

BLACK TIE

TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT

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REAPING LIFE'S REWARDS:

LIVING *Well*

LEGENDARY
FAIRWAYS

A TASTE OF
NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA

CULINARY
CRUISING

DAZZLING
DUBROVNIK

PROFILE:
BRUCE CROXON



Your adventure begins with us.

HIGH STYLE

Looking for exciting design ideas for your home, then take inspiration from these hotels and restaurants. The height of creativity is in the ceiling.

BY KAREN SEALY

ONE OF MY FAVORITE aspects of travelling is experiencing rich and diverse buildings and interiors where inspiration comes in many forms. Although magazines and online sources create the awareness, nothing compares to experiencing it firsthand. Architecture is a unique form of art that creates a reaction. Designers spend a great deal of time moulding a concept that marries and contrasts various materials, shapes and details in the hopes of creating something unique. Yet in a world where framing our ceilings with crown moulding has become common, it's surprising we haven't upped the ante with more architectural adornments on this relatively blank canvas. How is it we can spend so much time planning all the other details – from flooring; to furniture and built-ins; and not look up?

Ceilings can create the overall feeling of a space as much as, if not more than, many other decorative details. A cathedral ceiling creates a sense of grandeur and openness. This is perfect for great rooms or other large spaces, but used in a smaller space where you might want a cozier appeal it will feel like you are sitting in an elevator shaft. Frank Lloyd Wright famously used ceiling heights to create moods, in many cases, lowering the ceiling to offer a space to rest that made you feel safe and secure.



Hotels and restaurants can be a rich source of inspiration for your home. Many of these venues have the unique advantage of large budgets and innovative designers. The creative solutions in these public spaces can be adapted to residential design.



Hawksworth Pearl Room

Hotels and restaurants are an unending source of creative ideas.

The ceiling at Hawksworth cocktail bar (right), in Vancouver, feels like a sculptural piece that might have well been inspired by Gehry. Its organic flow has a feminine appeal that plays well against the very structured masculine walls and dark wood floor. But what makes this ceiling really sing, is the use of lighting to accentuate its sensuous folds.

The Pearl Room at the Hawksworth (above), which is adjacent to the cocktail bar, employs an entirely different ceiling technique. The linear lines created by the applied moulding acts to frame the enormous crystal chandelier. The colour palette in both rooms is the same – rich chocolate brown and cream, so the flow between the rooms works, but the experience in each is unique in large part due to the ceiling design.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAWKSWORTH

Hawksworth Bar and Lounge

This ceiling in Toronto's King Edward Hotel is majestic and elegant. By painting it white it has a reflective quality that bounces light from both the chandeliers and uplights, creating an airy and ethereal feeling.



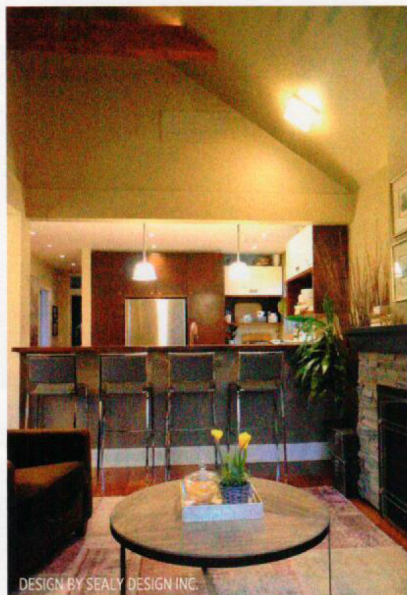
PHOTO: RICK LEE



PHOTO COURTESY WWW.WRIGHT-HOUSE.COM

Living room of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater house.

As someone who has always been inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's design it struck me how different it felt to be in the spaces he created rather than to just see them in print. Even large open rooms had a sense of intimacy and the entire space worked as a cohesive unit as you moved from one space to the next. I adopted many of these techniques in my own home. Opening the ceiling in the living room and adding wood clad collar ties, with subtle lighting above created drama and interest and then in the neighbouring dining area, I specifically lowered the ceiling over the wrap around banquette to create an intimate area for lounging and conversation.



DESIGN BY SEALY DESIGN INC.

AS OF LATE, there's been a great revival of the coffered and tray ceiling. We often associate these details with a more traditional aesthetic (which is where these ceiling have their roots) but modern choices such as a more linear structure, fewer "fussy" details and painted versus natural wood works in most transitional homes. Consider that some of the best design happens when we create tension between elements.

Imagine you've bought a century house with beautiful coffered ceilings and while you want to honour the history of the home, your personal taste is more modern. How do you marry these things successfully? In broad strokes, my trick is to keep (or even add) more authentic primary components of the house, such as: restoring the original baseboards, doors, ceiling details, architectural features... any part of the house itself. Then furniture, cabinetry and plumbing fixtures can be more modern. Of course playing with this formula also allows some creative license that can create some very dramatic spaces that don't slap you in the face in a way that says "I'm really trying here". Aside from their dramatic effect, coffered or tray ceilings can offer some practical purposes such as providing a clever way to hide structural beams, ductwork or plumbing. These also serve to delineate zones in open concept spaces.

Hotels and restaurants are an unending source of creative ideas. I keep an ongoing list of "must visit" spaces when I travel to a particular city. For me it's about the entire experience; from the feeling I get when I'm in the space to the way food is plated to how it tastes. Many of these venues have the unique advantage of large budgets and innovative designers and chefs working at creating news-worthy destinations. This can create big wins or sometimes the opposite, but creates conversation and evokes emotion that could possibly spark creativity for your next build.

We are experiential beings interacting with our built environment. Inspiration is all around us. In an age of information at our finger tips firsthand experience still trumps passive participation. Get out, look around (and up), feel, and take it all in. There is no comparison. **✦**

Karen Sealy is the lead designer and owner of the award-winning, design-build company www.sealydesigninc.com and regular expert on Cityline TV.



Adding a curved ceiling with details such as skylights and moulding can soften a structured space.



Tray ceilings are often created to seamlessly hide services such as duct work that is run around the perimeter. Then a recessed area is added in the centre that often echoes what's going on below. In this dining room, a gorgeous crystal chandelier was included and below a wool and silk area rug that is the exact same size as the tray ceiling above.

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