

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

SEPTEMBER 2006

DESIGNERS' OWN HOMES





LEFT: Among the main building's 30 suites is the Sea Island Suite, which includes a spacious living room. Lee Jofa sofa fabric. Bergamo pillow fabric. Julia Gray low table. O. Henry House green lounge chairs. Scalamandré ottoman, near fireplace, and wing chair and drapery fabrics.

BELOW LEFT: The Sea Island Suite faces the Black Banks River. In one of its two bedrooms, the four-poster, bench and night table are from Hamilton. Samuel & Sons pillow tassel. Brunschwig & Fils stand. Lee Jofa drapery fabric. Casa del Bianco bed linens. Schumacher floor lamp.



because my grandfather built it," he says. "But I didn't have much of an emotional problem with it, for a couple of reasons. One, I didn't feel like we had any choice. And two, I know it's exactly what my grandfather would have done. He was a businessman, and he was always the first guy to say, 'Don't get emotionally attached to something that doesn't make sense.'"

To undertake this delicate enterprise, Jones enlisted architect Peter Capone, whose relationship with Sea Island and The Cloister goes back a dozen years. In that time, Capone says, he and his client have developed an enviable dynamic. "He tells me what he wants, then leaves me alone to deliver it," Capone says of Jones.

"In other words, he'll tell me if I'm there, but he never tells me how to get there."

The ghost of Mizner loomed large over the project. Though he lacked formal architectural training, this son of a United States envoy to Central America (and the brother and sometime accomplice of the famed scoundrel Wilson Mizner) nevertheless became one of the most sought-after society architects of the 1920s. Mizner "had an eclectic style that violated principles," says Capone. "He cut corners all the time. But he was extremely clever."

Working closely with his longtime associate, Michael L. Ramsey, Capone set about constructing a new hotel that would honor the spirit of Mizner's design through

a thoughtful distillation of his ideas but not fall under the category of slavish replication. For starters, Capone and his team moved the main entrance from its original site, facing the Black Banks River, to what used to be the rear of the hotel. Now guests arrive under the porte cochere and register in a modest vestibule before entering the Colonial Lounge, a multistory marvel in which guest suites are hidden behind the arcaded tiers of the second and third floors. A topmost clerestory floods the space with light; visible outside the French doors, just beyond a shaded terrace where nightly cocktails are served, is the river.

continued on page 274