

A Charming Kitchen worthy of its EUROPEAN Name

Destiny leads a Minnesota couple to build their winter home in *Ocean Ridge*.

By Willi Miller

Photos by Robert Stein



Above: The home sits 22 feet above the beach and features a breathtaking view of the Atlantic from the dining room and kitchen.



Above: The large island houses its own freezer and dishwasher, as well as a vegetable sink and icemaker.

Left: The mahogany-toned island features drawers with built-in wicker baskets, one of the kitchen's several unique storage areas.



“They’ve named their home
‘Le Coquillage,’
[the seashell.]”

Combining French flair and function

The Lundquists have no problem imagining themselves in the south of France in the bright and spacious kitchen (a little larger than 10x18 feet) designed for them by Barbara Geller, of The Place for Kitchens, in Boca Raton. Geller brought in interior designer Arianne Parrish, of A. Design—a perfect fit, Merrilee says. “She had notebooks of pictures from magazines and I had pictures, and a lot were the same ones! I knew she was the one for me. The kitchen is beautifully designed and works very well. Barbara did a beautiful job.”

For Geller, form follows function, and that was certainly the case in the Lundquists’ kitchen. The mahogany-tone basswood island has its own refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, vegetable sink and separate KitchenAid

icemaker that makes ice cubes from purified water. Merrilee says, “The island is indispensable. It started off small and just got bigger and bigger.” It ended up larger than 4x9 feet. Merrilee chose azul aran granite, a grey-blue with silver flecks, for countertops and the island’s surface. “Blue was never my favorite color until I moved down here. It’s because of the water.”

The solid basswood Wentworth cabinets that line the walls have a distressed, off-white painted and waxed finish. They were handcrafted by a furniture maker in Pompano Beach, with beaded inset doors more than an inch thick. Again, function was paramount, Geller notes. There are drawers for pots and pans, tray storage above the ovens, and an ornamental pilaster that originally was designed for broom storage became an eight-inch-deep pantry cupboard.

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Merrilee Lundquist believes in fate. Had things gone according to plan a few years ago, she and her husband, David, would be living right now in Hilton Head, South Carolina, instead of in the friendly little town of Ocean Ridge, Florida. They were just months away from beginning construction of their new Axis Design winter home in Hilton Head when David signed up for a course at the Dave Pelz Golf School in Boca Raton. When he got there and discovered that Boca was a balmy 82 degrees while Hilton Head was a chilly 55, he sent Merrilee on a scouting expedition to see if they could find just the right place in Palm Beach County to build their home. "I found the lot in Ocean Ridge where an older property had just been demolished," Merrilee says. It took her a total of four days to set up the transaction and two days later they were starting to tie up loose ends in Hilton Head. "The lot was exceptional, on a dune 22 feet above the beach. We were coming from Minnesota and didn't know a place like this existed!"

After seven months of permitting and 2½ years of hard construction—the pilings were driven down 47 feet before they hit bedrock—the couple moved into their dream home in August 2003. "We have great respect for this beautiful property and wanted our house to look like old, classic Florida," Merrilee says. They also wanted the house to have a French Mediterranean feel. "We had artists make seashells of clay, which they then cast in stone for over the windows." They've named their home Le Coquillage, the seashell.

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The spacious kitchen and dining room provide plenty of room for entertaining small or large parties.

