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PICTURE PERFECT



Rhode Island capital's renaissance lives on at The Hotel Providence and its on-site restaurant L'Epicureo

PHOTOGRAPHY / WARREN JAGGER

Artists often toil over their work to get it just right. The same can be said for the design team behind the renovation/restoration of The Hotel Providence and L'Epicureo Restaurant in Providence, R.I.

Lia DiLeonardo, principal, architectural designer for DiLeonardo International, says the assignment of converting three buildings into a hotel and restaurant located on a historical register offered quite a challenge, but she soon discovered there was much more to it.

"Structurally, the entire property needed to be redesigned," she says. With the scope of the projects now larger than originally thought, working with a tight budget wasn't going to help matters much.

"Both projects, including fit out, mechanical, new construction, fire systems, etc., were supported by a total budget of \$12 million," she says.

Although ample funding might have not been available, inspiration was easy to come by. DiLeonardo says different approaches were taken to properly give what was wanted by the owners of the two separate entities, despite being located at the same property.

The owner of the Hotel Providence is one of the largest antique dealers in the state, DiLeonardo says. "Due to the historic tax credits, the traditional classical theming was required to maintain the character and fulfill the property owner's vision," she says.

The lobby acts as a showcase for some of the antiques and serves as an eclectic meeting spot. Royal blue and sienna colors were used to complement textured fabrics such as mohair, velvet and silk.

The guestrooms echo the mood created in the lobby and offer guests a generous living space that allows for the use of oversized furniture situated in unique layouts.

A fondness for an Old World European experience with an accent on Italian high cuisine helped fill out the design menu for L'Epicureo.

"They wanted to present a design which was a juxtaposition of all the clean, modern, minimalist restaurant venues of today," DiLeonardo says.

Renaissance-era reproductions line the walls and chandeliers light the way, reinforcing the European setting.

Despite some unpleasant surprises along the way, DiLeonardo is pleased with the outcome and knows others are, too.

"The pleasant surprise was the incredible acceptance of the product from the local community and their patrons."

-Paul Rusnak

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TOP Frette linen with Portuguese dinnerware and blue cobalt flower vases from the Museum of Modern Art comprise the table settings in the dining room.

BOTTOM LEFT L'Epicureo's lounge area sports stained glass panels that separate it from the restaurant seating. Iridescent glass art, an open grid ceiling and an array of vibrant color combinations give the space a contemporary feel amid a luxurious, yet casual setting.

BOTTOM RIGHT The Hotel Providence stands as an example, inside and out, of the renewal and renaissance that has been taking place in the downtown district.









PROJECT SPECS

Project: The Hotel Providence and L'Epicureo Restaurant

Architect: Newport Collaborative

Construction dates: 2003-2005

Interior design firm:

DiLeonardo International 2348 Post Rd., Suite 501 Warwick, RI 02886 (401) 732-2900 Fax: (401) 732-5315 dileonardo.com

Developer:

Stanley Weiss The Hotel Providence LLC 292 Westminster St. Providence, RI 02903

Purchasing firm: Parker International

Restaurant architect: diArchitecture (division of DiLeonardo International)

Restaurant lighting designer: Schweppe Lighting Design

Art consultant: Jean Conners-East Coast Art

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TOP In the guestrooms, the tall ceilings allow for the space to be filled with oversized furniture. Case pieces are finished in a deep mahogany and consist of an armoire, nightstand, a full-length mirror and a desk.

ABOVE A color palette of olive green, gold and rich burgundy were used to help create a sense of serene luxury in the rooms.