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Grovenor House

Florentine Designer Michele Bonan Imparts a Nautical Theme into the Lobby of Grovenor House



A lover of boats, a master of style, a curator of all things refined, Michele Bonan is the designer du jour, and his magical transformations grace the lobby of Grovenor House, Coconut Grove's most luxe addition. It is not in the least bit surprising that design-wise, Grovenor House defies tradition with a nautical motif. The tower's developer Ugo Colombo is known to select the absolute best in the business to impart the finest of finishes and most avant-garde approaches. For his latest endeavor, Colombo commissioned the Florentine designer, who took inspiration from the property's location, fronting a marina and yacht club on prestigious South Bayshore Drive, introducing the water theme indoors in an unexpected and refreshing way.

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And the white, swing-like benches are actually stationary seating

Like its predecessors, this Colombo project flaunts the most exclusive of addresses, with an equally enviable ambiance that embodies the upscale lifestyle of its residents. To reflect that privileged standard of living, Bonan recreated life on a yacht. "I wanted to evoke a lavish but comfortable environment, playing up the casual elegance of lounging on a ship," he says. "The seaside glamour of the 1950s and 60s is brought into modern marina mode here."

Crisp and clean — akin to the way the wind feels on the face as a ship sets sail on the waters — the lobby is defined by teak, mahogany, and polished chrome, highlighted by white walls and navy-and-white striped floor coverings. Traditional porthole windows set the mood and flood the space with natural light from the Florida sun. Infusing a personal touch, Bonan

adorns the part of the lobby most closely resembling a private living area with black and white photographs of boats at sea, never straying from his purposeful design objective. Of course, the component that most strongly supports the maritime theme, water, is prominent, with a waterfall cascading gently from the pool level down to the far end of the lobby.

Grovenor House's lobby invites its dwellers to unwind with the perfect amount of informality. Yet, the scheme is also whimsical, with design features that surprise and delight the senses, confirming the notion that this is truly some place special. Bonan's meticulous attention to detail gives him the ability to portray the harborside/yacht club storyline well and put a nautical twist to even the most traditional elements. The fireplace is fueled by gas, not real flames. The aquarium is also faux, a computer-generated fixture that simulates live fish swimming about. And the white, swing-like benches are actually stationary seating.

The most conspicuous of ironies is that the lobby is the entryway to a lavish residential haven, the most frequented common area of the 32-story building, but it never takes on the characteristics of a lobby. According to Bonan, "Lobbies tend to be impersonal, common. I wanted to avoid that vacuous feeling and define a space that can be used, a social gathering place for those who live here."

In fact, he holds so fast to that ever-important philosophy that he takes it to another level — literally. On the mezzanine floor, accessible by two winding open staircases fashioned from exotic teak, is a library situated at the far end of the lobby. The authentic, made-to-be-used, generously stocked refuge is dedicated to quiet reflection or catching up on a classic. "I remove the barriers that walls between the residences create, in the hopes that a greater sense of community will be cultivated, embraced," Bonan says.

Grovenor House. For more information call 305-854-1223
www.grovenorhouse.com

