

Take a tour! Tropical style, bold color, ceilings are visual treats at Kips Bay show house

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Here's our room-by-room tour of the fifth-annual show house, where more than 20 decorators have transformed a 1920s home in the Old Northwood neighborhood of West Palm Beach.

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How might you define “tropical style”? Let 24 decorators count the ways.

As they re-envisioned the rooms in this year's Kips Bay Decorator Show House Palm Beach, the design professionals applied colors and motifs of the tropics in ways that ranged from the brightly saturated to the neutral, from the bold and the brilliant to the soothing and the soft — you name it, and it was there.

And there's hardly a white ceiling — or room for that matter — in the historic home that stands in the Old Northwood neighborhood of West Palm Beach.

More about the house: Show house slated for historic home formerly owned by West Palm Beach ex-mayor Muoio

The fifth-annual fundraiser is a satellite of the venerable Kips Bay Decorator Show House in New York and is open for tours — in person and virtually — through April 3. It benefits Boys & Girls Clubs of Palm Beach County and the Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club in The Bronx in New York City.

Here's our tour of the project, which doesn't necessarily follow the floor plan but instead groups together a few decorating themes we discovered as we chatted with the designers while walking the house, the guest quarters and the grounds.

Strong statements: Super-saturated color

Enter the foyer and stair hall and you might feel submerged in the ocean deep, thanks to what Joan Craig calls her “Octopus’ Garden.”



The sumptuous blue-green walls serve as a backdrop for sea-life motifs painted in white plaster— and then inset and overlaid with shells and objects from the ocean. The effect brings to mind the charming silhouettes of a sailor’s valentine.

Look to one side of the foyer and you’ll see Jim Dove’s jewel-toned “Monkey Bar” and Robert Brown’s intimate sitting room, the latter enveloped in bold mural panels in chocolate, rust and gold with a ceiling painted a dark blue. “I wanted the ceiling to disappear,” Brown explains.





Look to the other side of the foyer, and the drawing room by Peter Pennoyer Architects is nothing short of juicy. The walls are covered in a luscious tangerine grass cloth, overlaid with hand-painted lemon trees. “The inspiration was Florida’s citrus groves,” said Alice Engel, director of interior design for the architecture firm.



Designer Noz Nozawa interpreted a Palm Beach look using pastels and deeper hues in her “No Bad Mondays” sitting room, which opens to the primary bedroom upstairs. Nozawa immersed the room in “lilac-lavender-pink, paired unexpectedly with tomato red,” she said.



In the “casita” — the guest quarters above the garage — Catherine Austin’s “Jewel of the Jungle” room and palm-frond green kitchen echo a “Costa Rica moment,” the designer said. The walls in the main area are lined in CW Stockwell and Voutsas’s Martinique Celebration wallpaper, featuring an iconic banana-leaf design with a brilliantly recolored palette inspired by Henri Matisse — “vibrant red, cobalt blue, sunshine yellow and every color in the rainbow,” Austin said.



Back in the main house, color was a mainstay in the bathrooms and the primary's suite's closet. In the primary bathroom designed by Nikki Levy, deep-green vertical fluted ceramic tile set the tone.



In serene blues, the “Closet Reimagined” by designer Barbara Lewis serves the primary bedroom. The decor was inspired by the lush color and palm trees of Palm Beach.



And you'll find more blue in Andrea Schumacher's "Flutter" powder room, which pays homage to Palm Beach's vibrant skies.



Tour last year's show house: Restful retreats marked 2021 Kips Bay show house in West Palm Beach

Gentle approach: Soft and breezy getaways

A covered terrace designed by Amanda Reynal employs a color palette of pink, green and yellow, set off with a scalloped awning, demure tassels and shell coquillage.



In soothing green and white, Paloma Contreras “Green Gardens” sunroom is clad in treillage and accented by a dentil valance that recalls tenting.



Designer Tish Mills is known for her Zen-like spaces, she said. And for her “Home Office Hideaway,” she chose as the backdrop Ripples, a textural wallpaper by Phillip Jeffries. The swirling pattern in grays resembles the rise and fall of the ocean as it pulls away from the shoreline, she said.



For contrast: A white-and-gray kitchen

Unusual for this house is the predominantly white — and sleek — kitchen with accents of gray and brass. Designed by Bakes & Kropp Fine Cabinetry, the kitchen includes colors, cabinets and other choices that pleased the husband-and-wife homeowners, Stephen Quinnant and Romina Polanco. And something else unusual is fun and useful: Shallow cabinets are lighted from within, which would make sneaking a midnight snack a snap.



Look up! Ceiling treatments are stars

In her “Wonderland Dining Room,” Beth Diana Smith alludes to — who else? — Alice in Wonderland. Whimsical wallpaper panels within the room’s brightly pigmented coffered ceiling feature fun and fantastic flora and fauna. The overall color scheme is a mélange of pink, red, lilac and green. “It’s a bit of a mix. I didn’t do a very traditional color palette, and in a whimsical room, you wouldn’t,” Smith said.



Ashley Gilbreath chose a neutral palette for her primary bedroom, which she described as a “tented retreat.” It features walls draped in brown-and-white stripes set off with a tented ceiling. Tenting the ceilings and walls is “soft and cozy,” Gilbreath said, “but there was a legitimate reason for it. We had architectural elements we had to hide.”



With subtle exotic elements, Sarah Bartholomew's boudoir is tented, too. She chose gray and white for the color scheme and explains that she was inspired by the Brighton Pavilion in England.



Tiffany Brooks' "Bloom Lounge" is drenched in chartreuse — a fun green — paired with sky blue and white. She also painted the ceiling. "I can't leave a ceiling untouched," she said. "It has to be in keeping with the room and keeping (this one) white would have been a mistake."



In his “Sala Exotico” — or “exotic room” — designer Philip Gorrivan topped his ceiling in what appear to be interlocking 3-D architectural blocks, an ode to Brutalist design. The deep-mauve ceiling kicked off his color palette of tobacco and creams, with pops of jewel-like purples and greens.



Maryline Damour and Mel Jones Jr's second-floor "Toddler's Haven" emphasizes the dramatic and the natural, Jones said. "We want you to look straight out the windows and then come back in. This room feels like a tre house, and the ceiling is painted to imply the sky, he said, "but with a different drama." Don't look for sky blue here, he cautioned. "That's been done a million times."



In the casita, Chris Goddard went over the top in his living room with hand-painted draped walls. The ceiling he created is coffered and lacquered in brilliant blue. “Vibrance is key,” Goddard said. In the rest of the room, the color palette contains “heavily saturated jewel tones, heavy on the purples, blues and citron.”



With luscious wine-red walls and a ceiling papered in a geometric design of dark burgundy and purple accented by black and white, Kelly Finley's luxurious suite in the casita is wrapped in color.

A fresh take: The great outdoors

Robert Bell's garden design incorporates lush outdoor rooms that progress around the house, moving from the reception area to more quiet contemplative spaces — and then to more modern-style areas that include a pebbled courtyard with a backgammon pattern.

Designer Janie Molster framed the pool area in pink and white, from the stripes on the entertaining pavilion to the vintage floral pattern on the sun umbrellas.

And designer Alecia Johnson's outdoor room — with a fireplace — has a color scheme of black, white and pink. "It's chic and doesn't compete with the greenery," Johnson said.

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IF YOU GO: The Kips Bay Decorator Show House Palm Beach is set in a 1923 house known as "The Mansion" at 3001 Spruce Ave. in West Palm Beach. It is open 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily for in-person tours through April 3. General admission tickets (sold for specific admission

times) are \$40 available in advance, while virtual-tour tickets are \$20. Health protocols are strictly observed, according to the organizers. For tickets and more information about the fundraiser, visit KipsBayDecoratorShowhouse.org/PBPlanYourVisit.