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SEASONAL SPA TREATMENTS
GOING BOUTIQUE
AUTOMATING THE HOME**



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Top: The Charles Pacific Grove living room features rich colors that give it a luxurious, yet comfortable, feel. Below: Gruwell with his partners, Don and Jay Desai at The Charles.

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Inn Style

AFTER DECADES OF DECORATING HIGH-END BOUTIQUE HOTELS, CHARLES GRUWELL IS DESIGNING HIS OWN.

By Pam Marino

Celebrated designer Charles Gruwell has spent decades designing for high-end hotels, restaurants and homes in places like San Francisco, Las Vegas and Los Angeles, as well as locally in Carmel, Pebble Beach and Monterey. Now he's come home, to the town he grew up in, to design for himself at his own recently opened boutique hotel, The Charles Pacific Grove.

"The Monterey Peninsula is probably the most beautiful place in the world, I've known that all my life—I've traveled all over the world—and coming back here I know we live in a paradise," Gruwell says. He returned to Pacific Grove from Los Angeles several years ago while continuing his busy design business.

His friends and partners in The Charles, Don and Jay Desai, approached him about rebranding the bed and breakfast located in a former Victorian home and gave him free reign to design it.

"This is your hometown and you should design this hotel just the way you want," Gruwell remembers Don Desai telling him. "I purposely wanted to have a rich, regal feeling to it, so I've used a rich color palette and I purposely got black carpet with cognac and caramel accents."

Gruwell looked for a rich brocade fabric with a black background and found a sumptuous one featuring deep

burgundy, gold and shades of green. The result is an inviting, comfortable space that's masculine yet elegant.

"It feels like you're in a private club," Gruwell says. "It's all based in classical design."

"An artfully designed inclusive inn" is the tagline for The Charles, because Gruwell and the Desais wanted to fill a void they saw in the hospitality industry,

an LGBTQ+ hotel open to all.

"There are gay hotels but there's really no established gay-friendly hotels that are open to everybody, open to the mainstream, the street traveler, the LGBT crowd," Gruwell says. "We merged style and elegance into inclusion." The hotel, which is also dog-friendly, is already getting positive reviews since opening in June.

After 46 years in the business, Gruwell, 73, is not ready for retirement. Next up is another partnership with the Desais, The Charles Napa, another Victorian-home-turned-inn that they will be renovating and opening in the future.

Gruwell is also redesigning Carmel's iconic Cypress Inn, once co-owned by the late Doris Day and Denny LeVett, who still owns it. The main living room and lobby are expected to be completed by December 2025, with hotel rooms and corridors completed by the end of



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