

INTERIORS[®]



ART IN DESIGN



DESERT JEWEL

INTERIOR DESIGN: ROGER THOMAS

TEXT: BENEDETTA PIGNATELLI

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROGER DAVIES









THE POLYHEDRIC ROGER THOMAS HAS MAGNIFIED INTERIORS

for both residences and yachts throughout his career. This familial project gave him the rare chance to fuse both spatial skills. One of Thomas's three brothers and his wife had moved from a torrentially large 10,000-square-foot home in Las Vegas to a vastly more compact apartment in town. "Both my brother and his wife have spent countless hours on the world's oceans and have owned three Explorer yachts in the past, so their mindset was already predisposed on how to maximize space, as one would at sea," Thomas says. "They were planning everything to an eighth of an inch. And I approached the project myself as 'a yacht in the sky.'"

Throughout the venture he counted Alex Woogmaster as a co-conspirator in charge of the interior architecture. "I've been privileged to work with Roger on many projects," Woogmaster says. "The space is beautiful for intimacy and creativity, but we started with a 'tortured' floor plan and the shell remained a challenge. One lesson that I learned from Roger is that floor plans can feel balanced and uplifting even when literal symmetry is hard to find." The apartment had to be completely gutted, and there was also a concern as its odd diagonals meant a lot of wasted space.

The only request from Thomas in exchange for his fraternal expertise was that his brother "couldn't say no to anything I pitched." Possibly the safest gambit ever for the owners, as their familial interiors sherpa brought with him an intimate knowledge of their personalities, a clinical eye for detail and a massive resource system from his decades as Executive Vice President of Design and Development at Wynn Hotels and Resorts and head of his own Roger Thomas Collection. For example, to recompose the apartment to a viable scheme, he once again used Merlin Custom Home Builders, a local source that also worked on his Las Vegas home. "It was founded by childhood friends of ours," he notes. There is also a dissemination from The Roger Thomas Collection and his many collaborations throughout the home, oftentimes at the service of the prominent hues of the abode: magenta, purple (his sister-in-law's favorite), taupe and chrome. These are found in details such as Flute, the cabinet hardware by The Roger Thomas Collection for Rocky Mountain Hardware, to wallcoverings such as 18th Century Lacquer from his collection for Koroseal.

Two pieces in particular hold an additional layer of meaning: the pair of bedside chests in the primary bedroom Thomas designed for the Masters & Mentors Collection for Eric Brand. Roger was the first Master/Mentor of the series, created to share the wealth of design mastery. His mentee was Marcus Ferreira, a student of furniture design at the California College of The Arts in California, who first interned with Thomas for three months before being hired by Brand. Thomas's enviable sources, that he accumulated both from his hospitality years and his personal curiosity, have also been vital to the success of the project. "I remember finding this glorious block of golden Calacatta quartz in Carrara while on a Wynn mission, and immediately urged my brother to buy it," Thomas remembers. "He did and we had it cut in Viareggio and sent to La Vegas. It is my favorite marble—a beautiful statuary white with a warm beige and grey vein." It became a leitmotiv in the apartment.









OTHER PIECES WERE THE RESULT OF INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITIONS. All Thomases made multiple visits to Hervé Van der Straeten's Parisian studio, which produced the choice of a cabinet that is a combination of parchment and hand-cast bronze in a horizontal strié, to fit the overall horizontal refrain of the apartment. Others were the result of Thomas's solo European ventures, like a chair he found at a Rue de Lille gallery with cast bronze owls, or the custom black oyster mother of pearl mosaic by Fameed Khaliq from London, where Thomas finds all that is nonpareil. Although the abode is stupefyingly sophisticated, Thomas doesn't forget that the household always welcomes a small tribe of adult children (three) and grandchildren (10) and somehow has found a way to make even a rotating lounge chair by Michael Berman child-proof, by placing it three feet away from delicate objects on all sides. He also made sure that the guest bedroom doubles as a playroom when needed.

Another tribute to the Thomas family primordial loves are two paintings by V. Douglas Snow, a family friend and mentor, one of which depicts their beloved landscape at Capitol Reef National Park in Utah. But there is one design object that has been omnipresent in the five Thomas siblings' lives in their adulthood: the Eames chair and ottoman that was a staple at their childhood home. And, according to Roger Thomas, the "only one that seems to accommodate our strange backs." ■ Roger Thomas, therogertthomascollection.com







