

Events planner turned Palm Beach co-op into her family's 'happy place'

palmbeachdailynews.com/story/business/real-estate/2024/04/26/events-planner-turned-palm-beach-co-op-into-her-family-s-happy-place/73404127007

REAL-ESTATE

Listed! How an events planner turned Palm Beach co-op into a 'happy place' for her family

Julie Savage Parekh undertook a thorough renovation to update the co-op apartment at the Ambassador II on the South End. The unit is on the market for \$1.595 million.

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Special to Palm Beach Daily News



Events designer and party planner Julie Savage Parekh first came to Palm Beach with her family as a baby to visit her late grandparents, Nancy and Julian Savage, who vacationed at The Breakers every season.

“Palm Beach was like a second home for me,” says Savage Parekh, who adapted her maiden name when she christened her company Sauvage Events.

In 2022, she and husband, Eric Parekh, a partner of Ascend Capital Group, bought a Palm Beach vacation apartment at the Ambassador II, a co-operative at 2780 S. Ocean Blvd. on the South End’s Condominium Row. They had followed her father, retired interior designer Darryl Savage, who also owns an apartment there.

“We fell in love with the location, and when a unit became available in this building, we jumped at a chance to buy it,” Savage Parekh says.

The apartment is on the ground floor of the eight-story building, which was designed by Lawrence & Belk Architects in 1968. It has 96 units in eight residential floors and stands immediately north of the Four Seasons Palm Beach Resort.

But the couple’s needs have changed: They have decided to move from Washington, D.C., to become full-time Florida residents. With their children, Hudson, 8, and Ava, 6, growing, they are looking to buy a single-family home.



As such, they are selling their two-bedroom, two-bath co-op apartment, No 110, with 1,294 square feet of interior space and a private 600-square-foot terrace.

Sotheby's International Realty agent Ben Stein holds the listing for the ground-floor apartment, which is priced at \$1.595 million. The furniture is available separately. The apartment will be sold with assigned parking for one car.

A little different ownership model from a condominium, owners of co-ops own shares of the building instead of owning their units outright.

Savage Parekh's professional background gave her a perfect set of skills to renovate the apartment, with the added benefit of being able to obtain advice from her interior-designer father when it was needed.

"My dad definitely weighed in, but I design weddings, dinner parties and exclusive events. Design is what I do for my work, so I had a lot of fun to make this apartment our happy place," she says.

"When we bought it, it had a popcorn ceiling, linoleum flooring, old carpeting in the bedrooms, wavy-plastic shower doors — and everything was dark wood," she says. "We totally gutted it, making it quintessentially Palm Beach. We wanted a perfect Palm Beach *pied a terre*, with lots of light and an airy feeling that brings out the best of resort style of living."

Today, the apartment is graced by coral-stone floors; designer light fixtures and sconces; and custom-lacquered bathroom vanities.

The electrical and plumbing had been redone by the previous owner. But Savage Parekh ran new electricity lines to her new custom gallery-style lighting system and to power her new white-and-rose-gold Cafe appliances in the reworked kitchen.

In addition to the new appliances, she upcycled the kitchen cabinets by painting them white, adding custom raffia panels, replacing the hardware and leaving some of the fronts open for display.

"I wanted a whimsical and relaxed island feel, so it made sense to transform the cabinets rather than replace them," she explains.

For the backsplash, blush-colored tiles were set in a herringbone pattern. "The clay tiles are hand-glazed and fired in a *zellige*-style, a technique that originated in Morocco," she explains.

She also updated the bathrooms.

The apartment enjoys a southern exposure. The front door opens to the great room, which includes the dining area.

“All the surfaces are smooth and freshly painted. And we did custom thick baseboards and trim. The wall behind the couch is a fun mural wallpaper, with a Colony hotel vibe,” she says, referring to the historic hotel in Palm Beach.

The great room is flanked by the primary suite to one side, with the guest-bedroom suite and kitchen on the other. The great room and both bedrooms feature walls of sliding glass doors that open to the poolside terrace, with its views of the tropical foliage at the Four Seasons resort and a peek at the ocean.

“We are on the first floor, and we have an extraordinarily large terrace, which really gives an indoor/outdoor feel,” Savage Parekh says. “A few steps from terrace, and you are directly at the pool and then (it’s) straight out to the beach.”

The main bathroom has custom-lacquered double vanities topped with marble. The plumbing hardware is by Newport Brass. Special details in the guest bathroom include Moroccan cement tile flooring and walls finished with shiplap paneling. Closets in both bedroom suites have custom-fitted fixtures, and the guest bedroom closet holds the new washer and dryer.

Building amenities at the Ambassador II include a recently renovated lobby, a community room with a kitchen, a conference room, a heated pool with poolside cabanas, deeded ocean access and electric-car charging stations. On the staff is a concierge, a full-time property-management team and 24-hour security.

The Ambassador II is not part of the Ambassador Palm Beach Hotel & Residences, the development just down the street that was sold in 2022 to a Miami-based developer.

While Savage Parekh and her family are looking forward to living in a single-family home, this apartment has offered them many perks, Savage Parekh says: “We are 10 minutes from The Colony hotel and Worth Avenue, which is great. Unlike a house, I will miss literally never having to worry about any maintenance — and when traveling, it’s just lock it and leave, which is so easy.”

“I will also miss walking next door to the Four Seasons for a seaside lunch and (taking) my beach walks every morning. It’s nice to start your day with coffee on the terrace and your toes in the sand.”

She also likes how the apartment’s terrace “blends with the pool deck, where’s there’s a grill, making it great for entertaining. The idea of condo living and entertaining don’t usually go together, but in this case, it’s a wonderful perk.”

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For more than 20 years, Christine Davis has written about Palm Beach real estate in the "On the Market" feature in the Palm Beach Daily News.