

A "RE-ASSESSMENT" OF THE OWNERS' COLLECTIBLES BROUGHT A NEW AMBIENCE TO THIS ASIAN-STYLE HOME

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River Club: Going With The Flow



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RIVER CLUB: GOING WITH THE FLOW

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When interior designer Andi Beck first saw the living room it was empty except for the rug and cabinet, which was filled with selected pieces of Roseville pottery from Doug's collection. Taking into consideration the furniture and accessories the partners already had, plus adding a few finds of her own, Andi created a room that is everyone's favorite, full of life and with an appealing dash of Asian flair.

The living room sofa had to go. The size, the shape, the color—everything about it was wrong. Whenever Doug Fowler and Mike Lambert set foot in the living room and saw it, they groaned. Other than that, their new River Club house was perfect. With three bedrooms, den, gourmet kitchen, spacious family room, and a pool Mike had designed himself, the partners couldn't have been happier with

their choice.

It was the sofa that was giving them a headache since it was the first thing anyone saw when they came through the front door. Frustrated, Doug and Mike knew they needed help, and they got it, thanks to a serendipitous introduction to interior designer Andi Beck.

"Every year we throw a big Oscar party and Mike, who's the best cook in the world, caters it himself. There

were 40 to 50 people, and Andi was there with one of our employees," says Doug, recalling how their paths crossed. "It just happened to come out during our conversation that she had done a lot of interior design work in South Florida as well as a couple of projects here in Vero Beach. I told her we were about a third of the way through furnishing our home, and I remember talking specifically about the fact that we were really unhappy

with the living room area. We had spent so much money already and the sofa—well, people either loved or hated it, and we were among those who hated it.”

Mike nods emphatically. “It was off balance and really didn’t go with the rug, which we liked a lot. We basically said Andi, help us out here and she did. Just talking with her was such a joy; she has such charisma.”

Joy, charisma, and getting the sofa out of the living-room, was a positive beginning. Andi immediately saw



The Roseville Pottery Co., founded in 1890, initially produced utilitarian ware such as flower pots, cuspidors and limited painted ware. Ten years later, the company introduced Rozanne, its first high-quality art pottery line. From there, under art director Frederick Rhead, things took off as he introduced art pottery lines such as Fudgi, Crystalis, Della Robbia, and Aztec. Later, when the demand for expensive, hand-crafted art pottery declined, the company shifted production to more commercial products.

As time went on, tastes and trends evolved, yet Roseville remained at the forefront by introducing Dahlrose, Rosecraft, Ferella, Sunflower, Blackberry, Cherry Blossom, Wisteria, and in 1935 Pinecone. With patterns that include over 75 different shapes in blue, brown and green, Pinecone became the most successful pattern produced during the company’s existence. Even to this day, Roseville pottery continues to represent the most widely known and most collectible art pottery ever produced.



Doug and Mike already had several furniture pieces, including these two living-room chairs, for Andi to choose from. She found the metal “man table” in a store and knew it was perfect. Fortunately, the partners agreed. As Mike says, “It’s a little piece of whimsy; it makes the room happy and exciting.”

an opportunity to showcase Doug’s collection of Roseville pottery; taking into consideration furnishings and accessories already at hand, she infused a contemporary Asian-inspired décor that turned the partners’ groans into grins.

“From the very beginning we were all of the same mindset of what needed to be done, and you don’t always have that with clients,” Andi enthuses. “The pottery really started the whole thing; it’s exciting to find someone who collects something so wonderful.”

Doug, who had never heard of the Roseville line until 10 years ago (see the sidebar at left), got his first glimpse of the much sought-after pottery while at the Indian River Mall. “It was some local show there,” he recalls. “I

really liked what I saw, but didn’t buy anything. That’s just about the time I became addicted to eBay. In those early years there were a lot of collectors online trying to sell their wares, and there weren’t just a few pieces of Roseville pottery for sale, there were thousands. The prices were pretty reasonable and I started bidding and winning the auctions. Then I got introduced to the finer pieces, those from 1924 to 1948.”

In 1998, Doug co-founded SpectorSoft, a Vero Beach software company that provides Internet security. “We had two markets in mind,” he explains. “Parents concerned about what their children were doing on the Internet and who they were talking to, and businesses

concerned about keeping employees with Internet access focused and on the task, rather than wasting hours a day surfing non-work related websites.

“Internet filters did nothing to protect children in chat rooms, and we discovered very early on that many were sexual in nature, especially those on AOL. Lots of kids were visiting these chat rooms not realizing their true nature. Our products record everything children do on the Internet, and provide full transcripts of the chats they engage in. That opened a lot of eyes and made parents realize how unsafe it was to allow their children access to the Internet.”

SpectorSoft, which started small, now has 57 employees and recorded \$13 million in revenue last year. It has become a market leader in parental monitoring software and monitoring software for small businesses, and is ranked among *INC* magazine’s list of the top 5,000 fastest-growing companies in the United States.

As the company grew, Doug and Mike began to think about purchasing a house closer to their Vero Beach office. “We were originally in Melbourne and our desire early on was to do our work from home, then go into the office two or three days a week,” says Doug. “But, about four years ago, we began looking for a place in Vero Beach. Mike was checking out listings on the Internet, and that’s how we found the River Club.”

Doug says candidly that the house is a lot more than he ever thought he would own in his lifetime. “We had come from California where we had paid a lot of money for a very small bungalow. When we bought this house we spent half as much money and got something that was larger and much nicer. When we saw the model



Knowing something special was needed over the fireplace, but not sure what, Andi used her creativity and resourcefulness to design the three-dimensional hanging. The striking silk fabric over a padded wood frame features colors that complement the sea foam green and azure blue of the rug.

with the high-coffered ceilings, I said oh, my God, this is wonderful.”

The one thing that wasn’t wonderful was that first sofa. It had to go. Doug and Mike decided to move it into the

den where it sits today, a reminder of what it took to bring Andi aboard.

“By the time she got here there was nothing in our living room except the rug, which is a hand-knotted piece

that's light but with a lot of pattern and design, and a display cabinet we had filled with Roseville pottery," says Mike. "The cabinet is very Asian in design, simple in an arts-and-crafts kind of way but also quite modern looking. We definitely knew that and the rug were going to stay."

Andi considered the cabinet, the pottery and the rug in serene shades of blues and greens to be a promising start. "Arranging accessories and fabrics is really my strong suit," she says. "That's the fun part about going into peoples' houses, and Doug and Mike already had some wonderful

things to work with."

"We had several Barbara Barry furniture pieces," adds Doug. "We really like her style, which is a classic design that blends in with everything, no matter what."

Barry's designs are known for a pared-down elegance reminiscent of 1930s Hollywood, plus an air of modern sensibility, which made them a perfect fit with the Asian theme. That's why Andi, an advocate of less is more, suggested a Barbara Barry couch and side chairs for the living room.

"You describe what you want and

Andi comes back with an idea and it's right on," says Mike. "If for some reason she presented us with something and we didn't like it, that was fine with her. From the beginning we've had a very positive working partnership."

That kind of agree-to-disagree relationship is what prompted Andi to suggest placing a metal table with a tall, slim figure as the base between two living room chairs. It's not only artistically exciting but serves a functional purpose as well.



Andi was delighted when she saw the dining-room table with its gleaming bamboo top and sleek lines. Culling through Doug's pottery collection, she selected complimentary pieces, spacing them single file along the buffet. More pottery peers out from the decorative cabinet on the opposite wall; perched on top is a gourd, posing as a most impressive pear, the work of Key West artist Helen Harrison.

“It’s call the ‘man table,’” Andi explains. “I walked into a store that’s now out of business and when I saw it I thought this is so great, so cool, we just have to have it. I came back and told Mike and Doug what it looked like, and they immediately agreed with me.”

“It’s a little piece of whimsy and it makes the room seem happy and exciting,” Mike adds, noting that Andi continually had an eye for seeking items that complimented what he and Doug already had, rearranging and refreshing rooms, adding a subtle touch of color and sparkle here and there, and occasional surprises.

For example, when she learned that the partners hadn’t been able to find a suitable chandelier for the foyer, the three searched for options, finally coming up with what they consider to be the perfect solution—an Italian handmade silk Fortuny lighting sculpture. The original creator, Mariano Fortuny y Madrzo (1871-1949), was blessed with a curious and innovative mind that led him to focus on artistic production based on research in a variety of disciplines, including lighting and architecture as well as interior and stage design.

“We’d had trouble finding the right lighting fixtures,” Mike says. “We don’t like glass or gold, but when we saw the Fortuny we knew it would work.”

The partners weren’t so sure when Andi came up with a proposal for the empty space above the living room fireplace.

“Mike and I agreed we needed something there,” Andi says. “His idea was a beautiful piece of fabric. Well, I saw this wonderful one and showed it to him but it wasn’t right



The breakfast alcove features a Barbara Barry table and chairs. “We already had several of her furniture pieces,” says Doug. “We really like her style, which is a classic design that blends in with everything.” Bamboo window treatments and a silk Fortuny light fixture overhead continue the Asian theme.

so I went down to DACOTA (the Design Center of the Americas in Dania Beach) and bought this square wood piece that looks like it was part

of an open Chinese screen, a kind of decorative window treatment.

“I didn’t like it hanging there by itself so I went back to DACOTA



The wallpaper pattern Andi selected for the guest bathroom has raised golden turtles heading as if out to sea.

where I found an unusual silk fabric in a golden green with a small design. It looks hand-made and Mike really liked it. So my upholsterer Tony came up and padded it so that it was three dimensional, then double-welded it in around the frame so it looks like it was always there. The colors complemented the sea foam green and azure blue of the rug, which I repeated by adding the hand-screened silk pillows on the sofa.”

When it came to the dining room, Andi was delighted with the furnishings Doug and Mike had chosen, particularly the table. With its gleaming bamboo top, the Williams-Sonoma catalog purchase was the second piece of furniture the partners had bought to accommodate their penchant for hosting small, sit-down dinner parties.



In the guest suite, Andi layered the Barbara Barry bed in soothing shades of soft green silk. Selecting shells from Mike’s collection, she had them matted in linen with silver inlays and framed in caramel-stained birch. Andi discovered the striking animal sculpture in a shop and added it to the mix. “To me, interesting accessories and fabrics, the combination of patterns and textures, just make the room.”

Andi culled through Doug’s pottery collection and selected complimentary pieces, spacing them single file along the buffet; more pottery peers out from behind the glass front of a decorative cabinet on the opposite wall. Perched on top, an impressive gourd posing as an oversized pear never fails to become a conversation piece.

“We found it in a little gallery in Key West,” Doug recalls. “It’s by a local artist named Helen Harrison who glazed the gourd with a beeswax finish and carved the wood stem; we loved it because of the mottling.”

For Andi, having such an interesting array of artistic accessories at her decorating disposal was pure joy. So, too, were the Barbara Barry table



The partners already had much to choose from that delighted Andi. "You pick out the best of what you have at hand, and Doug and Mike had so many wonderful things to work with—their art and books and pottery collections. It's not about me or my tastes, it's about the clients. As long as they're pleased, I am."

and chairs the partners had arranged in the breakfast alcove. Hanging a decorative carved wood three-panel screen the two had spotted while browsing through an antique show at the county fairgrounds on the wall added an Asian flair to the intimate eating area over which another Fortuny chandelier now sheds soft rays of light.

Doug and Mike were so pleased with the additions Andi had made, they asked her to wave her magic decorating wand over the guest suite. Again, she surveyed the furnishings already in place and got to work. One of her first additions was a substantial wood sculpture. "It looks Indonesian," she recalls. "I found it in a shop in Fort Lauderdale and just had

to have it. To me, interesting accessories, fabrics, the combination of patterns and textures, just make the room."

That's why she layered the Barbara Barry bed in soothing shades of soft green silk and, selecting shells from Mike's collection, had them matted in linen with silver inlays and framed in caramel-stained birch. In the guest bath she chose a hand-painted wall paper design dotted with raised gold turtles and a silk plaid valance for above the shower.

Doug and Mike already had the basics to make the entry foyer inviting and interesting. A colorful curved painting with an opening the size of a oversized fist is hard to ignore. So is the credenza below, which provides the perfect surface for displaying pieces of hand-made pottery by Hawaiian-born clay master Toshiko Takaezu.

"Toshiko is about 85 years old now and her work is wonderful," Doug says, holding one of the pots and gently shaking it. "Some of them have a little pebble inside that moves around, which is a difficult thing to do. As for the painting, I found it on eBay, and I took a chance because I bought it after seeing a photo. I really like the hole up there and the way it's shaped."

So did Andi. "You pick out the best of what you have at hand and Doug and Mike had so many wonderful things to work with—their art and books and pottery collections. It's not about me or my tastes, it's about the clients. As long as they're pleased I am."

There's no doubt that Doug and Mike *are* pleased. All they have to do is look in the den to see the sofa that started it all. What had seemed so wrong turned out to be very right after all. ❁

