

Portrait of an ARTIST

ROMANIAN-BORN DESIGNER ADAM D. TIHANY HAS BEEN UPPING THE WOW FACTOR AT THE BREAKERS SINCE 2012, ONE SPACE AT A TIME

BY MICHELE MEYER



ADAM D. TIHANY AND SOME OF HIS PROJECTS AT THE BREAKERS: HMF (THIS PAGE, LEFT); THE MAIN LOBBY (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP); IMPERIAL SUITE (OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM).

PETER MURPHY

For more than four decades, internationally renowned hospitality designer Adam D. Tihany (pronounced tuh-HA-nee), has been leaving his mark around the world. Most likely you have seen some of his work—he has created interiors for many of the finest restaurants, resorts, and cruise lines globally.

"We don't repeat ourselves," says Tihany, who, acting as design consultant to Peacock + Lewis Architects, has breathed new life and high style into The Breakers since 2012. "I paint my clients' portraits—not their faces but their personalities. No two are alike."

His moving canvases have dazzled at Los Angeles's Beverly Hills Hotel; Jerusalem's King David; Seabourn and Cunard cruise ships; and restaurants for famed chefs Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud, and Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

At The Breakers, Tihany's first project was recasting the Florentine Room as HMF, where he created a dazzling throwback to the Palm Beach cocktail culture of the Fifties and Sixties. Also re-imagined under his direction: Flagler Steakhouse, Seafood Bar, Flagler Club lounge, Royal Poinciana and Imperial suites, the South Oceanfront Tower guest rooms, and, most recently, the poolside bungalows.

All share traits for which The Breakers is known—attention to detail, great care for guests, and respect for history—yet each area is distinctly its own. "Ultimately, the portrait is about the subject, not the artist," says Tihany. "The Breakers should be instantly recognizable as The Breakers, not Adam Tihany for The Breakers."

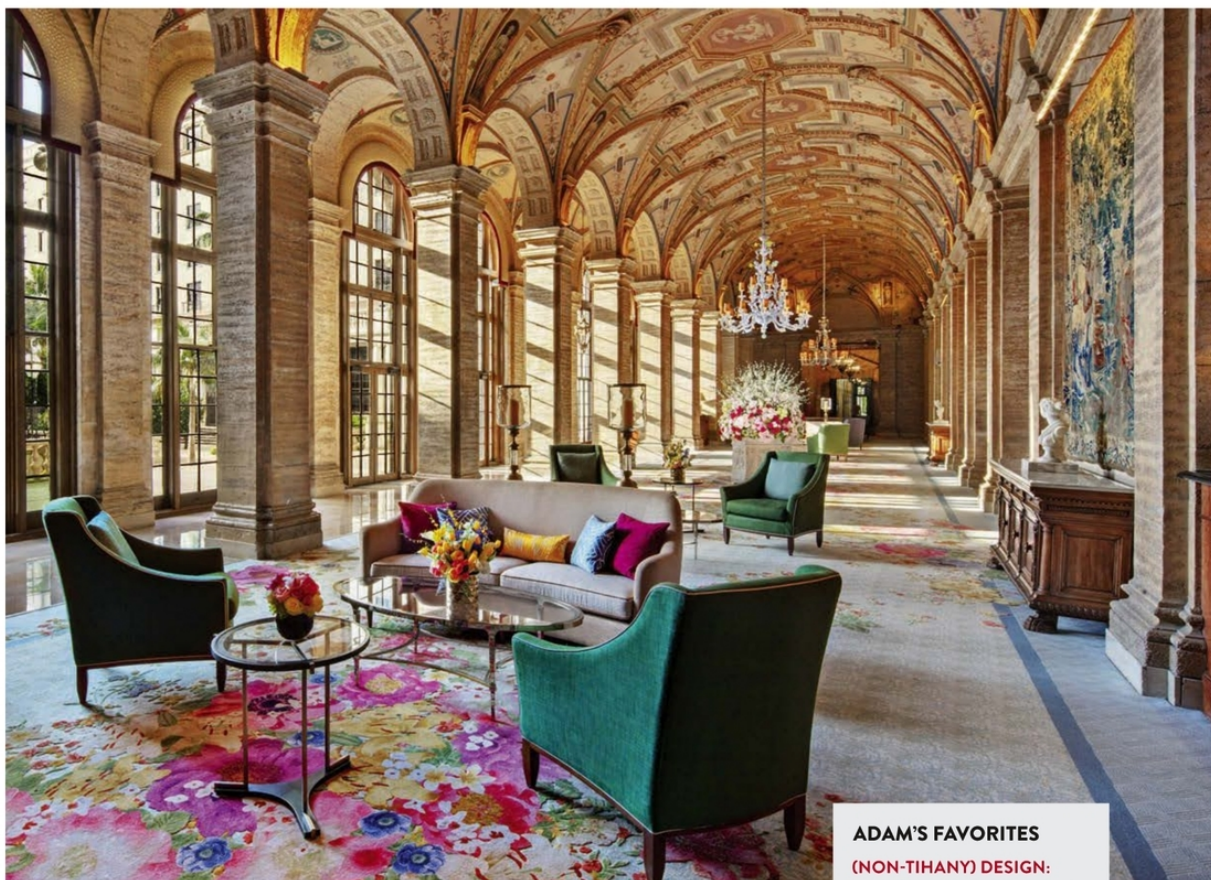
An affable artist with a playful smile, soft voice, and hint of an Is-

raeli accent mixed with a bit of Italian, 72-year-old Tihany has a knack for transforming spaces into fantastical experiences. At The Breakers, a corridor becomes a banana-leaf jungle; the main lobby a stunning, lush garden. "We want people to hang out and celebrate, not find a transient space they can't wait to escape," he explains.

The star of the recent main lobby renovation is a massive work of art: a 25-foot-by-161-foot, 1,500-pound magical carpet of 70 unique shades. The carpet, produced by Sacco Carpet of London, was handwoven in a single piece on a loom by 35 weavers. It took 30,000 hours for the team to create—a truly showstopping centerpiece that greets guests upon arrival. "Instagrammers will lie on it and take selfies," predicts Tihany. "It's definitely a 'wow' moment."

When it comes to his art, Tihany—whose personal style includes pocket scarves, bold spectacles, and sharp blazers—will easily chat for hours. But asked about his personal life, he deadpans, "Next!" Yet it, too, is filled with "wow" moments.

At 18, he was drafted into the Israeli Air Force, where, after serving three years, he pondered what to do next. Italy offered low tuition to Israelis at



ERIC LAUGNEL

two state-owned universities—one for veterinarians and the other for architects. “My only knowledge about architecture was that I did not want to deliver calves,” he jokes. That’s how he landed at Politecnico di Milano’s School of Architecture and Planning. He excelled, and eventually his reputation for contemporary design brought him the offer he had dreamed of since childhood: to work in the United States.



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Fame and respect quickly followed after he designed a replica of Paris’s La Coupole restaurant on New York’s Park Avenue, resembling a 1927 grand Parisian café. Following that, a silk tent and clock on a tightrope at midtown’s Le Cirque 2000 and, in Las Vegas, a *Mission: Impossible*-inspired bottle tower scaled by wine stewards at Aureole earned him his rep as a restaurant ringmaster. In 1991, he was inducted into the Design Hall of Fame.

Today, he and his small team of 15 (“I want to design, not manage,” he says) work out of Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood, creating art from Seoul to Dubai, Beijing to Paris. Destination matters at Tihany Design. “I will not send my designers to a place they don’t want to go to,” he says.

Tihany divides his time between New York and Paris and would count The Breakers, where he stays about twice a year, among his favorite places to visit. “It has become my home,” he says. He is fluent in Hebrew, English, Hungarian, French, and Italian. He met his wife, Miami Beach-reared Marnie Mass, at a dinner party. They married in 1995, and she has since become Tihany Design’s business development director.

Tihany’s collaboration with The Breakers, he says, “is a marriage made in heaven.” He elaborates: “I provide the hardware. The software is the service, smiles, food, and drink. Nobody does it better than The Breakers. I support their efforts, and they support mine.” 🍷

ADAM’S FAVORITES

(NON-TIHANY) DESIGN:

“Hamburg, Germany’s Elbphilharmonie Hall. It’s a must for anyone who loves music and architecture. There’s a mind-blowing synergy between the contemporary design and the concerts performed there.”

MUSE: “My wife. She has the highest standards I know of. If I can make her happy, anybody will be happy!”

FOOD: “A bagel with cream cheese and lox. My favorite New York deli has a ‘Schmeat Station.’ How can anyone resist?”