



# Casual Florida Living

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Beautiful homes, blue skies, bright sunshine, and the glistening waters of the Gulf of Mexico are all part of the paradise experience. If that kind of home appeals to you, here is some inspiration to help you create, update, or find your home in paradise...

## Open Up the Possibilities

Very popular, open floor plans are one of today's bestselling options when purchasing a home. These designs incorporate gracious living spaces that open freely to the dining room and flow into the kitchen area, allowing guests to interact not just at a sit-down dinner, but throughout the entire course of a visit. Traditionally, the kitchen was an area for the preparation of meals but, now with beautifully designed islands that offer the luxury of informal dining and additional seating, families enjoy gathering in the kitchen to have lunch and share the day's events, making it the hub of activity and the heart of the home.

Open floor plans also offer the homeowner a perfect opportunity to bring nature indoors and capture the beautiful sights in your surrounding environment. When considering building or renovating a home, window options are important. Today's architects and designers often use sizeable glass windows to create the ultimate living experience. Whether you prefer to look upon a tropical garden, the turquoise water of the gulf, a peaceful bay, or golf course vistas, floor-to-ceiling windows offer maximum access to a view of paradise. When thinking about installing expansive windows, you may want to consider your lifestyle. Some families with small children and pets may find it a bit challenging to keep



up with the inevitable thumb and nose prints! Also, climate and the amount of natural light streaming into the area both play a significant role when deciding where to position your windows. You want to be able to enjoy the glow from the sunlight without feeling the scorching heat during the summer. Consider asking your designer or architect for expert advice to ensure you make the right decision for the ultimate gazing experience.

Although fireplaces are not essential for every Suncoast residence, they do play an interesting role in the design of a Florida home. Many styles are available, and they can become the focal point of a room. Today, builders and designers are turning up the heat in interior styles, making the role of the fireplace an integral part of the design, and implementing them as the ultimate room divider.

When a living area is complete with tropical greens, beautiful hardwood floors, and comfortable furniture, its open plan lends itself to the wonderful world of casual Florida living.

## The Home Bar Experience

A popular amenity in new home construction or renovation projects is the wet pub or freestanding style bar. If you enjoy entertaining, this feature might be a valuable addition to your home. Usually, the bar is located in a small nook near the living, dining, or kitchen area, or it may be placed close to the pool for convenient outdoor entertaining. Drawers and open





shelving offer ample space for easy access to the wine, spirits, and glasses used during social gatherings. Countertop materials vary but include granite, marble, and quartz. Stainless steel sinks and refrigerators contribute to the sleek, chic style of these mini-entertainment centers.

The larger pub-style bars require more space and are most often situated in a den or game room. While wood is typically the countertop and base construction choice for a sit-down, pub-style bar, unique options are gaining popularity, such as the custom bar-top aquariums where guests may sit, enjoy drinks, and rest their elbows as they watch tropical fish swim below. The possibilities are limitless and, with so many selections in design and functionality, it's no wonder the bar has become a popular choice for today's homeowners.

### The Bedroom Sanctuary

Choosing the perfect size and style of bed to provide ideal personal comfort can sometimes be challenging, especially given all the choices available in today's market. Making an exquisite statement, the four-poster bed pictured with its simple but elegant draping, clean furniture lines, and classic white bedding can be a stunning option. Creating a romantic ambiance, vanilla-white sheers delicately adorn the top of the bed and flow downward. This type of bed clearly becomes the focal point of the room, and one that requires ample space to be appreciated.

**D**ating back to 15th century England, the distinctive four-poster style began as heavy, ornate oak-carved beds with thick, ceiling-to-floor velvet drapes originally crafted for royalty. Although traditionally constructed out of wood, the modern four-poster takes on a sleek and chic design, and may also be crafted in brass, wrought iron, or other types of metal. The most updated versions showcase exquisitely hand-painted flowers or other delicate motifs rendered by talented artists. With its exceptional beauty and versatility, the four-poster still holds its intrigue all over the world as a comfortable and stylish bed choice.

### The Bathroom Oasis

One of the fastest growing trends over the last few years in bathroom design has been cabinetry that resembles furniture. Homeowners are taking ordinary bathrooms from mundane and utilitarian to extravagant and luxurious, transforming them to become more like living spaces with charm, style, and glamour.

Bathroom furniture takes on an important role in keeping the clutter at a minimum, which helps to foster a stress-free, serene environment with everything carefully placed behind closed doors. It is all about furniture appeal and establishing a peaceful, yet stylish atmosphere.

Whether you are purchasing a new home, renovating, or redecorating, attention to the little details, style, and comfort options are all part of creating your special abode in paradise.



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