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HOME SUITE HOME

Checking into some designer hotels, checking out with some home design ideas

BY CHARLYNE VARKONYI SCHAUB

Home décor used to be a road map documenting where someone had traveled. Chinoiserie chests brought back from Hong Kong. Wool blankets from New Zealand. Murano glass from Italy. Tea cozies and hunt cups from England.

These days travelers do not only want to collect decorative objects from their trips, they want to bring the entire hotel experience back to their everyday lives – from the beds they sleep in to the way they see wines displayed.

Sometimes the interpretation is literal; other times subtler. Here's how four South Florida designers translated the hotel into the home.



When anyone sees Marc Thee's designs, it is obvious some of his greatest inspiration comes from high-end boutique hotels. A lounge bed for outdoor living. A bathroom that is part of the master bedroom. Clean design with wood detail on the walls.

"I think high-end boutique hotels are the number one place to find inspiration," says Thee, who was twice named to the prestigious *Architectural Digest* Top 100 architects and designers in the world. He also has worked with celebrities such as Tyra Banks, Dwayne Johnson, Jeff Gordon and Alan Jackson.

Thee says the design teams of high-end hotels take the time to select a theme with an overall aesthetic that fits the mood of the architecture. They also pay a lot of attention to wall treatments, which often are covered in elaborate wood or tile finishes.

"When guests walk into one of these hotels, they completely shake off the stresses and realities of their world," he says. "They immerse themselves in the design that speaks to them in a very sensory way – smell, sight and feel. The design ignites emotions in every way. The guests' rooms tend to be relaxing, but there is much less investment than in the lobby."

He pointed out the breezy gauze curtains in the lobby of the Delano in Miami Beach as a way to create drama immediately as you enter the hotel.

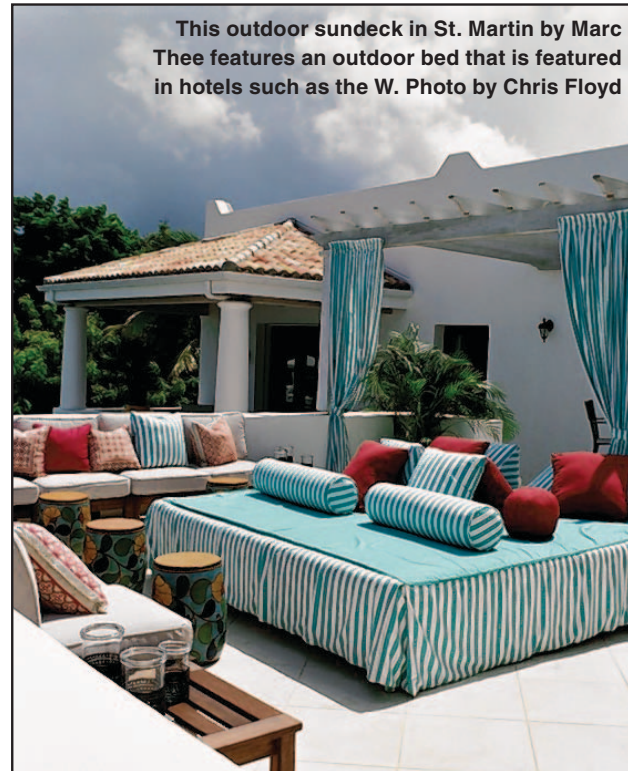
Stoking the senses

"It is all designed to hit your senses," he says. "The minute you have a gauzy curtain like you do in the Delano you are transported into something romantic. It is a detail that hits you emotionally."

His clients often bring him the links to their favorite hotels or show them photos of something they like in the bedroom or a bathroom detail. One favorite is the 2-½ inch thick marble countertop detail at the Bellagio in Las Vegas.



Opening the bathroom to the master bedroom is a popular hotel trend that Marc Thee translated to a condo in Naples. Photo by Kim Sargent



This outdoor sundeck in St. Martin by Marc Thee features an outdoor bed that is featured in hotels such as the W. Photo by Chris Floyd



One of the hallmarks of hotels is decorating the walls with wood like Thee did in a condo in Puerto Rico. Photo by Rob Harris



Danielle DePerro's clients wanted a wine display like they saw at the Setai in Miami Beach at their Fort Lauderdale condo. Photo by Robert Brantley

His design for a private residence villa at La Samanna in St. Martin included a rooftop sunset deck with an outdoor daybed and plenty of seating for parties.

"The hotel experience is all about supplying what you don't have at home and that's what keeps guests coming back," he says. "Hotels like the Delano and W hotels all understand that an outdoor loungey bed is a symbol of utter kickback and relaxation."

The inspiration for a luxury condo he designed in Naples was the hotel trend that morphs the bedroom and bathroom into a single space.

"You can immediately picture candles burning, water running, music playing and big terry cloth robes," he says.

Thee created hotel-like wall detail with white painted wood in a waterfront that evokes the mood of the casual Key West lifestyle in a condo in Puerto Rico. The bedding is white with sea-color accents in the pillows, throw and garden stool.

"Nothing says a resort like white sheets," Thee says. "It gives a spa-like feel and a clean look. It is easy and breezy and not overly designed."

Weekend retreat

Danielle DePerro's clients treat their second residence as a hotel. They have a home in west Broward and a beach getaway in The Residences at The Ritz-Carlton Fort Lauderdale.

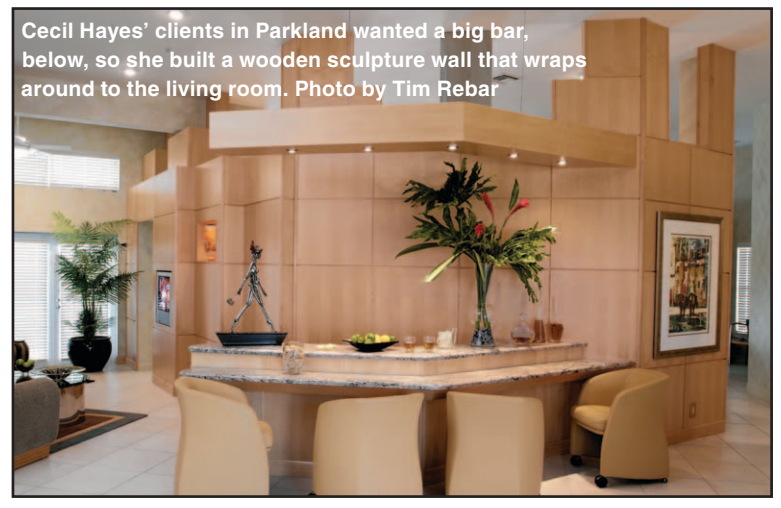
The two-story penthouse features a wading pool where the owners can cool off while enjoying the outdoors. DePerro says they took the hotel feel and made it more like a home. She added a waterfall, because the clients wanted to hear the sounds of splashing water; and a grass area to make it seem more like a back yard. The building's balconies are in a wave pattern and she repeated the wave in the grassy area.



The lounge area with a piano in the Fort Lauderdale condo could be in a hotel. Photo by Robert Brantley



The rooftop of the Fort Lauderdale penthouse already had a hotel-like pool but DePerro added a waterfall and grassy area. Photo by Robert Brantley



Cecil Hayes' clients in Parkland wanted a big bar, below, so she built a wooden sculpture wall that wraps around to the living room. Photo by Tim Rebar



Hayes faced another tall ceiling in a Boca West home. She added a tall laminate wall with a bar to break up the space. Photo by Tim Rebar

But the more literal interpretation is inside the penthouse.

"The clients had seen wine displays at the Setai in South Beach and asked me to give them the same feel of glass walls around the wine," she says. "We have a bar lounge with high tops and lounging areas around the piano."

Treating the walls

Cecil Hayes loves what she describes as the drama of hotels but her work is interpretive rather than literal.

"They make the walls come alive by putting dimensional things on them like wood panels," she says. "They create columns dividing the lines of passage. It's a little more daring. They use wood instead of wallpaper and faux paint."

Hayes took the same attitude in home design – transforming a square box into a room with architectural interest. She brings in natural items such as stone and wood.

The 20-foot high ceiling was the only drama in her client's home in Frenchman's Creek in Palm Beach Gardens. Formerly when a guest walked in the front door, their eye was drawn to an ordinary sliding glass door with a view of the swimming pool. She created moveable shoji screens and replaced the slider with French doors trimmed in wood. The same wood was carried throughout the room with niches in structural columns.

"When you first walk into a home it should be like walking into an expensive hotel lobby," she says. "It's the first thing you see and you want to create a handsome and charming look."

Hayes faced another tall ceiling in a home in Boca West. She added a laminate wall with a wood header to break up the space and provide architectural interest. A custom bar in a hand painted pewter finish with marble top completed the design.

Cecil Hayes added drama to the Frenchman's Creek home by making the walls come alive like they do in hotels and adding shoji screens and wood detail. Photo by Tim Rebar

A client in Parkland wanted a large bar that would take up a lot of room. To make this work, Hayes built a wooden sculpture wall that wraps around to the living room, where she added niches for art and the television.

"I saw this as the same thing someone could do in a hotel," she says. "It is like you are sitting in a lobby and could turn your head to see people having a great time at the bar."

Hayes is the first African-American designer to be named to *Architectural Digest's* Top 100 designers and architects in the world. Some of her famous clients include actors Wesley Snipes and Samuel L. Jackson and athletes Anfernee "Penny" Hardaway, formerly with the Heat; Jamal Mashburn and Ty Law.

Clean aesthetic

Eric Dyer, an architect and the design director for Trend Design + Build in Hallandale Beach, has the same clean aesthetic reminiscent of hotels such as the W. No wonder. Dyer helped design the San Francisco, Denver and Seattle locations of the hotels, but he says he gets inspiration from contemporary Italian design.

His design for a 5,200-square-foot condo in Boca Raton was based on his client's request for a minimal look. For inspiration, she showed him photos of an apartment in Milan designed by Giorgio Armani.

One of the most interesting features is how everything is hidden behind wall panels. The alcohol and breakfast bar looks like it could be in a hotel – with six bar stools facing a flat screen. The "wall" they face is actually a series of panels that open for storage. A hidden door allows entrance to the kitchen.

The master bedroom is also minimalist and features hidden storage for hanging clothing and drawers. The headboard is ratcheted and can pop up for reading in bed. The bed is an upholstered playpen with a deep mattress. And the silk blend curtains have that same, sexy feel as the Delano, especially when a breeze moves them.

"Life is stressful," he says. "The home should be our sanctuary without clutter."

The living room is designed with plenty of seating for eight guests and has the same hidden storage in the fireplace wall and behind the concrete walls that open. Anyone who has been to The Royalton in New York City will recognize the horizontal fire pit.

"I often incorporate this Rhythm fireplace," he says. "It can be set into a coffee table. In this particular building, they didn't have gas. If you don't go to an electric fireplace, which my clients don't like, this is the next best to a gas fireplace. It is vent-less and burns off the fuel [denatured alcohol] so you aren't inhaling it. But it can still warm a room."

Dyer says some people love to go to five-star hotels; his clients love to live in a space that looks like a five-star hotel.

"I think the difference between other people's work and mine is the finishes and the [coverings on the walls] I use. If you walk into a five-star hotel, you don't see drywall. It is finished to the nth degree. The architecture takes up at least 50 percent of the composition in my designs. A lot of designers put textiles throughout the whole space. I keep it clean. Too much confuses the eye." ●



Eric Dyer gave the bedroom in a Boca Raton condo the clean look of a hotel with hidden storage and filmy curtains like those at the Delano in Miami Beach. Photo by John Stillman



This bar in the Boca condo could be straight out of a hotel. The wall behind has hidden storage and a hidden door that opens to the kitchen. Photo by John Stillman

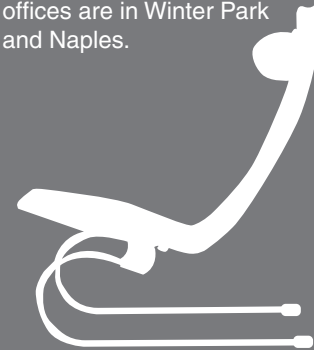
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Danielle DePerro: D. DePerro Design, Inc., 222 E. Ocean Ave. Lantana, 561-547-7423, deperrodesign.com.

Cecil Hayes: Cecil's Designers Unlimited, 6601 Lyons Road, Coconut Creek, 954-570-5843, cecilhayes.com.

Marc Thee: Marc-Michaels Interior Design, 850 E. Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton, 561-362-7037, marc-michaels.com. Other offices are in Winter Park and Naples.



If you have been to the Royalton in New York City, you should recognize the same kind of horizontal fireplace that Dyer uses here. It is vent-less and uses denatured alcohol for fuel. Photo by John Stillman

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