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ROMANCE
& DESIGN

VIVA DRAMA

Modern elegance creates intrigue and interest atop a crown jewel of a penthouse at Jade Beach

DESIGN BY RENATA PFUNER PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG DENIS TEXT BY LUIS R. RIGUAL

The staircase at this Sunny Isles Beach penthouse — Macassar ebony on one side, steel and glass on the other, marble underfoot — is what grand entrances are all about. Further solidifying the glamour: violet mood lighting from above and a diva of a chandelier that drapes down from the ceiling like a diamond necklace. Designer Renata Pfuner knows modern elegance all too well.

“This is the area you first see when you enter the apartment,” says Pfuner. “It’s that very important first impression. We had to make a bold statement.”

That it certainly does. Imagine the boring possibilities had the homeowners wanted a more straightforward pied-à-terre. But after 20 years as luxury homebuilders, Chicagoans Leo and Milena Birov have had a lifetime of exposure to design of all sentiments, so the couple knew exactly what they wanted for their South Florida retreat. They weren’t ready to leave the traditional trappings of their Windy City life behind, but they didn’t want to bring all that baggage with them and embrace total modernity either. Pfuner gave them the perfect balance of both worlds: a 4,890-square-foot residence that respects the >



Above left: Designer Renata Pfuner. Above: The breakfast room by the kitchen. Red Eros chairs by Philippe Starck for Kartell. The wenge wood veneer wall unit catches the eye with glass shelves in apple green. Opposite: The staircase and surrounding area are visible upon first setting foot in the residence. The wood paneling on the wall is Macassar ebony. Illuminated ceiling features are common throughout. Calacatta Oro marble flooring stretches throughout the entire residence. Swarovski crystal chandelier by Schonbek.





“The most important thing was to establish a cohesive design language that flows through the entire space.”

modern appeal of its building (Jade Beach) while nodding to the traditional background the Birovs are so fond of.

“It’s contemporary luxury that’s not too cold,” adds Pfuner. “The most important thing was to establish a cohesive design language that flows through the entire space.”

To that end, dark woods were employed just about everywhere in a variety of applications. Another common thread that adds to the sophisticated atmosphere of the residence is the use of ceiling features wired with ambient illumination. Pfuner opted for statement lighting as the main accents: that aforementioned Swarovski crystal chandelier by the staircase, a more demurely executed one in the dining room, an idiosyncratic

Chihuly creation of colorful blown glass in the den, and more traditional interpretations in the bedrooms. The furniture selections stick to the penthouse’s yin-yang design identity: modern one minute as in the polycarbonate Eros stools by Kartell in the breakfast room, and elegant the next by way of the cream and purple silk chairs and a lacquered mahogany table by Christopher Guy in the dining room. The master suite is unabashedly romantic with blue overtones, sheer window treatments and graphic wallpaper.

“The way I see it, the challenge was to dress the space to a certain degree,” says Pfuner. “Once that was established, we knew exactly what we had to do.” □



Above, left: Romantic blue tones permeate the master bedroom. Bed by Christopher Guy, Venetian chandelier by Cyan. “Flow” wallcovering from the Luigi Colani Collection. Above, right: SICIS mosaic applications in the bath. Opposite: Dining room furniture includes cream and purple silk chairs and a mahogany top table by Christopher Guy. Quartz stone was applied to the walls for texture.