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THE WELL-DESIGNED KITCHEN AND BATH

# MIA RAO DESIGN

“Our job as designers is to be chameleons,” says Mia Rao, principal designer of her namesake firm, **Mia Rao Design**. A fitting analogy given the recent shift toward color in the kitchen and bath. “People are much less afraid of color and more willing to take risks,” she says. “This is new territory for the Midwest, which is fantastic.” In addition to color, nature continues to make its mark with natural wood cabinetry as well as quartz countertops that offer durability in addition to organic style. “Our work has a soulful, tactile quality about it. We love to play with color to draw clients into an environment,” she says. “We play with texture to add depth of interest and make you want to stay. We like to create spaces that are meant to be used, loved, and to last.” While layering is key, maintaining a cohesive style is “mission critical,” as Rao puts it. As is staying on top of innovative products and technology. “In this digital age, clients expect a quick response and attention to detail,” she tells. “Creating truly unique designs that differentiate yourself has become more important than ever.”



## IN THE BATH: MUST-HAVES

“Every bathroom should have an **incredible shower**,” Rao says. “I find many of our clients prefer a shower, so I try to encourage them to go all out. Whether it’s through **high-end fixtures, tile, or steam or body sprays**, I think the shower should have a **spa-like** feel and be a refuge. Oftentimes a bathroom is not the biggest space, so every inch counts in terms of functionality and beautiful elements. I think keeping a timeless aesthetic is also very important in the bathroom.”



“Our goal is to create soulful design that reflects the interest and lifestyle of the client. We want our interiors to reflect energy and balance, creating a personal refuge. We like to have fun!”



1. In this master bath, sliding mahogany doors, a teal clawfoot tub and shower, sandy-colored marble, and a teak vanity remind the homeowners of their tropical paradise honeymoon, which was their inspiration.
2. Mahogany panels, with Moorish cutouts, add to the exotic feel of this bathroom. Millwork fabricated by Navillus Woodworks.
3. Be whisked away to another world when stepping into this luxury shower, featuring deep blue-green tile that reflects the colors of the sea.

## RAO ON... DESIGNER INSPIRATION

I’m forever inspired by the late **Maya Romanoff and his wife, Joyce**. I recently learned more about Maya seeing Joyce speak at the AuthLux Summit—about Maya’s passion for using unique materials and testing boundaries with his wallcoverings. He was a true artist and uninhibited when expressing himself. I’m a huge fan of those who push the limits in art and creation. I also love that their wallcoverings are made right here in Chicago.



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## INTERIOR DESIGN FOR MODERN LIVING

509 N. Wolcott Chicago, IL 60622

312.850.4841

www.miaoraodesign.com