



Straight from the **SOURCE**

DESIGNING A SOUTH FLORIDA DREAM HOME

The distance between Naples, Fla., and Atlanta, Ga., is more than 615 miles, but it's always on the way for Mark Riley. As owner of LUX Home Design International, Riley makes visiting AmericasMart a regular part of running his business.

Riley recently put his knowledge of the Market to work to complete a project both on time and on budget. The 3,600 square-foot home in Bonita Springs, Fla., was a traditional Mediterranean, filled with dark reds and browns. He transformed it into a light, bright, transitional oasis for his delighted clients, using products sourced from AmericasMart showrooms.

THE IDEAS

Inspiration can come from anywhere—a painting, an heirloom, a rug, a favorite blouse. Riley believes in finding what's important to a client and incorporating that into the design. "I love to use things that matter to my clients. You don't have to start over completely—unless that's what they want. Deriving inspiration from what matters to a family makes them feel comfortable in their space," he says.

In this project, the overall look started with a pair of chairs the client already owned and loved. The client selected a bold peacock blue from the fabric pattern, then Riley created a dazzling



look incorporating upholstery, case goods, rugs, lighting and accessories from AmericasMart. He used a soft gray and bright white paint palette to neutralize the yellow tones in the tile and ensure the new selections both blended and popped in the space.

"I brought my clients, and we did the entire house in three days. We could work quickly because I know the Market, am familiar with the exhibitors and had the ideas in place," says Riley. "I could easily guide my clients to make decisions.">



Artwork by Wendover



For additional information on Mark Riley and his projects, visit luxhomedesigninternational.com.

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MARK RILEY

As example, he cites just one of the showrooms he sourced for the project, Charles Ray & Associates. Riley says they found two tables that fit together behind the sofa in the living room, creating a functional statement. A coffee table the homeowners originally thought would be too big for the space, is the perfect size. And, the choice of a living room chandelier that would normally be placed in a dining room both opens the space and prevents it from being cavernous.

THE SOURCES

Riley often chooses to bring his clients with him to AmericasMart. “Shopping with your customer provides a different perspective. Sometimes he or she will see a piece in a showroom you might not have noticed. Each person sees with fresh eyes,” he says. But, he offers some advice. He has an upfront pricing structure, starting with the initial consultation through the sourcing and the project installation. Don’t assume

anything. Even those who say they have an open checkbook will have limits or a budget. By being transparent from the beginning, there are no surprises for anyone, and both client and designer feel informed and validated.

“As an example, the savings my clients get on draperies when I shop at Emdee International more than pays for what I charge to travel to Atlanta,” says Riley. “There is so much value at AmericasMart.”

Clients in multimillion homes appreciate value as much as those who live in more modest houses. At AmericasMart, a small design firm can access the same showrooms as major companies. “I’m one person, and I can compete with the big guys. I can source the same products,” he says. “I’m able to offer my clients pieces they can’t find on their own. They will have furnishings that are different from their neighbors.”

THE REASONING

Riley grew up in the building business and has been in real estate for more than 40 years. He knows what sells. The interior design component evolved at the request of clients who admired and trusted his taste. He designs for longevity, not trends, preferring to provide his clients with lasting pieces that won’t become quickly dated.

“Accessories are easily changed, but the bigger pieces should be timeless,” he says. He also insists on going beyond the surface to ensure the style, fabric and feel of furniture works for a client’s needs. “You have to sit on a sofa to make sure it’s both comfortable and functional,” he says.

“I could go to Dallas, but Atlanta is different. The Southern hospitality is everywhere. The people in the showrooms go out of their way to be helpful. Service is amazing. And everything is one place.” >



Living room tables by Caracole



Bedroom furniture from Bramble and Gabby

TRIED & TRUE ADVICE

As a successful business owner and advocate of creative sourcing, Mark Riley offers tips to both those who are new to AmericasMart and those who've shopped the campus for years:

1. Dissect AmericasMart on your own before bringing clients. Know the products and where they are. It will save time and reinforce your position as the expert.

2. Get to know the people. Showroom managers will go out of their way to help, especially if they know you. Being a quality customer benefits them with repeat business and benefits you with superior service.

3. Always have a plan. AmericasMart is a huge campus and takes time and effort to shop, so having a set itinerary makes the process more efficient.

4. Find out each showroom's policies regarding pricing, delivery, floor samples, etc. Remember that you're dealing directly with the people who can provide answers.

5. Don't be intimidated. Ask questions and learn from the answers. Exhibitors can value an independent designer as much as any other client if it's a professional, lucrative relationship.