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CLEAN

A MONMOUTH BEACH CONDO EMBRACES ITS



SWEEP

WATERFRONT SETTING WITH A COMPLETE CHANGE OF FURNITURE

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DESIGNER: SUZETTE DONLEAVY

Opposite: Traditional blue and white Chinese porcelains temper the modernity in the dining area of Ellie and Fred Rosen's Monmouth Beach condo. **Left:** A marble inset in the console is a practical touch: It's a durable landing place for keys in the entryway. Above it, maps of New York City and Long Island allude to Fred Rosen's career geography. **Below:** Fred and Ellie Rosen wanted to bring the outdoors inside their waterfront condo.





Opposite: A seascape by regional artist Steve Alpert echoes the home's Jersey shore setting, and designer Suzette Donleavy chose the mirrored screen to give the room depth. **Below:** Upholstered in rugged synthetic suede, a sleeper sofa in Fred Rosen's office maintains day-to-day comfort while accommodating grandchildren when they visit.



When they redid their condo, Ellie and Fred Rosen adopted an attitude of *out with the old, in with the blue.*

"We wanted to start fresh with everything new," he says.

The Rosens' interior designer, Suzette Donleavy, says the couple gravitated toward furnishings with contemporary flair. "Ellie really liked furniture with clean lines." Their modern leanings made Donleavy a surprising choice for the condo's makeover. The designer, whose firm is Well-Designed Interiors in Rumson, often works in traditional English and French styles showing an abundance of curvaceous furnishings.

The three struck up a conversation at the Visiting Nurse Association's 2007 Stately Homes by-the-Sea Show House, where Donleavy had designed the grand staircase and second-floor landing, and they chatted again during an accidental meeting at a Little Silver nursery. "Traditional is my passion," Donleavy says, "But they took a leap of faith with me."

Ellie Rosen never worried about the style issue: "I felt a connection. I knew I could work with her."

As a prelude to the redesign of the two-bedroom, two-bath condo, Donleavy showed pictures of various rooms to the Rosens. "One photo was a room that was blue and white, and they really lit up ... They wanted to bring in the outdoors."

With those color cues in mind, Donleavy and the Rosens shopped for new furnishings at the New York Design Center, Bergdorf Goodman and Bloomingdale's in New York City as well as many Red Bank stores.

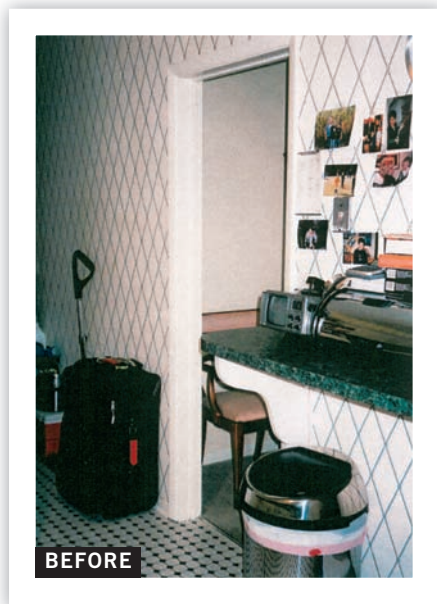
They also purchased pieces through mail-order sources.

Donleavy designed with an eye to the Rosens' requests for references to the Atlantic ("We love being next to the ocean," Fred Rosen says), for hardwood floors to replace the wall-to-wall carpet, and for comfort above all.

A crucial first move consisted of switching the dining and living areas to orient the living area toward the water view. Large glass doors let the living area visually spill onto the balcony, where Donleavy placed heavy furniture



Left: Donleavy and contractor John Bodnar updated the kitchen without changing the cabinetry by replacing the backsplash and countertop. **Below:** Eye-catching Fornasetti plates give the breakfast bar an interesting view. Donleavy designed the bar's wrought-iron supports; Bodnar had them fabricated.



For her bed, Ellie Rosen “really wanted something special,” Donleavy says. Its transitional styling offers dazzle as well as comfort, which the couple set as a priority for the condo redesign. The sculpture, affectionately named Lulabell, is one of the very few furnishings that stayed after the redesign of the two-bedroom, two-bath condo. The piece was a wedding gift to the Rosens nearly 50 years ago.

that doesn't blow around in high winds. “I live on that balcony,” Fred Rosen says.

Oceanesque blues — in the upholstery, rugs, pillows, artwork and other accessories — further relate the condo to its setting.

Flooring Finesse

When the time came to select flooring, prefinished wood won the day. Factory-finished wood costs less and installs more quickly with less mess. The Rosens moved out for a few weeks, staying in Florida and at a Long Beach Hotel while the most disruptive construction was under way. But they wanted their exile to be a short one.



The tub, originally yellow, was refinished for the sophisticated black-and-white redesign.

“The contractor, John Bodnar, was amazing,” Fred Rosen says. “He finished the master bedroom and bathroom early and sealed them off from the rest of the house so we could move back in.” Then the couple stayed on hand as the rest of the renovation took shape, with updates large and small giving every room freshness and function.

In the kitchen, for example, the modifications were mostly cosmetic but nonetheless dramatic. The Rosens usually eat out, so the kitchen wasn’t a budget priority “but Ellie wanted it to look nice because it’s open to the dining area,” Donleavy says. Narrow rectangular glass tiles in the backsplash introduce a hip element to the room, which retained its existing stock cabinets. Black granite countertops add richness, and large floor tiles turned on the diagonal seem to stretch floor space in the condo, which has only about 1,350 square feet.

Donleavy sacrificed only a sliver of space for the breakfast bar—a slab of granite atop two wrought-iron supports—which is a perfect spot for grabbing a sandwich

or eating that all-important first meal of the day.

“The kitchen just came alive” with the changes, Donleavy says.

Another transformation occurred in a small bathroom. Rather than replace a yellow tub, Donleavy and Bodnar chose to resurface it to a brilliant white. Show-stopping tiles complete the bathroom’s new color scheme of crisp black, white and gray.

Personal Touches

Even though the condo underwent a soup-to-nuts makeover, in Fred Rosen’s words, Donleavy instilled personalized touches that foil a furniture-showroom feel.

Perhaps the most obvious example is a framed threesome of oversize road maps above the entryway console. The maps show New York City and Long Island, paying homage to Rosen’s career haunts. To the left is a fourth map of New Jersey, which Rosen fell in love with during business travel; he moved Ellie down from Boston in 2001.

In his office, framed photos document good times in the Rosens’ lives, including a visit with friends Kitty and Michael Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts.

And then there is the one graceful, eye-catching piece the Rosens kept after the redesign: Lulabell, a sculpture holding court on the dresser in the master bedroom. She was a wedding gift to the couple nearly 50 years ago. “She’s just right for the room,” Ellie Rosen says.

In her final analysis of the redesign, Rosen says, “I love the way it all came out. The colors blend. They’re not the same, but they blend. It’s a place I always want to come home to.”

Donleavy believes “the enthusiasm the Rosens have for their home” is the best part of the project. “It’s important to create a home so people can spend time with their families, creating memories. I take that charge very seriously.”

Mary Vinnedge, a fan of eclectic and transitional interiors, has written about home and garden design, business and lifestyle topics for two decades. Contact her at www.EditorForRent.com.

SOURCES Overall: design, Suzette Donleavy of Well-Designed Interiors in Rumson. **Dining Area:** mirrors, Space Interiors in Red Bank; chairs, TCS through Suzette Donleavy; table, Century Furniture Industries in Hickory, North Carolina; table centerpiece, Kosta Boda in New York City; rug, Rugs Direct in Winchester, Virginia; console, Stanley Furniture in Stanleytown, Virginia. **Entryway:** maps and lamp, Horchow in Dallas; console, Stanley Furniture; marble ball on stand on lower shelf, Bergdorf Goodman. **Living Room:** painting, Steve Alpert through Beacon Fine Arts Gallery in Red Bank; sofa, Kravet in Bethpage, New York; screen, Century Furniture; balcony furniture, Restoration Hardware; pillow fabrics, Lee Jofa in Bethpage, New York. **Office:** sofa; Mitchell Gold brand from Space Interiors; desk and chair, Stanley Furniture; pillow and window shade outdoor fabrics, Perennials in Dallas; plant stand, Red Ginger Home in Red Bank; seascape painting, Steve Alpert through Beacon Fine Arts. **Kitchen:** glass tile, Lunada Bay through Monmouth St. Tile in Red Bank; granite, Benchmark in Lakewood. **Breakfast Bar:** plates, Barneys New York; Hudson leather stools, Palecek in Richmond, California. **Bedroom:** bed, Century Furniture; bedding, Down to Basics in Red Bank; dresser and nightstands, Barbara Barry Realized by Henredon in High Point, North Carolina; lamp on dresser, Uttermost in Rocky Mount, Virginia. **Bathroom:** tile, Monmouth St. Tile; Memoirs faucets, Kohler Co. in Kohler, Wisconsin.

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