



A Dallas Revival

\$36M project aims to restore Stoneleigh's splendor

BY CATHY URELL

Restoring the Art Deco elegance of a Dallas landmark while adding modern sophistication was the aim of a 14-month, \$36-million revitalization project completed earlier this year at the Stoneleigh Hotel & Spa.

Built in 1923, the hotel changed hands many times over the years. Following its acquisition by Prescott Realty Group and Apollo Real Estate Advisors, plans were formulated in 2005 for the restoration of the 170-room hotel.

"It was a beautiful, charming property but it was in need of a facelift," said John

Langston, managing director of Stoneleigh.

"Because the Stoneleigh was a historic hotel at the center of Dallas life for many years, particularly in terms of celebrity events and visiting dignitaries, it was important to respect the history and nature of the architecture while bringing it up to a glamorous level of design so it would again become a hotel of choice for celebrities and the hotel to go to and be seen," added Deborah Lloyd Forrest, principal of ForrestPerkins, the firm that designed the Stoneleigh's new interiors.

At the same time, there was a desire to create interiors that would appeal to a broad range of the population, according to Forrest, whose firm has a track record with historic hotels. "Some other hotels in town are focused on particular segments. We wanted Stoneleigh to appeal to all ages so people in their 20s and 30s would feel at home just as those in their 50s and 60s do. It's a very comfortable yet glamorous hotel," she said.

Four major changes were made within the Stoneleigh's interiors, Forrest noted. "First, the line between the lobby and bar was blurred so the bar could be opened up and reach into the lobby. The spaces really flow together—the lobby, bar and restaurant—to create an entertainment venue," she said.

"The lobby is now what I call a socializing parlor, a wonderful gathering place," Langston added. "And the fabrics and custom furniture that Deborah designed along with the chandeliers make it very special."

The next major change was the addition of a 5,200-square-foot spa on the lower

level. "The spa is really quite lovely. We worked hard to convey comfort and elegance in that space rather than have it feel like a basement," Forrest said.

The third major change was on the guest floors where the original wide corridors were retained for historical reasons but guest bathrooms were enlarged. The bathrooms now feature black and white marble floor tiles, walls with polished rectangular subway tiles and pedestal lavatories with marble tops and metal legs.

"It's really a beautiful bathroom," Forrest said. "And the guestrooms are spacious and comfortable. The Stoneleigh was originally conceived as a residential style hotel where guests would come with their trunks and take up residence in a sense for weeks. We wanted to maintain that comfortable feel."

Guestrooms have custom furnishings, including chocolate-toned mahogany case goods and platinum accents.

The fourth big change was on the Stoneleigh's top floor where a rooftop ballroom was created. Also on that floor is the Stoneleigh's Penthouse, which was originally designed by Dorothy Draper. It is being restored by her protégé, Carlton Varney, of Dorothy Draper, Inc., with the completion anticipated this month.

Former guests as well as the people of Dallas have responded positively to the restoration of the Stoneleigh, Langston said. "It's a beloved building and they're thrilled to see it restored," he said. "Deborah has re-created and re-ignited the glamour of the Stoneleigh."



Guest bathrooms at the Stoneleigh Hotel & Spa in Dallas (left) have been enlarged and refurbished to convey a 1930s feel. Guestrooms at the Stoneleigh (below) are comfortable and spacious.

