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A PALETTE OF SOFT, SUNNY HUES TRANSFORMS AN '80S-ERA HOME.



BY ILENE DENTON | PHOTOS BY GENE POLLUX

Aqua, tangerine, yellow. These are the soft, sun-and-sky colors that interior designer Kristin Raybon pulled out of her paint box to transform a dated, overly formal 1980s-era home in Harbor Acres. They pop against dreamy pale blue walls and handsome tobacco birch floors in six-inch-wide planks that she chose to run throughout the entire house.

"My client, Veronica Meuser, wanted the home to feel comfortable, updated and elegant without formality—a cottagey feeling without the clichés," says Raybon. This is the fifth design project she has worked on for Meuser in the past 14 years, though not all were primary residences, as this one is. "We have a blast together," Raybon says.

Built in 1987, the nearly 4,200-square-foot, two-story residence has a yellow clapboard exterior with

white picket porch railings, which the designer left unchanged. "It's got a very charming, understated quality, and that's why she fell for it," says Raybon.

Charming, yes, but the '80s-style, eight-foot tray drop ceiling and terra-cotta tile floors in the kitchen had to go. "You almost felt like you were ducking when you walked in the room," says the designer. "Veronica loves to cook and entertain in a low-key way, and so we raised up the ceiling and opened up the whole kitchen, family room and breakfast area," she says.

The Sea Pearl quartzite that the client fell in love with for the kitchen countertops started the design scheme for the entire home. "It has a bit of green, cream, a little bit of blue that to her felt like the sea," says Raybon. "It's stunning." Raybon and Meuser worked with Lindsay Perez of Design Works to

Previous page: Tangerine and softest aqua create a light-filled feeling in the newly redone living room. Above: The Sea Pearl quartzite kitchen countertops set the color palette for the entire home. Opposite page: The breakfast area is cottagey without the clichés.





design the brand-new kitchen, and they luckily found one enormous 85-inch by 103-inch slab for the kitchen island. “It took six men to take it up the stairs,” Raybon says. The kitchen backsplash is made of custom hand-painted tiles; there’s a three-dimensional garden scene behind the stove and a tasteful smattering of 3-D tiles depicting hummingbirds and bees.

Raybon also redid all three-and-a-half baths; the master bath is white and gray Carrara marble with custom white cabinets and polished chrome hardware. She clad the family room and living room fireplace surrounds in creamy shell-stone, where simply drywall was there before. And she added beams and tongue-in-groove ceilings in the family room and master bedroom to reinforce the coastal look and feel.

To accommodate Meuser’s white baby grand player piano and family heirloom pieces, like a large honey-hued wood breakfront and a curved console,

without creating a stuffy look, Raybon mixed in timeless Maguire chairs with tangerine pillows and an upholstered sofa in softest aqua. “These pieces won’t go out of style,” she says. Between those chairs is a satin chrome table with an antique-mirrored top and an end table to match. “The feeling is casual elegance,” Raybon says. Sheer white-patterned draperies add an open, airy feel.

About the paint color Raybon chose for most of the walls—Window Pane by Sherwin Williams—“it’s barely a blue-green, but it feels like the sky and the sea, and it works against the white trim and her white baby grand piano,” she says. The dining room walls are the only exception; they’re painted a creamy yellow.

Now all that’s left is to wait patiently for the handmade rug that incorporates all the sun-and-sky colors to come from India.

“The house has the absolute right feeling for me,” says Meuser. “I’m never moving.” ●

Designer Kristin Raybon installed beams and tongue-in-groove ceilings in the family room to reinforce the home’s new coastal feel.