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# WOW FACTOR

WITH SO MANY SURPRISES IN STORE, A VENETIAN ISLANDS HOME ENCHANTS ITS OWNER AND GUESTS THANKS TO THE ALLURING DESIGN STORY A CREATIVE DUO TELLS WITHIN ITS SPACES



AS SEEN IN  
**FLORIDA DESIGN**

A 5,600-gallon acrylic aquarium divides two living spaces. In one, Dunbar's curved sofa and a maple burl cocktail table by George Nakashima Woodworkers mirror a seating area that holds a tufted Baxter sofa and Fritz Hansen cocktail table, both vignettes flanked by Cassina armchairs in a muted blue. Whimsical turned-wood accent tables complete the scene with kicky colors.

*Poliform's sectional brings lightness to the family room, while Cassina armchairs, a Carl Hansen lounge chair and ottoman, and accent pillows add hints of color. White oak that defines the space from above pairs with a Rosemary Hallgarten area rug to introduce texture to the space.*



**THERE IS A PHENOMENON THAT HAPPENS** each time someone steps through the front door of this 15,560-square-foot house nestled into the Venetian Islands, and it begins when the floor-to-ceiling aquarium that divides the two, first-floor living spaces comes into view. “I show everyone the fish tank first and they are wowed,” the homeowner says. “By the time I’ve taken them to the rooftop terrace, and they’ve seen the views from all three floors, they’ve forgotten about it. That is until we come back downstairs and they’re awed yet again.”

Including a large-scale aquarium in one of his homes has been a goal of the owner for years, but the design/architecture team he taps time and again — Gregory Dufner and Daniel Heighes Wismer — had never found the perfect project for one. With this home, they knew it was time. “The 5,600-gallon acrylic aquarium was imported from Japan, fitted with equipment in Fort Lauderdale, and brought to the site on a barge,” Wismer says. “A diver has to maintain it weekly, so we designed a special access point from above. There were many multicolor mock-ups of the coral color before we proposed monochromatic pink, a fun Miami-specific reference.”

RIGHT: Spheres of colored fiberglass resemble a solar system as “Lampada” chandeliers from The Future Perfect become geometric sculptures that float above the dining room. Here, iconic Carl Hansen chairs line an Avenue Road white oak table positioned in perpendicular complement to the Miami mod stairway.



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In the breakfast area, a vintage Sputnik-style chandelier explodes above a BDDW table. Nearby, Marc Quinn prints add splashes of color in vivid contrast to the custom metal screen designed by Dufner Heighes.



From the start, the project was a highly collaborative effort. “When we first toured the site with the homeowner, he had clear ideas where he envisioned bedrooms and how we could take advantage of the views of Biscayne Bay,” Dufner says. The panoramas are so powerful because the three-story house eclipses the other buildings around it. “The property was purchased by our client in 2015 from the previous owner with an open building permit,” Wismer says. “The project had been abandoned and there was only a concrete shell in place without walls, windows, or finishes on the double-lot site. Because the house was started under previous zoning laws, the height was permitted, whereas it wouldn’t be now.”

Stylistically, the homeowner asked the design team to create a Miami home with a hint of big-city urbanity. “He didn’t want a Miami house with an all-white interior and white furniture: he wanted, texture, color and a variety of materials,” Dufner says. “The interiors were designed as a cohesive story linked by muted colors and inspired by

ABOVE: Molteni&C white uppers and dark-wood base cabinetry topped in white Corian wrap the kitchen, where a full prep island centers the space and BDDW’s “Square” counter stools pull up to the outer breakfast bar. Bover pendants all but disappear when not lit.

RIGHT: Cozy, coral-hued shells of iconic club chairs from the Gio Ponti Collection for Molteni&C invite comfort in an intimate sitting area. A custom, hexagonal cocktail table designed by Dufner Heighes centers the social grouping atop the pale grays of ABC Carpet & Home’s area rug.



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*Four Pochoirs*, a series of limited editions by Helen Frankenthaler, hangs above Dune's sofa in the guest room, where artisan Michael Robbins' handcrafted "Solo" cocktail table and West Elm's sleek "Martini" accent table add sculptural subtlety.



midcentury Miami modernism. Our work always includes a range of pieces — those that recede and those that provide a special visual or tactile moment within the room.”

The design duo also selected all of the art for the home. “Additions like the 40-piece Carlos Motta installation over the living room sofa have a great impact in the rooms we placed them in,” Dufner says. A mix of vintage furniture and new pieces that were designed midcentury and are still being manufactured today further the vibe.

Wisner notes that many of the team's moves contributed to sun control, which is so important in a tropical environment. “There are numerous eyebrow overhangs on the south-facing windows, and we commissioned American sculptor Erwin Hauer, before his recent passing, to create the two-story breezeblock screen in the entry courtyard,” he says.

“This was an important element to provide shade and privacy for the front of the house while still allowing light through.”

Many of the windows on the ground floor are full-height and slide open to create a stronger connection between indoors and out. “For that reason, limestone flooring traverses the first level, while the more intimate areas on the second and third floors have a warmer wood plank,” Wisner says. In addition, the expansive walls of glass frame views of Miami Beach in one direction and downtown Miami in the other by using architectural elements and landscaping. “There are sizable specimen trees throughout the property, including a large banyan tree in the rear of the house that was assembled from three separate trees and delivered to the site by barge,” Dufner says.



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“This house has been very well received by everyone who experiences it,” the owner says of the stunning backdrop the design team created for his life. “The views from the Venetian Islands inspired me to choose the location. I enjoy them and the house with its restrained Miami-modern vibe every day.”



ABOVE AND LEFT: The rooftop terrace of this 15,560-square-foot, three-story house offers the most spectacular water views and skylines. Knoll chaise lounges and Restoration Hardware planters are flanked by lush vegetation. The railings designed by Dufner Heighes create architectural interest without interrupting the panoramic vistas of Biscayne Bay and Miami’s cityscape.

**SOURCES**

**LIVING ROOM**

Tufted sofa - Baxter, Miami, FL  
White cocktail table - Fritz Hansen, Furniture from Scandinavia, Georgetown, Washington D.C.  
Curved sofa - Dunbar, High Point, NC  
Fabric - Rogers and Goffigon, D&D Building, New York, NY  
Wood cocktail table - George Nakashima Woodworkers, New Hope, PA  
Armchairs - Cassina, New York, NY  
Fabric - Maharam, D&D Building, New York, NY  
Round accent tables - &Tradition, Furniture from

Scandinavia, Georgetown, Washington D.C.  
Stone and metal side tables - Holly Hunt, Miami, FL  
Floor lamps - Visual Comfort, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com  
Series of artwork - Mor Charpentier, Paris, France  
Aquarium - Living Color Aquariums, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Drapery fabric - Knoll, D&D Building, New York, NY  
Area rug - The Rug Company, New York, NY

**FAMILY ROOM**

Sectional - Poliform, New York, NY  
Armchairs - Cassina, New York, NY  
Chair and ottoman - Carl Hansen & Son, Furniture from Scandinavia, Georgetown, Washington D.C.  
Fabric - Maharam, D&D Building, New York, NY  
Cocktail table - Holly Hunt, Miami, FL  
Occasional table - Wood Sport, Saint Paul, MN  
Table lamp - Visual Comfort, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com  
White oak ceiling treatment - Custom designed by Dufner Heighes, New York, NY  
Fabricated by Bart Reines Luxury Home Builder, Miami, FL  
Area rug - Rosemary Hallgarten, New York, NY

**DINING ROOM**

Table - Avenue Road, New York, NY  
Chairs - Carl Hansen & Son, Furniture from Scandinavia, Georgetown, Washington D.C.  
Light fixture - The Future Perfect, New York, NY  
Stairway and railing - Custom designed by Dufner Heighes, New York, NY  
Fabricated by Belt, Hollywood, FL  
**KITCHEN AND BREAKFAST AREA**  
Planter - Planterworx, Inc., New York, NY  
Cabinetry, countertops and island - Molteni&C, New York, NY  
Counter stools - BDDW, New York, NY  
Light pendants - Bover, New York, NY  
Artwork - Marc Quinn, London, England  
Metal screen wall - Custom designed by Dufner Heighes, New York, NY

Dining table - BDDW, New York, NY  
Side dining chairs - Carl Hansen, Furniture from Scandinavia, Georgetown, Washington D.C.  
Vintage chandelier - Owner’s Collection

**SITTING AREA**

Coral-colored club chairs - Molteni&C, New York, NY  
Cocktail table - Custom design by Dufner Heighes, New York, NY  
Accent table - Odegard, New York, NY  
White planter - West Elm, westelm.com  
Area rug - ABC Carpet, New York, NY

**UPPER WALKWAY**

Bench - Dune, NYDC, New York, NY  
Artwork - Uprise Art, New York, NY

**GUEST ROOM**

Sofa with chaise - Dune, New York, NY  
Fabric - Romo, New York, NY  
Floor lamps - Visual Comfort, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com  
Round chair - 1st Dibs, 1stdibs.com  
Fabric - Romo, New York, NY  
Print accent pillow fabric - Zak and Fox, New York, NY  
Solid accent pillow fabrics - Room and Board, roomandboard.com  
Throw - Clic, New York, NY  
Artwork and bowl - Owner’s Collection  
Cocktail table - Michael Robbins, Philmont, NY  
Accent table - West Elm, westelm.com  
Area rug - Rosemary Hallgarten, NYDC, New York, NY

**ROOFTOP TERRACE**

Chaise lounges and accent table - Knoll, New York, NY  
Planters - Restoration Hardware, restorationhardware.com  
Rooftop spa - Bradford, Leland, NC  
Railings fabricated by Belt, Hollywood, FL

**REAR EXTERIOR**

Pool - Aquadynamics Design Group, Inc., Miami, FL  
Wall sconces - Hallmark Lighting, Chatsworth, CA

**THROUGHOUT**

Windows - SunEx, Miami, FL  
Wood exterior doors - Signature Door, Altoona, PA  
Lighting and Shading Control - Lutron Electronics, Inc., Coopersburg, PA  
Austrian white oak flooring - Mafi, Austria