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FANTASY REMODELS

BY Charlyne Varkonyi Schaub

When are any of us really satisfied with our homes?

We go on house tours, visit show houses, read decorating magazines and watch HGTV. Everywhere we look we find enticing ideas of what our dream homes could look like.

If moving is impossible right now, remodeling can give your home the facelift it desperately needs. Changes can range from major surgery to the equivalent of a little Botox with some minor changes.

Our three remodels provide inspiration – for everything from kitchens and powder rooms to family rooms. You can borrow major concepts or just an idea to transform your abode into the home of your dreams.



Before

The new owners bought this home in North Palm Beach for the view, but the view from the water was mundane, especially with the unattractive second floor addition.

After

The remodeled exterior now takes advantage of the waterfront view with a new window configuration, a private balcony off the master bedroom and a covered outside area for a summer kitchen and seating. A hot tub was added to the pool.

From minor facelift to major surgery

Realtors love to repeat the mantra: Location, location, location.

In South Florida, location often translates into waterfront, waterfront, waterfront. Just ask a snowbird couple from Boston who knew they had to buy the home in Lost Tree Village in North Palm Beach when they saw the nearly 180-degree panoramic water view of Little Lake Worth.

They recognized the 1970s house needed work and estimated they would have to redo the bathrooms and create a more open floor plan. But once they started talking with architect Brian Collins of Affiniti Architects in Boca Raton, they saw the possibilities, and a minor renovation turned into a major facelift.

"The exterior architecture and interior were pretty chopped up and 1970ish," Collins says. "The house had no architectural theme whatsoever. They really had their heart set on a Key West style, with bright colors, planking and details that describe a Key West home."

Collins designed a new façade, added siding and a metal roof, new paint, details such as brackets and columns, a covered patio (with room for seating and a summer kitchen) and a private deck on the second floor. An addition of a few hundred square feet enlarged the kitchen and first floor bedroom. The front door, which was right next to the garage, was relocated and a covered entrance was added.

"The owner wanted to block the ugliness of it from the front as well as give it a facelift from the rear," Collins says. "The house just sits out there facing the water for everyone to see."

So why not take the typical South Florida solution: Tear down and start over?

"We gave them that option and, in hindsight, it maybe is the route we should have gone," says Michael Conville, president of Beacon Construction Group. "They would have had a brand new house with the exact floor plan they wanted. Still, it saved a couple of hundred thousand in this manner. Since they didn't tear the house down, the renovation presented some major challenges, such as leveling floor slabs and bringing the old structure up to new building codes, Conville says.

Collins saw "an extremely ugly second floor addition that was haphazardly put on the rear of the house" as the major problem. The addition resulted in a low ceiling height



— about 8 ½ feet — on the first floor. Typically rooms today have ceiling heights ranging from 10 to 12 feet. When they opened up the downstairs space to feel larger, they had to add steel beams to hold up the second floor.

What should you expect when doing a renovation?

"You should expect the unexpected," Collins says. "Seriously, when you do a renovation you really don't know what you have. We knew we were dealing with an ugly second floor, but we had no idea what we would find when we opened it up."

His final advice: "When you are planning a renovation, the important thing is to have the architect and the builder in place. I want to stress that we worked together on this. We can save the owner money when the builder and architect work together."

Architect: Brian Collins, Affiniti Architects, Boca Raton

Builder: Michael Conville, Beacon Construction Group, North Palm Beach

Photographer: Daniel Newcomb



Before

The original house, built in the 1970s, featured an off center front door, a dull color scheme and little architectural character.

After

Brian Collins of Affiniti Architects in Boca Raton relocated the front door, added a covered entrance, architectural interest and a new metal roof.





Recapturing style

Robert and Rita Swedroe fell so much in love with a house on the Isle of Biscaya in Surfside that they invested 3 1/2 years and \$1.5 million to return it to its former splendor.

The 5,000-square-foot Miami Modern (MiMo) house had a spectacular view of the Intracoastal Waterway on a 30,000-square-foot lot, which also contained a boat house, two-bedroom guest house and a three-car garage.

But the compound, designed by architect Donald G. Smith in 1945, had fallen on hard times. The property was in foreclosure and had been vandalized and neglected. It was in terrible disrepair. The marina, full of beer bottles and cans, had to be dredged. The house needed a new kitchen and new bathrooms. Inside doors required removal and refinishing.

"The challenge was to design something practical and functional for my needs within a realistic budget," Swedroe says. "The objective



After

Robert Swedroe added a spiral staircase, sliding glass doors and reinforced the roof to create a rooftop terrace without destroying the integrity of the Miami Modern (MiMo) design. The horse, at left, is a John Kearney sculpture made from chrome car bumpers.

Kitchen after

The most dramatic change was in the kitchen, where bright blue, high-gloss metallic lacquered cabinets were installed with a marble-topped island and six-burner stovetop. The chairs are classic Toledo stacking chairs by Jorge Pensi.



was to bring the house back to its original stature and not change the exterior."

The house was built with no air conditioning and was cooled by mechanical ventilators that would draw hot air up and exhaust it out. The ventilators were covered, but Swedroe got a set of original plans from the building department, opened up the ceiling, extracted the old ventilating system and installed skylights.

The second floor, which contained three guestrooms, was converted into a master suite with a lounge and a walk-in closet, workout area and his and her bathrooms.

One of the bedrooms on the first floor became a library/media room with a 10-foot drop-down movie screen. The other bedroom was turned into an office/den with a fireplace, bookcases and a computer area.

A kitchen was added and a bathroom was remodeled in the detached two-bedroom guest house.

The 1,000-square-foot, three-car garage became a studio for Swedroe to pursue art so the garage doors were changed to glass to allow natural light. His collage and assemblage art has been on display at Art Basel for three years. (For examples, see www.swedroear.com.)

Other enhancements included adding two exterior spiral staircases (one to the second floor and one to the roof), reinforcing the roof slab so it could be used as a rooftop terrace, adding a deck off the master bedroom and a steel front door with three portholes, in keeping with the house's appearance that resembles an ocean liner.

Swedroe hired Fort Lauderdale designer Toby Zack to do the interior design because they both believe rooms should be simple with minimal furnishings that don't compete with the outdoors.

A good example is the great room, which has no window coverings and features glass end tables, a limestone coffee table, white leather sofas and white leather dining chairs. Swedroe wanted an aquarium so Zack arranged the furniture with a view of both the 600-gallon saltwater tank and the Intracoastal Waterway. She created storage with flat panel doors and no hardware above and below the tank. Zack says art, which she calls the third dimension, brings it all together.



The only vibrant color in the house is the cobalt blue Snaidero kitchen, which Swedroe designed with an 8-by-8-foot skylight.

"It looks good today and will 10 or 20 years from now because it's a classic," Zack says. "It is contemporary, but it is timeless because clean, straight lines never go out of style."

Architect: Robert M. Swedroe, Robert M. Swedroe Architects & Planners, Miami Beach

Interior Design: Toby Zack, Toby Zack Designs, Fort Lauderdale

Photographer: Dan Forer

Living room after

Interior designer Toby Zack created the living room with neutral colors and clean lines so the interior would not compete with the waterfront views. She designed storage areas above and below the focal point, a 600-gallon saltwater tank.



SHOPPING FOR THE DETAILS



Lucky lamp: This 25-inch high lamp by b+g design is made from Citrine stone with polished nickel base and comes with a choice of white or black linen shade (\$2,750). From www.gisellefloor.com.

Chic chandelier: Pagini Studios created this 36-by-36-by-54-inch custom made Aquila quartz chandelier with satin-nickel finish (\$9,783). From Holly Hunt, 3833 NE Second Ave., Miami 33137, 305-571-2012, www.hollyhunt.com.



Stylish sink: Zylem's glass vessel sink (\$168) goes perfectly with Hansgrohe's Axor Citterio Tali Vessel Faucet (\$624.60). See www.ferguson.com for locations.

Tremendous table: Toby Zack created this custom coffee table first for her home. It can be designed with your choice of stone and size and has to be assembled on site because of its weight. Price available upon request. From the Toby Collection, 3316 Griffin Road, Fort Lauderdale, 33312, www.tobyzackdesigns.com.



Holy Toledo: Barcelona architect Jorge Pensi designed the iconic Toledo chair (\$1,158) with a cast-aluminum back and seats joined by cast aluminum arms and legs. For retailers, see www.knoll.com.

Classic chair: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe created the Brno chair in 1930 for the Tugendhat house in Brno, Czechoslovakia, with simple profile and clean lines. It is available in leather or fabric with flat bar or tubular frame (starts at \$1,331 for fabric and \$1,711 for leather). For retailers, see www.knoll.com.



21st century design

Styles change. Tastes change. The key to buying an older home is to imagine what it could be.

When a couple from Boston bought a vacation home in St. Andrews Country Club in Boca Raton, they thought at first it didn't require much work. Then they discovered the clean, sophisticated look that is the signature of b+g design in Hollywood.

"Once they saw our work and saw the possibilities, they got drunk with design," Sugerman says. "We didn't renovate every corner, but we did a pretty substantial renovation. We took a typical '90s-style Boca house and brought it up to current standards."

The first indication of '90s style was obvious when you walked into the home and saw a metal scroll in a cutout of the drywall in the foyer. The designers removed the scrollwork and created an open wood privacy screen with millwork detail. They did the same thing in a different style to an opening in the breakfast room.

The dining room had a non-functional niche that they squared off and wrapped in millwork. They added: a stone ledge for display space, wall covering to divide the space and a horizontal wood panel to display lithographs by Alex Katz. They also pulled out one level of the tray ceiling and installed drapery pockets so the drapes could hang cleanly from the ceiling.

"Those open niches were challenges," Loor says. "The question was: How do we connect them and address them without overdesigning them? And how do you tie them together without making the niches look the same? We didn't want a cookie-cutter look with everything the same."

One of the most dramatic changes was in the powder room, which they transformed from builder's standard cabinetry with a granite top to a work of art. The main wall was covered with stained oak. The central clear mirror was wrapped around columns giving a nod to origami, the Japanese art of folding paper. Bronze glass, which matches the floating counter and vessel sink, was installed above and below the clear mirror.

The original living room was traditional with plenty of decorative molding. The molding was removed and the room was decorated in a neutral color palette of tan and brown. The original Saturnia floor was partially covered with a custom rug by b+g design to create a conversation area. b+g also designed a custom coffee table with a glass upper layer to show items displayed on the wood layer underneath. A new striated marble countertop was added to the bar.

One design solution was to reduce the look of the high ceilings, which reach 15 feet in some places. One of the secrets is large art such as the Garth Weiser painting



Foyer before

The metal scrollwork in the foyer looked Mediterranean and so last century.

Foyer after

The updated wood accents flow well into the contemporary dining room.

Living room after

Giselle Loor and Brett Sugerman of b+g design updated this Boca Raton living room using clean lines and statement pieces of art. A pop of color comes from the faux snakeskin wallcovering in the den visible from the doorway.

Living room before

The outdated swag and jabot draperies were replaced with simple draperies and some molding was replaced to give the room a cleaner look.



in the living room. A 48-by-60-inch "James Dean" by Redmore is brought out by a red snakeskin wall covering in the den, visible through the living room.

"Part of the challenge is to make it have human scale, cozy and comfortable," Sugerman says. "A lot of that has to do with the materials and finishes that bring the eye down to human level."

Interior Design: Giselle Loor and Brett Sugerman of b+g design, Hollywood

Photographer: Barry Grossman

Dining room before

The chandelier is too small for the room, the niche is boring and the window treatments are dated.

Dining room after

The niche in the dining room was squared off and wrapped in millwork. A stone ledge was added as display space, wallcovering divided the space and a horizontal wood panel was used to display lithographs by Alex Katz. The 54-inch high Aquila quartz chandelier from Holly Hunt fits the scale of the room.



Powder room before
The original powder room was ordinary with standard cabinetry and granite countertop.

Powder room after
This powder room design is the most dramatic change from a standard builder's bathroom to a clean, modern design. Loor and Sugerman created a floating counter covered with bronze glass and highlighted with a bronze glass vessel sink. The horizontal band mirror is wrapped around the wall, reminiscent of origami.



Sources

Brian Collins: Affiniti Architects, 6100 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 8, Boca Raton, 33486, 561-750-0445, www.affinitiarchitects.com.

Michael Conville: Beacon Construction Group, 648 U.S. 1, Suite 1, North Palm Beach, 33408, 561-845-5130, www.beaconconstgrp.com.

Giselle Loor and Brett Sugerman: b+g design, 2001 Tyler St., Suite 3, Hollywood, 33020, 954-929-6949, www.bandgd.com.

Robert M. Swedroe: Robert M. Swedroe Architects & Planners, 12000 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 602, North Miami, 33181, 305-891-2555, www.swedroe.com.

Toby Zack: Toby Zack Designs, 3316 Griffin Road, Fort Lauderdale, 33312, 954-967-8629, www.tobyzackdesigns.com.

Quick fixes

BY CHARLYNE VARKONYI SCHAUB

Sometimes we dream of a complete remodel, but the timing isn't right for a comprehensive change. One solution is to make a big plan but implement it gradually as budget allows. Here are some suggestions on how to make some small changes that can make a big difference in our homes.



1. Dealing with storage

The right wall unit can change the look of a room from cluttered to cool. If you have a lot of art to display and crave hidden storage, this 12-by-8-foot entertainment unit is a great solution. Inside can be customized with a wine rack, hanging drinking glass storage or CD and DVD storage. It is constructed of ¾ inch Melamine in Fusion Maple and Cayenne Maple and sells for about \$6,000. Custom made units are available in any size and in 30 colors with a choice of Melamine or wood. Available at Beyond Closets, 1405 N. Congress Ave., Suite 3 and 4, Delray Beach 33445; 561-278-6183; www.beyondclosets.net.

2. Organizing the kitchen

If you don't have a huge budget to redo your kitchen, one idea is to start with a new island like this one from IKEA. The island is from the Akurum kitchen with Lidings white doors. It includes cabinets, cover panels, sink, faucet, chrome-plated legs and a custom countertop for \$1,743. The entire kitchen sells for \$4,750. Add Henriksdal barstools with Gobo covers (\$79.99 each) and Foto

pendant lamps (19.99 each). Available at IKEA Sunrise, 151 NW 136th Ave., Sunrise 33325, 954-838-9292; www.ikea.com.

3. Baking with convection

Anyone who has a convection oven can tell you that this method is the gold standard for quality baked goods. Replace your old freestanding range with the 30-inch GE Café Radiant Convection Range with Baking Drawer. The electric range has it all - stylish stainless steel with self-cleaning oven, certified Jewish Sabbath mode and automatic meat thermometer. Price upon request. Available at Coral Springs Appliance Center, 3500 Coral Ridge Drive, Coral Springs 33065, 954-752-3880, www.csappliances.com.

4. Decorating with glass

Sometimes all it takes is new tile on a backsplash or a wall to transform a room from bland to beautiful. New Ravenna Mosaics recently introduced the Ikat Collection hand crafted in jewel glass. Designer Sara Baldwin interpreted this rediscovered old textile motif inspired by her travels along the Silk Road and

her collection of Ikat textiles. Loom, this example, is created in quartz, aquamarine, tanzanite and turquoise glass. It sells for \$184 per square foot. For where to buy in South Florida, see www.newravenna.com.

5. Adding an awning

If you have been thinking about adding an awning but are worried about taking it down before a hurricane, retractable awnings are a perfect solution. New View Retractable Awnings has a variety of options. The most popular is the Siracusa, a retractable patio cover that can project outward 29 feet 6 inches from a sturdy base and is available as a freestanding pergola or attached to the house. Depending on the size, it can withstand heavy rain and winds of up to 63 miles per hour when fully open. The company can produce 3D renderings to show you exactly how the awnings will look on your home. Price upon request. For information, call 954-761-3322 in North Broward, 954-435-3166 in South and Central Broward, 561-241-5100 in Palm Beach South, 561-835-0550 in Palm Beach North and 305-623-7878 in North Dade, www.retractableawnings.com.