



Less is More

Taylor & Taylor Seamlessly Integrate the Essence of Prior Home in Significant Downsize

Story by Gabriel Anthony | Photos courtesy of Taylor & Taylor

Punctuated by rich, bold brush strokes, and wild swathes of vibrant color, at the turn of the 20th century, Fauvism was a wholly new kinetic way of depicting the world. Matisse said of Gustave Moreau, his teacher at the École des Beaux-Arts, and a major inspiration for the Fauvist movement, “He did not set us on the right roads, but off the roads. He disturbed our complacency.”

Like Moreau once did, the couple that purchased this home cherishes a life well lived unconventionally, having developed a personal style that reflects a kind of energetic elegance. “They’re a bon vivant couple who have lived a charmed life of travel, food and art,” says Phyllis Taylor of Taylor & Taylor, a design firm which she cofounded with her husband William, an architect. “They’re intelligent and

well educated, and the wife has a true sense of personal style – she’s a Fauve canvas in motion.”

Their clients downsized from a 7,000+ square foot home on the Sunset Islands, to a 4,000 square foot, 3 bedroom, 3.5 bath seaside condo. Over the course of their lives, they amassed a large collection of art, furniture and antiques. It was important to them that this meaningful collection of visually disparate pieces be integrated seamlessly into the fabric of their new home in a manner reminiscent of the spirit of their former residence. “Some people don’t give in to change, especially later in life,” Phyllis notes. “It’s important to embrace the desire to be surrounded by the things we’re familiar with.”







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As citizens of the world at large the owners had collected a wide range of treasures. It was agreed that the best of their collections should not only be incorporated but showcased into their new home. Their wide-ranging collections included art, antique furnishings, valuable Japanese cabinets, art-deco carpets, vintage chandeliers, over 20 sets of china, crystal, and much more.

Despite losing nearly fifty percent of their overall square footage when they downsized, the retired couple had a vision of their newer, less capacious residence as a mirror of their own tremendous personalities, undiminished in character. "There was a cultivated story behind their last home that was important to them," Phyllis explains. "We designed the apartment with the memory of that house."

Taylor & Taylor helped the couple navigate the challenge of creating a harmonious composition for this new apartment that was not only significantly smaller than their prior residence, but presented additional obstacles through its low ceilings, and cramped kitchen. "It was like trying to fit 10 pounds of potatoes into a 5-pound sack," says Phyllis.

By installing a reflective, mylar ceiling the Taylors were able to create the illusion of space. To create more physical space for the kitchen, Taylor & Taylor eliminated an excessively large laundry room which was of no use to the couple. "The wife's one request was that if we added a new kitchen, she wanted it in red," Phyllis recalls. "She's a red-lipstick kind of woman."

Through removing a wall, they were able to add a new, more spacious kitchen with Chinese red lacquered cabinets. A Fauvist painting of a cafe table hangs on the wall, a high-keyed reflection of the scene below. The banquette table and chairs are upholstered in a cheerful yellow daisy print, with yellow objet d'art serving as a centerpiece.

This bright, colorful motif extends into the living room, which Phyllis describes as a "velvet Klimt painting." Bold yellow and gold art nouveau upholstered sofas, and antique Italian ottomans with gilt legs rest on an antique rug lending a simultaneously cultivated, yet wild feel.

The dining room features a custom fluted wall which slides to reveal ample stage for a myriad of table settings. The living room restates the fluted paneling to invoke a classic art deco sophistication. "Her" office showcases a custom designed wall shelves that hold treasures volume as well as family photographs.

The master bedroom was inspired by an antique Syrian inlaid chest that enjoys a certain pride of place. The kitchen and breakfast area feature glorious bright red

lacquer cabinets with bright brass fittings and stainless appliances which and a yellow floral fabric that act to "bejewel" the center of the residence.

In the marigold powder room an elaborate French rococo mirror offsets a vanity with gold sink and faucets. On the balcony, a dining area offers a beautiful view of Miami Beach. Beige tones and organic shape cut outs on the base of the table make the balcony feel light and airy, and doesn't distract from the view.



The moveable white fluted wall panels, added by Taylor & Taylor are reminiscent of classical Greek columns. Everything is tied together with a high-gloss, herringbone walnut floor installed throughout. The result is a home that it is a reflection of its owners—a luxurious canvas of color—bright gold tones, brilliant yellows, cool blues and purples that coalesce flawlessly.

"The clients told us they felt at home the moment they moved in because they were surrounded by all their favorite things," said William Taylor. ♦