

Interior high notes

Riva Del Lago strikes a chord for 2006 Symphony Showcase

By LIBBY BOREN McMILLAN • Photos by GARTH FRANCIS

Nearly 3,000 people rose to new heights during the 2006 Symphony Designer Showcase. For two and a half weeks in February, the glass elevators at Riva Del Lago worked overtime, whisking curious visitors and Southwest Florida Symphony Orchestra supporters up to two luxurious residences and a fine art gallery created especially for the event.

"It's more of a classic contemporary look, very warm and inviting."

Gayle Wilson, Gary David Designs
Grand Penthouse Master Suite

An annual project of the Southwest Florida Symphony Society for 14 years, the event this year boasted several "firsts."

It was the first time a high-rise community provided the showcase setting. It was the first time two residences shared the showcase spotlight. And in another first, one of those residences was outfitted from floor to ceiling by the same design firm. (In keeping with the showcase tradition, each room in the second residence highlighted the talents of a different design firm or interior designer.)

A SENSATIONAL SETTING

Riva Del Lago overlooks Lakes Park in south Fort Myers. Anyone traveling U.S. 41 and Gladiolus Drive had watched the community take shape over several months, making the prominent property the ideal location for the 2006 showcase.

The community consists of two 21-story towers flanking Riva Centrale, a 13,000-square-foot common area that houses the Riva Club Room with a bar, billiards, a fireplace and a catering kitchen; a state-of-the-art media lounge; a fitness center and pool; a library with sitting room and fireplace; and a business center and boardroom.

Riva Centrale served as the elegant starting point for a gala preview the evening before showcase tours opened to the public. More than 300 invited guests noshed on four-star food provided by Sanibel's Dolce Vita restaurant, while a strong ensemble reminded partygoers who was benefiting from the event.

The south tower showcase residence, an Executive Penthouse with more than 2,400 square feet on the 20th floor, was done entirely by Denmark Interiors. Designers Judy Cahill, Jackie Streets and Penny Cathell chose a rich palette of deep browns and rich blacks, accented by splashes of red and gold for a result that was bold but cozy.



"When you go up into your residence, you've got the loft feel of a New York penthouse overlooking Central Park ... but you can go down to your car and be at the beach in just a few minutes."

**Barbara Bell, Robb & Stucky
Grand Penthouse living room, dining room and kitchen**

Top right: A detail in the dining area of the Denmark Interiors penthouse.

A playful chandelier in the entryway kicked off the wow factor without delay, and the open floor plan included lots of surprising angles to please the eye.

The master bedroom sported a cool, contemporary Asian look, with dark woods, a platform bed and an ultra-modern lowboy with amusing hardware. The room's striking art was perfectly in sync with custom linens, luxurious bed rolls and pillows.



The guest room's simple lines were deliberately accentuated: no molding, and eye-popping red accents against chocolate metallic walls. An iridescent tile clock invited guests to not take this room too seriously.

"It was the most grand, elegant (and delicious) gala in 14 years," says Pat O. Lang, president of the Symphony Society.

Just off the entryway, the residence's thoroughly modern home office featured a cooler palette of icy blue offset by dark espresso shelving and a sleek, curving glasstop desk.

Left to right: The master bedroom by Denmark Interiors; Robb & Stucky

A GRAND RESIDENCE

The north tower Grand Penthouse showcase, with more than 5,500 square feet on the 21st floor, was a collaborative effort, with rooms done by designers from Accessories Etc., Gary David Designs, Interiors by Decorating Den, Norris Furniture & Interiors, Robb & Stucky and Sloan Davis Interiors.

Soothing beiges and rich textures dominated the great room's chic monochromatic theme, playing off a diamond-patterned wall. Of particular note was the 5-foot-square glass dining table beneath an oversized drum-shaped chandelier and glossy tray ceiling. A writing desk sat contentedly in the corner by the terrace overlooking Lakes Park.



The 20th floor penthouse showcase residence was decorated entirely by Denmark Interiors in bold colors with playful touches.



The kitchen had at least five work

stations and an 18-foot wrap-around granite counter with room for eight woven leather barstools. Views from the 50-foot open terrace stretched at least 180 degrees; nearly 90 more were added by stepping onto the south porch.

While the laundry room — complete with its own gift-wrap station — got quite a few exclamations, it was the master suite that often held a crowd.

The Grand Penthouse kitchen by Robb & Stucky

A pair of 8-foot doors lead into the ultimate boudoir and bath

in sunwashed hues warmed by soft metallic finishes. Everyone agreed the piece de resistance was a soaking tub that provided sunset views from its marble platform. Fresh bromeliads, orchids and original sculpture further enhanced this restful haven designed by Gayle Wilson and Gary Niethamer of Gary David Designs.

The Symphony Society's annual signature fund raiser generated nearly \$48,000 this year, a combination of gala and showcase ticket sales and art sales.

The society is now on the hunt for the 2007 showcase location. Anyone who would like to offer an existing home or one under construction for consideration is invited to call Christine La Croix at 282- 5500. ▶

"A pearlescent paint adds dimensions to the walls. The clean contemporary lines of the furnishings complement the rich, dark woods of which they have been created. The bedding is luxurious and invites the occupant to relax and lounge."

**Chris Knudsen, Accessories. Etc. Inc.
Design Group
Grand Penthouse guest suite No. 2**



"We were happy being able to keep the continuity between the rooms. We incorporated several different palettes for different rooms, but we pulled all those colors from the living room."

Judy Cahill,
Denmark Interiors



Clockwise from top: The Grand Penthouse library by Norris Furniture & Interiors; The Grand Penthouse living area by Robb & Stucky; The Grand Penthouse guest suite No. 2 by Accessories, Etc. The "wrapping center" in the laundry room by Decorating Den; The master suite by Gary David Designs