

RELAXING IN ESTATE AND RESORT-STYLE INTERIORS

One top firm creates high impact design

BY LESLIE MCKERNS

Marc-Michaels Interior Design, Inc. has long been regarded as one of the country's most respected interior design firms, specializing in interiors for private residences, commercial projects, model home merchandising and luxury yachts. Mark Tremblay, COO, shares high-impact design techniques.

Estate and resort style interiors are all about impressive features—vacation-style havens full of amenities designed for entertaining and recreation with restaurant-quality kitchen appliances, the latest in electronics and exquisitely crafted materials and furnishings. High on the list of most wanted is kitchens as a gathering-room.

Marc-Michaels created a gathering room kitchen by eliminating a separate Butler's Pantry in the planning stages. Replacing the stand-alone room is a custom full-height pantry tower crafted of stainless steel, frosted glass and perforated metal. Other luxury touches in the space include chiseled limestone floors set in a brick pattern, a

beamed and stenciled cypress ceiling, a multi-tonal glass mosaic surround accenting the stainless steel hood and a long sweep of granite topping the central island, custom made as a gathering spot.

"We achieve dramatic results by layering detail on floors, walls and built-ins," Tremblay said. "Carefully crafting interior detail onto surfaces creates high impact and warrants a closer look."

This kitchen speaks of estate, but in a more relaxed resort way—an upgraded vacation quality environment for relaxing and entertaining family and friends.

The Robins-egg Blue of the walls is classic—unusual and refreshingly new when used in a kitchen. The color pops up again as French Blue in a Mission California house designed for a developer in Naples, Florida.

"Color trends are like fashion trends but with a shelf life of about five years," Tremblay explained. "People want to embrace color and commit to something," he said. "An infusion of color can be softer and



more subtle, and walls are not the only surface that can be treated to color. Trim does not always have to be white; ceilings do not always have to be white.”

Marc-Michaels is currently working on a 25,000 square foot house in the Cayman Islands, and for the same client, a 3,000 square foot loft in New York. These and other affluent homeowners are seeking out more eclectic spaces that reflect their travels.

“The interior is a story about a lifestyle,” Tremblay said. “And, while budgets are often unlimited, we do not go crazy—we value-engineer. If a one-of-a-kind or superbly handcrafted piece is absolutely warranted, we’ll go for it, otherwise not.”

He mentions two quality sources, Therien & Co. (seating, accent pieces, case goods and lighting) and Rose Tarlow (Melrose House, furniture, accessories and textiles) “These manufacturers exemplify handcrafted quality and exquisite finishes.”

Master suites are the ultimate in retreat. This 18 million dollar penthouse master suite was done for a developer in Florida. The bedroom as theatre is a luxurious haven. A room-within-a-room, its stage presence is fit for the set of Elizabeth I— yet Tremblay points out that much can be done to create this sense of retreat simply with fabric, drywall and furnishings.

“This master retreat is completely draped in creamy fabric—the bed got its grand scale and room-within-a-room enclosure by layering fabric and drapery panels onto drywall soffits.”

Other features within the room that make it a retreat are multiple seating areas in and just outside, for reading, relaxing or conversing and multiple sources of changeable mood-setting lighting.



Tremblay mentions that elsewhere in the home, the bar lounge is increasingly taking the place of the home theatre. He is calling these areas a Club Room experience, but family-styled, often set close to a Lanai area for inside-outside use.

Buyers often emotionally connect with their environment and visualize the home as the fulfillment of their dream. Pampering is an essential element.

Bathrooms in master suites are becoming larger sanctuaries and more spa-like, but powder rooms are luxuriously intimate areas with their own mood.

“This is the jewel of the house,” Tremblay said. “It is one area where you can depart from the rest of the house and provide that wow factor.”

Wine and cheese rooms are made for a single type of festive event. One eye-catching space is in a resort-oriented waterfront developer’s spec home in Vero Beach.

“This Wine and Cheese Room was a concept shown on the plans that we were brought in to execute. It’s a Memory Point - designed to make people notice and remember the home,” explained Tremblay. “The room was done with authentic materials—antique entrance doors, a carved vessel sink and natural stone on the rock walls.



Marc-Michaels Interior Design, Inc., founded in 1985, is located in Winter Park, Boca Raton and Naples. Marc Thee and Michael J. Abbott, founders and CEO’s, lead a staff of seventy-five. <http://www.marc-michaels.com>.