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MAKING ROOM FOR *family*

DESIGNERS REINVENT THE MOST
LIVED-IN SPACE IN THE HOUSE

BY CHARLYNE VARKONYI SCHAUB

No matter how big the house or the status of the neighborhood, the family room is where we want to relax, be comfortable and not worry so much if someone spills a glass of wine or drops a bar of chocolate ice cream.

These days the comfort factor is enhanced with forgiving indoor-outdoor fabrics, swivel chairs, deep seating and coffee tables where feet can be propped without fear of damage.

Check out how six South Florida designers created family rooms for everyday living.



CONTEMPORARY COMFORT

Designer: Liliana Korn Custy, North Miami Beach

Photography: Gerald Connell

Clive and Terry Lewis met interior designer Liliana Korn Custy in a contemporary design showroom in Coral Gables, shortly after she moved to Florida from her native Argentina.

After realizing their decorating ideas were in sync, they hired Custy - who's also an architect and builder - to design the interior and rooftop of the 7,000-square-foot condo they bought preconstruction at Oceania Tower V in Sunny Isles.

"Obviously, it helps if you are in accordance tastewise," said Clive, past chairman and consulting partner of Lewis Gace Bozell Health Care Worldwide, a health-care advertising agency in New Jersey.

Custy's design plan called for removal of walls between the kitchen and living areas so they could enjoy spectacular views of ocean, Intracoastal Waterway and city. White contemporary furniture and glossy white limestone floors don't compete with the view. An entry hall is covered in beige travertine to provide textural interest.

Red elements provide accent, in the ottomans, throw pillows and a pair of Sunset revolving chairs designed by Christophe Pillet. Sculptural interest comes from a pair of iconic Le Corbusier chaises. The dining table is glass with mesh-back chairs, which are actually office furniture on casters from Knoll.

Clive wanted a large bar to divide the dining/family area from the kitchen. The countertop is white glass with a special finish so fingerprints don't show. Hidden underneath is a bar cart on wheels.

The clients' request for "no embellishments" translates into hardware-free cabinetry and doors that hide the audio/visual equipment. A large projection TV screen also retracts into the ceiling.

"Since we didn't have walls, light defines the spaces," Custy said. "It makes 100 percent of the difference."

Liliana Korn Custy designed this family room at Oceania Tower V in Sunny Isles with low contemporary furniture that wouldn't distract from the fabulous view.