

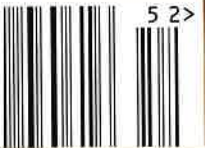
HOME & DESIGN

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| Southwest Florida



DESIGNER Q&A

WITH KIRA KRÜMM, PRINCIPAL DESIGNER
OF KOASTAL DESIGN GROUP



As the Principal Interior Designer and founder of Koastal Design Group — Kira Krümm & Company, Kira Krümm's boutique interior design firm works with private clients as well as investors and their teams. Ms. Krümm's interior designs form the foundation of her business, revealing her artistic background and international influences by balancing the elegant and ethereal.

We sat down with Ms. Krümm for an inside look at how she works with local investors, developers, builders, and other tradesmen to create spec home properties that anticipate the needs of Southwest Florida's discerning homebuyers. Krümm's services include unfurnished spec homes, where she selects all the interior and exterior surfaces, fixtures, and finishes, to fully furnished spec homes where all of the above is included as well as selecting the interior furnishings and decor. We hope this Designer Q&A gives you an inside look at the intricate process of designing, decorating, and furnishing spec homes from conception to completion.



Private Investor Spec Home





H&D: Why do you feel spec homes are so prevalent in our area?

KrÜmm: Investors see the real estate market in Southwest Florida as a great opportunity with low risk and high return on their investment. Southwest Florida is a sought-after destination, so the spec house market has been very successful. Now, especially with the pandemic, people realize how important homesteads are, and Southwest Florida offers a pristine, beautiful, safe environment with a good quality of life (not to mention considerable tax incentives). However, being able to purchase a luxury designer move-in ready home that has been designed, created, and implemented by local top professionals in their field is the real enticement, with the added value brought by the renowned team!



H&D: How do I pick the right team to design and build a spec home?

Krümm: Investors seek proven, experienced teams with a solid reputation in the market to create, build, and market a product that will sell, and sell quickly, for maximum return on investment. Selecting a team with a proven track record that will work well together is key. The team is often comprised of the investor, real estate broker, architect, interior designer, and builder. The interior designer works with all these professionals to make it happen — imagining the possibilities for the living spaces, developing the details, selecting interior hard surfaces as well as furnishing selections. For a cohesive look, designers are often also responsible for the exterior finish selections as well.

H&D: How do you design a home without an actual homeowner?

Krümm: Creating a high-quality environment that aligns with Southwest Florida's sought-after lifestyle and that appeals to a wide-range demographic but stands out amongst the competition is not a small task. The success of the project depends on the designer's ability to not only bring the vision, but make the selections and provide the supporting drawings in accordance with a fast-track timeline, all within budget, all in partnership with the team. Unlike designing a custom home, a spec home must appeal to the majority of individuals who are seeking a new home in Southwest Florida. So the years of experience designing for this market is invaluable. Knowing what appliances, fixtures, and furnishings are expected, imagining how the home needs to function and feel, as well as developing an interior that is unique, innovative, timeless, and appealing are all assets brought by the seasoned designer.

H&D: How do you determine the right location for a spec home?

Krümm: This is a tough question because most high-profile neighborhoods in Southwest Florida are a good location. Waterfront properties that can house a boat are desired, and in that case canals with deep water for larger boats or direct access are in demand. With empty lots few and far between, investors often look for "teardowns" — homes that are too small and out-of-date to be worthy of renovating.





Developer Spec Home — Furnished



What goes into designing a spec home?

A designer's scope of services begins with programming, which is gathering information, analyzing the plans, and making recommendations and improvements before they go to permit. This starts with a preliminary floor plan (basically a hypothetical plan since the furniture won't be selected until much later) and usually means minor tweaks such as moving windows, occasionally walls, or reworking space-planning since the designer is focused specifically on how the home will function. We typically start with the exterior selections (roof, façade, windows, trim, pavers, doors, garage doors, railings, coach lights) and then move inside. We try to have continuity with the architecture and interior. Inside, we typically begin with the general flooring, then select the appliances and plumbing fixtures. Next, we develop the cabinetry designs with a cabinetry company while selecting the tile and countertop material, and make selections for the cabinetry door styles and finishes. At that point, we move on to the ceiling details and lighting and electrical plans. Then we select the interior doors, door hardware, and millwork. Then work on the feature walls, ceilings, and bathroom tile elevations where we coordinate the plumbing surfaces and mounted light fixtures before framing is complete and the electrical and plumbing are roughed in. We will then work to design any specialty lighting needed to enhance the interior before returning to the rest of the selections (paint, finishes, window treatments, cabinetry hardware, shower enclosures, light fixtures, and furniture) and finally have time to select the furnishings and décor. ▶



Q: Why is it so important to hire a designer when building a spec home?

A: Time is money. We must conceptualize and oversee our design specifications implemented in the building of a luxury home. Done right, it will be ready just in time to market during season when the population is dense. However, over the past few years we have seen a lot of serious buyers even in the summer months, even more so this year. People especially love to purchase furnished move-in-ready homes — hello, instant gratification!

The fast-track process takes an organized, experienced, cohesive team. It is the designer's job to provide the selections, specifications, and supporting design documents necessary to implement the projects and facilitate the builder's fast-track process. This requires organization, structured processes and procedures, good communication skills, accountability, versatility, agility, diplomacy, thorough understanding of the construction process, ability to work well with the trades, good financial planning, and budget management. Noteworthy, considering most people consider their interior designer's talents to be primarily on the creative side. Many industry professionals choose to work together based on reputation and professional integrity, as ability goes without saying when you are in this level of work.







H&D: What goes into designing a spec home, con't.

Krümm: By this time the building is well underway, and the team has site meetings with the builder to make sure the designs are being implemented in accordance with our plans. The designer will also answer any questions from the builder or help to address unforeseen situations with the build-out. Typical issues may arise, such as reselecting materials no longer available or working through installation challenges and fine-tuning details together, all while the designer is processing and tracking the furnishings and décor to make sure it arrives when the house is complete. And often while the paint is still drying, it's showtime! We usually have about two weeks to install furnishings and decorate the entire home for the lucky future homeowner, and then it's ready to grace the pages of *Home & Design Magazine!* ■

Photography by Blaine Johnathan

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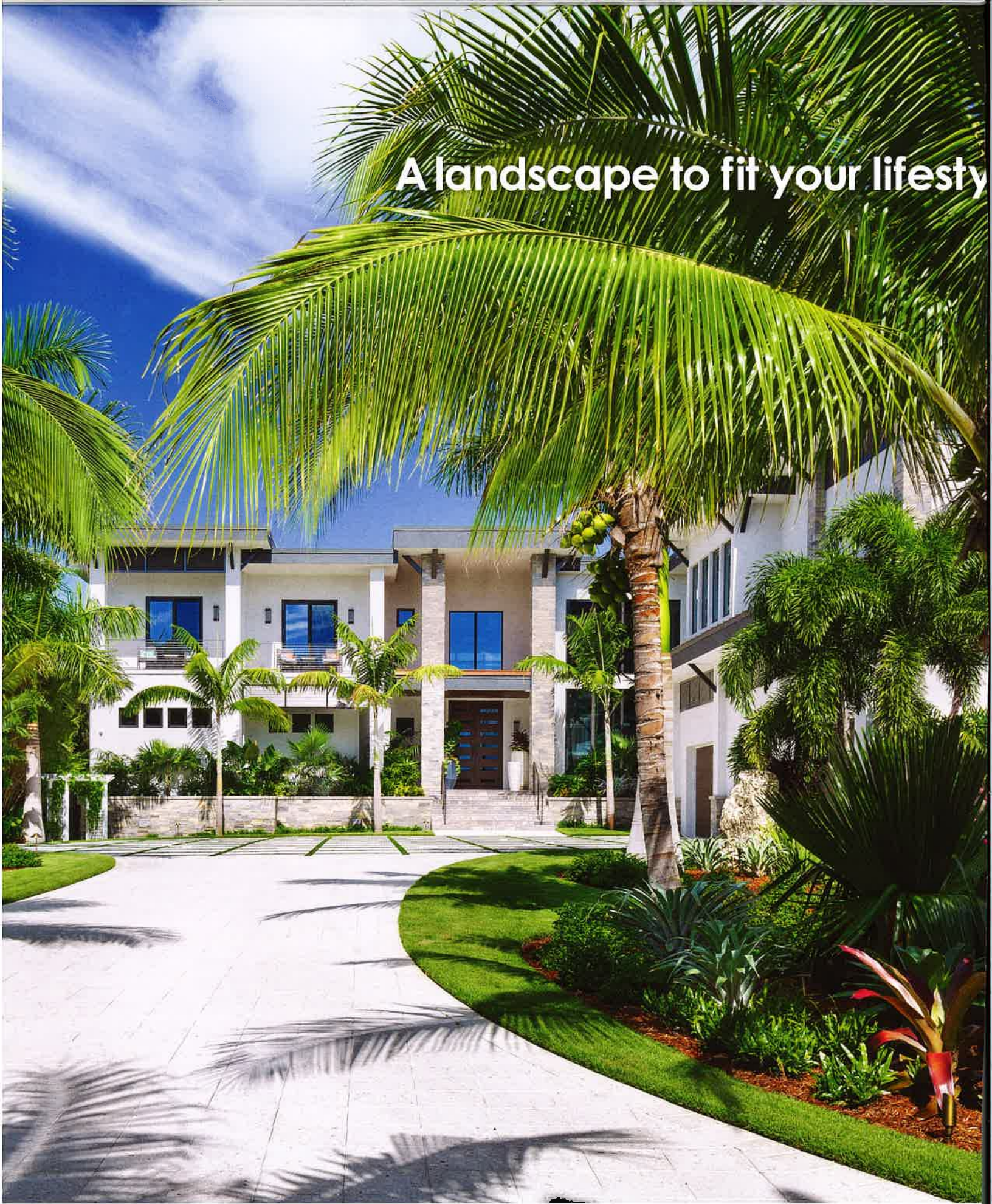
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A landscape to fit your lifestyle



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