Island remains something of a hidden gem, with a quiet, more relaxed vibe and atmosphere than the towns further north up the coastline like Naples and Bonita Springs. “The people who live here tend to be very casual and low-key, and the views here are simply spectacular,” says Kira Krümm, principal of Koastal Design Group, who lives on Marco Island herself and is always pleased when she has the opportunity to breathe new life into a home here. “Many of the properties, particularly the condominiums, were built a couple of decades or more ago, and it’s a real joy when I have a client who wants me to renovate and update one. In many ways, my clients are my muses and with this project, I absolutely loved working with Mrs. Cummings; she and I had very symbiotic tastes in interior design that made





everything so much fun for the both of us as we worked in collaboration to bring this design to life."

#### Coastal Focus

Kira has been creating beautiful interiors for coastal properties for much of her career, and she has been interested in art and design ever since she was a young girl. Both of her parents were artists, and her father was also an architect. "He's the one who really encouraged me to get into interior design," she says. "As a teenager, I was leaning towards being an artist and fashion designer, but after talking with my dad, I decided to look elsewhere for a career that would let me use my creativity and artistic talents and skills. I landed on interior design, so from the time I was 15, I knew that was what I was going to be."

That early level of commitment to the career meant that by the time she graduated from college with her BFA in Interior Design, she had already interned and worked for several design firms, and she was ready to step out on her own. "I started my own business right after graduation, in Virginia Beach, where I was doing both residential as well as commercial work." She relocated to the Naples area in 2000, and has been designing interiors throughout southwest Florida ever since, giving her nearly twenty years of experience in the region's trends and architectural styles. She has garnered more than 45 industry honors and awards for her designs throughout her career, and her work has been seen in numerous national and international publications.

#### Renovation and Renewal

This project's condo building was built in 1998, when the predominant architectural style and the way we shaped the interiors of our homes were both quite different. "These older condos are basically concrete boxes," Kira says. The architecture was common at the time, and resulted in homes with individual rooms and separated spaces that feel closed-in and cramped, not at all reflective of today's open lifestyle.

Addressing the space planning was Kira's first task. "No one wants box rooms now, everyone wants to enjoy the main living area together. You want to be able to see and talk to the person in the kitchen while you're in the living room, and vice versa." By simply removing the wall that separated the kitchen from the dining room, Kira was able to open up the main living area, allowing the entire space to benefit from the natural light from the windows—and the views of Crescent Beach. "The view is the star of the show," Kira says. "I created my design to emphasize that. The colors and textures you see outside are reflected inside. I wanted to create visual continuity between the external view and the interior design."

Kira modernized and completely reconfigured the kitchen to maximize the space and create a better flow from the far wall and breakfast nook through the kitchen itself and on into the rest of the living area.



The kitchen was opened up to the main living area, creating a single sight line from the entry through the kitchen to the ocean view. The contemporary chandelier over the table provides a focal point for the dining area.



The breakfast nook has a breathtaking view of Marco Island's Crescent Beach.

#### Koastal Style

The clients had seen some of Kira's previous work and were attracted to her hallmark Koastal aesthetic. "When I meet with clients, one of the things I tell them is that I'm not there to dictate style," Kira explains. "But I do have some fundamental philosophies that influence all of my designs. My work is known for clean, light backgrounds, with accents of organic materials inspired by the beauty of our natural coastal environment to add warmth and texture." Here, it's the French oak flooring that brings that warmth, and Kira's textural choices—as in the fabric of the breakfast bar chairs, the custom-built ottoman in the great room, and the area rugs throughout the condo—are masterful, conjuring up the look and feel of sand and shore.

Kira prefers to use neutral hues for her background colors because of their timelessness and versatility, adding blues and greens as accent colors. And when it comes to windows, another of Kira's fundamentals is that she doesn't want to cover them up, preferring to take a minimalist approach with regards to any window treatments. "I want to let in as much light and view as possible," she says. "Of course, we have to have window coverings for those times when the client needs privacy, but I like to keep them as unobtrusive and hidden as possible so as not to detract or obscure the view." Throughout the condo, you'll find no draperies at all, even in the two bedrooms. Valances and shades are minimal and clean, often in neutral colors that help them to blend in and





The master suite is designed as a tranquil retreat with a subdued, cool, neutral palette. Soft, luxurious custom bedding in cappuccino taupe fabric is complemented by modern geometric patterns and an ivory nightstand and dresser. A cozy sitting area overlooking the gulf welcomes you, and a woven gray and metallic grasscloth wallcovering makes a lasting impression.





In the master bathroom, his-and-hers vanities and an extra-large walk-in shower create a spa-like ambiance. A custom tiled wall in the shower with a faded ombre pattern and faceted glass tile accents add a modern touch.

vanish from the eye. In the great room, where the clients watch television and thus occasionally want to block the sun and darken the room, this meant Kira wanted to find a way to hide the electronic solar shades. The solution? Custom-built cornices in a muted seafoam hue that complements the color of the matching recliner chairs and sofa accent pillows.

#### Clever Design

Kira's design abounds with clever, unique details. In the great room, a dropped panel ceiling was added, both to allow the ceiling fan to be centered over the seating area as well as to hide the necessary electrical needed for the fan and the new cove and recessed lighting. "The client has granular control over the lighting here," Kira says. "They can elect to turn off all the lights and leave only the cove lighting on, which really adds a lovely ambiance to the space in the evenings."

The clients wanted to be able to watch TV in the great room, but Mrs. Cummings didn't want it to visually dominate the space, so Kira had a custom entertainment unit built with a beautiful

hand-painted finish by Old Biscayne Designs. The unit's central doors, instead of opening outward, slide left and right to reveal or hide the television as needed. And for relaxing while watching TV, directly opposite the entertainment unit, Mr. Cummings asked for recliner chairs. "I confess Mrs. Cummings cringed just a little when he said that," laughs Kira, "but we found these fully motorized reclining chairs with a great design, and we had them done in a seafoam-hued woven fabric to match the rest of the room. They are incredibly comfortable, and turned out amazing!"

In the master bath, not only did Kira eliminate a wall that used to bisect the space, she also placed the his-and-hers vanities on the outside wall, with windows above. "I wanted the clients to be able to see out of the windows when they are in the bathroom," says Kira. "But of course, you need a mirror. So we placed the mirrors on the side of each vanity. They open towards you, allowing you to open them when you need a mirror, and otherwise keep them closed." The central cabinet between the two vanities creates an optical illusion, due to its mirror reflecting the reflection



The guest suite draws you in with its rich fabrics and textures. The banana leaf woven bed and pale blue-green walls are inspired by the beautiful Florida coast.





The condo's balcony offers an incredible view of the water—the perfect spot for an evening dinner or cocktails at fresco, with the sound of waves and salty smell of the sea for company.

of its twin cabinet directly across from it. Not only is the visual alluring to the eye, it adds a touch of fun to the space.

There is one last little clever detail that can't be overlooked, and it's not what you'd expect: the bedding in the master bedroom. What's so special? The bed linens are made of wood. Part of Kira's exclusive Koastal Kollektion, these eco-friendly linens are actually made from 100% organic wood fiber. "The wood is harvested from carefully-managed forests, and is completely biodegradable," explains Kira. "It's manufactured in Europe following strict EU stands and procedures. A mix of Italian Birch and Beachwood are pulped, then spun and woven like cotton, giving this amazing textile a smooth, supple feel. It has the same luxurious look and feel as silk, but with the easy care of cotton. And unlike bamboo bedding, these sheets won't lose their softness with repeated washings."

From its heavily decorated, outdated and traditional beginnings, Kira's new design for this waterfront condo is bright, airy, and open. Like a fresh ocean breeze, the formal, cramped atmosphere is gone, replaced with a relaxed, casual ambiance and a sophisticated style that makes the condo the perfect seasonal beach retreat for the clients. Kira's design beautifully executes the contemporary transitional style — clean and sleek, but still with millwork details and cabinetry panels that offer a subtle nod to more classical, traditional elements.

#### *Resources:*

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