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GULF COAST HOME



A View from the Top

BY CHRIS FRANCIN
VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE



Building Up

Living in a tri-level home has many benefits, such as being able to appreciate views of paradise from nearly every room. A multi-level home allows you to incorporate larger square footage onto a smaller lot, with the advantage of being able to divide air conditioning and heating areas, offering greater savings on electric bills.

Many tri-level homes are designed with the guestrooms, bathrooms, and a mini kitchen downstairs so that the pool area is easily accessible for entertaining visiting friends and family. The guests' quarters can also double as a cabana suite for changing, and the mini kitchen can be used for cooking during a social gathering. Also, a number of these homes include elevators as a practical feature, because residents often appreciate this added convenience, especially when bringing groceries or other heavy items upstairs.

The location of the guestrooms is a matter of personal preference. Some homeowners opt to have visitors' suites on the top level and the master bedroom on the second floor, enabling residents to go about their regular routines without disturbing any of their guests. Others choose to keep the fabulous views for themselves, so they can enjoy all the amenities of their private, quiet living quarters.

Tri-Level Living

A Creative Choice ~ White Leather Furniture

The sleek look of white leather with its modern appeal is a popular decorating choice, especially in coastal tri-level homes where it promotes a sense of airy, open space. Since leather furniture is constructed from a material that breathes and adjusts to temperature changes, these couches and chairs tend to be cool in the summer and warm during the milder months, providing welcome relief that is perfect for the Florida climate.

One of the many reasons for the popularity of white leather furniture is its high versatility. The effect of pairing bright, bold splashes of teal, cool blues, or other coastal colors with the white leather can provide the perfect canvas for expressing your creativity. Also, when you are ready for a brand-new look, rooms featuring white furnishings can easily be transformed by merely changing décor items such as pillows, vases, and wall hangings, making white leather couches a sensible long-term investment.

Leather has also become a fabric of choice for eco-friendly shoppers who seek it out because it is a natural, minimally processed fabric. This durable material appeals to practical buyers with children as well, as it tends to be easy to clean. Since leather collects minimal dust, it is a great option for people with allergies. Being fade-resistant is also another reason Gulf Coast residents select leather furnishing to enhance their homes in paradise.

A Center Isle Kitchen



Creating a Spacious Ambiance

In this open design plan, the kitchen, island counter, and dining table are combined into one unique space, all located on the same floor. This feature is especially important in a tri-level home, as it creates plenty of areas to gather for a quick lunch, homework time, or an elegant dinner. The hardwood floor becomes the stage, adding a warm ambiance to the room. Placing the dining table across from the kitchen helps to create a center isle that contributes to the visual flow and openness of the room. Dressed in white, the appliances, furniture, walls, and ceiling allow for an airier feel. The presentation of the glass table adds to the fresh, light atmosphere of this beautifully designed space.

The ultimate in elegance, the center isle concept can be applied in smaller spaces using appropriately sized design elements. Functional fixtures and furniture create the feeling of being in a comfortable living room, resplendent in beauty and style.



The Bedroom

Glass Oasis



wonderful choice for constructing decorative walls in a tri-level home, glass blocks give rooms a beautiful, sophisticated appearance. While defining a space, it also offers excellent light diffusion, provides a sound buffer, and is relatively easy to construct. As pictured above, the inclusion of glass blocks ensures that this ultra-modern bedroom makes an impressive statement.

Once used only in commercial installations, glass blocks have proven their versatility. During the Art Deco era (1920-30s), they began to appear in residential basements, mainly utilized as windows. Durable and water-repellent, glass blocks hit the height of popularity in the 1980s, when they were applied to create walls and shower doors in bathrooms. Today, the newly updated shapes and textures make them a trendy choice when upgrading or building a home. Many times, they are simply utilized as a design element to pull the light into darkened corners, but they may also be spotted on the side panels of front doors, in windows, and in skylights. Colored and frosted glass blocks are now available, making it even easier to find a stylish option for enhancing the design of a room. Glass blocks can be implemented almost anywhere for paramount beauty, privacy, and infused lighting.

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Bathroom Artistry

Accent Lighting



The right lighting can transform a bathroom into the ideal oasis for relaxation, while still retaining the functionality so crucial for this important space within the home. In the featured bathroom, accent lighting has been placed within the ceiling ledge, and above and below the cabinets, helping to bathe the room in soft inviting light. Giving the room depth and dimension, while adding a touch of drama and luxury, the bathroom becomes the perfect canvas for design features such as artwork, unique tiles, or plants. Layering the light sources within a room produces optimal results, providing ample brightness so that the space can be used with safety and ease.

While fluorescent bulbs were once *en vogue*, Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) are now a more popular option for brightening homes. An advantage of LEDs is that they are more energy-efficient than fluorescent or incandescent bulbs, using as much as half the electricity of fluorescent bulbs and up to 80% less than standard sources. Also, studies have shown that while traditional lights emit more heat, causing the temperature within the home to elevate, LEDs use less energy and release less heat, helping your home to stay cooler. They also tend to last much longer, with some top-of-the-line types lasting more than 10 years. This kind of lighting is excellent around cabinet areas,

especially when illumination is needed for extended periods of time.

Offering additional brightness to the room are the frosted glass windows that stream natural light into the bathroom. The sleek glass shelving becomes a defined area for displaying apothecary items to their greatest advantage.

The beauty of accent lighting can be applied in most rooms, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere.

Downstairs

Guest Rooms

Living Color

Another way to bring light, color, and life to a room is accomplished by installing an aquarium.

With many styles on the market today, consumers can choose from tabletop models or more creative designs such as custom-made types that serve as coffee tables, room dividers, wall units, or even ones built within a television cabinet. Interior environments come alive with the colorful hues of tropical fish, vibrant greenery, and a kaleidoscope of other visual treats as aquariums become more and more a part of the design elements utilized by creative consultants.

Aquariums shed a soothing light and offer a relaxing ambiance. Gazing into the blue-infused water as you comfortably rest in your chair with a beverage in hand can be a wonderful way to unwind at the end of the day. In a family room, children can be entertained as they observe the antics of swimming and playing fish, displaying their striking colors. Placed in the bedroom, these fixtures become an instant nightlight, complete with tranquil sounds that encourage peaceful dreams. As pictured, a staircase leading from the guest quarters to the main living areas of a tri-level home is enhanced by the illumination of underwater beauty sitting on a built-in base. Aquariums can be positioned almost anywhere and are stunning additions to a home.

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