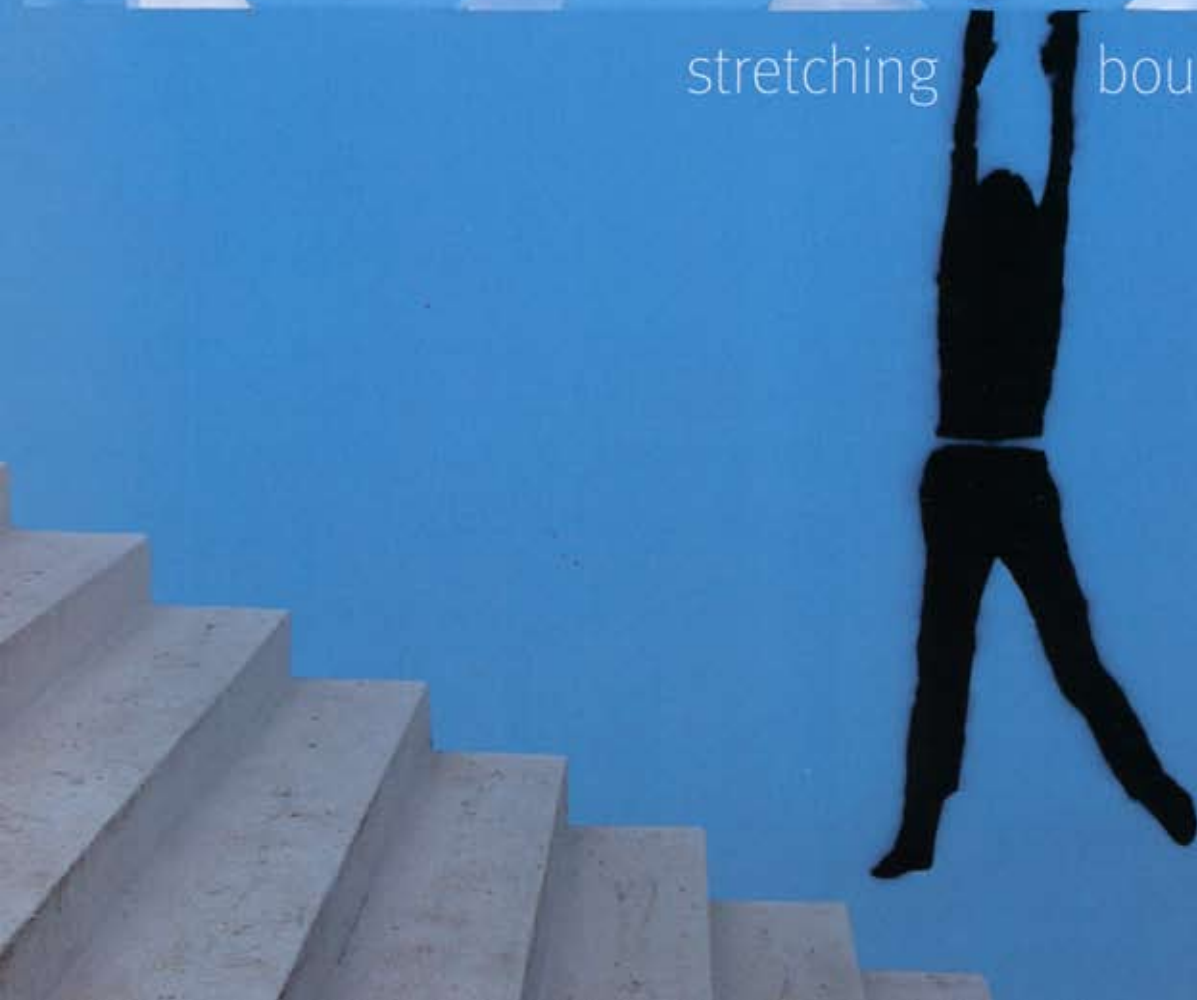


INTERIOR DESIGN®

OCTOBER
2010



stretching boundaries





text: *edie cohen* photography: *eric laignel*

bling and cha-ching

Mark Zeff hits the jackpot with an expanded Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas



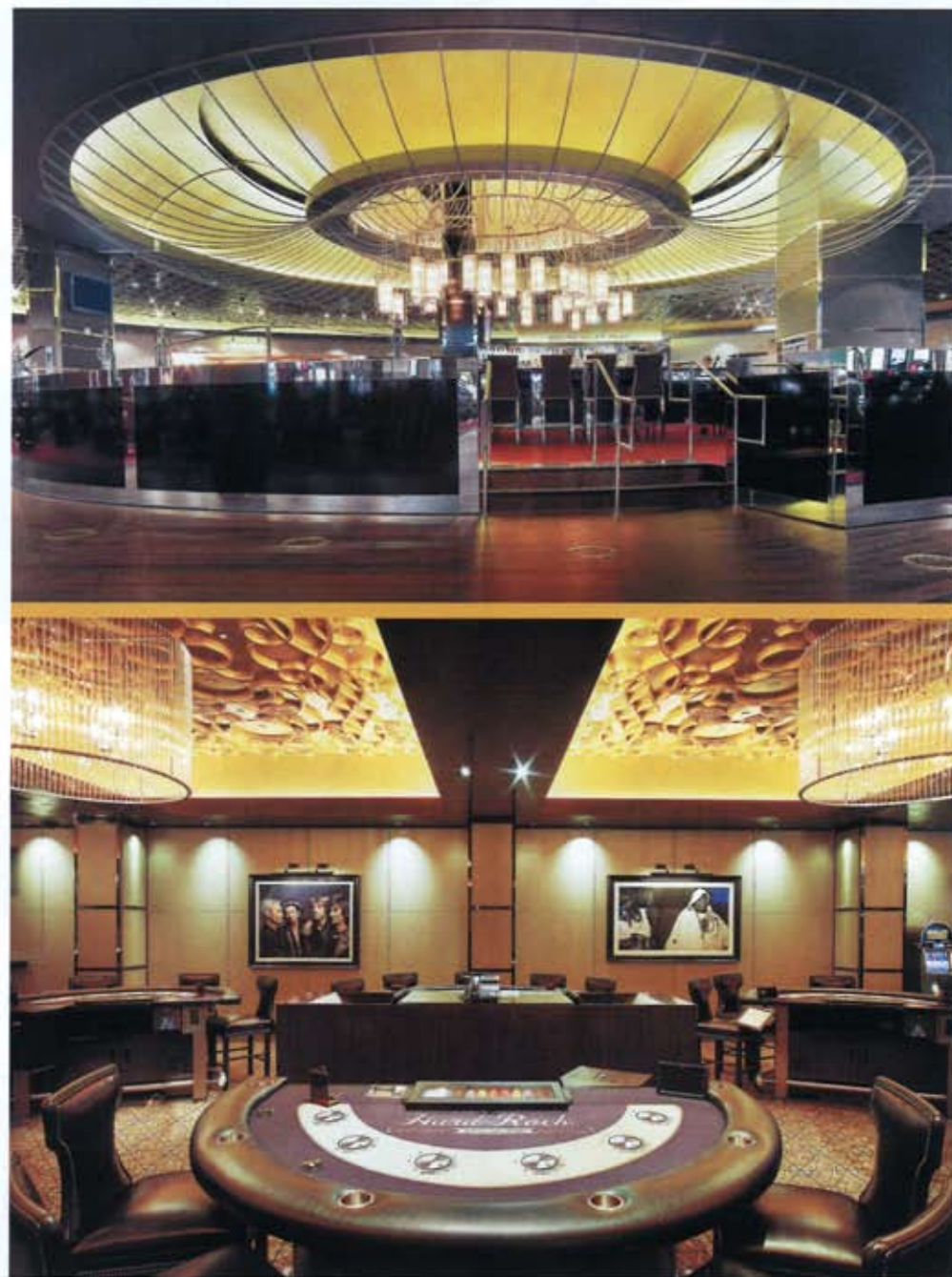
Mark Zeff is no gambler. But he was quick to take a chance on a mega-project, one with a scope that far exceeded anything that his firm, recently renamed MarkZeff, had previously designed. His two towers for the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas connect to the famous—some might say infa-

mous—original Hard Rock, which had built its reputation on sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Despite Zeff's extensive hospitality experience, the call from the Hard Rock's new owner, the Morgans Group, came as a surprise. More surprising still was the speed of the process. Within a week, Zeff

interviewed with Morgans executives, toured the site, and sealed the deal at the airport before flying home. That was in 2007, when it seemed like every investor in the world was betting on Vegas.

His first task was to evaluate the master plan, already developed by Klai Juba Architects. "The big issue was that Morgans, the operator, and the bankers all had different thoughts on what the hotel should be," he begins. "To galvanize the three groups, I put together a 15-minute branding movie on a day-in-the-life of HRH 2010." The DVD showed a hotel that would appeal to an all-inclusive clientele demographic. From the fashionista to the club kid and the business executive, everybody would find something to love in this new interpretation.

In total, Zeff's two towers, plus the existing hotel, have a 1,200 key count. The Paradise tower is an annex to the original building. The all-suite HRH tower stands on its own, with enough amenities to let guests get into whatever mischief they desire. ➤

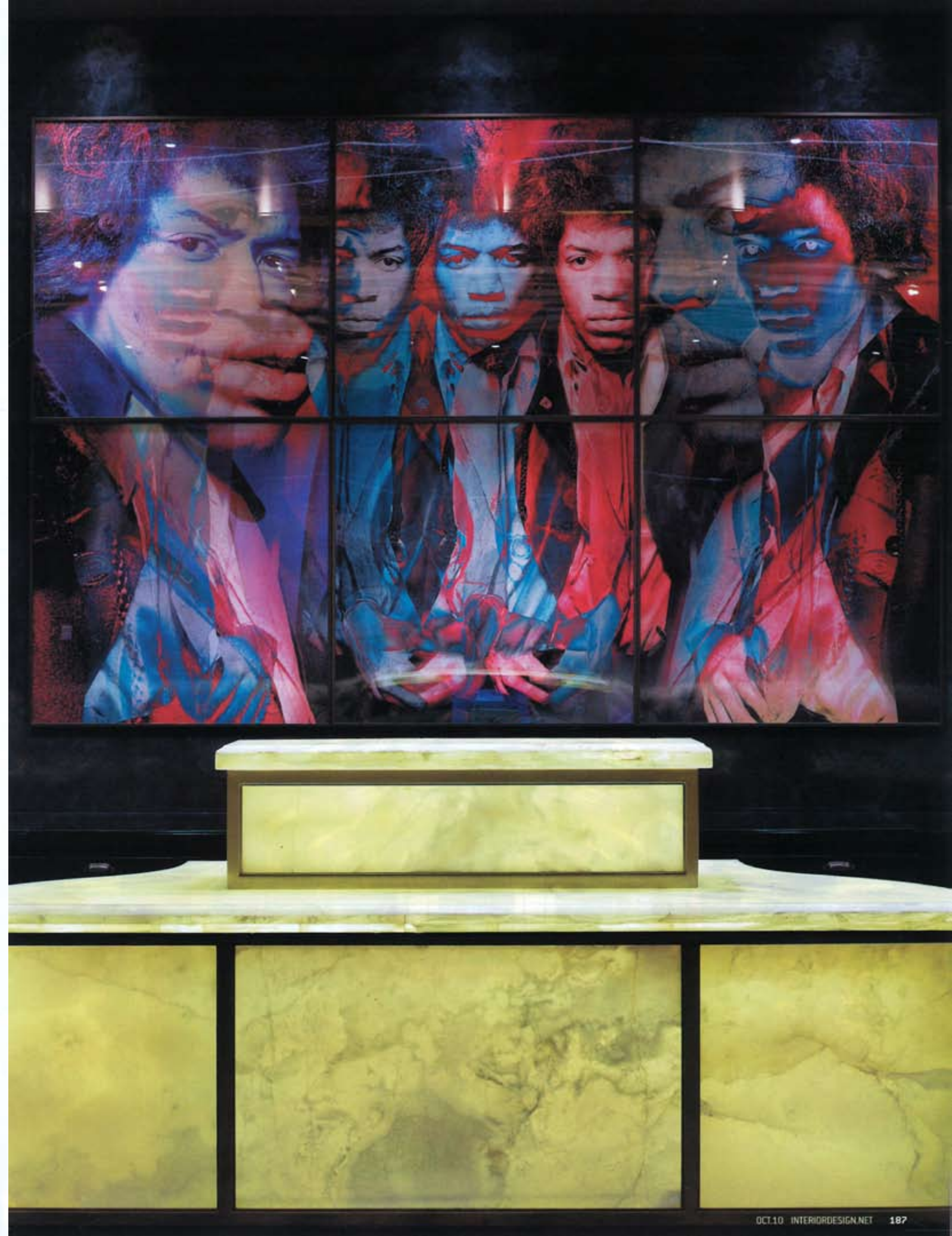


Previous spread, left: In the Luxe bar at MarkZeff's Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, the polished-chrome cocktail table and the wool carpet are both custom.

Previous spread, right: In reception, a Kiss collage by Lynn Goldsmith accompanies a custom linen-upholstered chesterfield.

Top: In the bar, automotive paint coats the dome and the 3-inch-thick aluminum chains slung across it. *Bottom:* Faux shagreen, actually vinyl, covers the walls in the high-limit gaming room.

Opposite: Gered Mankowitz's lenticular print of Jimi Hendrix backs an internally lit onyx reception desk.





Here's the layout. Composing the ground level at the Paradise are reception, the bar Luxe, and a high-limit gaming room that "threads the old and new hotels together," Zeff says. A nightclub vibe, a living-room feel, a memorabilia cache, they're all there. So are patterns—a major effort. All told, Zeff designed 450. Most of them, such as the red-and-black carpet at Luxe, hint at his current fascination: "Gothic meets tattoo."

Ceilings in general are a "big deal," he notes. A dome-within-a-dome reinforces the round shape of the room occupied by Luxe. He strung chains from the outer dome's perimeter to the chandeliers hanging below the inner dome, then channeled *Goldfinger* by spraying them with automotive paint. Equally gold are the curlicues that cover the ceiling in the casino's high-limit zone. The spa's pool area owes its old-world feel to bronze-framed vaulted skylights inspired by Budapest's 1920's Danubius Hotel Gellért.

White lacquered panels run along the ceiling of the serene

Opposite top: A pressed-tin light fixture descends from the ceiling in the separate reception lounge for the seven spa villas. *Opposite bottom:* Custom ceramic mosaic tiles flow around the swimming pool in the spa.

Top: A stairway of concrete and brushed stainless steel connects a spa villa's two stories. *Center top:* Cabinetry at the hair salon, Brannon, is ebonized oak. *Center bottom:* Custom vinyl wall covering lines the corridor to the spa's 32 treatment rooms. *Bottom:* Leather upholsters all the custom seating in the living room of the Ultra Lounge penthouse.



promenade that leads to the second story's spa, hair salon, café, lounge, and nightclub. Each presented a venue for bold strokes. Not one timid move. This is Vegas, baby. In the men's locker room in

the spa, lyrics from Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" emblazon a charcoal-gray wall. Silvery nail heads stud the salon's cabinetry of ebonized oak.

On the 16 guest floors, suites

range from 350 juniors, mostly identical, to the seven penthouses, each unique. Their names and decor hark back to the Hard Rock's raucous past, yet Zeff brought a gloss of refinement to the fun palace. The living room of the Provocateur penthouse has lipstick red on the walls and tobacco brown leather on the seating. In a bedroom, meticulously rendered lizards and iguanas cavort on the wallpaper. But that's nothing compared to the fully equipped S&M orgy chamber off the foyer.

The Sex & Pistols penthouse is tame by comparison, only hinting at debauchery with studded leather-covered walls in a bedroom and erotic photographs in the living room. Right in the middle of the living room of the Ultra Lounge penthouse is a plunge pool surfaced in gold mosaic tiles. Venetian plaster brings a platinum shimmer to yet another penthouse, Stones—as in diamonds, not Rolling. "I was thinking rapper bling," Zeff explains.

There's nothing truly outré about the seven spa villas built near



Top: Floor tile in the living room of the Provocateur penthouse was made from used leather belts. **Bottom:** A custom bed in stained oak and chrome dominates one of the three bedrooms.

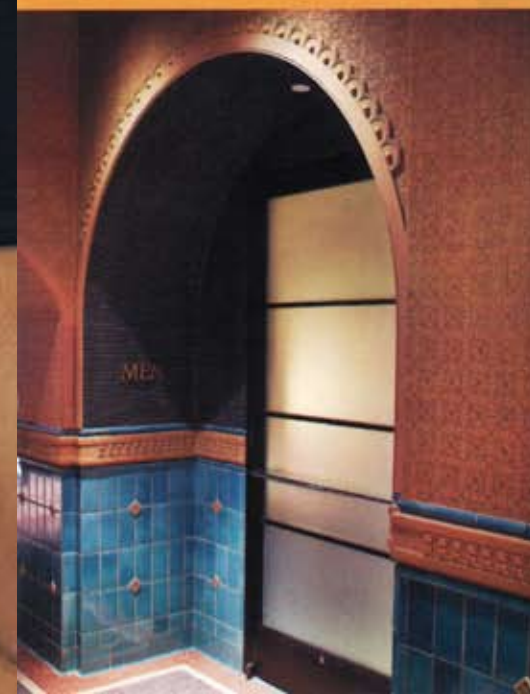
Opposite: The Provocateur penthouse's sex chamber is almost completely ceramic-clad.





Opposite: Screen-printed lyrics to Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" appear on custom vinyl wall covering in the men's locker room in the spa.

Top, from left: The promenade's crystal chandelier and leather-covered sofa, both custom. A custom sconce in polished nickel and organza, installed in the leather-lined bedroom of the Sex & Pistols penthouse. *Right:* Cut oak paneling in villa reception. *Center, from left:* Ceramic floor tile in the spa's steam room. Vinyl wall covering and marble flooring in the Provocateur penthouse's foyer. *Bottom, from left:* A synthetic composite mimicking terra-cotta in the pool area. A steel handcuff in Provocateur's sex chamber. A Myriam Santos photograph in the Sex & Pistols living room.



their own reception lounge. That's not to say they're minimal, however. A sofa-daybed extends 15 feet through each living room, while a strip of latticework runs across the ceiling before con-

tinuing outside as a canopy over a private pool.

Did we mention the high level of customization? Virtually everything is a Zeff design made in the U.S., Mexico, or China: the onyx recep-

tion desks, the chain-mail chandeliers, the seating upholstered in leather, suede, or velvet—the list goes on. What about the apparatuses in the S&M chamber? Those were purchased. —

PROJECT TEAM

JORGE PORTA; STACIE HEADOR; JAVIER ROJAS-RODRIGUEZ; CATHERINE KIDDER; COREY CHAPMAN; MERCEDES BRACERO; LIV RIEMER; MARK ZEFF. GRAHAM COWHES ARCHITECTURE: ARCHITECT OF RECORD. KUGLER KING LIGHTING DESIGN: LIGHTING CONSULTANT. LOCHSA ENGINEERING: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. FEA MECHANICAL ENGINEERING: MER. KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES: CIVIL ENGINEER. NORTHWESTERN WOODWORK: M.J. DEAN CONSTRUCTION: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT: VALLEY FORGE FABRICS: SOFA FABRIC (RECEPTION), CHAIR UPHOLSTERY, WALL COVERING (GAMING ROOM), SHEER FABRIC (LIVING ROOMS). CIRCA LIGHTING: LAMPS (VILLA RECEPTION). KRAVET: SOFA FABRIC, S. HARRIS: PILLOW FABRIC, COWTAN & TOUT: CHAIR FABRIC, THROUGH DESIGN & DIRECT SOURCE: TURQUOISE WALL TILE (SPA POOL AREA). ROCKY MOUNTAIN HARDWARE: GOLD ARCHWAY TILE. FORMGLAS: BROWN WALL, CEILING TILE, GALTILE: CUSTOM FLOOR TILE (SPA POOL AREA, STEAM ROOM). LIGHTOLIER: PENDANT FIXTURES (SALON). DESIGN-TEX: CUSTOM WALL COVERING (HALL). PREMIER LEATHER & SUEDE: SOFA UPHOLSTERY (BROWN LIVING ROOM). EDELMAN LEATHER: OTTOMAN UPHOLSTERY (BROWN LIVING ROOM), SOFA UPHOLSTERY (RED LIVING ROOM), ROND: STRIPED PILLOW FABRIC (LIVING ROOMS), BENCH FABRIC (FOYER). TING: FLOOR TILE (RED LIVING ROOM). WOLF-GORDON: WALL COVERING, FABRICUT: CURTAIN FABRIC (RED LIVING ROOM), RED CURTAIN FABRIC (BEDROOM), TIMOROUS BEASTIES: WALLPAPER (BEDROOM), LIMOR STEEL: CAGE, CROSS (CHAMBER). HASTINGS TILE & BATH: TILE. GLEN RAVEN: SOFA FABRIC (LOCKER ROOM). SILVER HILL ATELIER: CUSTOM WALL COVERING. AVIRON TEXTILES: PILLOW FABRIC (PROMENADE). MOORE AND GILES: SOFA UPHOLSTERY (PROMENADE), ARM-CHAIR UPHOLSTERY (GRAY LIVING ROOM). CORTINA LEATHERS: WALL COVERING (BEDROOM). STARK: WALL COVERING (FOYER). GIBSON TILE: FLOOR TILE. STONE SOURCE: CREDENZA TOP MATERIAL (GRAY LIVING ROOM). SAINT JOHN STONE: TILE (SUITE POOL AREA). THROUGHTOUT: TAI PING CARPETS: CUSTOM CARPET, RUGS.



Top: In the living room of the Sex & Pistols penthouse, a custom credenza in marble and ebony mahogany sits beneath another Santos photograph. Bottom: The custom bed has a frame of stained oak, the same wood as the custom side tables. Opposite: A plunge pool is the focal point of the Ultra Lounge penthouse.

