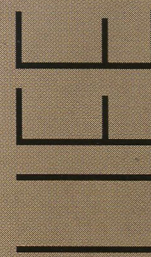


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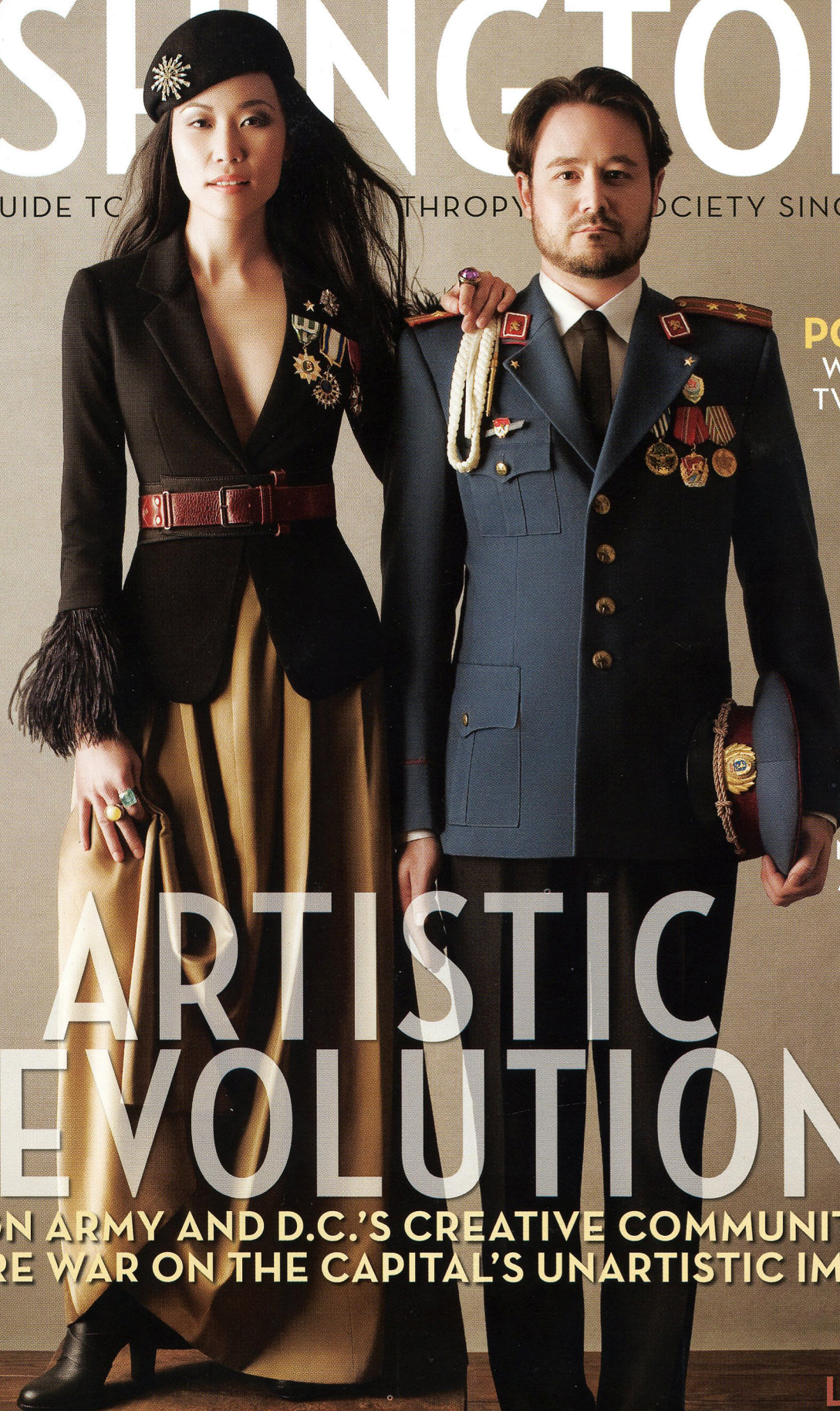


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A Star Designer

Washington's Pamela Hughes made a little history of her own as the interior designer of The Cloister at Sea Island, a five-star historic resort, after a \$350 million renovation

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CLOISTER AT SEA ISLAND

Located on Georgia's Atlantic coastline, The Cloister at Sea Island is one of the world's most luxurious resorts. Its five miles of private beach and top-notch equestrian, golf, tennis and other sporting facilities have attracted prominent guests since it opened in 1928. Former President George H. W. Bush and his wife Barbara honeymooned there. In recent years, it has played host to a G8 Summit.

Conceived by famed architect Addison Mizner, The Cloister immediately received international

attention and inspired numerous accolades for its Mediterranean-style beauty and allure. Over the years, The Cloister has gained the rare distinction of earning four Forbes Five Star awards for The Cloister hotel, The Lodge (which also has a AAA Five Diamond rating), The Georgian Room restaurant and The Spa at Sea Island. "The Spa at Sea Island is the most luxurious and spectacular spa I've ever seen," said Washingtonian Steve Norris, one of the founders of The Carlyle Group, after a recent visit.

The resort has also created a welcoming

space for families with a game room, a movie theater, kids' camp and even an ice cream parlor, drawing Washington, D.C. business leaders such as Ted Leonsis and Raul Fernandez and their families. "We love Sea Island because it is just such a fun, friendly, family place," Jean-Marie Fernandez said. "People – both guests and those who work on the island – remember you and your children from year to year, call you by name, and are generally the most friendly bunch of people we have ever met."

In 2003, the original building was razed



Left: The Spa at Sea Island with its glorious pool, anchors spacious treatment rooms, contemplative areas and outdoor terraces. Bottom left: The elegant Georgian Room with custom-designed carpet, chandeliers and mantle, is a five-star dining experience. Above: The Club Room's interior architecture, created by Hughes, was inspired by Mar-A-Lago.

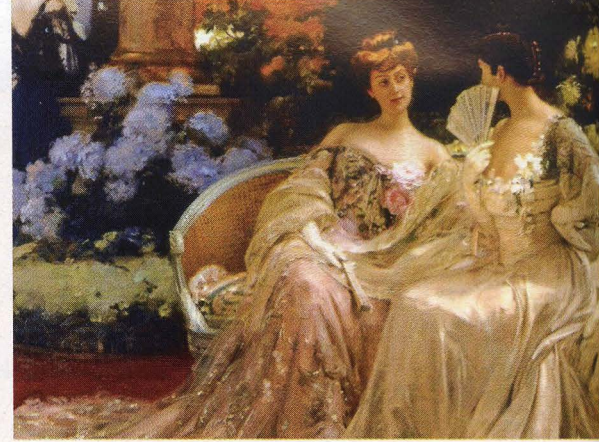
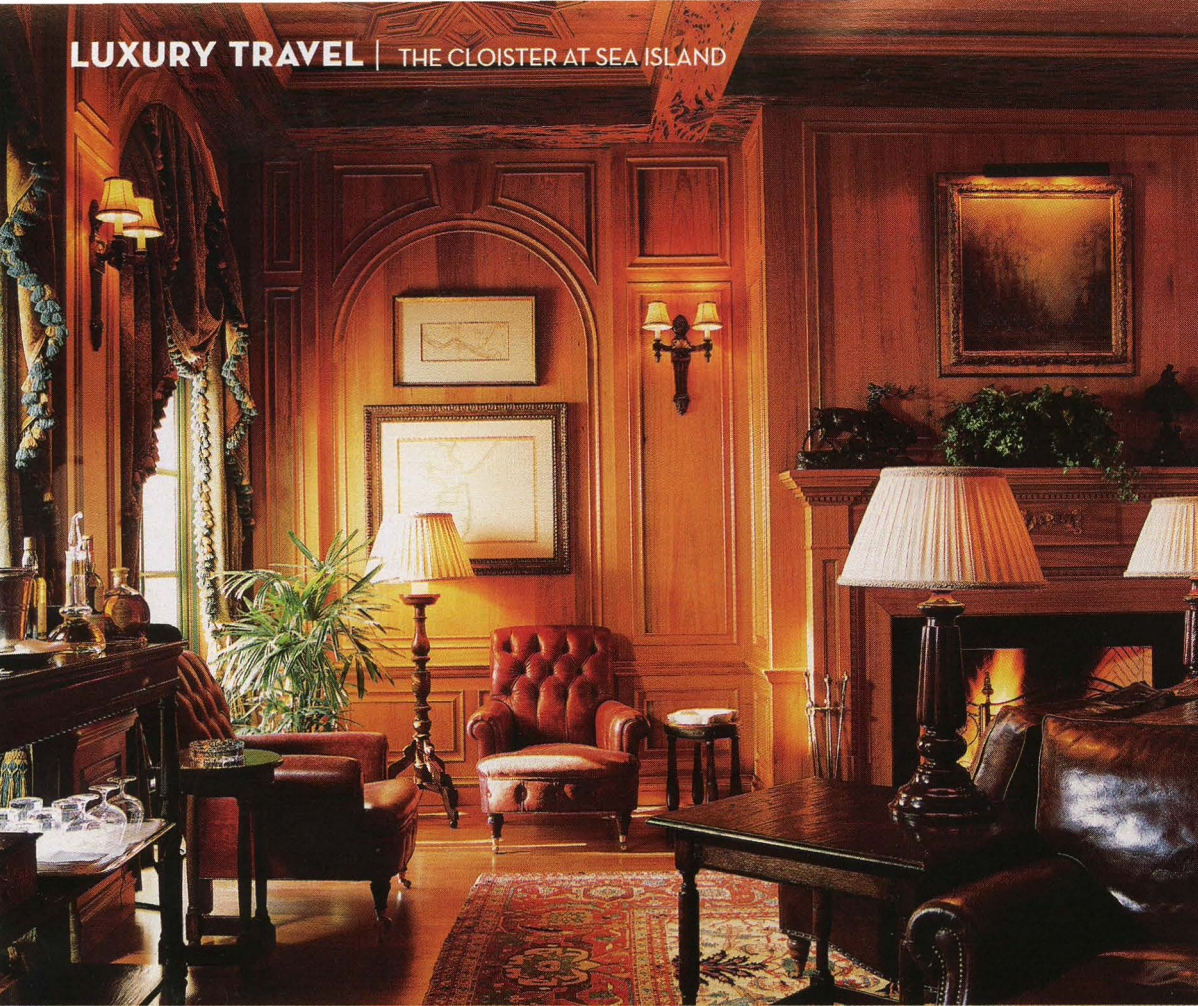


and the entire property underwent a \$350 million renovation. The new Cloister hotel, as well as The Spa at Sea Island, have been painstakingly rebuilt to capture the essence, charm and history of the original buildings.

After interviewing several interior design firms, Washington's own Pamela Hughes was chosen to design The Cloister and The Spa at Sea Island — two of the resort's most lauded buildings.

Hughes collaborated with Sea Island's master architect, Peter Capone, to create a seamless ambiance that would allow new as well as returning guests to feel as comfortable and content in the new hotel as they had in their beloved Cloister. The new building is larger and more spacious but has the same genteel, gracious and welcoming feeling as the original Cloister. The architecture is reminiscent of the former hotel, but stronger. The furnishings feel as if they were collected over four generations of world travels. "We wanted the guests to feel as if this new building had been here forever," Hughes said.

The design team began by poring over old photos and original Mizner drawings in The Cloister archives. "We got our hands on everything we possibly could and just devoured it. We read all the books about Sea Island, Mizner and Palm Beach architecture," Hughes recalled of the experience. "It was really fun to put ourselves into Mizner's head and try to visualize how he would have designed these rooms."



Left: For The Smoking Lounge, Hughes selected clear and heart pine for the walls, ceiling and floor with pecky cypress ceiling beams. Below left: The Wine Cellar, with its custom-designed table and chairs, was created to look like a cellar in a Mizner home. Above: One of the most notable and beautiful paintings at The Cloister is by Hubert-Denis Etcheverry, a French artist born in 1867. The painting is large, measuring 62 inches high by 88 inches wide, and was purchased from a private collection in Paris. Titled "Confidences -- The Secret," the painting commands your eye to its stately, old world presence and lustrous colors. The grand, elegant ladies pictured in their silk and satin gowns easily represent the ladies who frequented the early Cloister.

select European mills. All trims for drapery and upholstery are large in scale, and were made in Portugal.

The Library, The River Bar and The Smoking Lounge have millwork and ceilings made from indigenous woods. Ceiling beams in some areas have been sawn from 500-year-old logs dredged from local rivers. The hotel basement's Wine Cellar has brick walls and floors and an antique oak-beamed ceiling – just the kind you would see in an original Mizner cellar.

The Club Room "has the same glamour as Marjorie Merriweather Post's living room at Mar-A-Lago. The ceiling is elaborate and extravagant, designed and fabricated to replicate ornate, old plasterwork," said Hughes.

Fine art was purchased from galleries and collectors throughout the U.S. and Europe. Many of the works are from the American South, emphasizing the Sea Island landscape. Hughes received assistance from local gallery owner Laura Guarisco, who canvassed the New York and London galleries for paintings of appropriate age and genre.

"Laura and I were constantly emailing each other with images of art for months! It was a huge endeavor and the most fun. I learned so much from her," said Hughes.



When it came to furnishings, Hughes coupled old world craftsmanship with modern ingenuity. For the 750 custom-designed rugs, she enlisted the help of her friend, rug specialist George Jevremovic, in employing workers in numerous villages in Turkey. Rugs were made with natural vegetable dyes on the same looms used over 200 years ago by early weavers. "Nowhere in the world will you see a collection like this," she said, adding that it seemed as if "all

of Turkey knew about The Cloister."

Furnishings in the public spaces were custom-designed to blend with antiques found in Paris flea markets and obscure dealers in England, Morocco and elsewhere. They all come with a story. "Finding the most fantastic and rare antiques was one of the most exciting adventures of this project," Hughes recounted.

Upholstered pieces are both grand in scale and unusual. Many fabrics are from small,