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FRENCH finesse

DESIGNER/ARCHITECT JEAN-LOUIS DENIOT BRINGS A CONTEMPORARY VERSION OF MIDCENTURY GLAMOUR TO MIAMI'S NEW ELYSEE CONDOMINIUM ON BISCAYNE BAY IN MIAMI'S EAST EDGEWATER NEIGHBORHOOD.

BY LINDA MARX

PHOTO: Carlos Rodriguez



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The slender silhouette of Elysee rises over Miami; the building's Grand Lobby Bayside Lounge; the Grand Salon; the Grand Lobby Foyer.

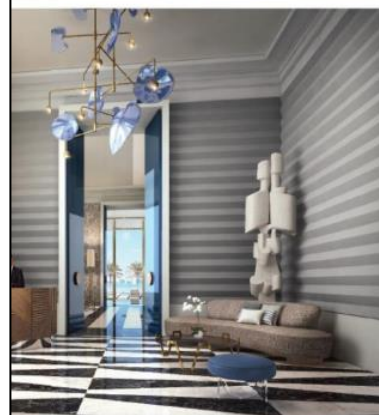


"I wanted to translate the multiplicity of life, style and design in Miami so there is no transition when owners go home to their residences at Elysee."

Paris-based

designer Jean-Louis Deniot has an innate ability to combine styles and periods that create spaces grounded in tradition as they embrace contemporary life. Inspired by great European designers like Jean-Michel Frank, Renzo Mongiardino and Alberto Pinto, as well as American superstars like Kelly Wearstler, David Collins and Peter Marino, Deniot has created the interiors of Miami's emerging 57-story Elysee in East Edgewater, his first US high-rise condominium project. "I wanted to translate the multiplicity of life, style and design in Miami so there is no transition when owners go home to their residences at Elysee," says Deniot, who owns a vacation home in South Beach and loves the area. "I showed the rich contrasts in Miami life, which can go from sophisticated to low-key."

Deniot, an *Architectural Digest* Top 100 designer, is known for creating interiors that are timeless and timely, neither minimalist nor excessive. He favors balance and osmosis with an emphasis on refinement, comfort and openness. For Elysee, he selected classic black and white marble, custom mosaics and midcentury modern furniture accented with antique gold and silver leafing, virtually importing the beauty of 1930s-1940s French Riviera to Miami. "My inspiration for Elysee was to bring back a contemporary version of the early midcentury glamour when Miami was a very chic international resort," he says.



For research, the erudite designer watched the 1964 film *I Am Cuba*, read architectural books by visionary Morris Lapidus, and studied hundreds of images of work by venerable designer Dorothy Draper, who favored bold colors and prints. After amassing all that history, Deniot created the interiors in line with the slender glass building's architecture. Elysee was designed by Arquitectonica and offers a three-tiered telescoping shape with direct 180-degree bay and city views from residences that range from three to five bedrooms measuring 2,300 to 4,000 square feet. (Construction is underway on the 100 half-floor and full-floor units, with completion scheduled for 2019.) "My design was very much guided by the building's architecture. I wanted the palette to reflect the exteriors and the views of the sky and water from the inside," he explains. "I wanted a chic, fun and airy design, an aesthetic statement that reflects the exciting, artsy destination that Miami is."

For Elysee's common areas, Deniot designed the spaces to be stylish and eclectic, yet sleek and sophisticated. Here and there are diamond shapes, light oak and retro-style



furnishings in dark blue, gray and off-white with touches of gold to emulate the sun. The spaces include a foyer, sitting area, bayside lounge, sunrise pool deck and Owner's Sky Lounge on the 30th-floor amenity level.

The grand lobby oozes with chic French flair and a definite residential touch, which was important to Deniot. "I want people to enter and feel the intimacy of a home," says the designer, who used graphics, blurred patterns and plain textured wallpaper fabrics mixed with antique gold and silver leafing to

create a rich and serene atmosphere.

He commissioned custom area rugs, vintage art works and antique lighting, which adds depth to the layers while whimsical patterns of black and white marble floors, inspired by Lapidus' work for the Fontainebleau Miami, and 20-foot lacquer doors bespeak formality and contrast.

Denoit's interest in the shapes of the architecture is visible all around the building. "The interior arch is geometric, structured in a loose rounded shape that is also strict,"



TOP TO BOTTOM: The 30th-floor theater; an elegant all-white bathroom with gold accents; the 30th-floor library.



he says. "This represents more about Miami and its contrasts with luxury on one side and light pleasure on the other."

Denoit's designs for the Owner's Sky Lounge, a dynamic full-floor space, are "grand, poetic and festive." With 360-degree bay and city views from the high floor, the space was designed to serve as an extension of each residence with "extravagant" amenities, such as a Great Room, a Grand Salon entertainment area with a full bar and piano lounge, a Grand Dining Room with seating for 30, a wine room, a chef's kitchen, a library where fans can watch football, a private theater and a gaming room. "The amenity floor was designed to emulate a full apartment with Miami elements," says Denoit. "We created something for everyone, which respects the logic of the individual apartment. I wanted a homey feel and designed the space to reflect that."

This way, potential buyers can get an idea of what their day-to-day lives would be like as Elysee residence owners. Denoit's influence is reflected with custom-designed gourmet kitchens appointed with brushed pine ItalKraft cabinets painted in off-white mixed with custom terrazzo countertops and top-of-the-line appliances like Wolf gas ranges and Sub-Zero refrigerators.

Bathroom layouts feature striking marble mosaics and organic shaped soaking tubs. "Here unique mosaic tile patterns and horizontal stripes pay homage to French bathing suits of the 1930s, with bespoke Waterworks fittings and fixtures," says Denoit.

Throughout, Elysee incorporated natural finishes and natural materials, including marble and oversized mirrors. All residences will have private elevators and foyers, soaring high ceilings, impact-resistant glass windows and sliding doors. Each unit will also have an expansive east- and west-facing terrace so residents will get both sunrise and sunset views.

Some of the furnishings used throughout the building come from Denoit's collection for Baker, which is inspired by 20th-century vintage furnishings and the grand presence of aristocratic decor. He designed with his usual elegance and flirty wit using warm antique golds, softened with muted grays but with touches of ivory and white. Versatile, layered and livable, many of his Baker pieces worked well at Elysee. "I don't want my spaces to look the same so I only use what feels right," he says, referring to his dining chairs and custom



pieces like the dining table, coffee table, lighting and rugs. "Each project I do gives me satisfaction and helps me grow."

At the center of classical technology and contemporary aesthetics, Denoit's interiors are serene, elegant and shrouded with drama, like the plot of a masterful play. They pay homage to other times, periods and places, yet always bring owners back to the reasons they selected this city. "Every culture is instantly

welcome in Miami, and I reflected that with my design for Elysee," says Denoit. "You can't compare the wonders of Miami to anywhere else in the world. I want residents to feel the intimacy of home, yet be inspired by views of the water, sky and city within the optical shape of this building." Now that the project is completely designed, Denoit is excited that it is being constructed so residents can soon live a productive life of harmony and well being. ■