

BY LINDSAY MILNER / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOLANTA BREMER

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Condo Redux

Tackling the challenge of an open floor plan makeover.



Lindsay Milner is the interior designer behind A Design Story, a local full-service interior design firm. Armed with a bachelor's degree in Interior Design from Ringling College of Art and Design and more than eight years of experience in high-end design, Lindsay is skilled in a broad range of design styles and brings a modern and versatile approach to her company. In addition to providing interior design locally, she offers e-design packages (virtual interior design) and writes a popular design blog, which has been featured on sites such as AOL and Apartment Therapy, as well as recognized by HGTV and the Nate Berkus show.

Achieving an open yet defined floor plan can be a challenge for the typical outdated Florida beach condo. Recently, I had the opportunity of working with Dr. Damian and Holly Lebamoff on their newly purchased vacation residence on Longboat Key. The two-bedroom, two-bath, 1,367 square-foot condo had a great "shell," but it truly lacked the type of open floor plan living that my clients desired due to its small enclosed kitchen, plain interior architecture, deficient use of proper lighting and an ill-defined layout that caused space location issues. They wanted a bright and spacious plan, but with designated spaces for the entry, kitchen, dining, living and sunroom. In addition to the layout, the entire condo aesthetic was stuck back in the 80s with a pastel color scheme that included sea-green carpets, white wicker furniture, floral accessories and sponge-painted walls. The goal was to transform their asymmetrical, antiquated and undefined space into a modern, flowing and open floor plan with well-defined zones that guide you effortlessly from setting to setting.

After working with the Lebamoffs to get a clear, cohesive vision of their practical needs and style aspirations, I was able to create a design plan and tackle the challenge head on.

space planning

The secret to success in this step was taking the information I gathered from the Lebamoffs and having resourceful ideas of how the space should be organized. The keys



were to unleash dead space and develop a blueprint that made sense. By eliminating the long, secluded entryway and the closed-in kitchen, I completely opened up the space even further, which then allowed me to properly address the functionality within the open floor plan. My design included a large, open kitchen with space for casual dining and gathering, a cozy dining area fit for family meals, a living room with space for entertainment and a sunroom area to relax, read a book and enjoy the view.

architectural details

After the layout was established and executed, I introduced various architectural elements to begin delineating each space from one another. Crown molding was strategically positioned throughout, dropped soffits were built in the kitchen and an elaborate ceiling feature was designed for the sunroom. Each of these elements aided in outlining each area, while working seamlessly within the overall design.

lighting

Lighting played an integral part in creating the overall ambience and making the space welcoming. I used lighting in practical ways by mixing ambient, task and accent lights to separate one space from another. In addition

to the plethora of lights that were installed, I had many put on dimmers so my client has the opportunity to alter the mood and add drama to each space individually.

furniture placement

A well-planned furniture placement can draw attention to specific zones or create intimate and cozy areas of dining, conversation, entertainment or relaxation. In this particular project, the windows on one entire side were asymmetrical, causing me to get inventive with the furniture plan. I specified a round table in the dining area to allow for family oriented meals and a small sectional in the living room with a large square coffee table to help enclose the space. In the sunroom, I oriented the sofa looking out towards the window/pool to give my client a separate "relaxation" spot she was looking for. Now the areas in this space are naturally set by the furniture arrangement; each piece is perfectly placed to guide attention to the purpose the zone was intended for.

floor coverings

Rugs create the illusion of rooms within a room. After the travertine flooring was installed, and each area was properly furnished, the zones needed to be "grounded" to create a base layer of depth and texture. A solid rug was nestled in the kitchen, a bold patterned rug in the living room and a shag rug in a complementary color was positioned in the sunroom. By using different textures, colors and patterns, I reinforced the illusion of separate spaces within the open room, while adding to the overall design scheme.

color flow

Color has many effects on the way a space makes you feel. Creating a successful flowing color palette in an open floor plan is all about repetition and the unexpected. I chose a natural color palette to use throughout the main living area to bring the outside in. Neutrals and greens give the space continuity, while pops of color in art and accents call attention to each area by making focal points and adding personality.



A well-planned layout and smart design choices are essential in having a successful open floor plan. Creative space planning, adding architectural details and a thoughtful lighting scheme, developing a functional furniture arrangement, grounding each area with rugs and creating a cohesive color scheme all helped to achieve the look and function the Lebamoffs wanted. Now what

was once an outdated condo with a dysfunctional layout and old-fashioned décor is a resort-styled vacation home that suits my clients and the way they live. 🏡

SOURCE Lindsay Milner, A Design Story, 941-809-7110, www.adesignstory.com

