

FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Tropical textures and earthy hues enliven a family home with whimsy and personality.

WRITTEN BY CHRISTINE DEORIO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEANNE CANTO



Interior Design: Maggie Cruz, Maggie Cruz Interior Design



Rex Ray artwork hangs against a foyer wall painted Benjamin Moore's Chantilly Lace. Maggie Cruz Home's Dulce stool in Newburyport Blue and Hudson Valley Lighting's Borneo lamp accent Crate & Barrel's Oasis console. Large-format limestone flooring balances the European white oak ceiling.

A

typical beach house in designer Maggie Cruz's hometown is stark and modern. At least, that's long been the prevailing sentiment. But she has a different interpretation.

"I like character, patterns and color," emphasizes the local native, whose interiors mirror what she loves about Miami: its mix of Cuban architecture, Old Florida design, Art Deco pizzazz and 1980s vibrance, all juxtaposed against modernist influences.

When Cruz's clients traded the dreary climate across the pond for a waterfront property in the Florida sun, this outlook was the backdrop they had in mind. Their newly built residence was warm and beautiful yet generic, so the couple tasked the designer with enlivening the interiors with "wow" factors and a sense of whimsy. "They wanted a house with a point of view and personality," Cruz explains. "They hoped to make a statement, and they were willing to take risks and be a little funky, which gave me the freedom to be bold with color and pattern and to mix things that aren't the norm."

Importantly, the couple wanted to embrace the area's tropical vibe and were inspired most by John James Audubon's *American Flamingo*. Yet the structure's clean architecture and finishes—which include brown-framed windows and limestone flooring—didn't lend the interiors to an over-the-top habitat for such a showy specimen as portrayed in the iconic drawing. Instead, Cruz leaned into a palette of earthy hues, such as ocean blues, rusty grays and wood tones. For the bar area, for instance, she sourced a wallcovering depicting lush jungle foliage in teal, caramel and gold, creating a focal point that is dramatic but still livable. Likewise, the dining room's eucalyptus-green velvet chairs contrast the abode's white walls and oak millwork while complementing the owners' collection of nontraditional artworks, which range from abstract paintings to groovy prints. Even in the primary bedroom, where a sky-blue channel-tufted headboard stretches the length of a white wall, the colors read as calm, sophisticated neutrals that nod to the home's natural surroundings. "You want to have a look—but not an overwhelming look," the designer explains.

In crafting her compositions, Cruz was strategic when incorporating patterns—creating a distinctive atmosphere in the bar, for instance, while leaving other areas such as the family room almost entirely unadorned. In the playroom, where colorful toys are a constant focus, a neutral Swiss cross rug is the only decorative embellishment. "If you're going to be in a room a lot, you don't want much visual clutter; you'll tire of it," she says. Likewise, the adjacent kitchen and breakfast area are crisp and clean, with sleek white cabinetry and bare floors and walls reflecting the sunlight that streams through tall windows. "They have a beautiful view of the yard, and I didn't want to take away from that," the designer explains. "The view is all the pattern you need."

Nowhere is the breadth of Miami Beach style better captured than in the living area, which she filled with contemporary and classic furniture shapes and textures that range from cozy bouclé to sleek polished stone. "Almost everything in this space is curved, which gives it a sexy '80s vibe—a nod to Miami's heyday," Cruz notes. Among the pieces are a pair of cane armchairs from her own furniture collection that celebrates the region's Caribbean influences. "Cane was a modest material and common staple in homes while I was growing up," says the first-generation Cuban American. "My goal was to elevate and showcase it in a more sophisticated way." To do so, she arranged the chairs with twin velvet sofas and a marble coffee table in sultry hues of charcoal and smoke. In a similar move, the dining room's two-tone, fluted-oak credenza introduces another subtly tropical texture that feels forward-thinking when paired with an angular brass chandelier and sculptural modern chairs.

In the foyer, where the designer tucked a cane stool beneath a travertine-topped console, an eye-catching wallpaper pattern evokes the curve of an Art Deco arch, grounding the interiors from the get-go in an endemic viewpoint from her wide-ranging lens. "I think that's what creates the character of the house and gives it a certain vocabulary," Cruz muses. "It says, 'We're not taking ourselves too seriously; we're lighthearted and having some fun.'" In fact, they're taking one bold step toward redefining today's quintessential Miami Beach home. ■



CB2's Foley chairs surround an Eichholtz dining table on an Anthropologie rug. The artworks, an Art Basel find, counter a Lindsey Adelman Studio Drop System chandelier. Generation Lighting's Contour lamp rests on Maggie Cruz Home's Valentina buffet.



Above: The family room's Ethnicraft coffee table holds court in front of Maggie Cruz Home's Isla sideboard. Design Within Reach's roomy Kelston sectional offers a comfortable gathering spot for movie nights.

Opposite: In the breakfast area, Secto Design's 4201 pendants from Lightology preside over Ethnicraft's Circle table and Design Within Reach's About A Chair 12 side chairs. Loopy by Zoe Bios Creative decorates a nearby wall.



“THE CLIENTS
HOPED TO **MAKE
A STATEMENT,**
AND THEY WERE
WILLING TO **TAKE
RISKS** AND BE A
LITTLE **FUNKY.**”

—MAGGIE CRUZ

“You see the sky, waterway and trees,” designer Maggie Cruz says of the primary bedroom’s curved window wall, softened with Fabricut draperies. Norwalk Furniture armchairs and a CB2 side table face an Arteriors sofa holding pillows featuring Holland & Sherry and CW Stockwell fabrics.