

MIAMI / FORT LAUDERDALE / BOCA RATON / PALM BEACH / NAPLES

# SE FLORIDA STYLE & DESIGN

SUMMER 2019





HOMES  
INTERIOR DESIGN

# *INTO THE BLUE*

*A South Florida interior designer  
takes a cue from the blue in creating  
her weekend oasis*

*by* ANGELA CARAWAY-CARLTON  
*photography by* HOLGER OBENAU

**I**NTERIOR DESIGNER Perla Lichi lives for a challenge, so when it came time to purchase a weekend retreat on the ocean for herself, she gave the realtor two ultimatums: The condo must have an ocean view and it must be dated. “I said, ‘Find me an older building with the ugliest unit that hasn’t been touched or remodeled,’” explains Perla Lichi, ASID and founder of the luxury interior design firm Perla Lichi Design. She settled on an oceanfront condo constructed in the 1990s at Oceania III in Sunny Isles Beach, Florida, where a mix of older and flashy new builds dots the coastline. “I’ve been doing this for 36 years. I knew that I could modernize it and make it better than any of the brand-new construction units,” she says.

#### What’s Old Is New (and Blue)

Lichi immediately went to work inside the 1,790-square-foot, two-bedroom, two-bath condo, knocking down walls, raising ceilings and playing with mirrors to make the space feel larger. She used Calacatta gold porcelain tile with gray veining for movement and brought in the breezy feeling of the azure ocean below. “I started with a blank slate, using a white background to open up the space. For the color scheme, I chose white and gray throughout, while using pops of blue to represent how the ocean’s color changes throughout the day,” says Lichi.

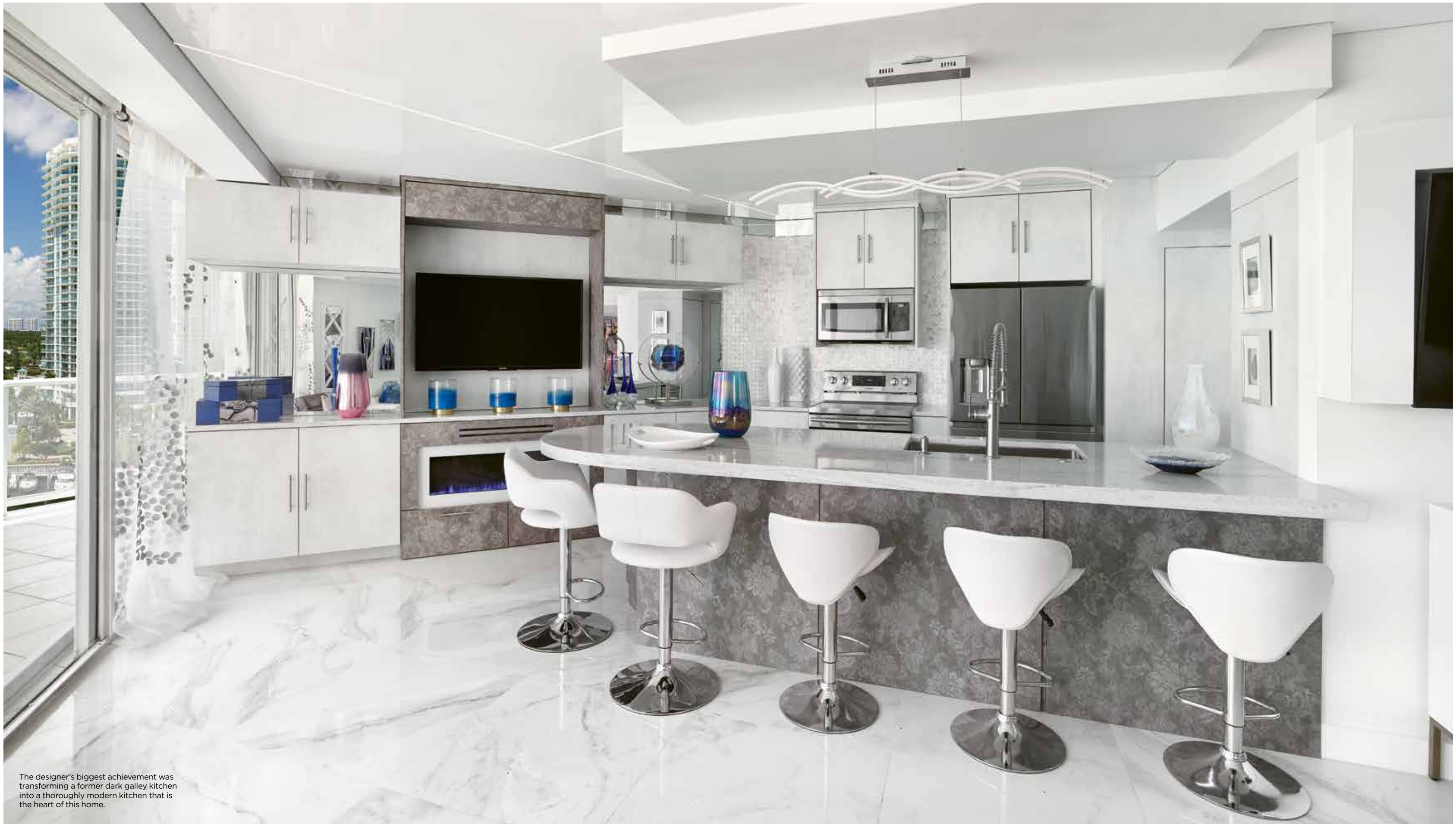
The designer’s biggest achievement was transforming the former dark galley kitchen into a showpiece—a two-tone kitchen, featuring stainless steel appliances, a white mosaic backsplash in a basket-weave pattern that’s dotted with Swarovski crystals from Rainbow Roofing & Tile, and a marble



An artsy white console table defines the entryway. Calacatta gold porcelain tile with gray veining adds movement throughout the condo.

#### previous spread:

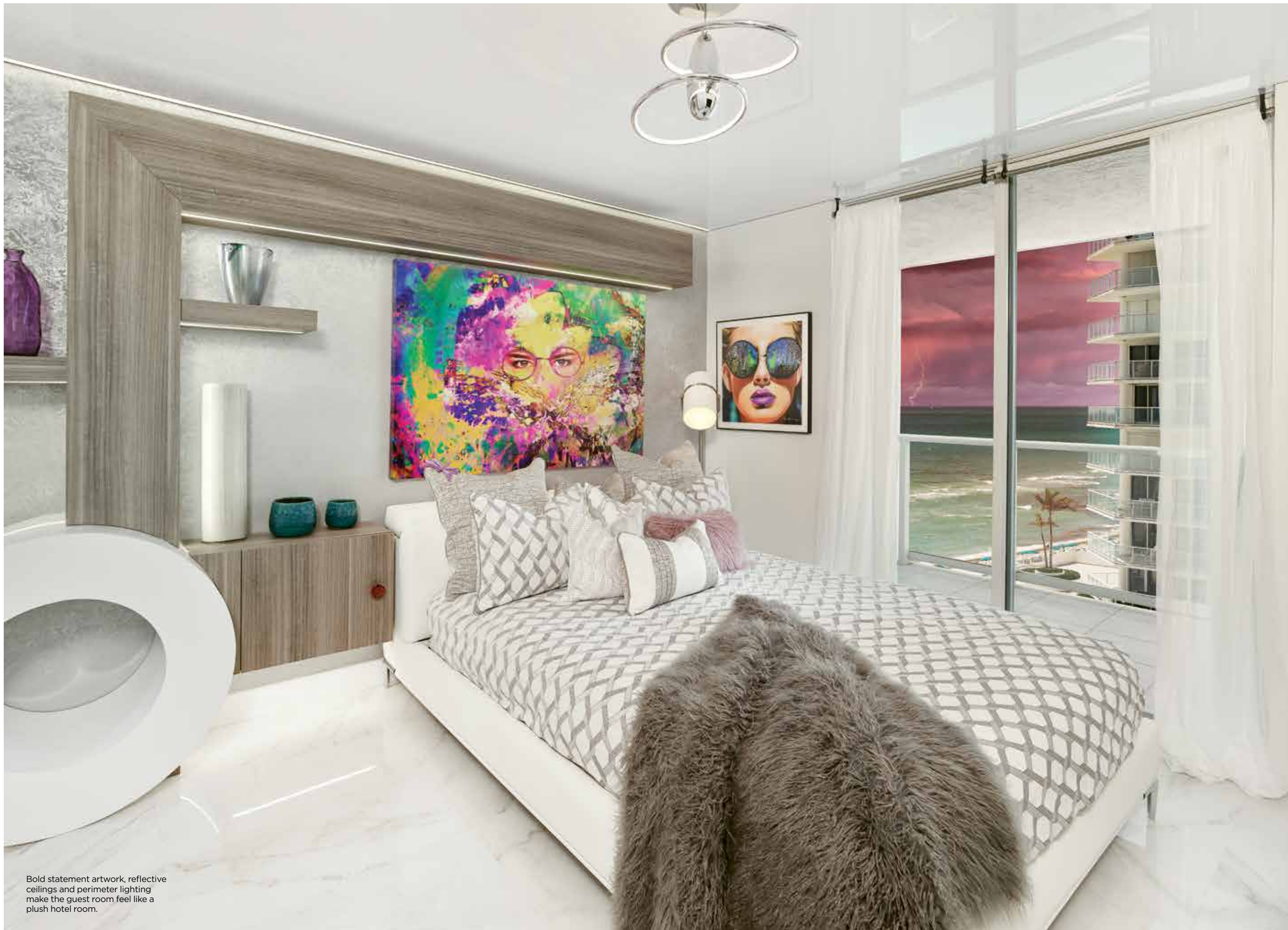
In the dining room, a LED-lit semiprecious onyx stone feature wall pulls in the dramatic blues and whites of the ocean and sand.



The designer's biggest achievement was transforming a former dark galley kitchen into a thoroughly modern kitchen that is the heart of this home.

The centerpiece of the living room is a 25-year-old coffee table. Lichi silver-leafed it and added scrollwork for a Tuscan feel.





Bold statement artwork, reflective ceilings and perimeter lighting make the guest room feel like a plush hotel room.

island layered with a subtle floral pattern (to break up the all-white aesthetic). The design is anchored from above by a wavy light fixture from LBU Lighting in Oakland Park, Florida. “The kitchen is the heart of the home. Everyone can just hang at the island while you’re cooking or watch TV,” says Lichi, “and you can see those stunning ocean views.”

The kitchen now opens into an inviting living room, decked out with a fireplace that glows red or electric blue, depending on Lichi’s mood, modern furniture enveloped in different textures, and colors that range from a blush pink chair to a rich navy velvet ottoman to accessories touched in electric blue.

“My signature thing is a throw in every room. Most of the time I knit them myself, but for this project I went for faux fur

**“My signature thing is a throw in every room. Most of the time I knit them myself, but for this project I went for faux fur throws.”**

throws,” says Lichi, adding that she did rehab the conversation piece of the room—a 25-year-old coffee table that she silver-leafed and to which she added scrollwork for a Tuscan feel. “I don’t like all cookie-cutter modern furniture; I like to bring in personality pieces.”

That bold personality extends to the adjoining dining room, where an eye-catching, LED-lit semiprecious onyx stone wall immediately draws you in—seemingly deep into the dramatic blues and whites of the ocean and sand.

“I wanted to bring in the drama. Instead of hanging a piece of art, the whole wall became the art,” she says. The wall is always lit, and its electric blue colors also echo in



Calming aquamarine colors create a soothing effect in the master bedroom.



Fifty shades of gray highlight the chevron-patterned wallpaper, framing the egg-shaped freestanding tub.

**right:** Lichi created a boutique closet by opening the existing closet and adding a peninsula island, allowing every inch of space for storage.



unexpected in a room," she notes.

**Mastering the Art of Relaxation**

Departing from the main living area's striking electric blue touches of color, the designer chose calming aquamarine colors for the master bedroom. "This is where I spend my weekends, so I wanted it to feel relaxing when I wake up," says Lichi. "Depending on the time of day, the color of the water matches the iridescent wallpaper."

She added her own personal touches to the room using Perla Lichi pillows, a colorful rug made of New Zealand wool that she designed, and one of her handmade signature throws.

The master bathroom is just as opulent, with an egg-shaped freestanding tub, a two-tone vanity buttoned up with pearl and crystal handles, and more than "50 shades of gray" in the Chevron-patterned wallpaper

that adorns the walls. As someone who's always dabbled in fashion—Lichi also treated herself to an expansive boutique closet with a peninsula island—every inch is covered in shelves and doors that can be closed or opened to reveal or hide handbags, shoes or clothing.

The guest bedroom purposely feels like a plush hotel room, with its bold statement piece of art, reflective ceilings and perimeter LED lighting that offers the illusion of more space. Lichi also put her design skills to work to create a unique feature wall with a sculptural round piece that serves as a night table. "I didn't want to do a typical store-bought bedroom set," she says.

With her anything-but-typical style, living at the condo on weekends breaks up the mundane for Lichi. "I'm loving it. Where I live full time has an opulent feeling, like an Italian palace. Walking in here with fresh, modern vibes and ocean views is a total contrast, and that's exactly what I wanted," she says. \*

**“Where I live full time has an opulent feeling, like an Italian palace. Walking in here with fresh, modern vibes and ocean views is a total contrast, and that’s exactly what I wanted.”**

the reflective ceiling fitted with LED strips. The room is topped off with a dining room table from Whiteline Furniture, window sheers speckled in silver leather from Cloud9 Design and a glittering crystal chandelier. Nearby, Lichi designed a wet bar with an extra-white quartz bar top, with doors and drawers swathed in the same floral pattern as the kitchen island. "It's all about creating interest or something

**Angela Caraway-Carlton** is a Miami-based freelance writer, travel and lifestyle expert, and television producer. Her works have appeared in *Indulge Magazine*, *Time Out*, *Elysian*, *Aventura*, *South Florida Luxury Guide* and *Modern Luxury Weddings South Florida & the Caribbean*. Caraway-Carlton has covered lifestyle trends in South Florida and beyond for more than a decade.

» **PERLA LICHI DESIGN**  
 2101 NW 33RD ST.  
 SUITE 300  
 POMPANO BEACH, FL 33069  
 954.726.0899  
 PERLALICHI.COM