

Dorothee Junkin of DJDS has created this contemporary beach-side home in Vero Beach, Florida, which has international influences.

MODERN BEACH HOUSE

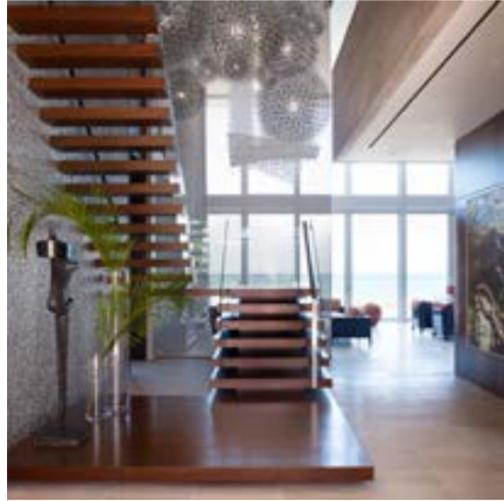
Photography: WILLIAM WALDRON
Text: ROSALIND ERSKINE

As first projects go, this 18,000 sq ft beach house in Florida could have been too much for some, but Dorothee Junkin of DJDS wasn't fazed by the scale, or the fact that it wasn't even built yet. "When I first met the client, the contractor had just started work on the foundations for the shell of the building and the interiors had not been looked into at all. I pretty much had to hit the ground running and play catch-up with the ongoing construction work over the first few months. The contractor, who was about to pour the ground-floor concrete slabs, needed positions for floor outlets and plumbing immediately, so we had to draw preliminary plans without having finalised the actual designs," she explains.

"My background in architecture was very helpful in the initial project stages, as we were looking at complex spaces and there was no actual building to look at – yet. One really had to be able to visualise the spaces to be able to understand what was going to be built and how the interiors would have to respond to the shell. Some of the spaces, like the wonderfully high-ceilinged living room, were exceptionally large and therefore required some additional thought about how to make the space feel grand without a single person feeling lost in it." It was this challenge and opportunity to create something unique and of high-end quality that attracted Dorothee to the project, plus the fact that the client "wasn't keen on a classic Florida beach house look," which appealed to Dorothee's international design



The exterior and pool deck area of the home.



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Clockwise from top left: bespoke staircase; wooden boats in the lush courtyard; the formal living room with large, custom-made statement light; the master living room; indoor/outdoor seating area that makes the most of the ocean views; the glass-fronted house has a gorgeous outlook; a corner of master living room with recliners.

background.

The brief for the home was based around the client's desire for a contemporary and elegant look with ample indoor and outdoor space to entertain friends and family in a variety of formal and informal settings. "During one of the first meetings the client said: 'Show me what is out there – preferably things I have not seen everywhere – and I will tell you whether I like it or not.' Given the rather contemporary and understated style of the architecture, the client was not too keen on interiors that shouted "Florida beach house" and was curious to see what an international design outlook could bring to the space. With this in mind, I designed interiors that have a contemporary elegance combined with international influences by bringing together artfully applied custom lighting installations, textures, furniture sourced from all over the world, finds from the owner's travels, plus vintage pieces and a variety of custom-designed furnishings," Dorothee explains.

The project took about 18 months to complete due to the scale of the house, which includes two pool decks, an entrance hall, formal living and dining rooms, kitchen, pantry, media room,





Clockwise: a light and airy Balinese-inspired bedroom with four-poster bed, which creates an understated luxurious feel; another, cosy master bedroom; office with statement feather lightshades; the contemporary master bathroom with nature-inspired accessories.

outdoor kitchen, master wing, a gym, four guest rooms and a pied-a-terre for the owner's mother, as well as two dorm-style bedrooms for the owner's twelve nieces and nephews. Dorothee's interior design, decor and style inspiration came from her international background. "Contemporary, elegant European furniture as well as Balinese design aspects, hinting at a subtle beach feel, became the focus of the initial style brief. The client also wanted to see some colour in her home, and a subtle muted colour palette was selected for some of the primary spaces, while some of the guest bedrooms received bolder splashes of colour. A well-considered material concept allows a seemingly effortless flow from one area to the next while imbuing each of the soaring primary spaces, as well as the more private secondary spaces, with its own distinct feel. All over the house subtle Alabama limestone creates an elegant atmosphere with its velvety texture or lends a more rustic feel with a split-face version. Wall panels, flooring and joinery in walnut give a beautiful contrast to the stone finishes and add warmth and character. The meticulous design process paid close attention to every space and every detail mattered as an integral part of the design, giving each space the individuality it deserves," she says.

The opportunity to create a unique space and the architectural points of interest, such as the beautiful and dramatic 8 metre-high ground floor ceilings and formal entertaining space, are what stand out about this home. Dorothee could also collaborate with designers to create bespoke



Left: the modern indoor/outdoor kitchen with feature lighting and beautiful wooden counter and chairs. Above: the family dog relaxes on a leather lounge.

“A well-considered material concept allows a seemingly effortless flow from one area to the next.”

pieces such as the lighting installations, designed by DJDS and Sharon Marston, which help to produce something truly special. When it comes to Dorothee’s favourite space in such a large project, she cites the Lanai/Loggia ‘outdoor kitchen’. “It’s wonderful to sit here in the sunlight in the mornings when temperatures are still low, and then it is shaded during the hot afternoons. It offers a comfortable lounge area as well as a dining area adjacent to an indoor/outdoor kitchen. Everyone is drawn to it and whenever visitors are at the house, you’ll find someone enjoying the views and slight breeze from the ocean in the Lanai.

As for the owners, they are more than happy with the finished result. “Although our house is quite large, it doesn’t feel cold or intimidating the way some houses can. It’s warm and inviting and has inspired both quiet nights in and fun family get-togethers, all of which come with amazing memories. For us, that’s really what makes a house a home.”

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