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**PALM BEACH + BROWARD**





# The Wow Factory

Textures, patterns and colors mingle in a playful blend of East and West Coast styles.

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very now and then, designer Mitch Brown would joke with his upstairs neighbors about convincing them to sell him their apartment. Of course, behind every joke is usually an element of truth. Having lived in their ground-floor residence for

more than a decade, Brown and his husband, Rick Moeser, desired more room but were reluctant to leave their prime location near the beach. Fortunately, the designer's good-natured teasing paid off: The neighbors eventually decided to sell, and the couple inherited the extra space.

Brown and Rick chose to start over, demolish the layouts and connect the two floors through an interior staircase, essentially creating a townhome in the boutique building. They designated their previous bedroom as an office/guest space and the second former bedroom as a media room to complement the living area, leaving the entire upstairs to become the primary suite.

An important part of the project involved opening up the downstairs galley kitchen, enlarging it to four times the original size and connecting it to the outdoors. "We put a big, beautiful island in the middle and sliding doors that pocket into the walls of the house," the designer says, "so when we're entertaining, we can open them up to the backyard." The 9-foot terrace, home to sitting and dining areas, received a facelift with a limestone wall, cast-stone pavers and plenty of greenery. By aligning the sliders with the front door and opting for a glass-railing staircase, Brown ensured the lush space is visible from the entrance, bringing the outdoors in.

The addition of the staircase also afforded the creation of an entry hall defined by a Macassar wall that floats across the entire ground floor. "It's the one consistent natural material that cuts through the apartment," the designer says. "This adds an element of strength and modernism to the space and gives the illusion that everything is bigger than it is."

The renovation gave Brown a fresh chance to convey his unique style: a duality of East Coast and West Coast sensibilities sprinkled with global

accents. "Early in my career, I trained in Los Angeles, so I always say it's a fusion of California and Florida," he explains. "I love textures, patterns and throwing in punches of color or excitement. I want to mix it all up and have incredible surprises as you round each corner."

The living area is an eclectic assortment of some of the designer's favorite pieces, including a side table with lion's paw feet and a pouf boasting an African-inspired print. The Floridian side of his work manifests here in details like the palm leaf patterns on the pillows and club chair and the warm orange-pink hue of the fireplace wall. "The light doesn't come into the living area very well, which was something that always bothered me," Brown says. "Because that wall is across from a window, I lacquered it with a wonderful peach color, so it brightens up as the sun shines in."

Pocket doors allow this space to open or close to the media room, which nods to California with a shag rug, geometric prints—like the sofa's gray flame stitch—and bold works from the owners' developing collection of art, including pieces the designer painted himself. "It shows I'm not afraid of color or pattern," he says. "So much of what we have is from our travels, and I love mixing the textures and memories."

Assuredly, Brown is an acolyte of color, yet because the home is a relatively compact space, he approached the palette judiciously. Keeping the base canvas—walls, floors, cabinetry—largely neutral, he saved the brightest tones for where they would be most impactful. Complementing the kitchen's Carrara marble countertops and backsplash, for instance, the white cabinetry features sporadic pops of his favorite hue. "Yellow is a perfect accent, and I'm crazy about a color I call 'curry,'" the designer says. "As an attempt to bring more light into the room, it's such a warm tone and reminds me of sunshine."

To Brown, Rick and their guests, the abode's latest iteration is its best yet. "I think of it as Michael Taylor meets Dorothy Draper," the designer says. "I love when people come over: They're so surprised by the transformation, because it looks nothing like it did before. They haven't seen anything like this in Palm Beach." ■





In the living area, a Michel Faublée artwork is framed by draperies made of a Formations textile from Jerry Pair. A pouf from Walker Zabriskie Furniture rests by a table from Sutherland holding a vintage lamp. The flooring is Turkish marble from SK Stones.



Interior Design: Mitch Brown, David Mitchell Brown





A custom Benjamin Moore shade colors the living area's fireplace wall with Porta Romana sconces and Ken Perenyi art. The J. Robert Scott barrel chair and coffee table join a Fondica lamp. Designer Mitch Brown made the portrait in the media room.





**Above:** A Jim Thompson Fabrics textile from Jerry Pair covers the breakfast area's custom banquette, accented with pillows in a Schumacher material. The table from Walker Zabriskie Furniture stands beneath a Visual Comfort light. A Slim Aarons photograph from Palm Beach Regency decorates the wall.

**Opposite:** "The kitchen truly became the heart of our house," the designer says. He outfitted the space with countertops and backsplash of Carrara marble as well as oak cabinetry from SK Stones with pops of yellow—his favorite color. The refrigerator is Liebherr.





**Left:** The back terrace is home to a Dedon sofa and Made Goods stool. The designer introduced a limestone wall, cast-stone pavers and lush greenery to enhance the serene space.

**Opposite:** Brown aimed for "Palm Beach with a twist" in the monochromatic guest bedroom. Sateen Ralph Lauren Home bedding dresses the custom bed, complemented by a Global Views night table.

