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## AMERICA'S FINEST HOMES

a collection of lifestyle articles from frontgate



**OCEAN RIDGE, FL** — While on a golf trip to Boca Raton and traveling south from Palm Beach, Merrilee and David Lundquist felt fortunate when they came upon a beautiful stretch of vacated oceanfront property. Sitting atop a dune twenty-two feet above the Atlantic, the 1.8 acres offered them a completely unobstructed view of the beach below. "We had designed a house we were going to build in another coastal area; but when we saw this stretch of land, we knew this was the site for our home. It was almost as if the property chose us. The synergy between our home, the setting and the surrounding community is very important to us."

### "I would advise anyone who's thinking of building to be close by during construction"

After they purchased the property, however, there was significant research and work to be done before the couple could consider breaking ground. Acquiring the appropriate permits alone would take months. The Lundquists therefore decided to rent a small apartment in a nearby town so that Merrilee, who had been the overall designer of the house, could be onsite throughout the construction process. "This was not my first experience with building. We've built two other houses and virtually rebuilt a third. It's so important to be onsite while the construction is going on. Building this house was my full-time job during that time. I would strongly advise anyone who's thinking of building to plan on being close by during construction," says Merrilee.



Merrilee designed the acid washed mantle to look like limestone. The 9' mantle was cast in one piece. Shop **Furnishings & Décor**.

#### A FIRM FOUNDATION

Building directly on the ocean requires a particular kind of care and necessitates concerns in the planning stages. "When you are fortunate enough to get a piece of property like this one, it's very important to build responsibly — out of a deep appreciation for Nature but also out of a deep respect for it, too. We had been told that a hurricane hadn't hit Ocean Ridge in the last 50 years, but we were nevertheless very cautious and thorough in our planning. And we're so glad we were. In the past two years, four hurricanes have passed through here, and our home has withstood the test of all of them," Merrilee reports with understandable pride. "In fact, after Hurricane Wilma passed through, we had our power back in three days, and were able to house and help neighbors who didn't get theirs back for weeks. That was a good feeling."

When construction began, they found they had to drive the pilings down forty-seven feet in order to reach bedrock. To reinforce strength and stability, they had the cement blocks of both the foundation and house itself filled with concrete; they also built the second floor of the house, as well as the one, on concrete slab. Their use of hurricane windows meant that the Lundquists wouldn't need to install protective shutters and would perhaps be able to remain in their home instead of having to evacuate in the event of a hurricane.

On a secure foundation and an unusually strong basic structure, Merrilee and David began building a home that was 'simple' and classic. "We say that it's French Mediterranean in style, but it's really more refined than that. We prefer classic designs—designs that will withstand the test of time. We wanted our house on the ocean to look like old, classic Florida."

### Featured Home Highlights

**HOMEOWNERS** - David and Merrilee Lundquist

**BUILT** - December 2000 - August 2003

**STYLE** - "We refer to it as French Mediterranean, and we named it Le Coquillage (the sea shell)."

**HOME SITE** - On 1.8 acres of a dune that sits 22 feet above the beach, with 150 feet of ocean frontage

**LIVING SPACE** - 9,284 square feet under roof, with an additional 3,000 square feet of loggias and 1,050 square feet of open terraces

**ARCHITECTURAL AMENITIES** - "Due to the scale of the house and our love of fine craftsmanship, we designed and had virtually everything custom made."

**CUSTOMER QUOTATION** - "Our house has been a photo shoot location for numerous Frontgate catalogs; we've seen firsthand the extraordinary quality of so many Frontgate goods." — Merrilee Lundquist

### Additional Images



The Breakfast Room



The Dining Room



The chateau floors are made of bleached 1" x 11" white pine that the couple reclaimed from 100-year-old, demolished barns in Iowa.  
Shop **Kitchen & Entertaining**.

## MADE TO ORDER

Due in part to the scale of the house and in part because they appreciate fine craftsmanship, the Lundquists had much of the finish work custom made. "There was almost nothing that we could just go to a store and buy." They had corbels, balustrades and balusters designed and cast in stone, and they commissioned a local art student to create and cast stone seashells for each of the exterior windows and doorways, as well as some of the interior doorframes.

Though it appears to be limestone, the 9-foot fireplace in the living room was also cast. "We had the fireplace cast in one piece and then acid washed. It looks like limestone that has been carved. It's based on a South American design, and it's so large, I can actually stand inside it," Merrilee says with a grin. "It took twelve men to carry it in the house."

For the family room, with its 22-foot ceilings, Merrilee designed an oversized, pecky cypress audio-visual cabinet to house the screen and projection system that David had custom made. By positioning the projection equipment in the cabinet above the screen and shooting the image onto a mirror that reflects it directly onto the screen, David made sure they could watch television and movies without having to darken the room or disturb their view. "David and I would live outside if we could," says Merrilee. "With this projection system, we can even watch a movie without having to compromise our view of the ocean."

The house is designed so that the large living room, dining room, music room and library open onto each other, and virtually every room in the 9,300 square-foot house offers a view of the Atlantic and the infinity pool which appears to be flowing into it. "We are pleased with the effect of the pool. I don't know of many other infinity pools that appear so much to be flowing directly into the ocean," she says.

## THE ESSENTIALS

"From my experiences with building houses, I've come to believe that a professional kitchen designer is a must. You've got to have a good kitchen designer. In fact, since working together, our kitchen designer and I have become good friends," Merrilee says with a smile. They designed the cabinets, which were subsequently made by a furniture company, and had the range hood cast in stone. The kitchen flooring is made from inch-thick pieces of bleached, white pine reclaimed from abandoned, 100-year old barns the Lundquists acquired in Iowa.

**"From my experiences with building houses, I've come to believe that a professional kitchen designer is a must."**

"We were also fortunate to find an interior designer who was very knowledgeable about the building process. Her help was invaluable to us. We had never built in the south before, and building here requires a different type of construction than what we were accustomed to in the north. She was so helpful. In fact, she and I have become good friends, too," says Merrilee.

Others had suggested to Merrilee and David that they wouldn't be able to use the heirloom furniture they own or other pieces they already owned because of the scale of their new home. However, they have chosen to work with their family possessions because of the special memories they hold. "David's grandmother's dining set, for example, is precious to us. We really want to use the heirlooms we have."

## A SHARED SPACE

Since completing the home they affectionately named "Le Coquillage" (the sea shell) in 2003, Merrilee and David have chosen to share it with perhaps even more people than might be expected. "Our neighbors have almost come to expect things going on here. Our home has been a shooting location for Frontgate catalogs and other filming projects as well.

We also see a lot of action on the water. Not only is the ocean itself constantly changing colors and hues, but we see a lot of water traffic go by-parasails, the Coast Guard, very large container ships and fishing boats. There is a lot going on out there, and it's so entertaining to watch."

"Living directly on the ocean can certainly be a challenge. For example, sometimes the wind is so strong that we can hardly open the door. But we are so appreciative of where we live. And we take our appreciation very seriously. We truly honor the place where we live."

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Interested in having your home featured in Frontgate?  
Please send a few indoor/outdoor snapshots to:

Creative Director  
5566 West Chester Road  
West Chester, OH 45069  
[featuredhomes@frontgate.com](mailto:featuredhomes@frontgate.com)

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The Living Room

## Resources

Architect - Thomas Lewis AXIS  
Architecture Kennesaw, Georgia  
(770) 917-0930

Interior Designer - Ariane  
Parrish A. Design at Sunninghill  
Inc. 10463 La Reina Road Delray  
Beach, Florida 33446 (561) 865-  
2518

Home Theater - Blake Brubaker,  
Director of Home Theater Sales  
Da-lite Screen Company, Inc.  
Warsaw, IN (800) 622-3737

Kitchen Designer - Barbara  
Geller The Place for Kitchens  
Boca Raton, FL (561) 338-7171

Cabinetry - Wentworth Cabinets  
1910 NW 18th St. #5 Pompano  
Beach, FL 33069 (954) 973-8312