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simply ELEGANT

An unfinished condo provides a blank slate for Randy and
Mary Sue Potter to draw out a simpler space.

BY KATHY BECKER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORI HAMILTON

Durand "Randy" and Mary Sue Potter already had a lifestyle they loved in Old Naples, with a home near the beach, shopping and activities. But the Minneapolis couple had many visitors to accommodate and wanted a change of pace.

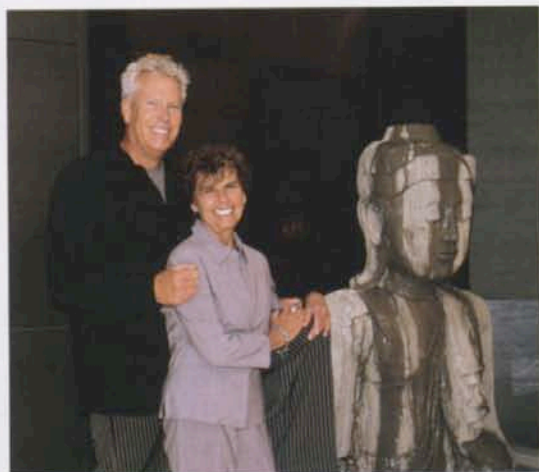
"We lived in a little beach house and decided we needed more space," Mary Sue says. "You are very popular when you live here. We seem to see more family when we are here. We were looking for something larger and easier."

They have been visiting Florida for 11 years, and bought a house eight or nine years ago. "We rented on Bonita Beach and didn't know about Old Naples," Mary Sue says. "Our friend's father told us about Naples, and I went every day thereafter."

They chose Naples because it is accessible and

affordable for family and friends to visit. "A lot of our friends are just retiring now," Randy says. "A lot of them come to try out Naples."

So when they were thinking about finding another place, they knew they didn't want to get too far from Old Naples or the beach. They both like to bike, and Mary Sue runs on



A Thai deity statue is the center of Durand "Randy" and Mary Sue Potter's Naples home, where clean, modern design and open spaces were created.

the beach every day. The couple, who worked together all their lives, went to kindergarten together and dated in high school, retired 10 years ago from the fields of internal software and bank systems.

For two years, Randy says, they considered buying in Sancerre, a 22-unit beachfront building with full concierge service and security.

"We kind of wanted to be spoiled," he says. "With a house, we spent half our time opening it and closing it. Here, you can call them up and tell them you want the barbecue at 400 degrees, and they'll even clean it up for you."

The unit they purchased was "designer-ready," which meant it had a finished kitchen and bathrooms, but little else.

They called in reinforcements — Astorino's interior designer Gil Walsh and architect Jerry DeGennaro.

"We knew what we wanted, but didn't know how to



This page: A practical ledge to keep water from the lanai out inspired a platform for art.
Opposite page, top: A hallway provides gallery space for the Potters' extensive collection.
Opposite bottom: Rounded lava rock counters and cabinets by Snaldero create clean lines in the kitchen.

apply it," Randy says. "We just had to find the people to help us put it together. We interviewed six or seven architects and designers. We knew they could handle it so we didn't have to."

Despite having a significant collection of modern art, the couple had not yet created a space for it that was clean and simple. Mary Sue describes their home in Minnesota as very French Country, and their first house in Naples as "Gauguin beach."

"We wanted clean, minimalistic," Mary Sue says. "We really love organic, and we really wanted something different. Every change in residence for us has been a change in style. We wanted a simpler life. Modern design is simple, but not necessarily easier. Features like crown molding hide flaws. It is something we always thought about doing, and it evolved into what we've always loved."

DeGennaro and Walsh took out the cabinets that came with the unit and redesigned the space. The challenge was hiding HVAC and lighting systems without adding dropped ceilings. "The lighting was used as sculpture itself, and is hanging by stems," Walsh says.

They incorporated a curb needed to keep water from



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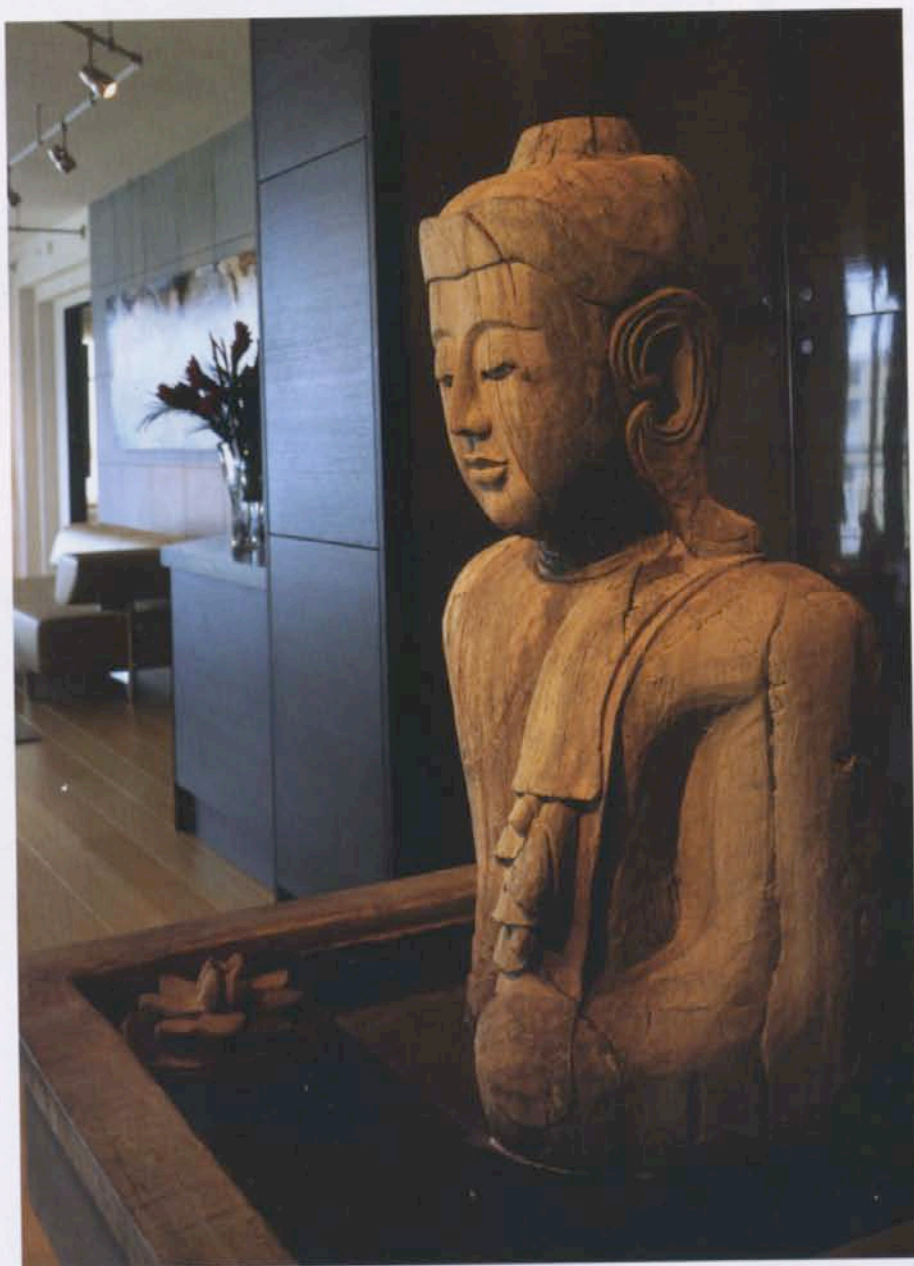
the patio from coming in under the sliding glass doors. "Instead of climbing over it, we extended a platform and put in a seating area with a table and two chairs," DeGennaro says. "It has a great view." The platform also has the added benefit of providing an elevated space for sculptures.

A lot of the design evolved around existing pieces of the Potters' art, many of which came out of their home in Minneapolis. They started with a large statue of a Thai deity they've had for 10 years and always envisioned near a pool.

"The driving force of this was the fountain," Walsh says. Although Randy had thought about putting the statue in the master bedroom, the designers made it a focal point in the large living area, which flows from the elevator entry into the dining room and through to the living room to the expansive view of the Gulf. Interesting angles are created with walls in the 4,800-square-foot unit, with rooms in the main living area defined by furniture placement. Because of the angled walls, the issue of where the doors would open for the study and other rooms off the main living area was resolved by adding wheeled, pocketing Bartel doors from Germany.

The private elevator lobby sets off the striking space with red walls and art, and is a big departure from the tra-

Although surfaces, colors and design were all created to enhance their art, the center of their home is still the people who gather there.



Above: The large, five-part statue created some interesting design issues. Opposite page: Providing clean spaces to showcase art was the goal.





ditional exterior and public spaces of the building. Two Mark Chatterley sculptures that used to reside near the pool at their other house hang from the ceiling. A work by Florida artist Lynda Braun is also in the lobby, along with two Jamali sketches.

To continue with the organic New York loft feeling, Walsh and DeGennaro came up with concrete wall panels. They designed all the surfaces to provide a backdrop for the art, with concrete a recurring surface and the same type of hardware used throughout. "The art takes precedence," Walsh says.

Bang & Olufsen components, Snaidero kitchen cabinets and curved lava rock countertops make the functional elements sleek. Giorgetti furniture in the master bedroom is "like pieces of art," Randy says.

In the dining room, a goatskin table Randy found 10 years ago is complemented by banquette seating that allows the dining area to be tucked to one side and shows

off a work by Joan Miró. Niches highlight the couple's African tribal masks and artifacts.

A Jamali painting in the family room sets the tone and color of the space. The master bedroom provides the setting for a painting by Eric Anfinson, a Minnesota artist they found in Key West, the master bathroom for two Jamali paintings, and the office for two vellums by Anthony Quinn that the Potters bought in the 1980s.

Although surfaces, colors and design were all created to enhance their art, they feel the center of their home is still the people who gather there or stay in their two guest suites.

"A lot of our entertaining is around visiting company," Mary Sue says. "When we have company, we invite three or four other people over. It's a great place to congregate. We've noticed when people come here to visit, it keeps you in the right frame of mind. It reminds you why you are here." *NI*