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A number of current home decor trends are reflected in the renovation at the Hilton Garden Inn, including vibrant colors, large-scale patterns on wallcoverings and bold graphic prints on carpeting.



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTO: GIAN SCORNA HAMMILL  
Interior designer Susan Huckvale Arann uses exotic painted mirrors from India and Morocco like art throughout the pre-function areas.

### A \$2.5 MILLION RENOVATION AT THE HILTON GARDEN INN INCORPORATES MANY CURRENT TRENDS IN HOME DECOR

By ANDREA BOYARSKY / STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

**T**he best hotels try to offer their guests all the comforts of home and then some. With the recent \$2.5 million renovation at the Hilton Garden Inn, Bloomfield, owners Richard and Lois Nicotra sought to offer their guests both hometown hospitality and an air of metropolitan style.

In her redesign of the hotel's pre-function areas and ballroom, Bloomfield-based decorator, Susan Huckvale Arann incorporates the latest trends in home decor, from vibrant color to large-scale patterns on wallcoverings, and exotic decorative accessories.

"We didn't want the hanging crystal chandeliers and the red velvet, gaudy look," said Richard Nicotra, who with his wife owns both the Hilton Garden Inn and nearby Hampton Inn & Suites. "We wanted a classy Manhattan feel and that's what we were able to get."

Of the first renovation in the hotel's seven-year history, Nicotra concluded, "I want them [guests] to feel cozy and comfortable and elegant all at the same time."

Many of the trendy updates seen in the hotel can be incorporated on a smaller scale in the home, according to Ms. Arann. Take the large-scale wallcoverings. One of the Hilton's pre-function areas features a large, red-and-copper-hued,

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## Model contractor offers help for the 'hub of the house'

Some time Islander Marc Bartolomeo is featured on cable TV's "Kitchen Impossible"



Marc Bartolomeo is the host of "Kitchen Impossible," on the DIY Network.

By ANDREA BOYARSKY  
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

As host of the new DIY Network show "Kitchen Impossible," Marc Bartolomeo helps harried homeowners living with a kitchen in need of a major renovation. The carpenter and electrician also shows them how to handle projects on their own and get the most for their money.

"The kitchen is the hub of the house," said the 39-year-old former model, who splits his time between Brooklyn and Staten Island when he's not traveling for the show. "Because it's the most expensive [room] to renovate, people need to

get the most information," he continued. "If you're going to make deep, big purchases, you want to make sure you have as much food for thought as you go into it."

On his show, which airs Wednesdays at 9 p.m., Bartolomeo takes viewers behind the scenes of renovation projects ranging from building a countertop and installing tile to removing a wall and increasing overall space. Some of the homeowners he's helped already had started the renovation process but got stuck, said Bartolomeo, mentioning one family that ripped open their kitchen's entire ceiling, leaving dust and fiberglass ex-

posed over the cooktop and oven for several months.

Of "Kitchen Impossible" Bartolomeo explained, "We come in and tear it out to the guts. We start from scratch and give them a new state-of-the-art kitchen."

Since there's not enough air time to feature a project from start to finish, step-by-step videos of Bartolomeo's work will be posted on the DIY Network Web site

(www.diynetwork.com). Currently two videos are up showing how to tile a backsplash and create a wooden wine rack.

SEE MODEL, PAGE C 3

### DESIGN WISE

#### Bring hotel styling home

What better way to beat the winter blues than to treat yourself to fresh bed and bath accessories that make you feel like you're enjoying the hospitality at a chic hotel? Macy's Hotel Collection Spring 2009 offers cosmopolitan duvets, eye-catching pillows, sleek bath accessories and colorful towels in a variety of styles and hues to reflect every mood and style.



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Many of the trendy updates seen in the hotel can be incorporated on a smaller scale in the home, according to Ms. Arann. Take the large-scale wallcoverings. One of the Hilton's pre-function areas features a large, red-and-copper-hued, damask print paired with a tone-on-tone paper in the same copper shades. At the end of a corridor dressed in a subtle yellow print, is another pre-function area featuring a large, wavy pattern in similar colors.

"Even though the (papers have) different prints, the colors are similar and they're separated by 20 feet," said Ms. Arann, president of American & International Designs. "The middle is more neutral; it would be similar to walking up your staircase."

The designer paired the papers with graphically designed, custom Axminster carpeting from Belgium in bold shades of red and yellow that offer contrast to the marble floors in the corridor.

Commenting that "Many people have neutral creams and taupes and beiges in their homes," she explained that adding a bold, graphic carpet in either a square or circular shape, rather than the typical rectangle, adds interest to a space.

Ms. Arann had drapes hung in the corners of the pre-function areas and ballroom to impart softness. The velvety, cognac-colored panels were made by Dazian Fabrics, the same company that provided sets for Broadway's "Wicked." Painted mirrors from India and Morocco used as artwork throughout the pre-function areas were found by the designer and her clients at last year's Architectural Digest Home Design Show.

NOT PREDICTABLE

"The frames are so detailed, they're a piece of art," Ms. Arann commented, adding that she incorporated a variety of sizes so as not to be "predictable." Scaling down the look for one's own home, she suggests creating a wall of mirrors in different shapes and sizes.

The colors and textures in the pre-function areas spill into Nicotra's Ballroom, where yellow and red predominate on wallpaper and carpeting. To give the ballroom a warmer look, Ms. Arann had off-white crown molding painted chocolate brown. The deep yellow of the ceiling and the lighting combined with the brown makes the room "glow," she said.

Also new to the ballroom are gilded, metal chairs featuring a square, open back in a trellis pattern and red, upholstered seat. The Nicotras first saw them at the St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan.

"Their chairs are what is in," said Nicotra. "It (design) always goes to Manhattan first ... and we want to be cutting edge here."

More changes will be taking place at the Hilton, including on guest floors and with regard to signage, and should be completed within the next few months. Updates already have been made to its 150 guest rooms. These include the addition of flat screen plasma TVs, duvet covers, draperies, furniture and carpets. And guests now will lay their heads down on the Garden Sleep System bed, which uses self-adjusting technology to conform to one's body, and catch up on business perched in an ergonomically designed Herman Miller chair.

Richard Nicotra is more than pleased with the transformation in his hotel so far. "It has more a 'home' feel, yet still an elegant feel," Nicotra said of the Hilton's new look, observing, "You can be homey and still be elegant."

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