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AMERICAN BUILDERS QUARTERLY®

LAS VEGAS SANDS
RECREATES THE
STRIP IN MACAO

THE MAN BEHIND
DREAMWORKS'
WORLDWIDE STUDIOS

E.ON PROSPECTS
ARE BLOWING IN
THE WIND

GATEWAY TO NOLA

The new terminal at the **LOUIS ARMSTRONG NEW ORLEANS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT** promises economic growth for a city hoping to transcend from reviving to thriving

ARCHITECT
DIRK LOHAN
NAMES HIS
FAVORITE PROJECTS

► CLASSICALLY CHIC

A diamond-patterned black-and-white marble floor is paired with garden statues and Grecian columns in the inviting entryway of a 1930s home in Pittsburgh. A circular wrought-iron center table with a slate top completes the elegant space.

her direction. "Theater combined costuming with the environment in which we all live, and I concluded that I really like interiors," Walsh says.

She began taking courses on interior design, but there was a definite learning curve. "It's one thing to know about fashion, but to know about interior design, you have to understand scale, heights, and depths of furniture, how people live in their environments, what their walkway requirements are—that sort of thing," Walsh says. But, her work earned her an apprenticeship at Irvin & Company in Ohio, which was then the largest design firm between Chicago and New York, and later she took on roles of increasing responsibility at two Pittsburgh firms.

The designer's first major project was Fallingwater, a house Frank Lloyd Wright designed in 1935 in the Allegheny Mountains of rural southwestern Pennsylvania, about 40 miles from Pittsburgh. The home, built partly over a waterfall, was hailed by *Time* magazine as Wright's most beautiful work, was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1966, and was listed on *Smithsonian* magazine's list of "28 Places to See Before You Die." In 1982, Edgar Kaufmann hired Walsh to refurbish the interior. When she finished, she encouraged him to find a permanent curator, who's still there today, ensuring the home remains intact as artisans from across the country contribute. Walsh, for her part, currently sits on the home's advisory board, but she now lives down in Florida, where her husband wanted to retire.

It was in Florida that Walsh realized it was time for a change. "As my departments became larger, I was no longer able to touch my clients, and the joy of my work is to experience the joy of my clients," Walsh says. When she opened her own shop, she put a greater emphasis on service, letting her clients drive the bus, so to speak, and simply helping them achieve the design and functionality they need. "My style is my clients' style," Walsh says. "I sit down with them and learn their style. I think that learning experience—placing yourself into your clients' minds and bodies—is really fun because they see colors differently, they experience objects differently."

The decision to trade her wardrobe in for a new career, as it turns out, was a good one for Walsh. "Men say their designer cars have a return on value," she remarks, "and it turns out designer clothes do as well." ■



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