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Vintage Furnishings, Contemporary Art And Playful Design Meet In An Island Home Nestled Off The Pristine Shores Of Miami Beach

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ARCHITECTURE Allan Shulman, Shulman + Associates, Miami, FL
DEVELOPER Craig Robins, Dacra Development, Miami, FL
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NEW YORK-BASED DESIGNER AMY LAU WAS THRILLED to be brought on board to design this 7,000-square-foot townhouse at AQUA Allison Island overlooking Miami's Biscayne Bay. "AQUA is an urban-influenced, bayfront community," says Lau of the carefully planned development. "A lot of up-and-coming architects and artists were involved in its inception."

Architect Allan Shulman envisioned this project as the ultimate address for those who crave carefree living and sophistication. For Lau, what was most exciting about the interior scheme was the owners' important collections of vintage and contemporary furnishings with an emphasis on Italian design, and the contemporary art by international and local artists. And in this home, designed to entertain family and friends, as well as to host overnight guests, the incredible merging of art and design provides the focal point.

ABOVE: Rainbow-colored glass accents a Silvio Cavatorta shelving unit in a sitting area. Osvaldo Borsani's vintage red chaise and a tabletop sculpture by artist Curtis Jere complete the curated look.



Off-white walls provide a gallery like backdrop for the owners' collection of contemporary art in the living room, where a new sectional sofa — Edward Wormley's re-edition for Dunbar — joins an extraordinarily rare pair of sculptural ashwood "Triennale" armchairs by Giò Ponti.

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In the dining room, black and white “Superleggera” Giò Ponti chairs surround a Paul Evans chrome “Cityscape” dining table topped with a checkerboard of aged olivewood, oak and ash. Shimmers of light from a sculptural, shattered-glass chandelier dance around the brightly illuminated space.



“The owners’ inventory is very important; what I call dealers’ choice material,” the designer says. “I reviewed their collections of both art and design, and assessed what we could use.”

The bones of the home are airy, bright and boxy rooms, with minimal moldings and stone flooring. “There are many signature pieces I wanted to highlight,” Lau says. “I created an environment of white light to showcase them.” The designer then borrowed the colorful hues from the artwork and painted in the playful floor plan.

In the living room, where large groups are entertained, it is important to have a fluid floor plan and organic flow. Letting function dictate the placement of the pieces, a seemingly dissimilar mix creates a balanced scheme of color, proportion and texture. To shape the main social space, a new L-shaped sofa clad in a welcoming burnt orange pairs with vintage sculptural armchairs reupholstered in a green linen-silk blend. “Because the design pieces are iconic vintage collectibles, all the reupholstering

ABOVE: *Digidentity*, by Miami-based artist Mette Tommerup, inspired the dining room’s theme of bold mid-century forms including an Italian credenza, circa 1950s, a Tom Dixon table with its graphic base, and red Ico and Luisa Parisi dining chairs.



With its many discs, a freeform wall sculpture by Curtis Jere offsets the strong rectilinear lines of paired cabinets by Giò Ponti in the home's foyer.

we did in this home was archival," Lau says. "We carefully followed the original lines, welting details and even buttons used by the original designers."

Though most of the vintage furnishings already belonged to the homeowners, such as the Silvio Cavatorta shelving in a sitting area, the majority of the accessories and decorative arts, like the collection of Holmegaard glass vases, were acquired through Lau. "I sourced accessories and antiques throughout the Miami area to complement the colors of my design," she says.

In the light and airy dining room, the vibrant artwork and its graphic presence plays off the checkerboard top of a square dining table that easily seats a party of 16. "I used Giò Ponti chairs in black and white to balance the artistry of the dining table ... it feels more dramatic," Lau says. Nearby, reproduction chairs by Ico and Luisa Parisi upholstered in red pull up to a sculptural Tom Dixon table. The credenza, circa 1950s, anchors the wall and provides storage.



A transparent Ferruccio Laviana "FL/Y" hanging light pendant for Kartell adds a discreet pop in the playful and brightly hued children's room. Here, the furnishings are kept to a timeless simple white.

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RIGHT: In the master bedroom, a pair of Charlotte Perriand stools sits at the bed's base that designer Amy Lau had custom-designed to work with the Giò Ponti bedroom set. The plush area rug by Niba Collections grounds the space in cool comfort.

BELOW: Vintage juxtaposes with contemporary in the sitting area of the guest room, where subtle floral prints and geometrics play in the upholstery and area rug, and a sculptural floor lamp speaks to period.



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“White walls act as a cool-headed antidote to Miami’s hot and sultry weather, while providing a neutral backdrop that presents the art and furnishings as one cohesive collection,” designer Amy Lau says.

Aesthetically pleasing storage is interspersed throughout the house, including paired period cabinets in the entry foyer, which showcase reversed color schemes, and rectangular and square forms.

Geometric shapes and playful hues are all the rage in the children’s room, where Lau departed from the pure white environment, layering cheerful bands of color on the walls. The area rug is a hexagonal beehive of activity.

“I softened the palette in the master bedroom,” says Lau of the toned-down ice blue, pearl gray and pale chartreuse shades. A custom embroidered coverlet by Judy Ross tops the owners’ Giò Ponti bedroom set crafted in birch with a wall-mounted headboard.

“It is unusual to see furniture with such sophisticated cutout shapes and elegant sculptural lines,” says Lau of the opportunity to work with such an impressive inventory. “One’s imagination is inspired to see the art and design interact with one another.” ♦