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For Rosewood's Jumby Bay, Rowley complemented the crisp, clean color palette with hearty dark-wood furnishings (here, right).



Design Intervention

Cheryl Rowley's stunning designs have changed the face of luxury hotels and private homes worldwide

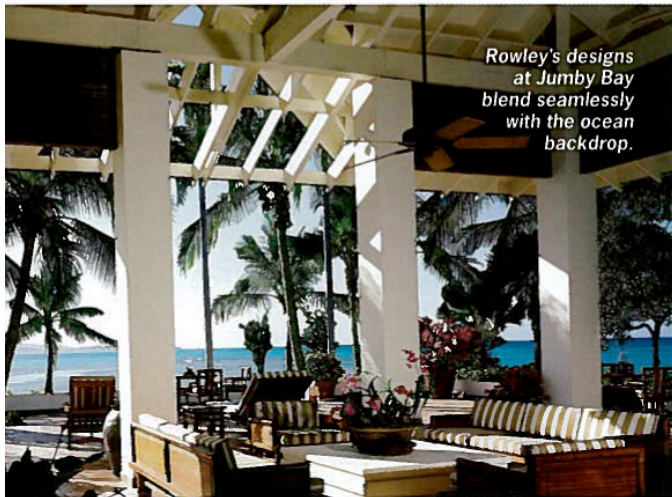
By Lindsay Lambert

Cheryl Rowley, dynamic headmistress of the eponymous Beverly Hills-based interior design firm, is a force to be reckoned with. After all, Rowley has lent her keen eye for design and her inherent, impeccable sense of style to a long list of some of the world's best-known boutique and luxury hotels—Four Seasons, Ritz-Carlton, Starwood, Rosewood and Kimpton among them. Too, Rowley's brilliant knack for design has been applied to the interiors of spas, country clubs and restaurants, not to mention a select few privileged private homes.

Since Rowley founded her company, Cheryl Rowley Design, in 1986 with a lone, part-time assistant, the outfit has since burgeoned into a full-service firm with 35 employees who deliver a wide palette of styles, ranging from classic and traditional to innovative and cutting-edge. Here, the award-winning Rowley breaks from her beyond-busy schedule to talk to *OceanHome* about her unique strategies for design success.

Ocean Home: *What inspires your designs?*

Cheryl Rowley: I am inspired by great art—fashion, music, dance and films—and, on any given project, the location, including the natural setting, the local culture and the climate. Often the architectural design of the project plays the most important role in inspiring our specific design choices.



Rowley's designs at Jumbay Bay blend seamlessly with the ocean backdrop.

OH: What were the early indicators that design would be your career?

CR: I grew up around design. My mother and stepmother were both involved in the world of fashion, and my stepfather was an interior designer and furniture designer. I was a dancer and always very creative and knew at a young age that I would be involved in the arts. I started designing at the age of 12 when I was allowed to make fabric and furniture and color choices for my own bedroom.

OH: How do you define your design style?

CR: My style is hard to define because it varies depending upon the project. It can be traditional, contemporary, urban or all about the country. But there is a thread that runs through most of my projects having to do with a quality of freshness in the style and a mix of styles. I love to combine periods, mix modern with traditional and use contemporary color combinations. There is an upbeat quality to the work.

OH: What are the most important things to keep in mind when implementing a design scheme that imparts a sense of place?

CR: The location, the culture, the climate and the natural setting must all be considered. Creating an environment that is unique to the

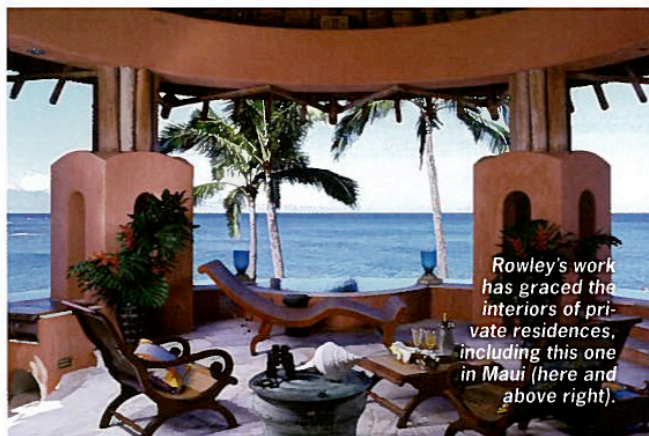
place is the key to creating an honest and memorable experience.

OH: What characteristics or elements of your designs might coastal home owners be able to translate for use in their private coastal homes?

CR: Bring elements from nature into the home. Create a tablescape that features found objects directly from the coastal setting. In Hawaii, I used orchids and coconuts. At my home on Vancouver Island, I use driftwood and whale bones. The things that are specific to the setting help to create character and a sense of place.

OH: What is your favorite room in a hotel, restaurant or other venue to design?

CR: The lobby living room/reception area is my favorite area because it encapsulates the essence of the project in



Rowley's work has graced the interiors of private residences, including this one in Maui (here and above right).

one space. It is usually generously proportioned, offering great opportunities for the development of interesting interior architectural features and is a large enough canvas to realize many facets of the project concept.

OH: Which of your own projects is your personal favorite and why?

CR: Hotel Hana Maui, designed in 1984, is still one of my all-time favorite projects. It was really the epitome of designing with a sense of the place in mind. At the time, Hawaii resort properties were being done without relating to what is quintessentially Hawaiian. They were all about huge scale with lots of Asian influence. Hotel Hana Maui was really the first Hawaiian project that related perfectly to its setting—a working cattle ranch along the windward or tropical side of the island. It was done in collaboration with my mentor, James Northcutt, and for a great client, Rosewood Hotels. It was my first complete hotel project and it was a labor of love.

OH: What is your favorite coastal destination and why?

CR: Vancouver Island, BC, because it is gorgeous. It is where I have a second home and it is where I share my most memorable and peaceful times with my family.

Jumbay Bay Photography: Courtesy of Rosewood Hotels & Resorts
Maui Photography: David Phelps

OH: What projects are you currently working on and what's up next?

CR: St. Regis, Costa Rica; Four Seasons, St. Petersburg, Russia, boutique hotels in Miami and Chicago, a private residence in Laguna Beach, Calif., and a penthouse in Dubai. Future plans call for more work in Russia.

OH: What do you most enjoy about your job?

CR: Watching it all come to life during a project installation and watching the smiles on my clients' faces as they see the finished project for the first time. ☺



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