

FALLING FOR A FLIP

Veteran renovator fell in love with a Siesta Key flip and ended up staying, but now she's ready to move on



When Sandy Pringle bought a 2,000-square-foot Siesta Key bungalow on water in 2008, her intentions were practical and clear about this fixer-upper. Prioritize the work needed, do it, live in it for a while and sell it. But once she had finished her total renovation of this home, which includes a pool, dock, boat lift and even a shuffle board court, she could not bear to part with it.

“I typically don’t live in a house longer than four or five years,” said Pringle, “but the location of this house is so wonderful and the renovation turned out so perfectly that I found living here too ideal to leave. I even love it in the summer when life on Siesta Key is slower, there’s less traffic on the island and I don’t have to heat the pool.”

She likes the easy indoor/outdoor flow she created and enjoys the low maintenance aspects. “I would not be selling it now, except that my husband and I have just sold a big house in Canada and we have a lot of art work and furniture that we want to keep,” she said. “I need a bigger house with gallery space. Of course, I’m looking for something that needs some renovation because I can’t resist the urge to improve places.”

The Pringle home at 710 Siesta Key Circle is on the market for \$1,585,000 through Elizabeth Van Riper of Michael Saunders & Company. The bungalow, which is set back from the road with a palm-lined paver circular driveway for privacy, has three bedrooms, two baths, and spacious lanai with dining options at either end. There’s a caged, heated swimming pool and beyond that a shuffle board court, the lawn, dock and boat lift. Big windows and sliding glass walls at the back of the house open to views of a wide, deep-water canal that flows into open water with no interfering bridges. Everything in the house has been reconfigured, made modern and stylishly relaxed, with rooms that are polished with a Palm Beach sense of chic.

“I lived in this house for quite a while before I developed a story board for the house and a plan of action,” said Pringle. “I wanted to create a floorplan for comfortably living in this space both on a daily basis as well as when I entertain. Now, I can easily have 65 people here for a party using both inside and outside spaces. Yet, it’s an intimate house for just one or two people.”

In the white and stainless kitchen that has black accents, Pringle reconfigured the whole room getting rid of blue formica counters and expanding the work space. She increased the size of the hurricane-grade window for more natural light. At one end of the eat-in kitchen is a banquette that overlooks the lanai. A fireplace and wall-mounted TV are in that section of the room. The eight-foot-long granite center island has a built-in six-burner gas range and beside the refrigerator is a bank of floor-to-ceiling cabinets for storage. Pringle added a skylight, recessed lights, track lighting and lamps to the room. “I’m a big believer in good lighting, she said. “And in this house I added 30 new light sources. I’ve gone with an LED system.”

New plumbing and electricity, new tile roof, Italian porcelain floors that she sourced from a wholesaler in Calgary, Canada, are just some of the improvements Pringle made to her new Florida residence. She redid the landscaping and the approach to the house, creating a sense of arrival by directing attention to the elegant front double-door entrance

and both the outside and inside foyers. The homeowner admits that she's had a lot of practice transforming outdated and underperforming private residences.



"When I lived in New Jersey years ago, I had a real estate license and a friend and I flipped quite a few houses over a 16-year period," she said. "I was single at the time and loved the whole creative process. We'd work with an architect or contractor sometimes, but often we didn't need to tackle big structure problems, it was mostly a case of making sense out of a house and figuring what it would take to make it function at its best and look really good. We were quite successful."

In 1992, Pringle married a Canadian and started spending part of the year in Calgary. "But I wanted a permanent residence in the US," she said. "My sisters are in Alabama and my daughter is in New Jersey and I want to visit them often and have them come here. I decided on Florida for my US home, and started out in Coral Gables and then moved to Vero Beach and Delray Beach. Then I discovered Amelia Island and bought there. I renovated, lived in and flipped eight homes in Amelia over a decade. Had a great time."

By then she had also discovered Sarasota and set out to find the perfect place to transform on Siesta Key. "I looked at about a hundred homes with my husband and rejected them all," said Pringle. "When we walked into this place, which had been built in 1969 and remodeled over the years, my husband and the Realtor thought we'd be in and out in a matter of minutes. But, as we were leaving, I told the Realtor we could go directly to the office and write a contract for an offer. They were shocked. But, I knew the moment I walked through the door that this was my project."

Pringle said she could envision exactly how the Siesta Key Circle would look and function when she got through with it. "And I completely fell in love with the neighborhood and the waterside location," she said. "I did not have a single regret about buying it. After I moved into this Siesta Key Circle home, I bought another in The Meadows which I acquired just to remodel and sell. Took me four months to transform that one and a couple in their 40s bought it."



Pringle said in the homes that she remodeled to live in rather than to flip, she has only kept three for five years. She likes spotting the next big project on the horizon. But, this house she has kept longer and said she wouldn't be giving it up

now except that she and her husband need a bigger place for art and furnishings from a home in Calgary that they have just sold.

“I’m looking for a home, hopefully on Siesta Key, that’s one-story and needs some renovation, because I want to make it my own, which usually requires reconfiguring spaces and adding better storage and lighting,” she said. “This time I’ll need a lot of wall space for an art collection but I don’t have to be on water because I’m not a boater.”

But, while she never used the boat lift, the homeowner said some of her most pleasant evenings have been on the dock. “I take a drink or a book down to the dock and just sit quietly and enjoy the peacefulness of the place,” she said. “Except for putting chairs on the dock, there isn’t much I had to do. It was already totally wonderful.”

Tips from renovator Sandy Pringle

- Almost any home can benefit from more and better lighting. A well-planned lighting system is one of the best improvements you can make. Personally, I always put table lamps in the kitchen and bath areas. More people should try it.
- For a neutral color scheme my favorite paint colors are Swiss Coffee and Spiced Apple both by Behr and Chalk Gray by Pratt & Lambert.
- Upgrading kitchen and bath fixtures make a huge difference. A dated built-in can often be saved with paint and new handles and knobs. I kept the one in the living room of this house because it has great storage and I knew I could transform it.
- Don’t be afraid to repurpose rooms. In the Siesta Key Circle house, the master bedroom had a fireplace which I didn’t want in my bedroom. So I took another room for the master and made that fireplace room a den/guest sitting room with a pullout sofa.
- Customizing closets is always a good investment.
- Reupholster or paint some pieces of existing furniture to match your new scheme. Often, you don’t need to buy new pieces. Some of the furniture in the Siesta Key Circle house I’ve had for 35 years.
- I never get tired of a white or neutral kitchen. And I love black accents in the kitchen as well as throughout the house. A little black always works.
- Before tearing things apart, live in your house for a few months so you’ll be sure of exactly what kind of changes will improve your life there.
- A modified H-shape house is my favorite to work with. That kind of flow makes things easier right from the beginning.

