

LUXURY HOME

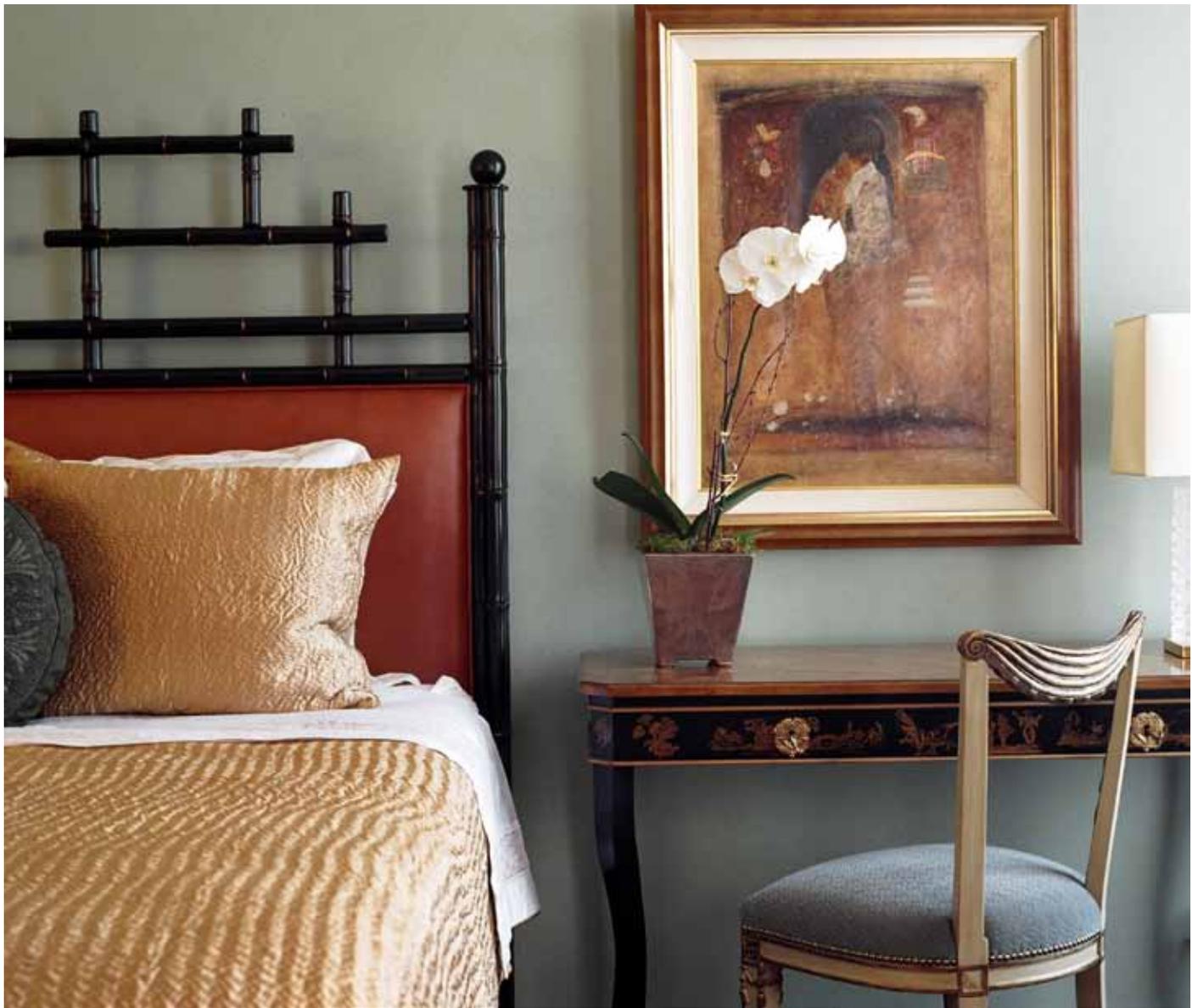
quarterly



TIMELESS
DESIGNS... *for kids*

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+ A PEEK INSIDE *Rachel Ashwell's*
'Shabby Chic' master bedroom



Deb Reinhart Interior Design Group Inc.

TRANSFORMING CLIENTS' HOMES INTO SPACES THAT REFLECT THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES

by Julie Edwards

With a tagline of “Designed Around You,” it’s easy to discern the client-centered philosophy that has been at the heart of Deb Reinhart Interior Design Group since the firm’s inception.

“My philosophy when approaching a project is to base solutions on the client personality and lifestyle—I take the client’s personal preferences and transform the space into something that they love,” says Deb Reinhart, the firm’s principal.

“The architecture, of course, leads the way, but the foundation for a space is truly who is using the environment and how they want to live in the space. We believe in leading, not dictating, because if the environment is congruent with the people it serves, then it will enhance and improve their quality of life.”

Having lived in both the Far East and Europe, Reinhart has been influenced by those experiences.

LAKE SHORE DRIVE CONDO

This Chicago residence’s master bedroom reflects the owners’ love of color, with a rust Edelman Leather headboard accenting the blue faux-finish wall (edelmanleather.com). Additionally, a period chair contrasts with the Chinoiserie writing desk, and a crystal lamp provides stylish task lighting.

“I enjoy taking the inspiration from these great designs and crafting solutions to fit the client and project, whether contemporary or timeless,” she says. “Taste can be timeless.”

In 1994, Reinhart decided to form her own firm—Design Odyssey—which she rebranded in 2009 as Deb Reinhart Interior Design Group Inc., a full-service interior-design firm located in the northern suburbs of Chicago that provides



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DEB REINHART, PRINCIPAL

design work for residential and commercial clients. Much of the firm’s business is from repeat clients or referrals, which underscores the quality of the work. “I had a Chicago-based client who asked me to design their area townhome,” Reinhart says. “We then assisted in the design-build of their home in Las Vegas and, later, in a design-build of two homes for a family retreat in Austin, Texas.”

The firm has received awards for many of its projects, including recognition for its work on a condominium on Chicago’s Lake Shore Drive. “The challenge for the [Lake Shore Drive] project was to create an urban home on an upper floor of a high-rise that would not only serve a family with teenage children but also provide upscale spaces to entertain friends and business clients,” Reinhart says.

To achieve this objective, Reinhart focused on warm, welcoming colors and transitional design with multicultural antiques that would be pleasing to both the family and their international guests. She also chose hard-wearing luxury fabrics for durability, incorporated efficient space planning, and added built-in millwork to utilize the entire floor plan while maximizing the spectacular views of the 27th floor locale. Reinhart also chose Lutron’s Whole Home Lighting Control, an intelligent and sophisticated high-end lighting system which includes centralized dimming panels.

Another challenge for Reinhart was sunlight. “When you are designing for high-rises, light has a huge impact and influence on what you are able to achieve,” she says. “From upholstery fabrics to window treatments, the intensity and control of sunlight definitely defines the direction of the design.”

However, Reinhart notes, her most unusual—and uniquely challenging project—was a condominium on Chicago’s Streeterville neighborhood.

The client—an absentee owner living abroad—requested a complete build-out of a 3,600-square-foot condo starting with bare walls and floors. “I initially was contacted by the owner three years before I started the project, and all of our communication was via phone or e-mail throughout the entire project,” Reinhart says.

From the custom millwork to the European-influenced gourmet kitchen, the space is disciplined and contemporary but, in keeping with Reinhart’s love of the unique, features an unexpected touch in the foyer—a two-inch-thick wood slab of African bubinga crafted as a light fixture and positioned in a soffit. “It’s clean and modern, yet softens the contemporary feel of the space,” she notes.

Looking ahead, Reinhart sees her firm continuing to diversify. Following the rebranding in 2009, the firm implemented a new website in Spring 2010. Reinhart also is looking into launching an e-commerce site and is expanding her commercial projects, including numerous bids on offices and lobbies. “I love the idea of public spaces, which are a completely different design challenge,” she says. “Public spaces are driven more by the locale and the architecture of the building, but they still have to be appealing and welcoming. In offices, productivity is improved if the environment is well planned. A dynamic lobby, for example, can reflect and enhance property value and also show how the occupants maintain the building.”

Reinhart’s ultimate aim is to provide clients with complete customization. “My goal when creating any space is to create a space that is absolutely unique and has one-of-a-kind solutions,” she continues. “I believe when you step into a well-designed space, you should instantly feel that it is special, even if you don’t know why.” ■

Robert Miles

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