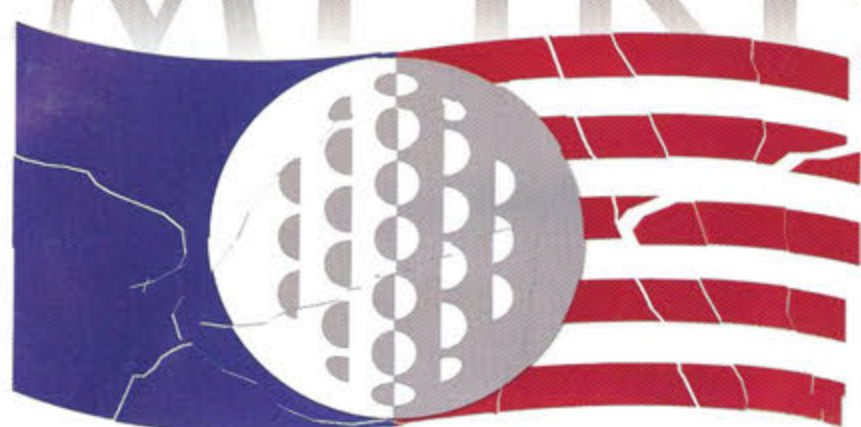


END OF AN EMPIRE?



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Marketing & Operations

Clubhouse winners share design keys

success story Key architectural elements reflect club's theme by Rebecca Larsen

Today's clubhouses often resemble plush resorts, places where you'd like to linger a while and enjoy the scenery both inside the clubhouse and out. The interiors are exciting enough for Architectural Digest.

But in decorating your clubhouse, what's most crucial — the furniture, the artwork, the ambiance? And how do you make all of it work together?

For answers, we talked to interior designers for three clubhouses honored in our Clubhouse of the Year competition.



Overall theme

The best interior designs seem to mirror the environment. In other words, the interiors of successful clubhouses draw their themes from the clubs' locations. The Duke at Rancho Eldorado in Maricopa, Ariz., sits on rugged plains once used for cattle ranching. Cindy Weissmueller of Scottsdale did the interior design for this clubhouse, which won second place in our daily fee category for clubhouses. A western-style décor fits naturally and is enhanced by the design details created by architect Douglas Fredrickson.

"We used Old Hickory chairs with distressed leather upholstery and buffalo nickel trim," said Weismuller. "The paintings and bronzes chosen had western themes. There is beadboard wainscoting and exposed wooden beams. It is finished like a ranch house."

The restaurant & bar in The Duke at Rancho Eldorado reflects the western ranch house style of the Arizona plains.



Artwork

Modern clubhouses often display original art that becomes a highlight of the interior design. Artwork may even help with space planning as it does at Trilogy Golf Club at Redmond Ridge in Redmond, Wash., first prize winner in our daily fee category for top clubhouses.

"It is important in this clubhouse that the central dining room be very open, but that it be separate from the bar area where minors are not allowed," said Clay Pryor, senior project designer for Design Lines of Englewood, Colo., who did Redmond Ridge. "So we had a double-sided grand fireplace built from stone that divides the dining room from the bar. On either side of the fireplace we hung oversized canvas paintings — contemporary renditions of the trees in the area. They create a wall, but still let those in the bar feel as if they are part of the dining room." The pictures are by a Denver artist, Kelly Cool.

See-through art separates Trilogy's bar and dining room.

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Space planning

As at Trilogy, space planning often influences decorating decisions. That is certainly true at Colleton River Plantation in Bluffton, S.C., near Hilton Head, where the new Pete Dye clubhouse is designed to resemble a mansion on an 1850s South Carolina rice plantation. This clubhouse won first place in our private club competition.

The plantation design dictates the room layout at Colleton River. "In those plantation homes, the living spaces are on the second floor; so in this clubhouse a grand staircase outdoors goes up to the second floor where there is a main hall, club pub and private rooms and a main dining room," said James Kenner, senior designer for Looney Ricks Kiss Architects of Memphis, Tenn. "Meanwhile, the support features are downstairs, such as the locker rooms and golf pro shop."

Second floor at Colleton River Plantation is upscale upstairs.



Furniture

All the designers we talked to stressed the importance of furniture. At Colleton River, for example, the custom-made furniture "is designed to look as if everything has been handed down through the generations. At the same time we had to provide first-class amenities," Kenner said. "Most of the pieces are reproductions of 1850s and 1860s era English- and French-looking furniture that planters would have shipped to their homes from Europe. We cannot have authentic antiques because we have to have functional furniture designed for commercial instead of residential use."

Fabric colors for furniture, drapery and walls are classic and traditional: claret red, burnt gold and sage green. In the dining room the square English style tables have sides that can be popped up to make circular tables to accommodate more people.

Custom made furniture at Colleton River Plantation reinforces club's period theme and look.



Flooring

Today's clubhouses use many more interior flooring choices than was true in the past. Carpeting, usually in the dining area, is often richly patterned and very sturdy in order to stand up to the wear and tear of golf shoes.

At The Duke at Rancho Eldorado, the entry way is tile, and patterned carpeting with a bandanna motif was laid in the dining room and pro shop. The patio is concrete stamped to look like stone.

At Trilogy at Redmond Ridge, slate paves the floor of the bar and the entryway. Carpeting used in the dining room has a textural pattern, a cut and loop in red, gold and tan. "It's a variation on a contemporary golf club pattern," said Clay Pryor.

Patio stamped to look like stone at The Duke at Rancho Eldorado lends elegance to the outdoor dining and gathering area.