

PHILADELPHIA STYLE



MELANIA TRUMP

Her Next Sparkling Success

Ultimate Holiday Gift Guide

The great room's built-in (BACKGROUND) was custom designed in Macassar ebony wood.

asian fusion

MEG RODGERS'S AWARD-WINNING HIGH-RISE RESIDENCE MELTS MODERN LUXURY WITH EASTERN INFLUENCE.

BY KATHLEEN NICHOLSON WEBBER

While many know Meg Rodgers for her much-lauded work on 20 restaurants and hospitality projects in and around Philadelphia, she is just as admired for her residential portfolio that exhibits both depth and imagination. Rodgers is drawn to these projects for the simplest of reasons. "I am a problem solver," says the former woodworker. "When I was in art design school, many of my friends wanted their furniture designs to be represented by a gallery. I wanted to go out and find someone who needed a chair." Today there are plenty of clients here—as well as places as far-flung as the Caribbean—who line up for Rodgers's designs.

Two years ago, one such client, a music journalist, was looking for a place in Philadelphia. Rodgers began vetting the most desirable neighborhoods and soon found a three-bedroom corner unit with tall ceilings and enviable views of Rittenhouse Square, a modern space at a choice Center City high-rise with amenities like a pool, parking, and a pet-friendly atmosphere. The renovation and decoration of the home just won her team at Marguerite Rodgers Interior Design the International Interior Design Association's Best Interior Award for 2011.

It has been more than three decades now that Rodgers has been making headlines for her work. Her latest roster of projects reflects her diversity: With work completed on furnishings for the Morse and Ezra Stiles Colleges at Yale University, originally designed by Eero Saarinen, Rodgers is also finishing the interior of a 130-seat restaurant for the Kimmel Center, slated to open next September and for which her husband's firm, Kieran Timberlake, is the architect.

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The first lady of Philadelphia interior design, Meg Rodgers

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Rodgers's latest award-winning project displays all of her signature touches—her work is dramatic and yet livable.

What the client asked for was a home that was comfortable, warm, and inviting, so Rodgers

“I like designing furniture because I like to be part of the process.”

started with rich woods for many surfaces. “He shared my passion for wood,” she says. A Macassar ebony was chosen for a living room built-in, designed and fabricated by Contemporary Artisans Cabinetry. She also darkened the pre-existing cherrywood floors. “I often use dark floors because it grounds everything,” she says. Atop them sit upholstered furniture, coffee

tables, and end tables that she designed. Of note is a corner table with a shagreen top. “I like designing furniture because I like to be part of the process,” she says. “I don’t just want to sketch



Beyond the great room lies the kitchen, where under-cabinet fixtures were installed to add glow to the room.

something. I like going into a shop and saying, ‘Let’s make this a little higher or lower or change the leg length.’”

In the kitchen, Rodgers repurposed the cherry cabinets, staining them darker, and replaced dated green granite with Calcutta gold. The tile floors were removed and replaced with wood. Rodgers then worked with lighting designer Sean O’Connor to add under-cabinet fixtures to give the room a glow.

Rodgers’s design for the guest bedroom was inspired by the client’s hobbies. “Because we had worked with him before, we knew he liked chess and to work on his laptop. We turned two small bedrooms into one big guest bedroom. The bed has luxe details like an upholstered leather headboard, and there is a game table surrounded by Holly Hunt chairs where the homeowner can sit, write, play a game, or eat.” Alison Berger pendants etched with poetry complement the room’s glowing ambient light.

While the majority of the palette is neutral, Rodgers applied touches of red throughout to draw the eye in. As the client is a frequent patron of Liao Collection, there is an antique console from the Asian antique gallery in the foyer in a dramatic shade of red. Also from Liao is the accent piece above the console, which originally held scholar’s stones; decorative painter Chris Lynn of Faux Fax mimicked the stones with metal leaf on glass to create a reflective surface. “We like to play off the original intent of the piece,” she says.

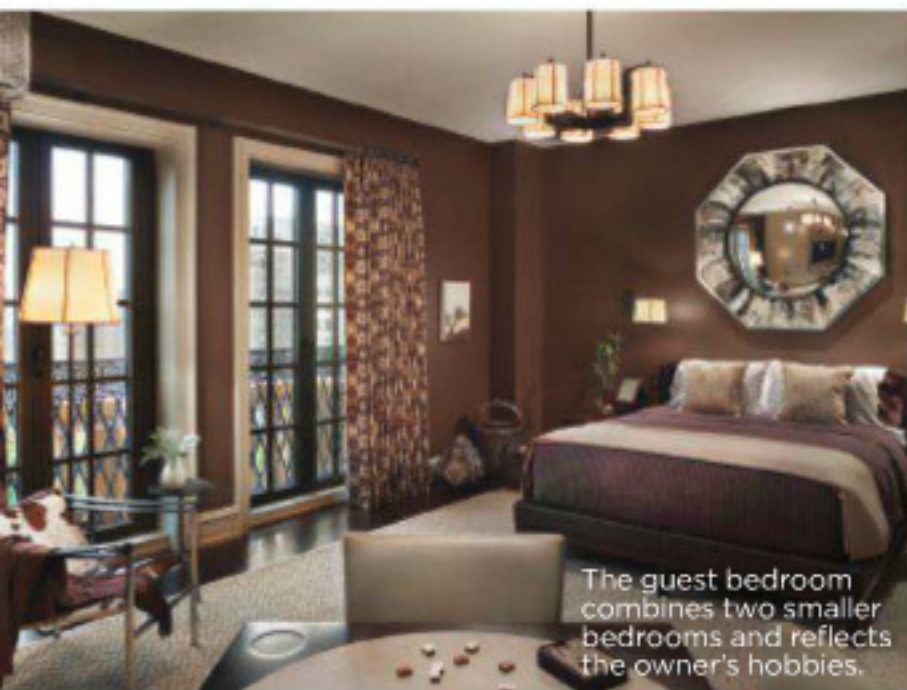
For this project, some of the artwork came from local galleries and artists’ studios, some from the client’s previous apartment, and others from galleries all over the US—including a few the client visited during Art Basel Miami Beach. “In the main hallway, there is a series of four carved skateboard decks by George Peterson, a piece by Jihyun Park in which the image was created by burning small holes in rice paper and mounting it on canvas, and another by Karen Margolis—a

seven-layer hand-watercolored map that has been burnt with a soldering iron. There are playful pieces, too: the very unique Etched Apple computer in the living room that is displayed on a shelf, a three-dimensional Lego collage in one of the baths, and an etched steel piece, titled *Groovy*, in the master bath. The array of art complements the furniture and design.” *Marguerite Rodgers Interior Design, 2131 N. American St., 215-634-7888; mroddersltd.com. PS*

SQUARE FOOTAGE

Views of Rittenhouse Square still command top billing.

Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors power Realtor Laurie Phillips has specialized in high-end Center City properties for 31 years, so she knows that views are a big draw for this particular market. “There are always homes with great views,” says Phillips, who has her own private residence in The Barclay Condominium, “but there are very few homes for sale facing the square that are in excellent condition that you can just move into with a toothbrush.” Phillips says that such properties can range from \$2 million to \$5 million, depending on the size, condition, and location. One such rarity is a \$2 million four-bedroom co-op condo at The Rittenhouse Plaza, located at 1901 Walnut Street. The 3,400-square-foot property, completely restored two years ago, has four and a half baths, high ceilings, a large kitchen, and a living room, all outfitted with high-end fixtures, lighting, and appliances. The cherry on top? It has breathtaking direct views of the square below.



The guest bedroom combines two smaller bedrooms and reflects the owner’s hobbies.