

PROFILES IN DESIGN

BY SAXON HENRY

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Those who believe that architecture and interior design are only mildly related will have an argument with Jeffrey Howard. He insists that outside and inside should be treated as inseparable.

"If the relationship between the interiors of a project and the architecture are not considered as equally important concurrently, the project will suffer," Howard says.

"If interior architecture is taken into consideration from the start, cosmetic treatments or decorating are not necessary," says Howard, who teaches a course in interior architecture at the University of Miami. "The placement of the furniture should be reflected in the ceiling pattern and the floor pattern from the very start."

His fascination with design began as early as he can remember. "When I was 5 years old, my most prized possession was an Erector Set," he explains. "I always liked to draw, and I originally wanted to be an automotive engineer; then I thought about set design for movies, but that wasn't real. During my second year in college, I found architecture and interior design, and I knew they were perfect for me."

During an initial position with Henry End from 1965 to 1971, Howard was immersed in hotel design, mostly traditional.

"I used to be known as 'Mr. Traditional,'" Howard says. "Now our projects are 50 percent modern, 30 percent transitional and 20 percent pure traditional."

Hospitality projects worldwide make up a substantial percentage of his projects, and he is noticing a philosophical

INSIDE OUT



WALTER MICHOT/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

change in the industry that he heartily applauds. "Several hotel companies... are merging architecture with romance and making their designs spiritual," he says. "I believe that this is going to set companies apart."

He's putting this belief into action with projects such as a worldwide venture called Hermitage and Stanford Development's Billionaire's Club in Antigua. "You have to be a bona fide billionaire to join the Billionaire's Club," he

says. "We're designing the sales center and 30 ultimate dream homes for the company's Antigua project."

Hermitage is geared toward a South American clientele. "We're buying 25 villas around the world and turning them into five- and six-star destination resorts for the organization's members," he says.

It's not surprising that hospitality projects continue to fascinate him, as the two commercial projects he sees as

career standouts are hotels.

"My most satisfying early project was the Grand Bay Hotel in Coconut Grove" because it "broke many barriers." It represented "the first residential approach to hospitality design; the industry then began to produce smaller boutique hotel projects, which truly became a home away from home."

"The Ritz on South Beach is my most recent one because I worked with classic Art Deco," he says, noting that working

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JEFFREY HOWARD VIEWS
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HIS DESIGN: Above, the lounge area of the Ritz-Carlton Dilido Bar in South Beach is elegant, with a curved wall behind the sofas. Left, Jeffrey Howard and wife Linda at their Pinecrest home.

JEFFREY E. HOWARD

Company: Howard Design Group, 2801 Florida Ave., Coconut Grove; 305-446-4088.

Personal: Born in Cambridge, Mass.

Education: Studied design and architecture at the College of Architecture at the University of Florida, receiving his bachelor of design degree in 1964.

Design philosophy: Paying attention to interior architecture is the foundation of good design and it's what makes everything work whether the style is traditional or contemporary.

Inspired by: The challenge of integrating the architecture with the interior design.

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with a historical building meant following "the original Morris Lapidus details while bringing the hotel into the 21st century."

Oprah Winfrey was his favorite private client, for her adventuresome spirit when designing her Fisher Island retreat.

"We took her to Italy to buy antiques," he says. "When we went to an estate sale of fine antiques that exceeded the budget she'd set, she didn't hesitate when she saw the quality."