

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A waterfront Sarasota condo is full of head-turning moments with chic surprises around every corner.

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Interior Design: Tracee Murphy, Trade Mark Interiors Home Builder: Grant Castilow, Vertical Design + Build

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racee Murphy understands the power of a memorable encounter. When general contractor Grant Castilow introduced the interior designer to the new owners of a Sarasota condo, “We all just kind of fell in love,” she recalls.

“Sometimes there’s a great synergy with clients, and this was one of those times. We all understood each other.”

Homeowners Al and Carol Hogan had experienced a similar captivating feeling when they first toured the residence. A blank slate just waiting to be decorated, the waterfront unit offered ample space, 13-foot-tall ceilings and a vast deck offering sunset views over Sarasota Bay. “You could immediately see out onto the harbor,” Carol remembers. “It was a real eye-catcher.”

This was the kind of stunning impact the Hogans craved every time they stepped inside. The couple envisioned a home unlike anything else around—a chic, contemporary and comfortable city condo that relates to the bay surroundings without typical coastal styling. “They wanted to open the door and feel something special,” Murphy describes.

So, the entry is exactly where she established the first unforgettable moment in the abode, transforming the white-walled foyer hall into a more striking introduction. “The entry was dark, because there’s no natural light there,” the interior designer points out. “It had a tunnel feeling.” To add flair, she wrapped the passage in a three-dimensional white oak trim studded with integrated LED ambient lighting. “Now, it’s like you’re walking into a high-end hotel,” Castilow observes. “It’s amazing.”

The lengthy corridor leads to the living area, a lofty space with grand windows and a white fireplace that extended halfway up a wall. This, Murphy recognized, was another opportunity to drop jaws. “We wanted it to make a dramatic statement,” she says. Her answer: a wall of black-and-white porcelain slabs in a book-matched pattern that stretches to the ceiling, turning the fireplace into a showstopper. The feature is now a focal point for a seating area with a capacious sectional and a pair of armchairs that can face the flames or swivel to admire the outdoor view.

Throughout the rest of the spacious room are “pockets of function and beauty,” the interior designer describes—each with a particular purpose. One such area is the lounge, a corner nook to the left of the fireplace that was previously an empty niche. “The goal was to make it a destination,” she muses. Against the backdrop of a custom built-in, Murphy reached for playful textures like blush bouclé on twin armchairs, leather fringe on a gray ottoman and an ebony wood-framed mirror. “You can sit there and have a martini or cup of coffee and still be involved with what’s happening in the kitchen or communicate with somebody who’s hanging out in the living area,” she notes.

The lounge’s tones are among the punches of cheery pigments the Hogans requested amid a primarily watery palette. “It was important to them to bring in bold splashes of color—and to not be shy about it,” the interior designer says. “We intended to embrace the setting without feeling like you’re walking into a coastal home.” The residence’s range of carefully selected blues includes a turquoise vinyl wallpaper in the dining area—a bold transformation, as the wall originally contained a window that looked out to a nearby building. “I knew from the first time I walked in there, I would close in that window,” Murphy states. “The wallcovering is cool and comforting, and the texture gives movement and light reflection.” Instead of offering a view of a concrete structure, the space now exhibits colorful artwork, dalmatian-print chairs and a wall-to-wall refrigerated buffet with a reeded exterior.

More ribbed texture appears in the primary bedroom, where the interior designer warmed a curved wall using floor-to-ceiling slatted wood. Malachite green nightstands pop against the room’s neutral tones and call to the putting green on the adjoining balcony, one of the multiple outdoor entertaining opportunities. The main terrace boasts a grill area, dining for six, a lounge space and a bench that curves around a fire pit. Connected to the living area, it forms an extraordinary place to gather. “We wanted to make the condo cohesive from the inside out, so everything can flow nicely—and to make it all fun and a little punchy,” Murphy says. And that leaves quite the lasting impression. ■



Sonneman’s Liquid chandelier from International Design Source dangles in the entry hall. The three-dimensional white oak trim, outfitted with LED lighting, complements a Phillip Jeffries vinyl-wicker wallcovering. Perennials’ Landscape Tibetan Knot runner leads to the living area.

Previous page: Bernhardt’s Nicolette sectional, Gainsford cocktail table and Camino armchairs gather before the living area’s fireplace wall of Bedrosians’ Magnifica Encore porcelain. Kravet’s Oui Grande drapes and Hruffelina rug add texture. Noir’s marble Architect side table and Currey & Company’s Boyles table complete the space.



The dining area's Arte wallpaper echoes the kitchen's Uttermost stools. Beneath an Arteriors chandelier, Palecek chairs encircle Old Biscayne Designs' Gypsy table atop a Kravet rug. Kelly Wearstler sconces flank Kyle Goderwis art above a buffet by Campbell Cabinetry Designs.



A curved wall, reeded by SRQ Woodworks Co., anchors the primary bedroom opposite Bernhardt's Silhouette bed. Surya's Odessa rug and The Phillips Collection art contribute neutral tones. Visual Comfort & Co. and Ngala Trading fixtures offer light.

Opposite: Century Furniture's Raylen chairs and Pericles tables hold court in the lounge with Made Goods' Hallie ottoman and Revelation's Brianza mirror. Visual Comfort & Co.'s Dessau picture light illuminates prints from Natural Curiosities.

On the terrace, a bench by Ben Nettles Concrete Design curves around a fire pit. "Adding a few vibrant color elements brings the space to life," interior designer Tracee Murphy observes of the pillows.

**Opposite:** Brown Jordan's Parkway bar table and Oscar stools provide a spot for al fresco dining with bay views. TimberTech French white oak covers the deck.

