

DIAMOND

in the Sky

BY EMMA TROTTER

Decorating a gem of a home with
local interior designer Jill Abelman



Towering above the Strip in one of the city's many residential high-rise buildings, Jill Abelman, founder and principal designer of local interior design firm Inside Style, has decorated what she calls "a little jewel box". But she doesn't literally mean "little". At 5,147 square feet, the three-story "Sky Suite" crowning the top floor of the luxuriously modern Sky Las Vegas is anything but cozy.

But even with its massive size and moody color scheme, Abelman's platinum touch has created a warm sense of home, which is exactly what its wealthy owners wanted when they

purchased the property for \$4.5 million in 2007. From azure to sapphire, and every shade of ocean and sky blue imaginable, the home's rich tones complement glittering light fixtures and pops of silver, while deep chocolates and slate grays are found in the granite, woods and furniture. Floor-to-ceiling windows and a massive terrace let both natural sunlight and a glow from the stars glisten through for a celestial feeling. "It's really pretty here at night, it is just like a little jewel box," Abelman says. "When the lights are on, everything just kind of glows so you really do feel like you're in a club."

"They have the means to stay anywhere they want, and they want to have their own kind of suite here in Vegas," Abelman says. "The client asked for a 'Las Vegas-rich nightclub named 'Top of the Sky'.' Therefore, the colors and textures and feeling should invoke feelings of Vegas, the nightclub experience, its rich tones and textures, and a sky high environment...I enjoy using

With a three-story elevator, the home offers a master suite with retreat, two bedrooms each with their own bath, a guest room or maid's quarters and top story theater room with wet bar and 800-square-foot patio. Abelman and the homeowners met by accident when the couple randomly walked into another Sky unit she was working on. Loving what they saw, they tracked down her name and after hours

A longtime Vegas resident, Abelman realized that after more than two decades of interior design work, she wanted to use her talents at her own boutique firm that focused on high-end properties. In 2004, she founded Inside Style with her husband Marc. "I have a small staff, I'm hands-on every project," she says. "Ever since I started doing this years and years ago, it's been 150 miles an hour, 24 hours, but it's hard for me



unusual textures whether it's a custom paper, stone applications, faux treatments or just a combination of beautiful complementary paint tones throughout the home," Abelman says. "I often say I'm allergic to plain white walls. One of my favorite textures in this project is the glass bead paper by Donghia used on the master ceiling bedroom. It just picks up the light beautifully."

of design presentation, Abelman had them hooked with her vision for the home.

"I met them when the place was a white shell, and then they were going on a trip all around the world and they weren't going to come back until Christmas," she says. "When it's a long distance client like that, it's almost like a romance. You talk every day and then you break up [when it's done]."

to turn it off because I really love it. Every time I get a new job, I am up all night thinking about what I am going to start with and do."

But she says few jobs are as "fabulous" as the Sky Suite, in which she was given lots of creative liberty to design and furnish using the colors, textures and theme selected by the owners. They began by describing their vision of a Las Vegas-influenced design theme





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combined with a palette of blue, silver and brown tones, and Abelman worked from there. Taking advantage of the flood of natural light throughout the home, Abelman was instructed to incorporate a lot of shimmer, and reflective crystal and light fixtures. She worked with the couple for months, mailing paint and fabric swatches back and forth, constantly e-mailing to go over design details and excitedly sending cell phone snapshots when a new section was completed.

"They wanted to see every paint color so I had to send them all these boxes," she says. "Even the carpet was custom dyed because they wanted the perfect shade of black-gray." After putting in numerous hours hunting to find the perfect furniture, getting made-to-order accessories and furnishings ordered, the job was complete. The family was awestruck at the crystal palace Abelman had created for them. "It was very fantasy

driven and they have the imagination to be able to say 'this is what we want' and they weren't scared," Abelman says.

Each floor strongly mirrors their chosen theme, with some ultra-modern elements, such as tall curvy vases, light panels, abstract art and square furnishings, combined with plush fabrics and carpet. "There is a lot of suede," she says. "I guess the big goal was to have it be modern but yet they still wanted it warm. That's why I used a lot of the velvety, suede warm fabrics. Then they wanted all that glitter as well so I balanced those with the textural elements like the stone and the granite. I feel like it has a real masculine feel overall and then the crystals and the lights really balance it out a little bit. I feel like I'm good at doing the yin and the yang of a place so that it feels comfortable for a man or a woman."

Abelman continues, "They really wanted to have this continuity of being at the top of



a tower called Sky and looking out to the sky and seeing all the changing colors and all the different moods. So we kind of started out dark and cloudy on the first floor - stormy, kind of sexy, moody, nightclub. Then the second floor, the master, is a little more dusk, then up in the theater you're in the clouds so we did the faux painting, with the blues and whites and the marshmallow cloud [carpet]."

Another Vegas-appropriate design request? Lots of glitter. "She wanted diamonds everywhere," Abelman says. "She said, 'I want a lot of bling bling', and that's the way she dresses too." Pops of crystal and rhinestone are evident throughout the entire home, ranging from small crystal buttons on headboards and pillows to 12 Swarovski crystal starburst-shaped ornaments adorning the ceiling and catching the sunlight. The rhinestones are perfectly streamlined with the ever-present silver and gray tones while adding Las Vegas flair, and touches of mosaic glass and stainless steel work with the color scheme. "The silvers and the stainless, to me, are the modern element," she says. "It's white, it's light, it's uplifting and I think it's more timeless than gold."

The foyer welcomes visitors with sweeping silver silk draperies, a silver leaf ceiling and a simple round crystal light fixture, which Abelman describes as "something you would see in an old Vegas casino". The light sand-colored Travertine floors, which are present throughout the home, lead into a hallway past the guest bathroom, stocked with monogrammed towels, no less, and up a few stairs to an over-the-top main living room area. Perfect for entertaining,



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a granite bar area – complete with light sparkly silver swivel bar stools, wavy textured silver wall and pop-up television – faces out onto two-story floor-to-ceiling windows and a \$9,000 blown glass chandelier centerpiece.

“The chandelier was the big find. It’s five feet across and I think it looks like a Superman star,” she says. “It just looks like something you would see in a cartoon. It’s just so different.” Surrounded by concrete gray walls, a micro-suede couch, large faux fur ottoman, a heavy cracked glass table and several artificial plant arrangements accented with smooth stones and moss warm up the room. But while the living room is as dramatic as it is inviting, it also features the home’s priciest design element: a wall of 24 LED panel screens that act as moving art, operated by remote control.

“We wanted a piece of art, we wanted to emphasize the verticalness of the space and the largeness of it,” Abelman says. “You can program them to make them go slow or faster, you can program the color range and how quickly they can change from one to the other.”

The kitchen features three dangling crystal light fixtures, stainless steel appliances, a wine chiller, small balcony and a hand-placed mosaic glass insert on the ceiling over the breakfast table. The master suite includes a retreat and luxurious master bath with steam shower and chandelier. The guest bedrooms have slightly metallic paints, shimmering wallpapers, and continue the definitive color scheme of chocolate and sapphire shades, both in accents and décor.

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The posh headboards are especially spectacular, and Abelman says, “I designed it and I had somebody upholster it and send them the rhinestone buttons and he made it. The same with the bench. All the headboards in the house were custom made as were all the master bedroom furniture and the living room. And that’s a lot of fun too, I like doing that.”

Ironically, she got the most creative when it came to decorating the stairwells and hallways, where much of the art is present. Abelman says the homeowners wanted a “Zen feeling” in those spaces, and being unable to find anything good enough, she painted some pictures herself. In one hall, Abelman popped holes in the walls, hung mirrors and created art pieces to go in them.

“I do a lot of hunting,” she says. “Of course, with most designers you have the ability to visualize what you want, and if you can’t find it, you have to keep going. You put in endless hours and when you finally find the right piece, you are so excited. If you can’t find exactly it, there are a lot of great craftsmen that will make things for you.”

The final room of the house is the top story theater and family room. A comfortable couch with decorative velvet and turquoise satin pillows face out on to Strip views and the balcony complete

with Jacuzzi. Mirrors framed in brown iron with inlaid crystal borders hang above the couch, and vases, paint accents, picture frames and a lighting fixture that resembles a snowball covered in paperclips all add to the room’s lighthearted, heavenly feel. “The [rectangle of marshmallow carpet] feels really good on the feet,” she says. “Textures are a big thing and I wanted to warm it up without adding busyness.”

Though revamping the formerly all-white Sky Suite sounds like a designer’s dream, Abelman says it wasn’t without challenges, such as installing, ripping out, and redoing numerous elements to get the perfect result that would make her client happy. “With the bar downstairs, we actually went through five or six different finishes,” Abelman says. “We wanted a grayish blackish finish and we went through five renditions of the finish to get it just right and go with the stone and granite. And we did 12 shades of paint in here to make sure we had the right shade of gray because grays change color in the light.”

Decorating and furnishing luxe residences may take hours of dedicated work, but Abelman says there is one reason she insists on touring the home herself with its owners upon completion: “It’s like giving them a present”. □