

DesRosiers from page 1F

immortality as a ceiling painter, DesRosiers' mark, however loudly he'll protest, will be his lavish, large-scale luxury homes, not his renovations or office buildings.

Tour de DesRosiers

"Oh, I hate the word 'luxury home,'" said DesRosiers, who is an architectural firm in based in Bloomfield Hills. "And don't call them 'Custom' homes. I hate that word. Call them architecturally designed homes."

Call them magnificent. To flip through his portfolio is like taking a drive through a subdivision of the rich and famous, you can almost picture Robin Leach doing the narration:

"And here is a splendid French Norman Chateau, where this man's home truly is his castle. The exterior is constructed of rough hewn limestone blocks and stucco with smooth limestone trim. Step inside and you are led into a three-story circular tower ascending to a skylight. You can't help but envision French royalty in the two-story Great Room set off and enhanced with arches and columns. And, of course, there's the breathtaking master suite complete with its Romeo and Juliet balcony."

"Next stop is this awe-inspiring Mediterranean. This home (which is actually being built on an in-land lake in Bloomfield Hills) is graced at the front by a temple facade into which is nested a rotunda foyer some 22 feet in diameter. Also notable the curvilinear stables and balcony and the twin colonnaded veranda which looks out to the lake. Inside, you can travel each of the four floors via elevator. With its free standing round columns and articulated pier colonnades, its observation deck on the roof and its walk-out to the lake from the bottom floor, this home is fit for a prince."

"We move now to an architectural style that is a Louis DesRosiers original, perhaps his signature piece: a modernization of the Atlantic shingle design which has its roots in the great Victorian

homes on the Atlantic coast. You can't help but fall in love with the serenity of the geometric shapes of the natural wood and cedar shanks interwoven with the Michigan field stone, the turret, eye-brow windows and beveled glass and port holes. This house looks right at home on the shores of Michigan's Great Lakes..."

Enough, already. This is not what DesRosiers the businessman wants to hear.

"Please don't make me out to be the architect of the rich," he said.

OK, he's not the architect of the rich. His is a full-service architectural firm. No job's too big, no job's too small. But forgive us for using this newspaper space to gush and marvel at these dream homes.

"Don't call them dream homes," he said. "Most of my clients read your paper and they own these homes. They aren't dreams to them."

True enough. DesRosiers' homes can be seen throughout the lakes regions of Oakland County (Heron Bay, Orchard Lake, Pine Lake) as well as on the shores of Lake Michigan near Harbor Springs.

20th Century traditional

Among the many distinguishing qualities of his work — not the least of which is a price range from \$400,000 to \$4 million — are his use of glass and open spaces. DesRosiers' homes have the feel of being close to or part of nature.

"Ninety percent of our homes are built on water," said DesRosiers, whose father Arthur DesRosiers designed the renowned St. Hugo's of the Hills Church. "We know what our clients pay for these properties, so we use enormous expanses of glass to enhance those panoramic views. One of my personal goals for every home I do is that you be excited every time you come home. You



Modern Interiors: One of the many special qualities of DesRosiers' residential work are his wide open, state-of-the-art floor plans which often serve as a nice counter to the old-style exteriors.

should never be bored to come home and walk into your house."

DesRosiers' early residential work featured what he calls, "ultra-slick" contemporaries. He only recently turned traditional.

"The biggest change in the last five to eight years is that America has rediscovered traditional architecture," he said. "What we are doing is 20th century traditional, with up-to-date, state-of-the-art open floor plans with traditional exteriors. It's very exciting."

Inside the French Norman castles and the Mediterranean structures are five-story commercial elevators, Olympic-sized swimming

pools, elegant wooden floors and stairways, skylights and other accoutrements that probably weren't staples of the original architectural style.

"Our concepts are an expression of our client's personality and lifestyle," DesRosiers said. "We take the client's wish list and then apply our own professional creative talent. What we come up with is a house that is an example of our architectural interpretation of their lifestyle."

What DesRosiers comes up with, essentially, are homes that make their owners feel very special, and leave the rest of us awed and envious.

Light and white make kitchens appear larger

In almost any kitchen, light and white make a rejuvenating twosome, says Country Kitchen Ideas magazine.

Even in very small kitchens, white spontaneously pairs up with natural and artificial lighting to refresh a space and make it look larger.

How? When light bounces off a white surface, it appears to push boundaries outward.

Woodwork, too, benefits from the effects of white paint. The play of shadow and light emphasizes architectural details.

"I love using a creamy white on the trim in a house," says interior designer Sharon Brown. "Crown molding, the trim around doors, any type of architectural feature — white shows off the details without fighting with other elements."

But that's not all. White offers the ideal backdrop for showing off a limitless variety of colors and decorating themes.

"White is so flexible," says interior designer Julie Sutta. "It's timeless. A kitchen is a place where there are large investments of money in fixtures, countertops and the like. White lets you leave your options open in terms of being able to change the decorative scheme down the line."

Rather than include permanent color — such as tiles — in the kitchen, Sutta likes to depend on rugs, drapes, chair cushions and collections for adding changeable color.

"I wanted the background to remain neutral so I would have as much flexibility as possible."

On the other hand, Brown likes to use white as a subtle, elegant background for permanent but classically colored materials: blue

tiles, clay-red granite and warmly stained floors.

"I love the contrasts," she says. "If all these advantages get you excited about white, be prepared when you make the trip to the paint store. You may think you only have to ask for white paint, but you'll soon discover that you must pick from as many as 160 shades of white."

So how do you choose? Sutta suggests reviewing paint chips in the store, then choosing three shades of warm white, "I would pick at least three colors of white," she says. "Maybe one that looks slightly pink, one that looks slightly yellow and maybe one that looks slightly beige."

Buy quart of the shade you select. Then take them home and try them out in side-by-side swaths on the wall.

"I always paint a huge section," says Sutta. "At least a 4-by-4-foot square. Then I leave them on the wall for two or three days. I look at them in the morning light, in the midday light, in the evening light, and also in artificial light. That way, I can see how they change and what kind of character each shade gives off."

Sutta cautions against purchasing a pure white paint with no warm tint to it. "Even though it's white," she explains, "when you get it into the room, it will turn blue and give off a cold, sort of icy feeling."

Once you've got your shade of white pinned down, you can move on to accent colors. Brown depended on her collections to help her choose a shade of blue for tiles, fabrics and wallpaper. Sutta agrees this is a good approach.

JGA's Albers remembered

Elaine Albers, 50, popular member of Southfield-based Jon Greenberg & Associates real design and architecture firm since 1982, died from cancer.

Albers supervised the firm's design department.

Many of the trend-setting environments produced by JGA, said Tony Camilletti, the firm's director of visual communications.

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