

A S P I R E

# DESIGN AND HOME



gardens  
& pools

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MANHATTAN  
FLORIDA  
**REAL ESTATE** THE ARK  
Normandy Chateau Modern Oasis  
1834 Federal  
Brick Townhouse

SUMMER  
2015  
ASPIREMETRO.COM

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a construction site. In the foreground, there is a corner of a brick wall made of reddish-brown bricks. Above the brick wall, there is a concrete structure with rebar (steel reinforcement bars) protruding from it. The sky is not visible. The logo and text are overlaid on the top half of the image.

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TEXT ANNE MARIE SOTO

WHEN AN INTERIOR DESIGNER IS CALLED UPON TO CREATE A SPACE THAT EVOKES A PARTICULAR CULTURE, THE REASONS ARE MORE VARIED THAN YOU MIGHT SUPPOSE. **IT COULD BE THE CLIENT'S DESIRE TO HONOR THEIR FAMILY HERITAGE.** IT COULD BE A WISH TO RESPECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION. IT COULD BE TO CONJURE UP CHERISHED TRAVEL MEMORIES OR TO TRANSPORT ONE TO A SPECIAL TIME OR PLACE.

Interior designers love these types of projects because they provide the opportunity to explore cultures, resources and artisans that may not be part of their everyday design vocabulary.

We asked four interior designers, all members of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers, to share thoughts on some of their favorite projects that integrate other worlds and other cultures.

Jo Ann Alston, Allied ASID worked in California, Illinois and Kentucky before relocating her design practice to New Jersey. She observes that this is the first region where clients have asked her to integrate other cultures into the projects she designs – a true testimony to the variety and sophistication of our area. When Alston began work on a center hall colonial, the wife, who is Japanese, requested a design approach that reflected both her culture and the modern aesthetic favored by the couple. Alston found it to be the perfect design marriage. She concentrated on the clean, low, horizontal lines that are hallmarks of both modern and Japanese design. Japanese art and artifacts provide the accent touches. For example, in the couple's living room, Alston mounted an antique Japanese screen on the wall above the sofa. The screen itself was the inspiration for the room's color palette. The walls are faux finished in a pattern inspired by grass cloth. Silk fabrics and a judicious use of cinnabar, a color that frequently appears in traditional Japanese design, are used throughout the house. The coffee table features a cinnabar leather top and lacquered base. The same deep red, in coordinating brocade-patterned fabrics, was used for the pair of upholstered chairs opposite the sofa.

The foyer is another example of the skillful blending of aesthetics. The space retains the bones of a center hall colonial entryway; the visitor is greeted by a Japanese kimono, framed in Plexiglas and hung on the staircase wall opposite the front door. Framed photographs of Japanese temples hang over the entrance to the library. Cinnabar makes its entrance, courtesy of the area rug and the wall sconces.

When Sarah Leedy Dooley, Associate ASID, began work on a private hunting ranch in Southern Texas that is owned by a Philadelphia-based client, the goal was to create spaces that paid homage to the Mexican history of the area. Research for elements to include in the project took her all over Mexico where she encountered resources and antiques that





O R B I T I N G  
J A P A N  
Interior Design |  
Jo Ann Alston, Allied ASID  
Photography by Bill Rothchild

O R B I T I N G  
M E X I C O  
Interior Design |  
Sarah Dooley, Associate ASID  
Lara Swimmer Photography

O R B I T I N G  
I N D I A  
Interior Design |  
Rina Capodiecì-Quinn, Allied ASID  
Jeffrey Totaro Architectural Photography

O R B I T I N G  
I T A L Y  
Interior Design |  
Anna Maria Mannarino  
Associate ASID  
Photography by Wing Wong/Memories TTL

made it truly special. In the pictured bathroom, the stucco plaster walls, the exposed wood ceiling beams, the tile work, and the bright color scheme with subtle hints of white are all characteristics of the Mexican Hacienda style. The tiles are custom-made encaustic cement tiles. With this type of tile, interlocking designs are achieved by taking a group of four tiles and rotating each one by 90 degrees to create a quadrant that forms one design unit. When laid side by side, these units also form a larger interlocking pattern. On the floor, their patterns form an area rug; on the shower wall, their patterns create a hanging tapestry.

Although originally designed in a specific style for a specific region of the country, when Dooley posted this project in her Houzz.com profile, she got responses from many different places. “In today’s world,” observes Dooley, “through their travels and through the Internet, including sources like Houzz, people are exposed to a huge field of design influences. And with luxury resources such as Ann Sacks and Waterworks now offering encaustic tiles, there’s a renewed appreciation for the beauty of this design style.”

An interest in yoga ultimately led Rina Capodiecì-Quinn’s client to become a Kundalini yoga instructor. With a home large enough to accommodate a yoga studio, she turned to the designer to create the perfect environment. “Our goal,” says Capodiecì-Quinn, Allied ASID, “was to engulf you in India as you enter the space.” Research, both into the physical requirements of a yoga studio and the aesthetics of Indian design, was essential.

The room was originally the home’s library with beautiful millwork that Capodiecì-Quinn retained as a connection to the rest of the house. But she eliminated most of the shelving to create a clean, uncluttered look and installed fabric panels between the bookcase sections to create warmth and absorb sound. The room’s barrel ceiling is partially concealed by draped canopies, which also serve to absorb sound and add to the meditative qualities of the space.

In the entryway, the center of the ceiling is treated to a gold and blue leafing that has the appearance of an acid wash. Its surround is painted a dazzling blue, a color associated with Lord Krishna, perhaps one of the most favored gods in India. The chandeliers are a lotus design, a flower that has been a

spiritual symbol in Eastern religion for thousands of years. The rich, saturated colors of India are reflected in the choice of fabrics and in the custom-designed table next to the platform .

While we tend to think that a culturally-inspired space incorporate design ideas that have been around for many, many years, that isn’t necessarily true. For the 2013 Stately Homes by the Sea Show House, Anna Maria Mannarino, Allied ASID created a media room to celebrate the exquisiteness of modern Italian design. “When people think of Italy, they think of Tuscan design, of traditional ornate design. I wanted to show something different.”

Originally a warren of small rooms with lots of angles, Mannarino painted the entire space in a single color, from floor to ceiling, thus minimizing the break of the angles. Wallpapered panels, mimicking the pattern of the windows, were attached under the windows, with the alcove’s back wall painted to match. A molding, installed a few inches in from the edge, was added to the ceiling, creating a precise frame for a dark-colored ceiling.

Everything in the room is either Italian made, Italian designed or Italian inspired. The copper-brushed, ancient oak dining table with bronze base,

the croc-embossed lounge chair, and the structured floor lamps all come from Promemoria, a Milan-based company that designs and manufactures furniture and design accessories, completely handmade and in limited edition. The rug is inspired by an old Italian Fresco. And, of course, a modern Italian room wouldn’t be complete without a wine/espresso bar! ■

The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) sponsors a directory for consumers interested in obtaining the services of a qualified professional interior designer. For residential and commercial listings, visit the ASID New Jersey Chapter’s designer directory at [www.asidnj.org/find-a-designer](http://www.asidnj.org/find-a-designer)

RESOURCES

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