



Grand Del Mar Resort & Spa Villa Living Room



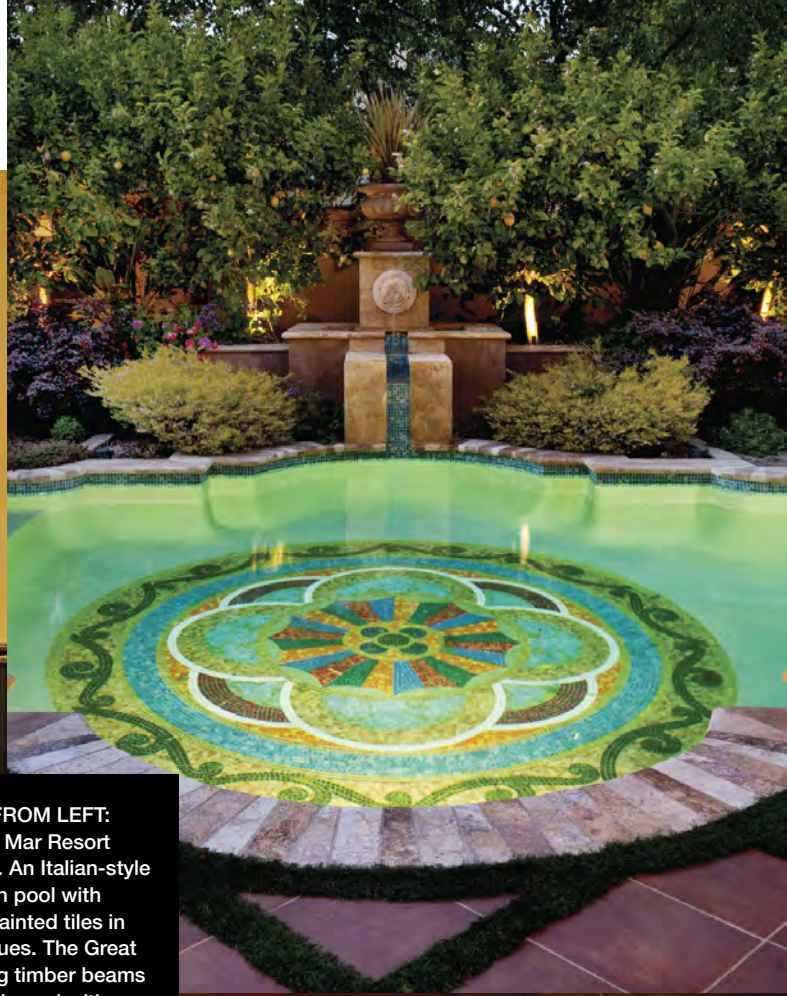
Elegance Redefined

Award-winning interior designer Warren Sheets has left his sophisticated mark on some of America's most magnificent private residences, country clubs, and resorts. *Gentry Home* catches up with Sheets to discuss his design philosophy and highlight a few of his favorite projects.

TEXT BY SHANNON SULLIVAN

His extraordinary body of work will stop you in your tracks. As the designer of projects like the five-star Grand Del Mar Resort & Spa in San Diego or a 50,000-square-foot collectible automobile museum, Warren Sheets is a man who could easily rest on his laurels and reputation, demanding your respect and awe. If you ever have the privilege to speak with Mr. Sheets, you'll discover that he is a humble man who earns your respect with his eloquence and imagination.

In so many ways, Sheets is more excited to be a part of his clients' stories and dreams than he is with the finished product. Whether designing from the ground up, renovating a home, or redecorating it, Sheets greatly respects his role in his clients' lives. "History →



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Grand Del Mar Resort and Spa lobby. An Italian-style villa's reflection pool with 20,000 hand-painted tiles in a rainbow of hues. The Great Room featuring timber beams and ceilings adorned with intricate hand-stenciling and a custom-designed Jerusalem limestone fireplace, hand-crafted by artisans in a Veronese-style villa.

and stories are important. As a designer, you can start the story, live with the story, or look at the story in a different way," Sheets remarks. One such narrative is the aforementioned automobile museum, the Milhous Auto Museum and Museum of Collectibles, completed in 1995. "We created a ground-up, 50,000-square-foot space to display the Milhous' collection of American automobiles and one-of-a-kind, turn-of-the-century musical instruments from around the world," Sheets explains. Based on original 1930's and 1940's pictures, Sheets' design ensured that every element was carefully created. "When someone asks you to design a museum of their collectibles, you're pretty sure those collectibles are things you haven't seen before or will ever see again and thus deserve our respect. We showcased them in a diverse way and made our clients' dreams a reality."

An integral part of making that vision a reality is his longtime design partner, Sharon Regan. "We're intent on working together on the thousands of decisions that comprise each project. We know what's going on at all times, and we're able to bounce decisions off one another and provide that client-centric approach," explains →





A contemporary master bedroom

“History and stories are important. As a designer, you can start the story, live with the story, or look at the story in a different way.” —WARREN SHEETS

Sheets. It’s this focus on the client, the story, and teamwork that seems to be the only trademark you’ll ever find in a Warren Sheets design. “We want all our projects to be different from one another. We don’t use the same fabric and design over and over. We always want to find new vendors so that our designs aren’t copied, but unique. That’s why clients turn to us.” Aside from his own 10,000-square-foot showroom, Sheets is inspired from sources like San Francisco’s Cowton & Tout, Sue Fisher King, Kneedler-Fauchère, and Designer’s Guild, or architects and designers such as Robert Stern, Thomas O’Brien, and Mark Anthony.

There are those rare times, though, when clients do not always see his vision. One particular residential project comes to mind.

“I wanted to do a medallion for the bottom of a pool. Initially, when we told the clients what it would be and the cost, they didn’t agree. So, our Art Director drew the bottom of the pool in life-sized form. Myself and four of our staff were on the floor, coloring in bits of this life-sized drawing, so that we could communicate the mosaic to the clients. We showed it to them and they said ‘Yes.’” Perhaps it is just as Sheets explains, a case of “You don’t know what you don’t know,” but it very well could be that his vision is so original that it takes a team’s devotion to lie on the floor to bring it to life.

This imagination and success is a large reason why the Grand Del Mar Resort & Spa, completed in 2009, ranks as one of Sheets’ →



TOP TO BOTTOM: A residential project of Sheets' in Idaho. West View of the Milhous Auto Salon, located inside the Milhous Museum of Collectibles in Boca Raton, Florida.

greatest accomplishments. Shockingly enough, Sheets says, “It wasn’t overwhelming because there wasn’t anything there to start with. It was a process, and I amassed and assembled an amazing group of artisans, like a four-generation Italian family who carved all of the marble statues in the hotel. The Grand Del Mar is the result of a creative workshop in which so many ideas were used for the first time here on the West Coast.” Sheets’ understanding of classical approaches combined with his willingness and ability to use old techniques in new ways are other reasons why he so successful with commercial and residential clients.

With his history, it’s incredible to think where Warren Sheets and Warren Sheets Design could go next. For him, though, “I don’t think it really matters what it is, since I’ve done almost every type of design project and art style I can think of. What matters is that I am challenged and creative and have an enjoyable relationship with the client.” With a yearning for more San Francisco-based projects in the future, Warren Sheets seems poised to continue

his role as one of the leading interior designers not only here in the Bay Area, but wherever his clients need him. ■

