

Changing Seasons

Meyer Davis and Inventure Design partner on a modern upgrade

By JoAnn Greco

Photography by Don Riddle

When designers from Meyer Davis' New York office first saw the Four Seasons Hotel Houston, which opened in 1982 and hadn't undergone a major renovation since, they were greeted by an "extremely dated exterior and an entrance in need of a fresh transformation," says senior designer Kristen Cochran.

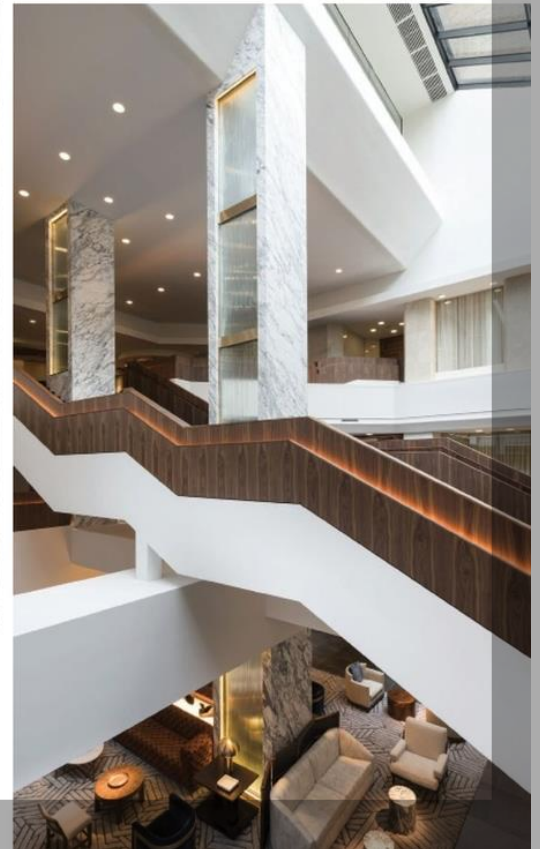
Removing the Brutalist-style entry wasn't an option, so Cochran and her team covered the foundations of the massive columns in a bronze-finished metal, created custom channeled glass windows glistening with lighting, and suspended a grid of lights from the ceiling of the porte-cochère.

The effect—dark and brooding yet sparkling and welcoming—serves as a picture perfect signal of the renovation that now awaits inside. Houston-based Inventure Design served as architect of record for the project, which was limited to the exterior and first floor arrival experience, and besides the redo of the drop-off and entry doors, included a new reception desk and lobby atrium, and the additions of a bar (Richard Sandoval's Bayou & Bottle) with a state-of-the-art golf simulator, a men's

boutique, a private dining area, and an outdoor lounge carved from the building's exterior. (Phase one of the renovation—an update of the spa and fitness center by Rottet Studio—opened in April 2016.)

"Everything was completely gutted and redone," says Scott Dooley, senior associate at Inventure. "The driving force was getting the property aesthetically competitive with some newer ones and to do so within an extremely compressed timeline in advent of the Super Bowl coming to town."

For Meyer Davis, that meant crafting a material, color, and finish palette that evoked a fresh and contemporary sense of residential luxury. A premium was put on mixed metals, suggests Cochran, who says the "unfinished brass, blackened steel, gun metal, and bronze will all patina and deepen with age." Honed and layered natural stones—including the white and gray veins of Arabascato marble that shows up in the interior columns and book-matched walls, the antique gray marble that spills over the floor, and the smoked onyx used for the bar top and front—



Above and right: To combat the dark interior architecture of the Four Seasons Hotel Houston, Meyer Davis tore out a low ground floor ceiling and revealed a bright atrium above the grand staircase.



Above: Mixed metals, rich leather, and jewel-tone upholstery as well as book-matched walls, dark wood furniture, and feature walls give the hotels' public spaces a feel of comfort and luxury.

echo the coolness of the metals, while saddle leathers, jewel-toned upholstery, and dark wood furniture and feature walls inject richness and warmth to the spaces.

The major challenge facing Meyer Davis, though, was the lobby's cramped and dark interior architecture. "Although a grand staircase offered great light from an atrium, it was underutilized," says Cochran.

"Plus, the oversized, built-in planters that flanked the stair were visually obtrusive and segmented the space." By tearing out a low, ground-floor ceiling and removing the stair's middle level, designers better revealed the atrium, which now stretches the entirety of three floors. "The result," says Cochran, "is an inviting and bright living room that you walk into from the first moment you step into the hotel."

fourseasonshotel.com; meyerdavis.com; invdesgroup.com

Owner and Purchasing Firm

Four Seasons

Architecture and Interior Design Firms

Inventure Design and Meyer Davis

Interior Design Project Team

Will Meyer, Gray Davis, Kristen Cochran, Eric Appel, and Amanda Davis

Contractor

Turner Construction

Custom Glass Pieces

Nathan Allan Glass Studios

Custom Leather Screens

Richard Wrightman

Stone

ABC Stone

Upholstery Fabrication

Matizza

Artwork

C2 Art Advisors, Cynthia Byrnes Contemporary Art, and RARECulture

Carpet

By Meyer Davis; fabricated by Tailor Made Textiles

Casegoods and Furniture

By Meyer Davis; fabricated by Matizza, Genesis Hospitality, Vaughan Benz, Lily Jack, Neri & Hu, The Future Perfect, Moroso, Espasso, DWR, Reagan Hayes, The New Traditionalists, Powell & Bonnell, Altura, Desiron, Cliff Young, and Julian Chinchester

Drapery

Innovations

Fabric

Holly Hunt, Mokum, Moore & Giles, Jim Thompson, Zimmer & Rhode, J Robert Scott, Perenials, Romo, Kvradrat, Kelly Wearstler, Fil Doux, Pollack, Innovations, Demar Leather, and Osbourne & Little

Lighting

Niamh Barry, Holly Hunt, Apparatus Studio, Matthew Fairbank Design, Kelly Wearstler, Hammerton, and Circa Lighting

Wallcovering

Phillip Jeffries