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Top row: Interior of Voyeur; Sense Spa at the Carlyle Hotel. Bottom row: poker room at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino; Wasted Space nightclub; Mark Zeff.



SPACE MAN

Mark Zeff designs interiors that rock. Now he's creating "the sexiest hotel in the world."

Mark Zeff has a rep for building sexy spaces. If designing Carey Hart's Wasted Space lounge at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas didn't already do it for him, Zeff's two newest projects are on track to cement his status as the rock world's go-to guy for decadent, vice-inspired interiors.

Hired to conceptualize a nightclub called Voyeur, which opened this summer in West Hollywood, Zeff's firm, Zeff Design, drew from such roguish influences as *Eyes Wide Shut*, the photography of Helmut Newton, old-school men's clubs, and, says Zeff, "that crazy, scratchy, underground, obsessive-compulsive mass-murdering thing" that characterized the movie *Se7en*.

"The club's name was important, so we created this place that is overtly sexual," he explains. "I think what is missing in the world is an understanding

of the sensuality that people have. We've all been taught that it's illicit and that our inner self can't come out, but I really love to use that craziness to design."

Meanwhile, in Las Vegas, the Hard Rock enlisted Zeff to rebrand it as "the sexiest hotel in the world." The aesthetic starting point for this \$600 million-plus, five-years-in-the-making project? Rock 'n' roll, of course. Sex, naturally. And tattoos. "I used tattoo [culture] as an inspiration in everything that I did," says Zeff, who grew up in South Africa and lived in Australia and London before settling in New York City. Some of the hotel rooms, for example, have oversized, mirrored panels with elaborately detailed designs. "It's like you're looking through a medieval gate," says Zeff, "but it's really a tattoo."

Creating a sensual space that caters to visitors of all stripes and, uh, taste levels is not easy. "I'm trying to find a way to bring a 60-year-old guy with a mullet who thinks he's really cool together with a group that have traveled in from Detroit, have 17 pounds of piercings, and are in for a drinking, sexy weekend at the Hard Rock," says Zeff—and you can almost hear him start to perspire. Time to call in the textiles. "My work is very textural, so we've got beaten metal next to silk. We've got shiny, almost motorcar-style elements next to rough-hewn wood. We've got patterns that you would think you'd find in a Tudor castle next to very modern, sleek stuff. The lighting is very moody." He pauses. "This is not a bright, twinkly Vegas joint. This is a very dark and nasty, sexy place." —*Kristina Feliciano*