

# Softer, simpler, cleaner

Contemporary clubhouse décor complements the lifestyle of today's members.

By Scott Kauffman

When members of The Colony Golf & Country Club in Bonita Springs, Fla., returned for the season this year, many of them no doubt did a double take when they walked into the clubhouse.

reopening, The Colony's clubhouse had been "de-Tuscanized."

The stylishly redesigned hub of activity now has a softer, simpler look and feel, with cleaner lines and lighter colors. The

ite restaurants and in their own homes.

During a recent visit to Greenville Country Club in South Carolina — run by General Manager Gregory Hobbs — industry expert Rick Snellinger of H. Chambers Co., a Baltimore-based planning and design firm, got a first-hand example of what today's private club members are looking for.

"When I went through the planning process with them, I had a young member say, 'Rick, I either want to be at home or at the club. Give me the amenities that I want,'" Snellinger said. "It wasn't, 'I want to be at home or the golf course.' It was home or the club."

Snellinger, president and CEO of a firm that got its start in the private club industry in the mid-1940s, said today's club facilities must be multi-dimensional and appeal to all ages, generations and genders.

Clive Daniel Hospitality of Naples, Fla., was chosen to oversee the updates at The Colony, developed by WCI Communities, a luxury homebuilder and manager of resort-style clubs. Using the clubhouse's existing architectural details and taking advantage of natural light, the design team made aesthetic and functional improvements that are receiving rave reviews from members.

"Our members are all saying they can't believe it's the same space," Club Manager Jim Iacovino said. "The design team did an amazing job imparting a fresh, light and contemporary look to the club while maintaining its original design. This design takes the club into the season in style."

In addition to redefining spaces to enhance functionality and optimizing water and greens views, the update used a light color palette that is balanced



**THE COLONY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB** remodeled its Tuscan-style clubhouse and embraced a crisp, fresh, modern look.

Sure, the private club still had its spectacular, sweeping views of the Gulf of Mexico and Estero Bay. And the lush, green fairways of the Jerry Pate-designed course still popped outside the bay windows of the main dining room.

But it was the inside of the 28,000-square-foot clubhouse that caused heads to turn. The ornate, Tuscan-inspired décor had disappeared. As one member put it during the recent grand

new look is a contemporary or transitional design, a style that is sweeping the private club industry nationwide, from golf and country clubs to yacht and city clubs.

With the rapidly changing makeup of today's private club membership, which is increasingly driven by more female and family-oriented influences, the fresh new resort-style look is growing in popularity. In many ways, it's just an extension of what members are enjoying at their favor-



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by rich, warm wood finishes and new furniture, draperies, lighting fixtures and artwork.

Longtime Colony resident members Bill and Dorothy Podl attended the recent celebration for the remodeled clubhouse and newly renovated Jerry Pate-designed golf course. They were thrilled with the changes.

“We just think the results are wonderful,” Dorothy Podl said. “It’s fresh, crisp and clean. We just love it. It’s just very fresh and modern looking. And yet the physical bones remain and just look natural. By and large, everybody is very supportive of it, and the membership is very pleased with the results.”

The Clive Daniel design team responsible for The Colony’s transformation included Daniel Lubner, principal, and

Nancy Woodhouse, vice president of design and business development. They said the biggest changes they see today in private club projects are the use of “transitional and relaxed elegance” throughout the club and lighter colors, such as neutrals and grays with various hues of blue as accents, colors that add a “pop to any palette.”

According to Kimberly Timmons-Beutner of Denver-based Kimberly Timmons Interiors, decorative Bella Beams are an interesting new material used to support this natural look. Handcrafted from real wood planks and finished in furniture-quality elegance, Bella Beams are lightweight, hollow and easily slip over structural beams.

Bella Beams can be installed with little or no engineering requirements, accord-

ing to Timmons-Beutner. The interior designer used the decorative beams at Robson Ranch Golf Club in Eloy, Ariz.

“Clubs are leaving behind the typical heavy, dark, fully masculine ambiance and focusing on great design that appeals to all clientele,” Timmons-Beutner said. Her work on Robson Ranch was recognized by Golf Inc. last year as a runner-up in the clubhouse renovation of the year competition.

“Often incorporating natural light and views, great architecture, modern design elements clad in war, natural materials for an elegant yet comfortable direction,” she said. (Bella Beams) add an amazing aesthetic to any space.”

To be sure, Tuscan-inspired darker, red brick settings still work in some places. Case in point is The Club at

Bella Collina, just outside Orlando, Fla. Designed by renowned Marsh & Associates, this 75,000-square-foot Italianate clubhouse and village plays host to more than 150 weddings each year, partly because of its destination-like Tuscan setting.

But for most clubs, the Tuscan style is going the way of metal golf spikes and formal dining rooms. Podl is reminded of it every time she enters the new Colony clubhouse.

“When you walked into our county club and went through the front door, you used to walk down this long, dark, red brick hallway with vaulted ceilings,” Podl said. “I didn’t know what they were going to do with that, but they whitewashed the brick, and it is so attractive.”

Other clubs are embracing this fresh

new approach to design and décor. For instance, the Lauderdale Yacht Club in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., recently updated its main lobby with new furnishings.

Lauderdale Yacht Club General Manager Nadine Rockwell, CCM, said the older, nautical-looking décor and club chairs needed a fresher look.

“You’re still keeping that nautical detail, but something classic with a little more contemporary lines,” Rockwell said. “You’re still using the color palette of the nautical blues, but branching out a little bit and contemporizing it a little bit.”

Rockwell, who previously worked at Annapolis Yacht Club in Maryland,

said many clubs still want to honor their yachting history and traditions. You’ll likely still see a lot of brass and a wall of photos of commodores and leaders past and present.

But the approach these days is moving toward cleaner and more tailored lines, Rockwell said.

“Our freshened front entrance still has the real classic furniture and pieces that are timeless, but it’s in the hues of the blues and neutral colors,” she said.

The new trends mean that at golf-

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focused clubs, the once-ubiquitous greens, browns and beiges designed to complement the surrounding courses are disappearing.

“I remember when 20 years ago the most difficult statement we would make when doing the interiors at clubs was,

‘Let’s bring the outside in,’” Snellinger said. “Outside-in meant greens and burgundies.”

Now, he said, preferences have changed.

“You’re bringing in a lot of the more airy, lighter colors for the décor,” he said.

A perfect example is Cape Fear Country Club in Wilmington, N.C., where Chambers rebalanced the clubhouse dining area and redesigned the family activity center as part of a multi-phase master plan at the club led by General Manager Mary Geiss, CCM.

“You’ll be seeing lighter colors,” Snellinger said. “Light blues and grays. Colors that make you feel good when you come in.”

Interior designer Migena Gace of Florida-based Peacock + Lewis has been in the private club business for more than 12 years. At Grey Oaks Country Club, one of the original private club communities in Naples, Fla., where Jim Butler, CCM, is general manager, she redesigned the pool and the cafe to reflect a more casual style.

“The finishes are very traditional with more textures than patterns,” Gace said. Stained cypress with a light and airy finish is used for trims, crowns and panels.

One of the biggest challenges clubs face is how to successfully create a style that speaks to both formality and a casual, family-friendly environment.

One way Gace strikes that balance is to use more textures in wall coverings and large Italian porcelain tiles.

“Patterns tend to be a little bit trendy, so they go out of style very soon,” she said. “One of the successes we’ve had is doing more tone-on-tone [texturing] rather than patterns. The mixture of warm woods and texture has been well received by members.”

“You’re seeing cleaner and more modern, fresh lines,” she said. “We’re getting away from the harsh geometric shapes. You still have patterns, but we’re seeing more of the curves, the rounds and circles. Not so much squares.”

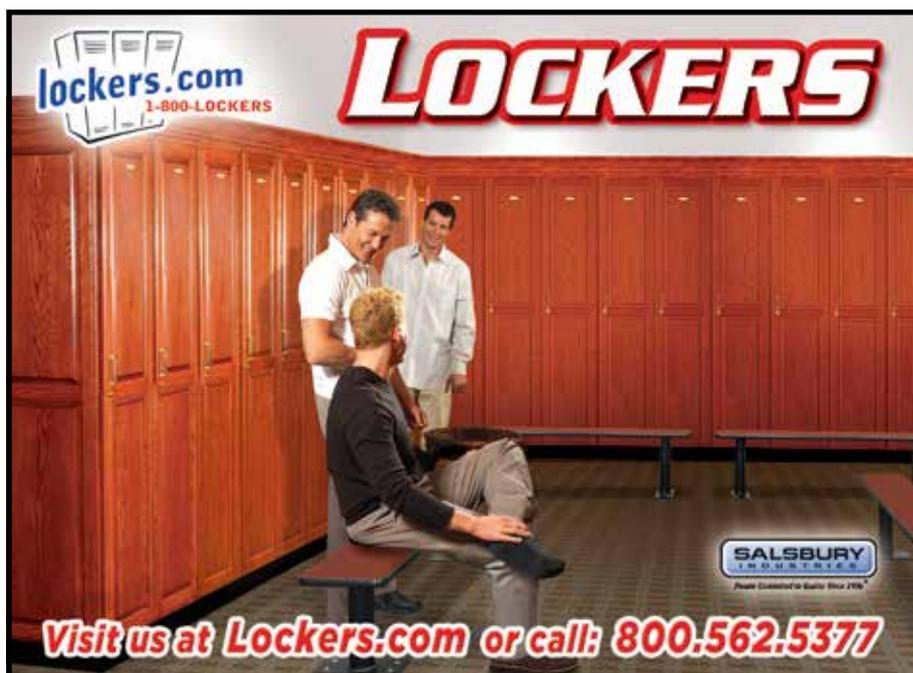
If this sounds a bit more feminine in nature, it’s no surprise.

“All of my committee members are women,” Gace said with a smile. “They say a woman will take a house and turn it into a home. Now they’re taking a county club and making it into their home.”



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