

# Seeing Double

A DECADES-LONG FAMILY TRADITION CONTINUES WITH TWO SEASIDE APARTMENTS, ARTFULLY RENOVATED BY RC STUDIO.

**HAVING** celebrated their 38th anniversary, a pair of empty nesters decided that they wanted to continue one of their favorite family traditions. They purchased two beachfront condo apartments in the same seaside town they've spent summer weekends since the 1980s, first as guests in his folks' apartment, and today as parents (and grandparents) themselves.

COPY: KELLI LAMB

INTERIOR DESIGN: RC STUDIO

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEXANDRA ROWLEY





“

Each apartment had its own set of considerations, reflecting the different purposes the couple envisioned.





**THE APARTMENTS** both clearly required a gut renovation, but they knew exactly who to call. Designer Rena Cherny of RC STUDIO had worked with the couple before and was well versed in both their wants and needs. "They wanted the home to reflect their active family-centric lifestyle and strong appreciation of nature's divine beauty," Rena explains. "In designing this home, I strove to create relaxed, luxurious spaces by focusing on warm minimalism and authentic materials, while honoring the sparkly ocean views and glorious natural light."

**EACH APARTMENT** featured quite a few common elements you'd expect in a 1980s building: popcorn ceilings, track lighting, wall-to-wall shag carpeting, pink bathtubs, vertical blinds, and (now) oxidized wallpaper. "Moreover, the existing layouts did not serve their needs," the designer recalls. "We re-imagined the spaces as complements to one another - one, a refuge for the couple to enjoy whether their family was visiting or not, designed with the possibility of retiring there in mind. The other, a dedicated family space for their children and grandchildren to visit throughout the summer."



“

I saw my job as designing an interior worthy of the natural beauty it looked out upon without competing with it.



**FOR** the couple's apartment, Rena aimed to create an oasis that would feel like a vacation every time they entered, even if it ultimately became a full-time residence. "My vision was to create a haven of understated luxury while incorporating personal details and design elements meaningful to them." Having already designed their primary residence, she was able to quickly narrow in on selections that would create that feeling for them. "I knew they had always dreamt of a blue kitchen, but they had followed my lead in not going that route in their primary residence. Needless to say, with the stunning blue water visible from the kitchen windows, making that dream come true was one of the exciting elements of the project," she shares. However, as it often goes, this went hand-in-hand with one of the biggest challenges. "Our plan to combine the living and dining spaces resulted in a large, open space that required significant lighting. Unfortunately, we were unable to recess into the ceilings at all. While we considered sourcing two hanging lighting fixtures, we felt that it would have been too common and traditional of a solution. Instead, we proceeded with a highly customized branching fixture from Suite NY, designed by Hans Verstuyft in Belgium. It was installed with these luxurious leather straps tacked onto the ceiling, and the metal arms expanded across the ceiling, bringing a cohesion and coziness to this vast space. The language barriers and metric system conversions created serious challenges for this technical piece, but the payoff was tremendous! Its sculptural form and connection between spaces resulted in a magnificent jewelry-like glowing crown."





**EVEN** with so many jaw-dropping design moments, Rena admits that the ocean views were always going to be the star of the show. "I saw my job as designing an interior worthy of the natural beauty it looked out upon without competing with it," she muses. To complement the great outdoors, she used a range of opulent and neutral materials that permeate each apartment, combining a variety of quality finishes that reflect the cohesive variety of the world outside. Plush rugs in wool, jute, and mohair, soft white-oak wood millwork, natural stone, glazed zellige tiles, and textured woven upholstery feels balanced and indulgent without screaming, "Look at me!" Rena reflects on the completed spaces, saying, "We honor the vastness of the sea and the alluring mystery of the horizon by valuing the negative space between the furnishings with the same attention we gave to the furnishings and finishes themselves. Walking through the doors to these homes, one can't help but feel flooded with serenity and warmth."



**RENA** credits much of the design to the local artists, vendors, and visionaries she worked with and was inspired by during the one-year renovation: Apparatus, Andrianna Shamaris, Lindsey Adelman, Egg Collective, Polly Apfelbaum, Tibetano, Scott Daniels, Workstead, Roll and Hill, Gabriel Scott, Urban Electric, Cle Tile, Palo Samko, LV Wood, Homenature, and Montauk Sofa. As for the clients, they could not have been more ecstatic upon seeing the finished apartments, which brought the designer great joy. "Being able to transform a space, by developing a vision for clients to live out in their homes with feelings of serenity and peace brings me an extraordinary amount of gratification, particularly at this time where we are all seeking comfort and refuge in our homes and families."



