



# COLOR CODE

When a traditional, out-of-state bachelor seeking a post-retirement lifestyle change described his ideal Florida home interior as “colorful” and “contemporary,” interior designer, Lisa Gilmore of Lisa Gilmore Design was tasked with translating two words into 3,000 square feet of livable space over 1,000 miles away.

WRITTEN BY ANNA RACHEL RICH | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY LAMB OF NATIVE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY





**THE MOVE—A CELEBRATION, OF SORTS—WOULD DISCONNECT THE CLIENT FROM THE OVERLOADED POWER GRID** of his past after logging countless, busy years in his high-pressure, tech-industry career. He looked forward to life after work, but was “tired of the cold and ready to embrace the Florida lifestyle,” Gilmore explains. Residing in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania for yet another icy, drab winter was anticlimactic, but he was unclear how his “fresh start” would manifest itself within his newly-built, split-level Lakewood Ranch bachelor pad. Connecting with Gilmore through a mutual contact at Smith and Associates Real Estate, the client identified with her penchant for personalized posh.

“I believe in designing all my projects with ‘livable glamour,’” emphasizes Gilmore, quickly dismissing cliché images of glitzy, overstated sparkle. “Glamour to me and glamour to you are likely two completely different



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concepts,” she recognizes, “but it’s the customization, the approachable elegance in a space that make it glamorous.” To her Lakewood Ranch client, Gilmore notes, “finding balance in his desire for both colorful and contemporary styles was glamorous.

Offering a playful reprieve for the gray-weary eye, scattered vignettes of hi-contrast prints and punchy hues saturate the living area when you first enter. “We didn’t want to overwhelm him with intense color on the walls,” says Gilmore, choosing a neutral palette that allows bold art and accessories to pop. Clad with a curated collection of mostly independent artists from around the country, the understated walls provide a balanced backdrop for a minimalist transitioning into technicolor territory.

In an alluring dance of shade and shape, custom geometric drapes modernized from old quilting patterns command the spotlight as ample light filters through large living room windows. When the sun retires, champagne-like bubbles infused with LED illumination glow from clustered wall scones by Sonneman Way of Light. Because “you can never have too many table lamps,” insists Gilmore, she dispersed ultra-modern chrome lamps throughout and a notable “funky orange lamp jilted sideways” in the upstairs bonus media room. Providing warm, textural contrast to the sleek contemporary pieces, a handsome Global Views console in geometric zebra wood veneer offers ample storage for the new resident.

Gilmore’s favorite art pieces—two abstract watercolors acquired from a New York gallery while visiting family—hang stacked in a hallway niche, charming passerby with swift strokes of burnt orange and mint green above, and deep purples offset with lemon hues below. “I loved the movement they created in that space,” says Gilmore.





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**CREDITS** Interior Design by Lisa Gilmore. Colorful, contemporary bachelor pad for a recently relocated resident from Pennsylvania—3-bed, 3.5 baths and 3,000 square feet of living space. Vendors include Diane Von Furstenberg for Kravet, Eurostyle, Global Views, Gus Modern, Jaxon Home, Maria Yee, Natuzzi, Nuevo, Robert Allen, Sonnoman Way of Light and Surya.

“Luckily, my client loved them, as well,” continuing to explain the challenges of selecting art for someone with whom she wasn’t well acquainted. “I find art to be incredibly personal,” she says. Having a client who didn’t express his artistic preferences required Gilmore to usher him into an aesthetic space he’d likely not find on his own. “He wasn’t familiar with contemporary living,” she says, “but he really let us take the wheel when it came to educating him.”

Embarking on a visually stimulating three-to-four week excursion with her design team—referring to it as her “honeymoon phase”—Gilmore filled her office with a sea of inspiring images and ideas from studied issues of Vogue to leafed-through coffee table books. The internet was their oyster as design blogs and Pinterest boards surfaced potential gems. A quick visit to Gilmore’s Pinterest “Inspiration” board—likely evolving into an extended stay—reveals a vividly juxtaposed collage of Louis Vuitton circus-themed window displays and hyper-realistic Richard Phillip paintings, a smoky Diana Vreeland in her Vogue office circa 1965 alongside Frank Lloyd Wright stained glass window designs, to note a few. As interior and fashion design sashay around each other in a materially rich, methodically similar courtship, Gilmore unsurprisingly cites “vintage fashion and designers’ current runway collections” as a constant source of inspiration to draw from.

Reality struts in after the “honeymoon phase,” requiring Gilmore to condense her options, source vendors, design floor plans and create watercolor hand-renderings, all in preparation for presentation day—the culmination of “a healthy six-to-seven weeks,” she estimates, of behind-the-scenes labor.

Using a mix of watercolor and markers, Gilmore presents three different 3-D renderings for her client to visualize. “They’re supposed to feel dreamy,” she notes. “I don’t want them to be extremely specific because the client focuses on the details and misses the vibe, the lifestyle we’re trying to create.” After casting her nuanced vision with each rendering, Gilmore engages the client with fabric samples, color swatches, specific lighting fixtures and furniture options. “Every detail is laid out on presentation day so there are no surprises,” she says. The client was on-board with their design decisions and everyone was keen to set the installation in motion—everyone except the longshoremen’s union and shipowners on the West Coast. Gilmore’s project was unexpectedly halted by seaport congestion during simmering labor disputes last winter. “It was completely out of our hands and affected our lead-time severely,” she recalls. All of the bedroom furnishing—including her favorite black and white Maria Yee nightstand, hand-crafted using a nail-free Breathing Joinery technique—was floating stagnant on the shore. Going with the flow, Gilmore split her installation into two phases, “not something I like doing,” she adds, “but it came together in the end.” As boxes trickled in at a glacial pace, Gilmore swiftly transformed the barren abode into a coastal dwelling brimming with livable glamour.



Helping strike just the right note of glam, Gilmore upholstered a custom-built ottoman in chic-yet-durable silver faux-snakeskin—a place to “kick your feet up without worrying about wear-and-tear,” she says. A Gus Modern convertible sectional bordered with an edgy flash of stainless steel, and a studded leather chair duo by Jaxon Home set the stage for a jazzy affair atop a swirled living room rug. “The array of colors mixed with different textiles, woods and metals creates a refreshing, unexpectedly balanced space,” says Gilmore.

With her client out-of-town for a brief three-day interlude, Gilmore finalized installation details before cuing the house lights. “We did almost everything in those three days, locked the house up and he came home the very next day,” she says. “Pleasantly surprised,” Gilmore remembers his initial reaction, the newcomer was ready to flick on the wall sconces and raise a glass to trading Blue Bell for blue skies. **SRQ**