

FIXING PARADISE

HOTELS SEE BIG CHANGES IN VISTAS



By C. Elliott Mest

THE BOULDERS RESORT & SPA in Arizona's Sonoran Desert is putting the finishing touches on a multimillion-dollar update that began at the beginning of 2015. The hotel's refresh took inspiration from the motto of Carefree, Ariz., where the property resides: "Home of Cowboys and Caviar, Where the Old West Meets the New." June Chun, lead designer at DiLeonardo, worked to transplant Old West styling into the modern resort.

Chun says the hotel lobby's reception area received custom-designed furniture

inspired by Native American motifs, including a three-dimensional sculpture installation behind the front desk. Custom-designed light fixtures were also installed under a skylight to accentuate the details of the room, and the entire property is infused with earth tones to evoke the hues of the landscape of the Southwest.

According to Chun, the refresh was done to enhance the identity of the Boulders while merging it with Southwestern inspirations. "For examples, in the existing casitas, the fireplace design and plain carpet were not unique to the region. We thus introduced an adobe-styled fireplace as the feature of the casita; drawing reference from the Spanish influenced architectural façade of the architecture," Chun says. "The natural flagstone floor proposed was inspired by the foothills of the Sonoran desert."

These design considerations were all part of the Boulders' overall aesthetic goal of blending in with surrounding rock formations. The update overhauled all 160 of the property's casitas with new interior designs, finishes and furnishings. Regional art was also included in the redesign to be juxtaposed with area rugs in bold colors and patterns.

To tie in with the adobe-style architecture, the interior walls of the ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: The Boulders Resort & Spa
Top to bottom:
 The Boulders' updated casitas were designed to blend into the desert terrain; Interior design is dominated by earth tones and rustic architecture imitating pueblos.



PHOTOGRAPHY: Hilton Los Cabos

Left:

Local culture was called on for inspiration in the property's design, even repurposing furniture from the property's past.

casitas were hand-plastered and designed without sharp edges, but in the process of plastering the structure, the designers encountered a problem: Because the building was first constructed decades ago, there were no modern drawings of the interior, forcing the designers to create their own from scratch as they explored the structure.

"We took this challenge and created an opportunity to understand the property

on a much deeper level," Chun says.

In Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, Hirsch Bedner Associates has been updating the Hilton Los Cabos. As a result of the renovation, which just completed its second phase in September, the property has 65 new club-level suites, a 7,000-square-foot spa and salon and other miscellaneous upgrades and enhancements.

The local culture of Cabo San Lucas was used as inspiration for the design, where many existing pieces of furniture were salvaged and used as the accent wall in the property's La Vista bar as a callout to local woodworking and wood-carving roots. The area also has a history of ironworks and weaving, leading the property to include custom iron lanterns in the main reception courtyard and ballroom exterior corridors, and a custom hand-painted art wall adorns the two main grand stairways leading to the hotel pool.

"The whole building was refreshed and repainted a clean white, a soft white and two shades of gray, finding inspiration in the clean light of Cabo, the blue ocean and the sky," says Kathleen Dauber, partner at HBA. "This added dimension and shadow to the building façade."

According to Dauber, multiple areas of the hotel were in ►

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RENOVATIONS



PHOTOGRAPHY: Hilton Los Cabos

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The positioning of furniture maximized space for seating and created a more social atmosphere.

a curated focus on meshing with the placement of the room's seating.

In the guestrooms, designers removed heavy drapery and installed shutters in club rooms and an ombre sheer in standard guestrooms. These guestrooms now have a palette of clear blues and woven textures that recall the textiles of the region. New guestroom casegoods are made of limed wood with carved accents.

"The overall look is streamlined; the rooms feel expansive and open," Dauber says.

Because the hotel had to close during the refresh, time constraints were a major aspect of the update. Dauber says tight teamwork and constant communication between multiple parties was necessary, including the owner, operator, project manager, general contractor, purchasing agents and interior designer. "Luckily the owner, Thayer Lodging, along with all team members, really worked together in keeping things moving so quickly," Dauber says.

With the update completed, Dauber can take stock of the final results: "The refresh is getting great feedback and the property has never looked better." **HD**

need of a refresh. Aside from the hotel's guestrooms and suites, the bar and specialty restaurant were in need of updates, as well. HBA relocated the hotel's original bar and added a second bar to the premises. New flooring and ceiling designs were implemented, as well as new furniture, fixtures and equipment with



Photo/room design: Chris Jovanelli Interior Design

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