

# Eye of the storm

The green room area at the Dolby Theatre for this year's Oscars was created as an urban loft and place of calm.

BY DAVID KEEPS

For Academy Award winners and presenters, the Architectural Digest green room is a backstage oasis of pampering calm, a place where the stars can perch on bar stools without rumpling their clothes and steady themselves with a cup of coffee or a cocktail.

"And there has always been a place for people to smoke," said David Rockwell, who was the original architect of the Dolby Theatre in 2001 (when it was known as the Kodak) and created sets for the 2009 Oscar broadcast. "It was the loading dock." Tapped by Architectural Digest to create this year's green room, Rockwell is transforming that loading dock into a California garden room that adjoins the green room, a first for the Academy Awards.

The garden room will be enclosed by woven willow wall panels, enlivened with a Mediterranean-accented floor made from Medina cement tiles by Exquisite Surfaces in Los Angeles and filled with up-lighted tropical plants and a canopy of string lights.

"It will look like dusk has ended and cocktail hour has begun," Rockwell said. (And smokers will be welcome.) The furniture will be an assortment of brass tables, Brown Jordan lounge chairs and sofas in teak with a gray finish and cushions made from Rockwell's Spotlight collection for Jim Thompson Fabrics.

The designer conceived the adjoining green room "as a more contemporary urban loft environment" with simple but dramatic architectural details. White-stained joists will lend a California post-and-beam Modernist feeling to the ceilings. A bank of back-lighted windows — reminiscent of shoji screens — will be punctuated by vintage cast-iron factory columns.

Chandeliers and ceiling fixtures by Hudson Furniture and lamps from Circa Lighting will add soft light. "The level of anxiety is pretty high" at the Oscars, Rockwell said. "And if there's one place where you want to look good in a mirror, that's the green room."

To help keep the mood light, Rockwell worked with Oscar-winning actress Susan Sarandon, who helped select artwork for the walls, pulling classic black-and-white images from the academy's archives. "Susan liked the madcap screwball comedies from the '30s and '40s, like 'Bringing Up Baby,' 'Born Yesterday' and 'It Happened One Night.'"

The furnishings evoke a different era: Rockwell paired vintage mid-century loungers with petrified wood and bronze side tables and a contemporary zebrawood and leather club chair, sofa and ottoman by Hudson Furniture. The firm also produced a custom brass bar and cocktail cart inspired by mid-century furniture designer Paul McCobb and crafted leather and zebrawood bar stools that seem to melt into gleaming bronze bases.

"It's minimal but intentional ornamentation," Rockwell said, "like putting on really great shoes."

Rockwell designed the palette — neutral colors and earthy materials such as brass, bronze, stone and highly patterned wood — to be warm and inviting, "not overtly feminine, but not like a men's club," he added. And the designer's low-key luxury serves another purpose.

"The Oscars have become a ritualized event for fashion, so the green room needs to be a setting that shows off the jewels," he said with a laugh. "Competing with the colors of the gowns is a real no-no."

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Renderings by Rockwell Group

**A FANTASY GARDEN** with willow panels and soft lights will adjoin the green room at the Dolby Theatre.



**THE GREEN ROOM** for this year's Oscars is by David Rockwell.