

Pierce Allen
makes a New York
family's Florida
pied-à-terre well
worth the trip

palmbeachstory

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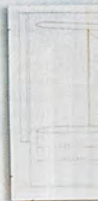
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Facing page:
Curtains made of
Full Swing's
Savanna fabric and
a vintage Edward
Wormley slipper
chair and ottoman
frame a stunning
ocean view. This
page: Bob Wade's
Young Roy hangs
above the dining-
room table. The
lacquered wood
shelves were
designed by
Pierce Allen.
See Resources.





The circa-1930s aluminum ocean liner chest from Gansevoort Gallery, 1. French table lamps date from the 1940s. See Resource



“This place is definitely a refuge”



Left: Thomas Lee and Ann Tenenbaum in the living room with their newborn baby boy, Jesse. Above: A Jack Pierson sign sculpture and a photograph by Christopher Bucklow. The stainless-steel bar is by Pierce Allen; the architect's stool is from Wyeth.

Like many newlyweds, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas Lee set about re-energizing their immediate environs soon after their nuptials: in this case, a Manhattan apartment and Lee's New York office, both designed by DD Allen and Michael Pierce of the Manhattan firm Pierce Allen. But the other jewel in the couple's real-estate crown—a two-bedroom oceanfront pied-à-terre in Palm Beach, where they spend many winter weekends—needed a bit more polish.

“I really don't care that much for Palm Beach,” says Tenenbaum, now the proud mother of a newborn baby boy. “If it were up to me, I'd be in South Beach. But Tom belongs to a golf

club in Palm Beach, and his parents spend the winter here. So that's how it came about.”

The Savannah native, an avid collector of 1930s and '40s French furniture whose storybook wedding was featured in ELLE DECOR's June/July 1997 issue, stayed close to the project from beginning to completion, overseeing its Pierce Allen makeover from a basic Palm Beach flat into a veritable oasis of South Beach cool. “DD and Michael made this a place I wanted to come to,” says Tenenbaum. “It's definitely a refuge. You could pick this up and put it in Miami, and it would be perfection.”

Like a cool dip on a steamy afternoon, Pierce Allen's decor is remarkably refreshing. The walls alternate between soothing, Florida-spa shades of sorbet and sea-glass: lime ice in the public spaces (hallway, living room, dining

area, and bath) and lavender in more intimate areas (master bedroom and dressing room). Ceilings and floors are white, maximizing what is perhaps Florida's greatest asset, apart from its balmy winter clime: “Light,” says Pierce, “is the most underrated aspect of the Florida experience.” Incidentally, the kitchen, with its stainless-steel counter, pale-blue walls, and Warren MacArthur dinette set, is practically blinding.

Even the furnishings manage to let the sunshine in. Pierce and Allen strove for a warm glow with items old as well as new: parchment turns up on a 1930s cabinet at the end of the hall and on a brand-new cocktail table; the dining table is a 1940s bleached-blond Dunbar by Edward Wormley, its coordinating chairs reupholstered in crisp lavender; the glass-topped folding

“Light is the most underrated aspect of Florida



Above: The kitchen table and chairs are vintage Warren MacArthur. Right: In the powder room, a metal mirror from Peter Werner Ltd. and an Uta Bath photograph. The sink and faucet are by Philippe Starck. See Resources.



shelf, a copy of a 1940s bookcase unit by Boris Lacroix, serves as an airy see-through buffet.

Florida's other marvelous feature is water, a point made irrefutable by the master bedroom's window, which affords the Lees a surreal view of a foreshortened sea that seems to have been painted by Magritte. And it comes as no surprise that the guest bedroom's metal furnishings (a chest of drawers and two newly reupholstered beds) once decorated a stateroom on an ocean liner. Above the chest hangs a circular mirror—the sole item, Tenenbaum notes, left over from the apartment's previous incarnation. As it catches the reflection of a stuffed sailfish hanging on the opposite wall (the noble fish was rescued from a Palm Beach antiques store, as was the bathroom's elaborate seashell

chandelier), the mirror suggests a playful porthole.

The apartment's unusual palette serves as a smart backdrop for the Lees' ever-growing, ever-changing collection of contemporary art (a Brice Marden here, a Gary Hume there). The partnership is particularly effective in the living room, where pistachio wall meets deep-purple photograph by Christopher Bucklow. “This isn't just a one-installation situation,” says Pierce. “The artwork is always coming and going. The big cowboy image over the dining table [Bob Wade's 1993 oil on linen portrait of Roy Rogers] might move, although I doubt it, because it's so perfect there. We needed to create a background strong enough to stand both on its own and with a lot of artwork.”

The mix has its funky side. Andreas

Gursky's monumental photograph of the Prada boutique in Düsseldorf hangs in the hallway, while floral curtains—contemporary fabric updates on vintage bark cloth from the '50s—administer a dose of post-postmodern wit, a blissfully kitsch-free complement to the coolly iconic tables by Saarinen and Donghia and the Gio Ponti lamp on the bar.

The whole place is chic enough, fast enough, to make even Tenenbaum forget she's in sleepy Palm Beach. Well, almost. What's that huge Jack Pierson sign sculpture doing on the wall of such a vibrant, dynamic living room, its letters laboriously spelling BOREDOM in ominous green boldface?

“I bought that piece especially for this apartment,” Tenenbaum says with a wicked giggle. “I just loved the statement of it.” *



In the
bedroom, a
by Dong
Samuel
craquelure
table
Donzella
a Chr
Liaigr
from Holly
The bed
are by Pr