

## Lobby Re-Design Creates A Dramatic & Beautiful First Impression

By Marcia Bradford

The lobby of a condominium complex often serves as an important portal between homeowners and guests and the outside world. It's a point of entry, where a vacation experience begins or a season spent in a second home gets underway. With this in mind, the homeowners association at Silver Beach Towers in Destin recently renovated the lobby of the resort's East Tower, which serves as the site of guest check-in and guest services. ➤

Incorporating the view from the second story of the lobby, the new design features a chandelier with oblong-shaped glass spheres that appear to trickle down like water over the custom-made reclaimed table.

Photos by Mark Worden, Lightwave Photography

# A Grand Entrance





In updating the lobby's seating areas, West Indies style furnishings were replaced with stylish and comfortable seating, upholstered in durable fabrics that will stand up to weather and use.



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"The first impression of Silver Beach Towers is made curbside," pointed out Steve Odom, president of Silver Beach Towers East. "Because of our beautiful, well maintained grounds, the property itself is very impressive. However, the lobby interior finishes and furniture were a West Indies theme dating to 2001 for the East building and 2004 for the West building."

He further explained that, while the West building had taken a step forward two years ago by replacing carpet with tile, it was obvious that a complete renovation of the lobby was well past due. UV rays had faded upholstery materials and framed prints. Also, the area was carpeted and hard to maintain.

Fortunately, the necessity to update the lobby also created an opportunity to re-imagine the condo community's main point of entry, and Cara McBroom, an interior designer with Lovelace Interiors in Destin (Miramar Beach) was chosen to create a new look and feel for the space.

Odom said that the association board of directors

was very involved in the process of selecting a designer and worked with the Home Owners Associations (HOA) staff to put together an ad hoc design team consisting of several owners, board members and staff.

"The staff had previously assisted by contacting several area firms to ask for proposals and ultimately chose to recommend Cara," he recounted. "Her presentation was shown to the homeowners at the annual meeting and the board of directors voted unanimously to engage Cara and Lovelace Interiors to perform the renovation work."

#### Creating An Inspiring and Inviting Entrance

From her discussions with HOA members and staff, McBroom understood the overriding objective of the redesign project.

"We wanted the design to be inspiring, and inviting enough to give owners a sense of pride in their home (or, in some cases, their home-away-from-home)," she explained. "Alternately, we want them to immediately forget where they came from when they enter the lobby. We want them to know they've arrived at the beach, and begin to relax and enjoy themselves."

With that in mind, McBroom drew upon her design skills to create a look that was fresh, timeless, clean and uncomplicated.

"I wanted to lighten things up, with new colors and special lighting," she explained. "I leaned toward a transitional/modern style, with organic elements intertwined, knowing this would appeal to more people. In choosing a color scheme, I drew from the colors right outside the window, which overlooks the beach, as I knew this would have more staying power."

#### Bringing the "Wow" Factor

In developing focal points, McBroom brought the "wow" factor with the custom entry table and chandelier. "I knew it would create more of a grand entrance than before," she said.

Indeed, the oblong-shaped glass spheres of the chandelier seem to trickle down like water over the custom-made reclaimed wood table. Built by Armored Frog from McBroom's drawings, the new table is the perfect mix of natural and modern, with its beautiful wood, ombre stain effect, chrome banding and large hobnails.

McBroom was able to carry this effect into the pool lobby.



Original art by Grayton Beach artist Mary Hong brings the colors and textures of the beach into the lobby.

"When I saw this large, empty untouched space, I immediately saw it as prime real estate for something special," she recalled.

As a result of her design approach, the lighting that overhangs the pool lobby now has the same, trickling, sparkling effect as the entry chandelier. An S-shaped track uses the entire ceiling, and holds a variety of glass and crystal pendants, which hang at different heights.

"During the day, this provides visual movement and interest, without detracting from the

incredible view," she explained. "At night, it creates a beautiful twinkling star effect."

Adding to the impact are glass art panels, originals created by Grayton Beach artist Mary Hong, hanging in the two-story section of the lobby walls.

Another important focal point that received a major facelift was the staircase. McBroom liked the style of the woodwork, but felt that a fresh coat of paint would lighten it up and create a more transitional look. She also replaced the ➤





To provide a facelift to the lobby staircase, the woodwork was lightened and busy iron balusters were replaced with suspended glass panels.

busy iron balusters with suspended glass panels, which really opened things up visually.

To complement and enhance the new look, planters were placed at the entry doors. This interior landscaping was created by Pat Heroman, of Heroman Services Plant Company in Pensacola.

#### Keeping Utility In Mind

Utility was an important consideration in the design, according to McBroom.

"During the spring and summer months, the lobby receives some pretty heavy traffic," she said. "Lots of families and children come in from the beach and pool, so utility was a large consideration in choosing fabrics and finishes."

To provide comfortable seating while protecting against sand, sun, wear and tear, McBroom had all the main pieces covered in a soft, leather-like, but durable vinyl, which can be wiped clean with a damp cloth. Pillows were covered in solution-dyed acrylic Sunbrella fabrics.



Cara McBroom, an interior designer with Lovelace Interiors in Destin

Odom further pointed out that flooring was changed from carpet to tile, "which looks great and makes for a much cleaner atmosphere."

The renovations also extended into the ground and lobby level hallways, as well as the elevator lobbies. "We replaced the light fixtures, added artwork and furniture, and painted in those areas as well," Odom said.

The result of the cooperative effort by McBroom, Lovelace Interiors and the Silver Beach Towers HOA is a dramatic, yet inviting point of entry that welcomes owners and guests to enjoy wonderful experiences on Destin's beautiful beach.

Odom added that he has heard nothing but positive comments and compliments from owners and realtors.

"The lobby design, colors, flooring, artwork and lighting all make a statement for the entire resort," he said. "Cara's concepts took advantage of the stunning view through the two-story glass window walls fronting the beautiful beach and water. Discriminating prospects who want to invest in a higher end property will be impressed."



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