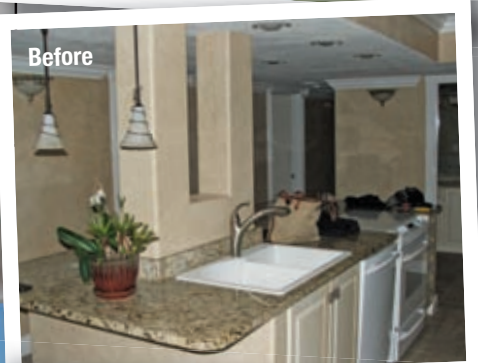
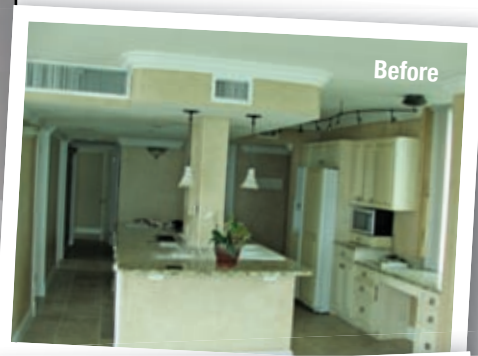




BLAINE JONATHAN / COURTESY PHOTOS

## Better than ever

London Bay Homes Renovation and Design takes a 1970s condo into the 21st century



BY MICHAEL KORB

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A vacation condo at the beach: It's the dream of a lot of northerners.

But while Naples has more than its share of beach condos, a majority of them were designed and built in the 1970s and 1980s — a time when Barry Gibb was one of the coolest cats on the planet.

Not surprisingly, time hasn't been kind to designs of that era (or Mr. Gibb's hairline, for that matter), so if you do buy a little place at the beach, you can bet you'll want to do some renovating.

A professional couple from New York City bought this approximately 1,800-square-foot unit on the eighth floor at Surfside, a building that was constructed in 1974. The space hadn't seen much improvement since.

"It was very dated, obviously," says Matthew Bailey, director for renovation and design at London Bay Homes. "The clients wanted a beachy retreat where they could get away from the hustle and bustle of New York. They were looking for a coastal contemporary renovation to a space that was very compartmentalized."

Utilizing the services of Romanza Design, Mr. Bailey and his crew took the walls down and basically left themselves with an empty box. That allowed them to take advantage of the unit's three sides of windows, giving the homeowners spectacular views from almost anywhere in the space.

"Romanza designed a new floor plan that completely opened everything up and gave them an entertaining open kitchen with a breakfast nook off the end of it," adds Mr. Bailey. "And then we opened that space up into a combination great room/living room area that is just phenomenal."

Another challenge the crew faced was

This gulf-front condo in Surfside was dated, dark and compartmentalized. London Bay Homes Renovation and Design along with Romanza Interior Design took out walls and lifted the ceiling where possible to brighten the approximately 1,800-square-foot unit. Clean, sleek lines, quartz counter surfaces and large-scale white marble flooring place the residence squarely in the 21st century.



the low ceiling height of the older building. They wanted to make the ceilings as high as possible, but still needed areas for the mechanical ventilation system and lighting. So they put some ornate drop soffits (curved, no less) into the area that allowed for the mechanicals while also updating the unit with gorgeous detail.

The master bathroom was a train wreck, dark and dreary —“like a dungeon,” Mr. Bailey recalls — and with an outdated tub/shower combination. They opened the room up with glass walls, creating a wet room complete with a steam shower. Wall-mount cabinets give the room more visual space, and lighting is hidden in the soffits and coves. There’s even a docking station for phones and tablets in the master bath, so the couple can stay as connected to the world as they’d like.

The final product is a far cry from the '70s. “It’s clean, bright, and open,” Mr. Bailey says. “Everything is meant to bring the beachy-ness inside.” ■



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Like every room in the unit, the master bath was dated and in desperate need of modernization. The designers continued the bright marble flooring, took out a partition wall and added floating cabinets with recessed lighting to bring the space up to date. A glass wall makes the bathroom to feel larger and creates a wet room complete with a steam shower.