

A minimalist living room with a white sofa, a wooden coffee table, and a large floor lamp. The room is decorated with a grey rug, a white ottoman, and a white chest of drawers. The walls are white and feature framed artwork. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

# WHITE MAGGIO

INTERIOR DESIGNER CAROLA HINOJOSA UNLEASHES HER SIGNATURE MINIMALISTIC STYLE ON HER OWN KEY BISCAYNE CONDO.

TEXT BY JENNIFER SCRUBY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICK GARCIA



“As a designer, I work on so many projects, so many rooms,” said Bolivian-born, Miami-based interior designer Carola Hinojosa, sitting in her living room. “At home, I just want a blank canvas to help clear my head.”

A favorite treasure is a Tracey Emin work made of white neon wording, pictured above. “Luckily, I met her and told her I loved the work but also loved everything in white,” Hinojosa said. “So she did a series of three and I got one.”

**IN THE STYLE EVOLUTION OF FAMED DECORATOR CAROLA HINOJOSA, HER ARRIVAL IN MIAMI FOURTEEN YEARS AGO MARKED A TURNING POINT.**

Back in Bolivia, she’d gravitated toward traditional English interiors, heavy on florals and stripes. “But when I came here, I did the opposite,” she said. “I decided I wanted more of a clean, contemporary look. When you have those views and nature coming through your windows, you don’t need that much inside.”

With that in mind, Hinojosa honed her decorating sensibilities, settling on her preferred monochromatic palette and a self-assured, minimalist aesthetic. “I like spaces to be modern but very livable, which means you have to make them homey,” said Hinojosa. For that, she relies on natural materials—beautiful woods, stones and textiles that add depth and texture to a room without color. These days, the challenge is less about creating these zen environments than fitting new projects into her busy schedule. She regularly juggles a range of them, from private residential estates to high-profile country clubs and hotels—all brought in by word of mouth.

With her four children grown and living nearby, Hinojosa, 57, recently decided to renovate her own 2,200-square-foot Key Biscayne condominium—the same one she’d moved into when, newly divorced, she first settled in Miami. “I gutted the whole thing, so it’s totally new and done just for me,” she said. “It’s my sanctuary.” Cast in clean, seamless white, it’s an inspiring illustration of less is more.

Originally, the space was quite dark. “It had a concrete wall at the entrance, ebony doors, travertine floors and a very dark kitchen, along with big mirrors and lots of drawers,” Hinojosa said. “Now, it’s all white and light oak. Even all the art is white. It looks a lot bigger because the spaces are empty—now it’s more about the art.”

Choosing the scrupulously pale theme was simple. “As a designer, I work on so many projects, so many rooms,” said Hinojosa. “At home, I just want a blank canvas to help clear my head.” To up the serenity factor, everything’s enclosed. “The kitchen disappears—the stove is enclosed—and all the doors are flush with the paneling,” she said. AC grilles? Tucked out of sight. Even the baseboards are hidden inside the walls.

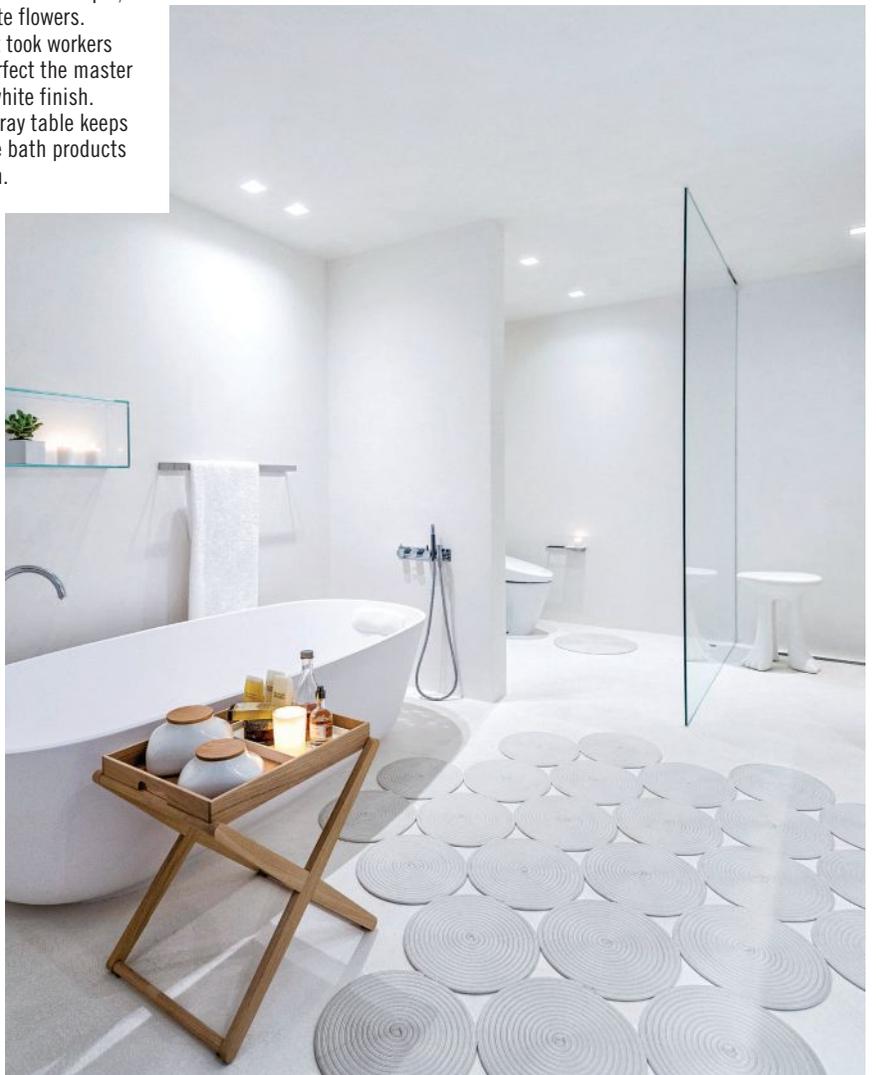


## DREAMY DINING

“My lifestyle is very family-oriented and I love to host sit-down dinners for my kids and grandkids,” said Hinojosa. “The white spalted maple dining table seats 12—it’s a real conversation table—and was made by John Houshmand. It’s cantilevered out from the Bulthaup kitchen, which doesn’t look like a kitchen because it’s all behind doors.”



Clockwise from top left: In the living room, a custom cabinet holds some of Hinojosa's beloved art books, beneath a beaded ceramic necklace by Moroccan artist Lalla Essaydi. She keeps accessories, like this streamlined clock and porcelain vase simple, and only uses white flowers. Serenity central: It took workers four months to perfect the master bath's seamless white finish. A simple wooden tray table keeps Hinojosa's favorite bath products within arm's reach.





The challenge was creating an impeccably geometric, minimalist space. “I wanted all the doors to be floor to ceiling, so the ceiling had to be perfectly flat in order for the doors to open,” she said. “That was a process.” Then came the master bathroom. “I didn’t want tiles or stone or grout lines, so it’s made with poured concrete with a special finish without any seams,” she added. “That took four months alone. I wouldn’t do a design like that for a client because it’s so detailed, and you don’t even see the details!”

Hinojosa found it easy to keep things sophisticatedly spare, since she’s been culling her possessions ever since she came to Miami. “Every year, I have less and less,” she said. When she decided to remodel, the first thing that came to mind—besides more art—was the dining table, a huge piece of white spalted maple that’s attached to the kitchen island. Lending some visual continuity, custom cabinetry in the living room is topped with the same type of wood.

That’s because, like most true style-makers, once Hinojosa finds

something she likes, she sticks with it. “My upholstered leather bed by Christian Liaigre, for instance, I’ve bought in brown and taupe, and now I have the same model in pure white,” she said. “In my New York apartment, I have black and white art, and in Miami I have only white art. But in both, I have exactly the same furniture: the same B&B Italia Luis couch—in white for Miami and black for New York—and the same custom-made coffee table—in a very light tan color for Miami and black for up there.”

At home in Miami, she’s often curled up on the round sofa in the living room. “Even if I’m alone I don’t feel lonely there because the space kind of embraces you,” she said. And she loves to hang out on both terraces. One has views of the bay and a big white table where Hinojosa likes to eat breakfast before heading out for her daily workout at Barry’s Boot Camp or Flywheel. On the other, overlooking the ocean, an all-white sitting area with yacht-worthy white decking takes center stage.

The best compliment she’s gotten on the renovation? “That the

space is very me,” Hinojosa said. “It really reflects who I am—I thought of all the details and it’s very, very serene. Likewise, my clothes are very minimal and neutral—you’ll never find color in my closet, and I’m not a jewelry person.”

Next up: “Now, it’s all about art—I still have a lot of spaces in the apartment that I want to fill,” Hinojosa said. She started collecting contemporary art about eight years ago. “Now I take courses, am always reading about art and travel all over the world to the fairs and museums,” she said. “It’s my biggest passion.”

What she’s definitely not passionate about is the idea of ever renovating her own home again. It’s much harder to make a decision when you’re designing for yourself, she admits. “You want everything to be perfect and it’s never perfect so you start doubting yourself. I’ve had this place since the day I arrived in this country so I don’t think I’ll ever sell it. But if I won the lottery, I’d buy a beautiful beach home and have someone else design it. I’m done with designing for me!” □

**Master bedroom:** Over the years, Hinojosa has bought the same model of upholstered leather Christian Liaigre bed in ever paler shades: brown, tan and now white. Her lucky children get her castoffs.