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fisher island



Back to Nature

This Fisher Island apartment reflects the beauty found just outside the window

By Beth Dunlop | Photos by Ken Hayden



The design of this beautiful Fisher Island apartment tells a profound and fundamental story: Roger and Jerry Ward love nature. The clues to this are both subtle and obvious, a color scheme that invokes the hues of the sand and the earth with highlights that tell the story of the sea at dawn and the sky over the Atlantic when it grows pale at dusk.

The designers for this apartment were Alison Cahlan and Judy Male of Male Cahlan Design Partners. The two started with an empty shell, and—working with architect Ray Border—transformed raw concrete into an island retreat. “We used a lot of organic elements,” says Cahlan.

The idea of nature, of the organic, dominates, both in materials and motifs. There’s a whitewashed side table in the living room, designed by the Key, Biscayne-based James Duncan, as well as two fossilized-stone side tables. The built-in bar features an onyx top. Silk and hemp rugs are vegetable-dyed (as opposed to chemical), which both respects the environment and adheres to the motif.

In the dining room, the chandelier features a “sprinkling of raw caribbean rocks,” as Cahlan calls it. Still other light fixtures evoke images of the undersea world. The two designers created custom pieces for the living room to look like seaweed, or, as Cahlan says, “like floating in the sea with a little rickety glass.” A rendition of a giant piece of beach coral comprises the breakfast room chandelier.

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The breakfast room features the Dorian upholstery Company's design with images of shells and coral.



In the dining room, a handwoven linen "waterfall of light camelina seeds," a velvet Wendell Castle dining table, a triptych painting by Cecilia Brown, and there is pale western fabric.

The designers created custom pieces for the living room to look like “kelp floating in the sea with a little twinkle glow.”

For the floors in the living and dining rooms, Cablin and Mile chose a pale Jerusalem stone (it has a rustic edge and is set in an subtle pattern) which implies the idea of sand. For contrast, the bedrooms (“a huge, beautiful space,” says Cahley) features unique walnut tree-grain flooring.

The owners, Roger and Janis Ward, adore the deep tones of dark wood that reflect their love of Cabo San Lucas (where they also have a home) and their desire to have the Fisher Island residence speak to an island aesthetic. Thus, the shaker doors throughout the apartment, as well as the cabinetry and furniture. The Wendell Castle dining table, for example, is made of walnut.

Cablin and Mile offset the darker hues with bright highlights, among them the coral chandelier that hovers over furniture covered in a fabric found at Jerry Fine in DCFFA (it is Dollar upholstery called Coconight) which features sprightly images of shells and coral. A rug with a pattern in brilliant colors (it is by Cecilia Rivera) lends a vibrant touch.

But if those touches are bold, most of the eye is subtle—dining chairs in a pale seashore fabric, celadon upholstery and a lighter than-light blue rug with an abstract pattern that is “just the suggestion of coral” in the master bedrooms—all evoking the beauty just outside the window. “It’s a beautiful, beautiful apartment,” says Cablin. ■

