

MODERN MARVEL

A combination of contemporary and timeless design elements transforms this unique oceanfront property in Irvine Cove

By Jennifer Daack Woolson

Sue Capelli, founder of *Passione Interior Design*, is no stranger to the Irvine Cove property she recently remodeled. In fact, she's known it since before it was "born." She worked with the homeowners in 2005 when they originally built the 11,500-square-foot Tuscan masterpiece on the upper portion of a unique double oceanview lot.

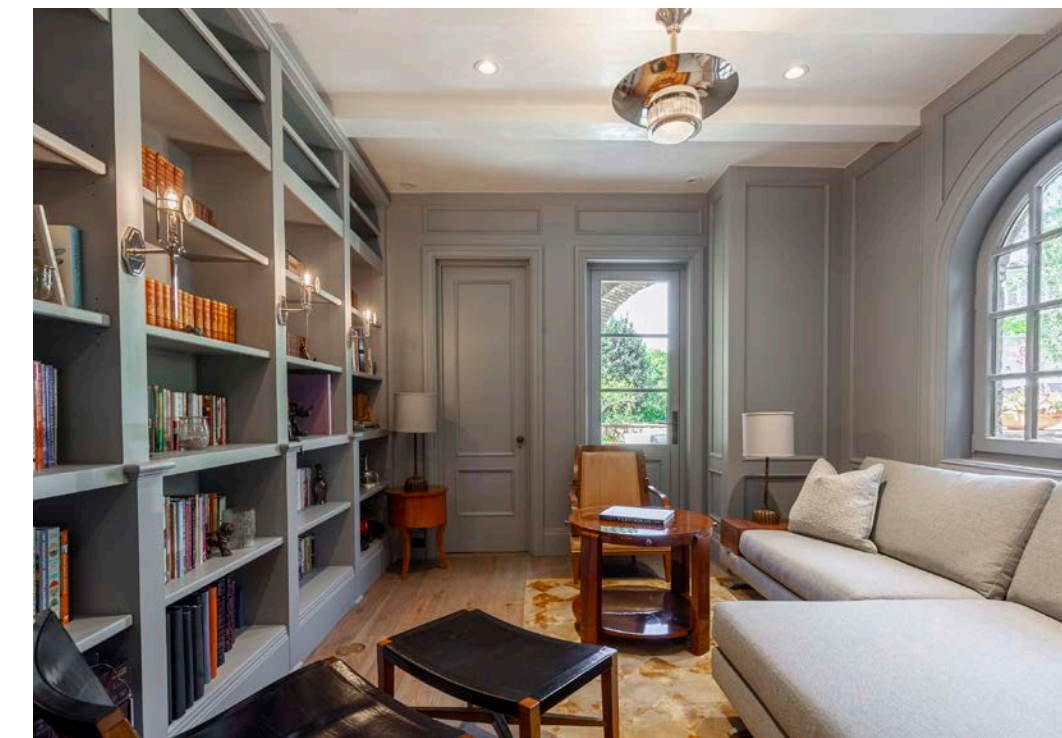
In 2010, she returned to design the lower property—including a magnificent home office, luxurious guest suite, and gym nestled in a horseshoe around a pool and spacious outside area. Her most recent project was an extensive remodel of the upper property, completed in 2022. This time, her efforts were focused on providing a modern update to the kitchen, family room, sitting room, and library.

An intimate seating arrangement provides the perfect spot for quiet conversation or gathering before heading out for the evening.



“The inside of the upper property has always been clean and more contemporary,” Capelli says. She gave it an even more contemporary look by mixing materials such as terrazzo, marble, and caesarstone, and pure white Venetian plaster. The gourmet kitchen has cabinets custom finished by Capelli Antiques and gets a punch of color from the vibrant green La Cornue range. The matching vent hood draws the eye up to the stunning barrel ceiling constructed of old bricks with a gesso finish—also by Capelli Antiques.

Furniture selections, like a cozy, oversized sofa for hosting a game-day party and smaller grouped seating areas for more intimate conversations, fit the way her clients live and are thoughtfully positioned for spectacular views—outside and in.



Above: A French La Cornue range in vivid green, Sub-Zero appliances, and stainless steel back splash give the kitchen a modern feel.

Right: The library provides a serene and secluded spot to relax.



A sculptural wall by artist Nathan Slate Joseph wraps the stairwell.



The great room offers breathtaking views of the ocean from a couch custom-designed with entertaining in mind.

Those views include one of the home's most impressive features, an art wall that wraps around the central staircase. The wall was created and installed by New York artist Nathan Slate Joseph. His sculptural galvanized steel work is painted, stained, and molded to create a stunning and timeless installation.

Capelli's clients have been actively involved in all three design projects. "They come shopping with me, they look at materials, they touch and feel things. They really enjoy the whole design process," she says.

For this latest project, that process involved pandemic-related supply chain issues. Capelli faced them head-on by taking an innovative approach to the project timeline. Rather than her usual method, which is to demo first, then take measurements and complete design work before ordering materials, she flipped it on its head to avoid an additional four- to five-month wait.

She completed all the design work, layouts, and renderings, then got in touch with manufacturers and vendors to get timelines on delivery to help determine the timing of the client's six-month move-out.

Appliances, stone, furniture, and other materials were pre-planned and purchased well before the clients vacated. Only then did demo begin. "I would never have done that before," Capelli says. "We always demo and then go in and take the measurements and make sure everything is correct. This time, we had to be extremely accurate because we were ordering everything ahead of time."

The results were spot-on and worth the wait. 🏡

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