

Becoming Boutique

Philadelphia's Rittenhouse 1715 Updates its Style and its Name

BY EMILY LIEBERT



Modern lamp on Queen Anne table

Modern ceramic vase

Daubert tribal pillows

This just in: Rittenhouse 1715 is now a boutique hotel. Formerly the Rittenhouse Square Bed and Breakfast — one of Philadelphia's most exclusive and luxurious properties — the name change to Rittenhouse 1715, A Boutique Hotel, took place in the spring of 2006, as part of an extensive dual-phase renovation.

Built in 1911 by renowned architect Walter Cope, Rittenhouse 1715 boasts an innovative and unique new style thanks to designers Peter Salgado and Kip Saucier of Salgado Saucier and architect Richard Wesley of wesleyArchitects. Located off Philadelphia's famed Rittenhouse Square, the original Carriage House and adjacent Georgian townhouses have been joined to create one cohesive hotel featuring 23 rooms, including an extravagant two-story presidential suite.

To enhance the interior, Salgado Saucier combined traditional and eclectic looks, which reflect the Rittenhouse Square area. "The property owner definitely gave us direction. He wanted a European feeling, but also to infuse some modernity," said Salgado, who introduced an element of tranquility. "We want guests to experience a calm atmosphere, as if they have checked-in to their own personal sanctuary."

Enter the reception lobby and you'll know just what he means. The walls are striking in yellow and white stripes, accompanied by sleek black granite floors, a sparkling chandelier, plush floral sofas and diverse antiques. The newly appointed drawing room is a sanctuary of warm, engaging shades of rust, gold and brown.

The six new guest rooms of the first renovation — festooned with fireplaces, oversized flat-screen televisions and the finest Egyptian linens — embody the elegance of yesterday and the modernity of today. "Our plan was to give each room its own

— PETER SALGADO



"The goal was to make each room seem like the furniture and accessories had been collected over a period of time. We worked in the owner's collection of European antiques and combined them with some more updated pieces as well as contemporary art. We didn't want any of the spaces to feel contrived or cookie cutter."

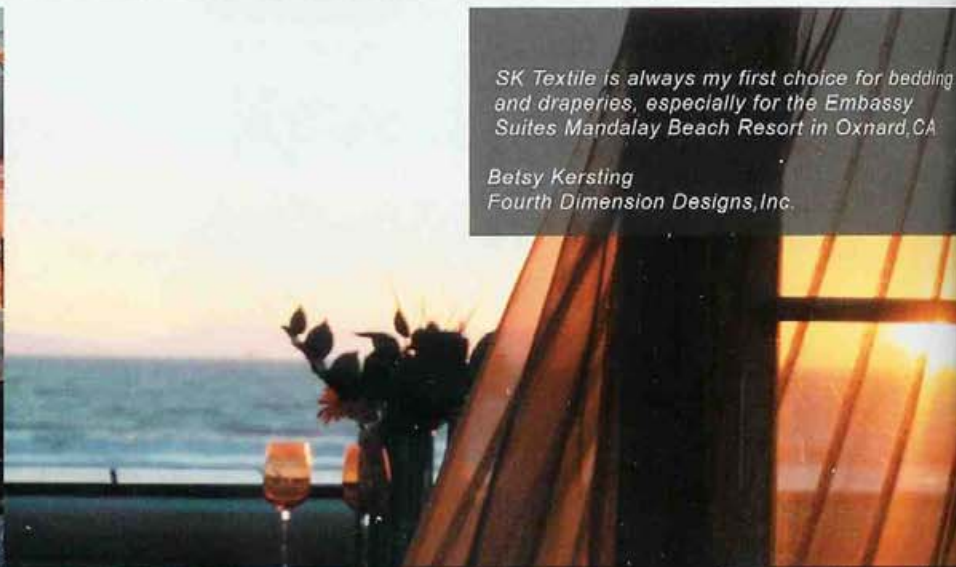
distinctive look by altering the paint colors and fabrics for each," explained Salgado. "The goal was to make each room seem like the furniture and accessories had been collected over a period of time. We worked in the owner's collection of European antiques and combined them with some more updated pieces as well as contemporary art. We didn't want any of the spaces to feel contrived or cookie cutter." Salgado Saucier designed all of the headboards and some of the lighting themselves. "We kept the headboard designs to a total of three styles, but switched the fabrics and fine detailing for each — either nail heads or braids, and sometimes both," said Salgado.

The premiere highlight of the project is the majestic presidential suite where a lustrous spiral staircase winds from the loft, king-size bedroom down to an elegant black and green-hued living space adorned with cushy couches, a powder room, bar and large-screen television. The presidential suite is "dramatic, elegant and luxe," said Salgado. "Since the

architecture played a key part in this room — with its high ceilings and second-level bedroom loft — the back drop color needed to be serene. We chose a very pale green in order to evoke a sense of calmness. We mixed the owner's French dining chairs with a new dining table and combined vintage spoon-back lounge chairs with a traditional style sofa and a leather coffee table detailed with oversize nail heads. The artwork and accessories are contemporary and traditional." Salgado added, "The key was to balance all the details."

Architect Richard Wesley faced the same task in creating private, deluxe bathrooms. "The building was constructed in the 19th Century as a traditional Philadelphia townhouse with rooms arranged front and back separated by a stair and a courtyard. The conversion of the

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Top: The Presidential Suite, spiral staircase and all; Below: The King room at Rittenhouse 1715



townhouse into a boutique hotel required the installation of a bathroom for each bedroom on either side of the existing stair. This created a difficult design challenge because of the tight dimensions," said Wesley. His expertise prevailed, however, paving the way for bathrooms that "foster a sense of openness and spaciousness — despite the dimensional restrictions," noted Wesley. "The light-colored Crema Marfil marble tile used on the floors, base and shower walls was cut

into different sizes and patterns to provide variety and richness while promoting a sense of simplicity and unity of surface." In order to avoid losing any space to the door swing, Wesley installed pocket doors. "These doors were glazed with translucent textured glass to create privacy while admitting light and allowing the space to flow between the bedrooms and the bathrooms. The stone vanity tops were designed as long, open and simple stone slabs with wide surface-mounted lavatories. Long, horizontal, wall-to-wall mirrors were used above the countertops to psychologically extend the space and maximize light reflections," detailed Wesley.

Reflecting on his first hotel design, Salgado has visions for what's to come. "Things are moving in a softer direction away from the sleek modern look that has dominated the trends. You can probably expect to see a little more romanticism mixed in with modern."

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