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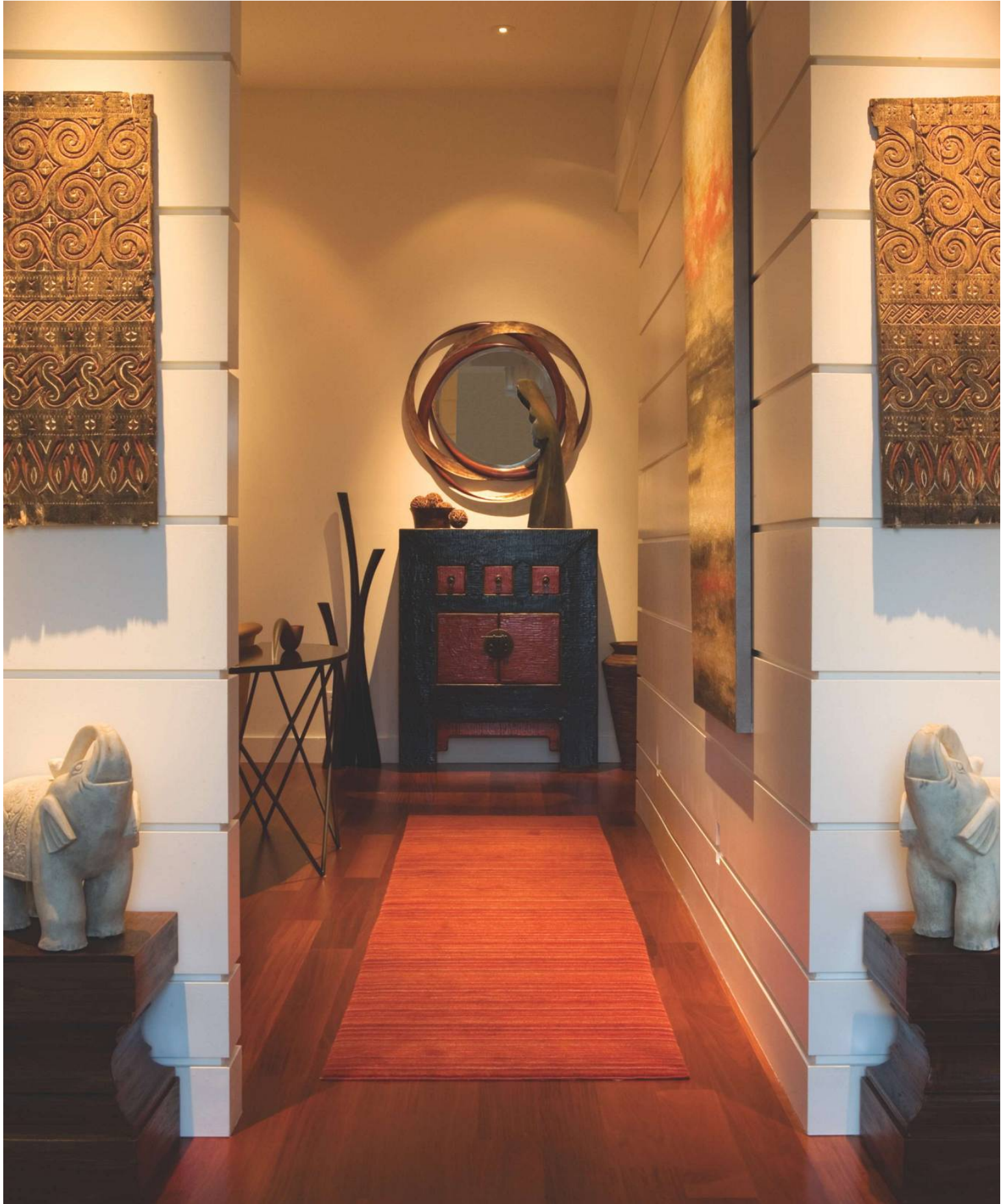
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DESIGNING DUO

A talented couple veers from the traditional to create a chic, contemporary space

By Patra Taylor | Photography by Dickson Dunlap

For Denise Maksimowitz, changing careers became a jumping-off point for changing her life. An executive for a global leader in communications, Denise came to realize her long career in corporate America, although successful, lacked one vital ingredient: passion. One morning, the inspiration for her to completely change course and follow her dream appeared in the pages of a national newspaper. It read, "Just think how good you'll be when you're doing something you have a passion for."

Ten years later, Denise says following her dream has been an amazing journey of transformation for both her and her husband, business partner and best friend, Dennis. "We're in the interior design field now and we absolutely love what we're doing," she says.

Shortly after earning her master of fine arts degree in

interior design from George Washington University, the couple formed DenMak Design, LLC in their home state of Virginia. Growing up in a large family that was always building or renovating, Dennis found he had a natural interest in his wife's new career. A former corporate executive in charge of major projects, Dennis believes the couple's "detour" through the corporate world has helped set DenMak Design apart from other design firms. Denise agrees.

"With our business background, we realize that every endeavor is a project and needs to be developed as such," says Denise, who holds an NCIDQ certification as well as an MBA. "Interior design requires creativity, but the process should be approached in a thoughtful manner."

"We find that many of our clients have time, budget and other constraints," continues Denise. "We have the



education, training and experience to work within those constraints and still deliver notable projects on time and on budget.”

Having a formal project plan in place frees their creative spirits and allows the DenMak team to bring fresh, innovative ideas and solutions to their projects creating results their clients love. “That’s the hallmark of our signature approach,” notes Denise.

This signature approach, along with a thoughtful respect for their clients’ tastes and ideas—as well as the contagious synergy this team brings to every project—soon earned DenMak Design a word-of-mouth reputation for excellence in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. With their professional transformation well underway, the couple decided the time was right to tackle their firm’s biggest project to

date—a project that, when complete, would not only showcase their interior design skills and expand their business in a new community, but also redefine the couple’s lifestyle.

“We visited a friend on Sullivan’s Island for many years,” explains Dennis. “When our son was attending the University of South Carolina, we were drawn back here. The first time we visited our son and his family in Mt. Pleasant, we bought this property, intending that it would someday be our home.”

About five years later, the couple began the process of designing and building their new home in Saltgrass Pointe, an intimate subdivision situated along the Intracoastal Waterway in Old Mount Pleasant. Their exciting trip through the design world inspired them to step away from the traditional style they’d

enjoyed in previous homes, opting instead for a contemporary style that allowed them to indulge their eclectic taste. “Although it is based on the Charleston Single architectural style, our home is not what you would expect of a Lowcountry home,” offers Dennis. “It has a definite modern vibe.”

That “modern vibe” begins in the foyer where a series of horizontal panels draws one’s view down a long wall to an artfully arranged composition. Atop an old Chinese chest sits a contemporary African sculpture with an elegant, chiseled profile that’s reflected in an oversized mirror.

Contemporary design has long been characterized by its clean lines and smooth surfaces. Anything but “cold, stark and sterile,” the couple’s living room achieves its fresh





sophisticated look through a masterful blend of carefully selected furnishings and art.

“Interesting finds from our travels are really shown to their best advantage against a backdrop of modern furniture.”

An intricate mosaic pattern of limestone, hand-cut and chiseled in Tunisia, surrounds a wood-burning fireplace—the focal point of the living room. Wide-plank Santos mahogany flooring topped with a hand-tufted New Zealand wool rug adds a layer of warmth and texture. The room’s luggage-colored seating is from Poltrona Frau, a 100-year-old Italian company that is acclaimed for its hand-made modern and classic furnishings. Red accents

“Comfort and livability don’t have to be sacrificed to create a beautiful interior,” says Denise.”

complement colorful modern paintings, while other three-dimensional art and sculptural pieces add an extra layer of texture and interest to the room’s ambiance. “Comfort and livability don’t have to be sacrificed to create a beautiful interior,” says Denise.

It’s no surprise that, for these self-proclaimed “foodies,” the kitchen and dining

area forms the heart of their home. Carefully planned layers of light set the ambiance for any occasion. Designed specifically for entertaining family and friends, the homeowners take full advantage of the flexibility the space offers. “No matter what your house is like, everyone loves to congregate in the kitchen. With this floor plan, we’ve been able to comfortably host a family reunion of 40, as well as a sit-down dinner for 16,” recalls Dennis.

The dark oak kitchen cabinetry, manufactured by Italy’s Snaiidero, was designed by Pininfarina, a name long associated with Ferrari and Maserati autos. Pininfarina designs are distinguished by their beauty, practicality and maximum





functionality, and this kitchen is no exception. A backsplash of textured stainless steel tiles and stainless steel Miele appliances speak to the metal channels integrated into the modern cabinetry.

Under an origami-inspired chandelier, a large dining table, selected for the unexpected metal detail in its legs, is surrounded by comfortable, durable red leather dining chairs. The custom console table, an original DenMak design, marries dark oak and stainless steel. A lighted niche features a rotating display of collectibles.

World travelers, the couple sought to create a luxurious master suite to conjure up that “vacation” feeling. The color palette was inspired by a painting they purchased from a Georgetown artist. “We loved how the vibrant fuchsia contrasts with the overall tranquil mood of the painting,” says Denise, who selected a dreamy aqua wall color and an iridescent fuchsia drape as

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a backdrop for the white leather Poltrona Frau bed, which appears to float over the carpeting. The room glows under dimmable cove lighting that highlights the architectural details. A palm-fringed balcony overlooks the private backyard. The bath features an oversized walk-in shower, a deep soaking tub, vessel sinks and custom-designed bamboo cabinetry that warms up the natural aqua slate and pebbles.

With their Lowcountry home complete, DenMak Design currently serves clients in both the Washington, D.C. and the Charleston, S.C.

areas.

“We chose contemporary styling for our new Lowcountry home,” concludes Denise. “But as a professional designer, I can work with any design style a person may have.

“In the end, when a project is completed and we’ve gone home, our goal is to leave our clients with a design solution that delivers in a way they never could have imagined. We want them to say, ‘I never would have thought of this myself, but I love it!’ For us, that’s the ultimate measure of our success.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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