



SAN FRANCISCO DESIGN CENTER

Making a Diffa-rence

By William J. McKay

Photography Tara Arrowood

Outrageous. Gorgeous. Fabulous. Delicious. Unforgettable. Hardly words you'd expect to hear describing most fundraisers, yet typical of the comments heard from past participants of DINING BY DESIGN at the San Francisco Design Center (SFDC). The SFDC is well-known for hosting and sponsoring many special events. I previewed last year's stunning displays including those shown here. Walking through the Galleria Building, I overheard comments like, "How did they ever come up with this?" and "That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen." Since these accolades were from SFDC showroom pros accustomed to seeing the best of the best in design, their reactions were particularly notable.

DINING BY DESIGN is a visual feast of dining room vignettes. The more than 40 themed settings are created by architects, interior designers, artists and SFDC showroom professionals. The two-day event kicks off with a preview cocktail party aptly titled "TABLE HOP & TASTE." A formal dinner is served at the designed tables the following night.

DINING BY DESIGN is one of a series of national fund-raising events created by DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS). DIFFA supports direct care for people living with HIV/AIDS and at-risk preventive education programs. A local example is the Positive Health Program at San Francisco General Hospital. Randall Shields is Project Director for DINING BY DESIGN in San Francisco, which raises \$125,000-plus annually. This unique collaboration illustrates how private industry can support needed community services in a way that also promotes the creative work they do in their field of expertise. "Funds from this event make an incredible difference for people living with AIDS," says Shields.

Speaking of that work, I asked some of the creators of last year's displays to share the inspirations for their designs...

Mark Newman of Mark Newman Design created the SFDC's display featuring a glass tabletop with inset flat screen monitors. These screens delivered a slideshow of artwork created by artists represented in SFDC showrooms. "I juxtaposed organic elements with clean-lined contemporary ones," Newman says, "to suggest a connection between the abstract imagery and the natural elements that inspired the work."



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT:

Mark Newman, Mark Newman Design for SFDC; Dave Allen of Artefact Design & Salvage and Hinc showroom; Adeeni Design Group and Randolph & Hein; Ken Fulk for Kneeder|Fauchere; Scot Meacham Wood of Thane Studio and Wroolie & Company

Adeeni Design Group paired up with Randolph & Hein to build what General Manager Heather Hutchinson describes as “a luxurious and comfortable nest in which to have a dinner party.” The vinyl wall covering with its ostrich-skin texture is appropriate for this avian fantasy.

Designer Scot Meacham Wood of Thane Studio collaborated with Wroolie & Company to create an elegant and formal dining scene. Wood says, “My inspiration began with some new items from the showroom. I looked for clean lines in the furniture and then experimented with contrasting textures and finishes such as the crocodile wallpaper.”

Designer Dave Allen of Artefact Design & Salvage worked with Hinc showroom to create the rustic natural setting for their display. Allen started out with just the stainless steel cafeteria trays in mind for a completely different theme. He kept the trays as contrast to the natural fibers in the final design which Allen describes as “natural, simple and substantial.”

Designer Ken Fulk who was sponsored by SFDC’s Kneeder|Fauchere had some fun with their swimming theme entry. “We took the iconic, traditional, American institution of the country club and turned it on its head,” says Fulk.

The 2008 event is November 19 & 20. Information and tickets are available at www.diffa.org. Sponsors and designers (yes, there’s still time to get in on this year’s event) can call Randall Shields at (415) 597-8164. If you’d like to volunteer, send an email to barry.tereshkow@haworth.com. □

