

MAXIMIZING (AND MATCHING) THE VIEW

Rectifying obstructed views of the ocean and using a vibrant color palette, designer **Bruce Bierman** transformed a Palm Beach penthouse into an island-influenced retreat

CARIBBEAN BEACH HOUSE
The client wanted their penthouse home to feel like an open, informal Caribbean beach house. To create this, Bierman gutted the space and designed a layout that allows you to see the ocean and nearby golf course upon entering, then carefully selected furnishings and a vibrant color palette.



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Originally, Bruce Bierman was hired to just move a wall in a recently purchased Palm Beach, Florida, condo. But when Bierman first met with the husband and wife at their unit, he was surprised by the layout and immediately wanted to do more to improve the space.

"It was a very strange space," says Bierman, owner of New York City-based interior-design firm Bruce Bierman Design. "This was an oceanside penthouse, yet when you walked into some of the rooms, the views were obstructed. You could really only see the ocean clearly from one room."

Bierman agreed to move the wall his clients wanted relocated—and also convinced them to refurbish the rest of the interior. The condo is located on the grounds of The Breakers, a luxury resort hotel, and Bierman wanted the interior of the condo to showcase the beauty of its location.

"By gutting the place, we recreated it so that you can walk in and see the ocean and see the nearby golf course, which you couldn't before," he says.

One of the condo's bedrooms was converted into a study for the husband, who also has a separate dressing room and bathroom. The wife has a few private spaces of her own, as well: a bathroom, dressing room, and library.

Additional bedroom space from the original unit became a living room, dining room, and open kitchen with stainless-steel columns and bamboo walls.

In addition to the configuration changes, at the wife's request, Bierman retooled the décor using vibrant hues—a marked departure for the designer, who typically works with a more neutral palette. "She told me that she wasn't afraid of color and wanted it to feel like a Caribbean beach house," Bierman says.

To achieve the effect, a bedroom accent wall was painted a bright candy apple green, and bright orange and yellowish-gold pillows adorn select sofas and chairs. Because the wife loves red, crimson accents were included in a second kitchen that was built in the unit's sizeable laundry room space to accommodate catering staff when the couple entertained. "We did red Formica countertops, which was a lot of fun, and I found this vintage chandelier that we had lacquered red," Bierman says.

The condo also includes some more-subtle accents—such as bamboo-paneled walls and semi-hidden pocket doors, designed to blend in so that they appear to be part of the wall. Guests wash their hands in a teak-wood sink in the powder



01

PROJECT
Breakers Row Penthouse

LOCATION
Palm Beach, FL

SIZE
4,100 sq. ft.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Woollems Inc.
561 835 0401
www.woollems.com

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02



03

01 MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACE
Part of the challenge with this project was designing a space that could serve as a guest bedroom when the client's extended family visited. Bierman created this library with an suite both, featuring a couch, chaise, game table, and a sleeper sofa.

02 HOW YOU SEE IT, HOW YOU DO IT
Continuing the "convertible" design, the study offers floor-to-ceiling shutters that can open and close to transform the room from cocoon-like to bright and airy. Like the library, the study can be converted into a guest room with an suite both.

03 MASTER BATHROOM
Clean lines and simplicity dominate the master bathroom. Whether in the transitional tub or in the shower surrounded by treated glass, the client can bathe while enjoying panoramic views of Palm Beach.

room; other bathrooms feature stone slab countertops and mosaic tile. "The condo is really designed to make the space as expansive as possible and to take advantage of the light and the views," Bierman says.

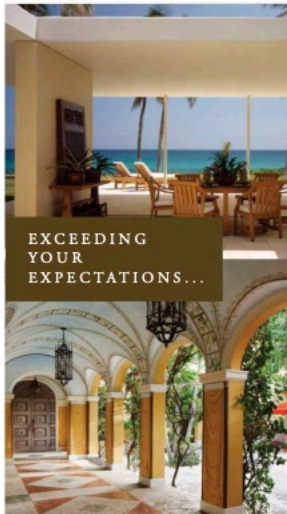
Although the considerable structural changes may seem like the biggest challenge Bierman faced, he says time was a more pressing issue. Because the couple lives in New York and spends winters in Palm Beach, work could only be done from around Memorial Day until October.

Fortunately, the renovation was not only completed on time, it was finished early. The project began in May 2010 and concluded in September 2011—earlier than the couple planned to arrive for the season.

Bierman attributes the early finish to the contractor he worked with, West Palm Beach-based Woollems, Inc., a general contracting company that offers residential, commercial, and preconstruction services. Bierman also used Woollems to renovate his own West Palm Beach condo. "They're really wonderful," he says. "We do a lot of high-end detailing on our projects, and you really need a contractor who can partner with you and understand that level of detail."

The lighting, stonework, panels, and other aspects of the project required significant installation skills, Bierman explains. "When you are working with a quality contractor and subcontractor, unless they're up to the level Woollems is at, you have a problem," he adds.

The overall attention to detail clearly paid off. The homeowners—and their three adult children—were thrilled with the condo's new look. "The couple used to own a house with extra bedrooms for their children, but they never came to visit," Bierman says. "Now they say the children think the apartment is cool and visit all the time!" ●



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