

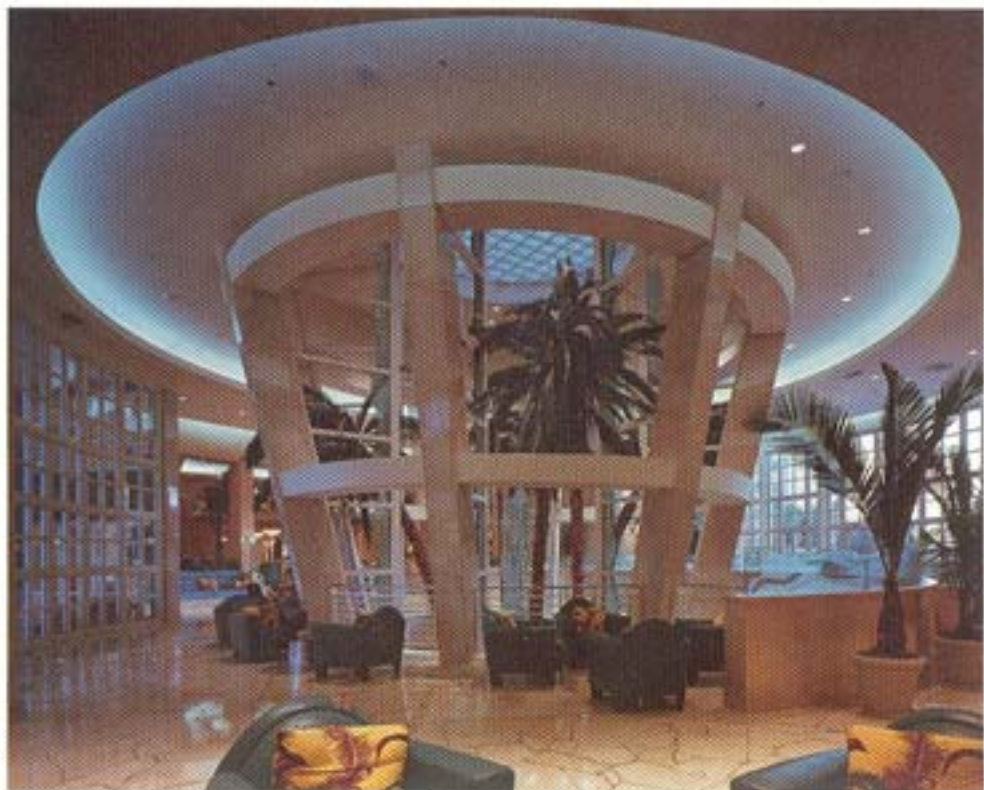
by Diane Wintroub Calmeson

Photography by Neil Rabbia

## A Sense of Place

The Sheraton Bal Harbour Beach Resort in Bal Harbour, FL, was built in 1954. Although the 668-room hotel had undergone several redecorating efforts over the years, the overall appearance was still very Fifties. Now, however, thanks to architectural reno-

The circular lobby of the Sheraton Bal Harbour Beach Resort is anchored by a skylit atrium featuring palm trees and an aquamarine plate glass sculpture, which together evoke the feeling of the ocean. Floor-to-ceiling windows present unobstructed views of the landscaping, beach and ocean.



vation and the new interior design of public areas, the hotel presents a style that is uniquely Floridian in a setting that is more functional.

Nichols Brosch & Sandoval of Coral Gables, FL, was retained for the architectural renovation of the project, which included entirely redesigning the lobby and other public areas of the resort. According to principal, Greg Sandoval the facility's lobby needed to be completely transformed to bring it from a dark and featureless space to a well-lighted and open space. This was accomplished with a clear delineation of spaces and with large bright windows that capitalize on the best views available.

"The lobby was a two-story egg-shaped space with a continuous wall of glass that presented attractive and unattractive views," says Sandoval. "It was one large, undifferentiated space. We divided the lobby, creating two geometric shaped spaces that now have distinct purposes."

Now, with a clear delineation between the spaces, there is actually a purer definition for the activities that take place in each area. The social meeting and cocktail areas are in the circular shaped portion of the lobby, which features a cream colored floor of Botticino marble broken into huge flagstones. Floor to ceiling windows at the back of the

## LOBBY/FRONT DESK

## Milwork

Akira Wood

## Artwork

Margaret Tolbert

## Side tables

Centure Furniture Co.

## Center feature table

Interior Crafts

## Sculpture

Damon Phour

## Lamps

Leucus Lighting

## Chandelier

New Metal Crafts, Inc.

## Area rug

Thai Dynasty

## Planters

International Terra Cotta

## Glass wall tile

MBC Glass Studio

## Fabric wall panels

Gretchen Bellingr

circular lobby provide a spectacular view of the resort's lush landscape and pool, as well as the ocean.

The center of the lobby is dominated by a towering atrium that houses specially-pre-



The enclosed rectangular portion of the lobby is for registration and check out services.

The deep blue of the chairs and carpeting, along with the bright accents of yellow, portray the water and sun that are Florida's hallmarks.

served palm trees and is highlighted by a sculpture entitled *Synchronicity* by California artist, John Gilbert Lucbtow. Complementing the glass of the sculpture and built into the diagonal columns around the atrium are accenting stacks of bark-edged pieces of plate glass by Bolae. The same theme is continued in a divider between the bar area and the circular staircase to the lower level.

The rectangular portion of the lobby is for registration and check out services. This area hides certain service-related functions for a sleeker, cleaner feel to the design. For example, the previous design had clumsy provisions for handicapped access and a cumbersome luggage handling procedure. Now, with special ramps, the new design not only provides for easy wheelchair access, but also for a more graceful as well as hidden process of moving luggage directly from curbside to the guest's room.

### Oceanic Design

A team of designers from Hirsch/Bedner and Associates, Atlanta, GA, redesigned the interiors of the public areas, conference center and penthouse suites at the resort. According to Holly Kappes, an associate with Hirsch/Bedner, the design concept was inspired by the beach, the ocean and tropical Florida greenery. The concept creates a mostly neutral

**PRESIDENTIAL SUITE****Lounge chair**

J. Robert Scott

**Lounge chair fabric**

Rudolph

**Chaise lounge**

A. Rudin

**Chaise lounge fabric**

Dorghia

**Throw pillow fabric**

Portus, Yves Gonnell Inc.,

Silk Dynasty

**Coffee table**

Design America

**Lamps**

Fine Art Lamps

**Sofa table**

Studio Amerika Ltd.

**Chandelier**

New Metal Crafts, Inc.

**Ceiling fan**

Hunter

**Wall covering**

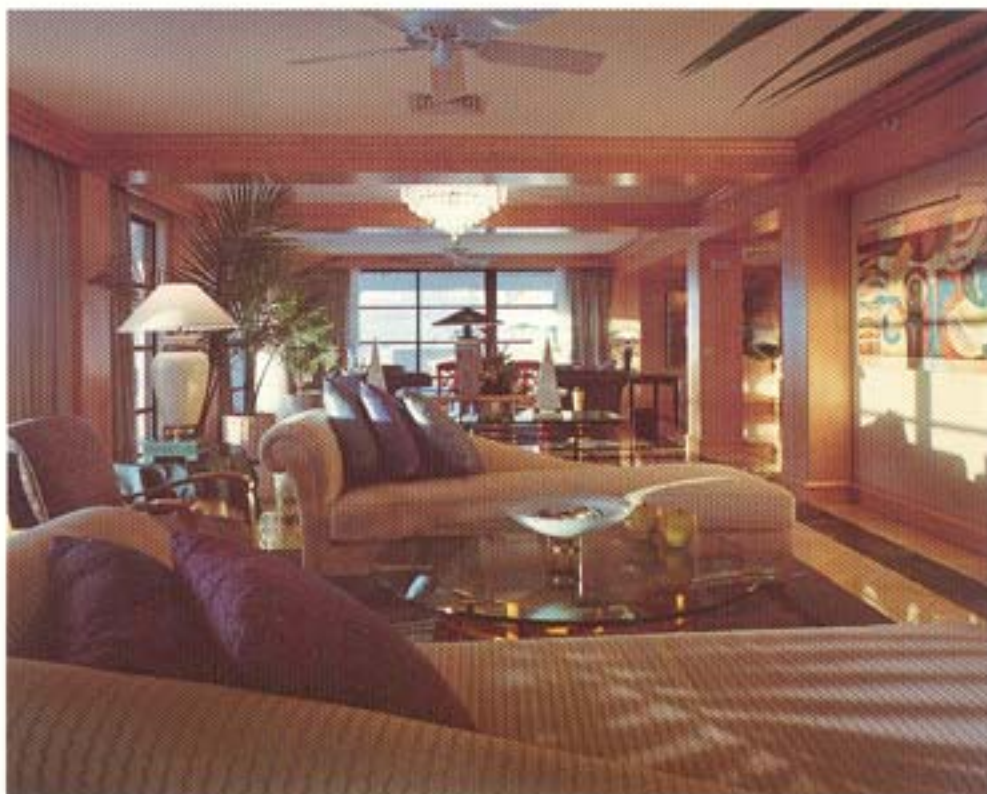
Silk Dynasty

**Accessories**

Sarried

palette of colors in natural materials for the walls, pilasters, hard flooring and wood paneling. The vibrant aquamarines, blues, greens and yellow accents of artwork, carpeting and furnishings give the resort its new atmosphere and bold character.

The newly designed Presidential Suite features a striking combination of Art Deco furnishings and accessories in a divided layout that makes the suite appropriate for business or social gatherings.



"The design creates a true sense of place," says Kappes. "Travelers from around the world recognize the sophisticated Florida style."

Highly-figured English sycamore is used for most of the paneling, millwork, doors, cabinetry and beams that are found throughout the public areas of the resort. The sleek paneled walls have generous crown moldings. Other wall treatments include an elegant woven grass wallpaper and a highly-textured custom wall covering with a rich, stucco-like paper fan design in a neutral shade.

Particularly striking interior design elements, such as the chairs and banquette seating that furnish the front of the lobby, are Art Deco-inspired. The deep aqua leather is offset with throw pillows in a Caribbean floral design with a bright yellow background accenting a print of magenta and green.

The mostly cool-colored artwork, including original paintings and collages, as well as the rich, textured carpeting, help to accent and differentiate spaces. In addition, these aspects of the design are the elements that make the property appropriate for South Florida, says Kappes.

The new Executive Conference Center on the lower level has a more formal atmosphere than the rest of the hotel resort, but nevertheless exudes a feeling that is undeniably

## HIRSCH/BEDNER

Michael Bedner, president  
Howard Pharr, managing  
partner, London/Atlanta  
Holly Kappes, associate  
Alan Russell, designer  
Scott Perkins, designer

NICHOLS BROSCI &  
SANDOVAL

Greg Sandoval, partner in  
charge  
Michael DeSouza, project  
manager  
James Lawson, construction  
coordination  
Randall Moingot, computer  
graphics and production

## ATRIUM

Stacked glass  
Bolan

## Glass sculpture

John Gilbert Luebtow

## Etched glass partition

Bolan

## Lounge chairs

Design America

## Lounge chair leather

Spinneybeck

## Palm trees

Preserved Treescapes, Inc.

## Throw pillow fabric

Wesco Fabrics

Floridian. The English sycamore coffered ceilings and trim are accented with darker colors, such as the deep turquoise carpeting and marble flooring in contrasting colors of emerald and cream. Accents of modern, colorful art and dramatic sconce lighting with alabaster



Throughout the resort, colorful modern artwork enhances the sense of place that drives the design concept.

shades enhance the conference center's sense of place, as do the terraces that are located adjacent to several of the meeting rooms.

### Room on Top

Perched atop the hotel is the Presidential Suite, which the designers at Hirsch/Bedner renovated from scratch. According to Kappes, the suite has a residential atmosphere, but is appropriate for small business meetings.

"Columns and beams define the space," says Kappes. "One side is the dining area, which also can be used as a conference room. The other side is for lounging and entertaining."

Within the suite, components of the resort's new design are tied together using cream colored marble and emerald green borders in the flooring and vivid colors in the deco furnishings, accessories and artwork. Surrounded on three sides by enormous canopied terraces, the suite offers views of the ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway and Miami. ■