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SOPHISTICATED STYLE

Arlene Critzos and her team of talented Interior Concepts designers have created a masterpiece at Harbor Lights in West Ocean City

Stunning architectural details and extraordinary elements of design are perfectly united under the roof of one of West Ocean City's most exclusive addresses.

Located at the foot of Old Bridge Road, this five bedroom, four bath residence built by Monogram Building and Design measures 4,235-square-feet and overlooks the Inlet and skyline of Ocean City, Assateague Island and the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, the residence does not have a yard — rather the waters of the Assawoman Bay provide incredible scenery and act as the home's green grasses to the north and east.

Inside, this luxurious property the décor is fit for a king and queen's vacation home at the beach. Interior Concepts, Inc. and il Collezione owner Arlene Critzos and a team of talented designers, consisting of Cathy Belkov, the company's director of design, Andrea Blamphin and

STORY BY JON WESTMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN CHERRY



The elegant and spacious master suite is anchored by a patterned tea rug that provides interest for the room but does not detract from the incredible views outside the windows.



Arlene placed a four poster bed in front of this bedroom's windows to maximize the flow of the space. The light colored furniture, window treatments and accessories help to expand the smallest room of the home.



Joyce Pearl, outfitted the home with a dazzling collection of furniture, window treatments and accessories from around the world and they did it in just 90 days.

The first floor of the residence serves as a guesthouse within a home. Here, visiting family and friends can relax in their own beautiful and private space. Two spacious bedrooms, a dining area, a sitting area, kitchen, and powder room provide all of the comforts of home with views that arguably trump most others on the coast.

"It has the feel of a home, but is more guest oriented," Arlene said. "We tried to accommodate all of the residential functions, such as dining, lounging, preparing meals in the kitchen, and sleeping."

Arlene and her team transformed the main hallway of the level into a comfortable and practical "dining room."

"It is a pretty challenging space because it really is the continuation of a hallway. It is not really defined with walls, so we did not use backs on the chairs or integrate anything else that would disturb the flow of the space. We decided to incorporate elements that did not have any hard lines or squares. The only anchor to the room is a rectangular rug that says, 'Sit here.'"

Arlene described the style of the first level as casual and elegant with little touches of urban and beach influences.

"I love the use of the simple linen, but yet the subtle-

ness of the rattan," Arlene said. "There is more than one composition used in this space, such as stone and iron, and nothing is perishable."

The colors used on this level, as with the entire residence, were selected to instill feelings of solace and promote relaxation. Here, the water was the dominating influence in the selection process.

"We decided on a fog color — it's not really blue or gray — and wanted to bring the water up to the residence," Arlene said. "Normally on a project of this size, we wouldn't use as much color on the walls, but because the home meanders right out of the water — you can't even see land from here — we wanted to take that color and freshen it a little to make it the core color of the space."

One of the guest bedrooms is painted in a welcoming shade of yellow and handsomely accented through the innovative use of fabric lining its coffered ceiling.

A minimalist approach to the use of window treatments ensures nothing will compete with this floor's remarkable views.

A majority of the second floor is dedicated to the homeowners through its impressive and elegant master suite. Arlene and her team implemented an extensive selection of materials and fabrics to decorate this space, including leather, rattan, iron, stone, cottons, and gauze.



The result was a refined retreat ideal for relaxation.

"This is a soothing space," Arlene said. "It has a light, earthy terracotta wall color and everything else is neutral. We wanted to convey a feeling of warmth here."

The Interior Concepts team enhanced the suite, complete with stunning architectural features in the ceiling and a built-in fireplace, through the creation of a sitting area to observe and enjoy the breathtaking views. They also incorporated lightweight, see-through khaki cutaway fabrics for draperies.

"The room really started with the rug. It is a tea-dyed Indian rug that has all of the colors used in the room, but it is also diffused. Without this rug, the room becomes pretty plain. It anchors the room, but does not distract from the incredible views. If this rug pattern was used anywhere else in this room, such as a large-scaled bed-cover, it would distract. The object was to get the weight and grounding but not have it interfere with the view."

The master bath conveys similar serene sensations through its calming colors and generous use of stone.

"This space follows the same feeling as the master suite; it is elegant and spacious. The earth tone colors, the use of stone, and the extensive incorporation of mirrors provides a soothing and expansive master bath suite."

Also on this floor is another guest bedroom and bath, the smallest rooms in the home, where Arlene dispelled a common misconception among novice decorators.

"People are sometimes afraid to put beds and end tables in front of windows. It always gets a reaction from clients, however it works. In this room, if the bed were placed against either wall, you would walk right into it. In this space, you do not focus on the bed, you focus on the movement of the decoration. Everything here is light in color so it takes you through the space. Dark elements would have stopped the flow of the room."

The accompanying guest bath was completed with an impressive array of natural stone that complements the "fog-like" atmosphere of the wall color.

"It really tells a story. It is a very simple design, but has great texture and a wonderful custom shower," Arlene said.

It is safe to say the final room on this level provides comfort to anyone not in the mood to wash clothes. The expansive laundry room has state-of-the-art amenities and awe-inspiring views guaranteed to transfer thoughts of work to a far better place.

"We took a very substantial laundry room that most people would kill for and had a little fun with it," Arlene said. "We gave it a life of its own with two-tone colored paint striping; and how about those views?"

Arlene and her team used a generous assortment of accessories to adequately decorate this remarkable residence. Their style, like their accompaniments, is visually stunning and sets the tone for the experience of visitors to



By placing the dining room table at an angle, at left, Arlene and her team created an intimate nook for entertaining within the expansive, open floor plan of the residence.



The master bathroom's elegant accompaniments and relaxing color scheme provide the ultimate escape from everyday stress. At right, Arlene's creative gathering style is highlighted through the incorporation of a neoclassical urn near the dining area.

the residence.

"The difference between man and beast is the ability to accessorize," Arlene said with a smile. "I remember that line from a long time ago. Once we design a project, we automatically start thinking about the icing on the cake — and that is what accessories are. The cake can be great, but it is not complete without the icing. Our style is not in sets. Our style is gathered and brought together."

A great example of this gathered style is in the main living quarters on the third level. The dining room table, an 18th century artifact Arlene acquired from a convent in the south of France, was gracefully combined with Polynesian antiques, neoclassical urns, tables fitted with iron pedestals, and chairs covered with duck slipcovers.

"We have achieved clean lines with touches of diversity all the way through this home," Arlene said. "It is a great mix between casual and classic styles. I love it." ■

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