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MODERN MASTERPIECE

COLORFUL ART AND TEXTURAL ACCESSORIES BRING VIBRANCY TO A SURFSIDE VACATION PROPERTY.

WRITTEN BY LINDSAY LAMBERT DAY / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KRIS TAMBURELLO

Designer Anil Kakar made an artful impact in a couple's vacation home at the Residences at Four Seasons Hotel at The Surf Club in Surfside. Antique garuda sculptures "kick-started what would happen with the look of the foyer," he says. The dyed-cowhide rug from Colombia rests on travertine flooring.



Any art collector knows, displaying an assortment of works adds character to a residence, transforming it into a showcase of treasures. Yet smoothly integrating paintings and sculpture throughout an interior requires a deft touch to ensure the surroundings retain the comfortable qualities of a home and don't assume the chilly sterility of a museum.

Achieving that delicate balance was the challenge presented to designer Anil Kakar when envisioning a vacation property in Surfside for his clients. Longtime collectors, the owners had amassed a storage warehouse of predominately Indian art begging to be displayed in their of condo at the Residences at Four Seasons Hotel at The Surf Club. "Their specific request was to infuse color, pattern and texture into a monochromatic palette of white, off-white, beige and cream," says Kakar. "They wanted a gallery feel,

very elegant and simple, with clean lines, in keeping with the architecture and design of the brand-new building."

The residence's crisp white walls and sandy travertine flooring offered an ideal blank canvas for Kakar, whose strategy involved curating pieces from the couple's prized art collection and combining them with antique furnishings and textiles. "The design is a study in minimalism, really—just enough layering, color, texture and pattern," he says. Furnishings and rugs came first, setting the stage for the designer to arrange artworks throughout the home. "We wanted the greatest impact for each piece in each room," he says. "Each artwork was thought-out and tried in several different areas until we got it right." The result is a vibrant, livable residence that catches the eye at every turn.

Perched atop pedestals in the foyer, antique sculptures of a garuda—an Asian mythological bird-like beast that blends the features of a man and eagle—as well as a Kelly

The sand-colored rug, linen draperies, Minotti sectional and travertine coffee and console tables bring a sense of serenity to the living area. Pops of color come from the Minotti chairs and the sofa pillows made of antique suzani textiles. The C-shaped sculpture—from the designer's boutique, Kakar House of Design—is made of antique industrial machine parts.



Sage green velvet chairs surround the dining area's glass-topped table from Deco Dreams. Behind them, custom wall lights frame artwork by Jagdish Swaminathan above a Minotti credenza that holds a trio of 1940s German glass bowls from Kakar House of Design.

green cowhide rug establish the eclectic tone. Between them hangs an abstract artwork in complementary hues that "reminds me of a modern interpretation of a guru or swami sitting down or kneeling in meditation" Kakar says.

The color-and-texture infusion continues in the dining area, where Kakar placed modernist side chairs in sage green velvet around a 1940s French table with a mercury-glass base. "Vintage and antique pieces help give contemporary spaces soul, personality and charm," he says. The table's custom round glass top strategically echoes the framed artwork of concentric circles by S. H. Raza hanging above one of the two white-lacquered credenzas that anchor the open room. Crowning the scene is a midcentury-style flush-mounted light fixture—part of a matching pair that glass masters in Murano, Italy, crafted for this space and the adjacent living area, tying them together. "We wanted identical pieces because the dining and living areas are one giant great room," the designer explains.

The living area draws in the commanding presence of the Atlantic Ocean, visible through floor-to-ceiling windows. Ensuring the sea would remain the dominant element in the space, Kakar emphasized a sense of serenity by orienting a neutral linear sofa and coffee table toward the water view. Touches of color come from a pair of moss green chairs

and the sofa's red-and-black throw pillows, made of vintage Uzbek suzani textiles. "Some of these suzani are between 70 and 100-plus years old," the designer says.

More suzani fabrics appear throughout the residence as pops of pattern on the pillows and benches in all three bedrooms. Repeating the approach he used in the living area, Kakar maintained a focus on the ocean in the sleeping quarters by employing taupe headboards, white bed linens and cream-colored rugs. The lack of windows in the media room, however, allowed the designer to get more playful. "We started with a very neutral palette and worked our way up," he says, pointing to the light-toned sofa, coffee table and rug. Vibrant hues brighten the room thanks to the addition of oversize artwork, throw pillows sheathed in hand-embroidered Otomi textiles, a turquoise vase and pendant lights in a color he describes as "Hermès orange."

Between the thoughtful furnishings and museum-quality displays, the residence offers the comforts of home with the intrigue of a gallery. No longer stored in a warehouse, every last piece of the couple's art collection has found its rightful place in stunning new surroundings. "With the amount of art and wall space, it was a perfect marriage," Kakar says. "There wasn't anything left over, and we didn't run out of walls—it all fit nicely." ■

Museum-white walls offer an ideal backdrop for the homeowners' art collection, which includes this piece by Ram Kumar above a travertine credenza in the living area. A pair of restored 1940s French crystal rods from Deco Dreams adds subtle texture and sheen to the space.





“THE DESIGN IS A STUDY IN MINIMALISM—JUST ENOUGH LAYERING, COLOR, TEXTURE AND PATTERN.”

—ANIL KAKAR



Opposite: Kakar left the kitchen untouched, as the sleek, all-white space complements the rest of the home's design. The room offers a view into the dining area and the mercury-glass base of the restored 1940s French table. Twin Murano glass-and-brass lights—sourced through Michel Contessa Antiques—hang overhead, and the Atlantic Ocean beckons through the living area's floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

Below: Another Minotti sectional, this one embellished with hand-embroidered Otomi Mexican pillows from Kakar House of Design, encourages family time in the media room. A Nepal wool-silk rug rests underneath; overhead is a Poul Henningsen lamp custom-painted by the designer. Contemporary American artwork hangs behind the couch, and an M.F. Husain piece appears in the hallway. The 1950s metal sculpture on the travertine coffee table and the turquoise pottery, handmade in Tuscany, are from Kakar House of Design.

Combining patterns and textures for a relaxing feel in a guest bedroom, Kekar placed a cowhide atop a wool-silk rug made in Nepal. Vintage suzani fabrics cover the bench and the accent pillows on the bed, which wears Pratesi linens. The chair and nightstands are Minotti, linen draperies frame the view.



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KAKAR HOUSE OF DESIGN

Since its beginnings in the world of fashion, the concept of a “design house” has come to connote a constant evolution of creativity and collaboration under the tutelage of a visionary. With a team of outside-the-box thinkers and Anil Kakar at the helm, Kakar House of Design lives up to the idea for which it was named. Lauded the world over for not only its interiors, but also an eclectic furnishings showroom with global reach, it represents a unique genre of aesthetic. “We are known for our use of colors and patterns, and mixing up different styles and time periods to create one-of-a-kind spaces,” Kakar says. “Each design is a projection of the client’s dynamic personality.” Kakar enjoys blending the classics with modern and contemporary styles. He builds every room with character, charm and personality, and points to restored vintage pieces and antiques as frequent features in his designs. His muse? “My travels have always influenced me,” he says. “Traveling renews my soul, and feeds my passion for design and life. I’m always on the hunt for fresh ideas and unusual items as I experience new places.” In fact, he says sourcing furnishings is one of his two favorite parts of the job. The other is the friendship he builds with each client. “They are very special to me,” he says. “I’m able to work with such interesting, talented and unique people. I love building environments that reflect them and complement their lifestyles.”



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“I’m always learning and seeking out bold new ideas.”

Ask the Expert

First project that put your company on the map?

Villa Louise, my own home. It’s a 1937 Miami Beach gem. It was gutted and fully renovated in 2002. We brought it back to its former glory days as an authentic Mediterranean home. It was a labor of love, and I’m so proud of it.

Define a successful project.

Last year, we curated blue-chip art into a new condominium for one of our clients. The overall design was a beautiful marriage of the client’s art collection and our distinctive furnishings, which led to a design that flowed nicely and had good balance. That’s a successful project.

Dream creative project?

To do a boutique hotel with a renowned restaurant where I can have carte blanche to put all of my creative ideas and years of experience into one building.



1. & 2. This lovely South Florida home reflects how its Connecticut-based family lives, works and plays. Their love of music, art and individualism is reflected throughout the condominium. Kakar and his team created interiors that are functional and divided into several zones, so everyone can spread out with ease and comfort. **3.** A casual, yet elegant Southern California lifestyle was the inspiration for this 1930s Hibiscus Island villa. **4. & 5.** In this Miami home, the Kakar team used art, sculpture and glamorous, high-octane furnishings to inject the owner’s personality into the design. Many one-of-a-kind and vintage pieces were placed throughout the home.

All photography by Kris Tamburello

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