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**DODD MITCHELL LENDS A LITTLE HUMILITY WITH HIS DESIGNS**

BY LISA FALCONE RENDERINGS PROVIDED BY GRAND SIERRA CORP. PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLINE

{ Dodd Mitchell has taken the design world by storm with his innovative ideas and classic sense of style; his impressive list of accomplishments leaves few holes. That's what you *do* know. What you may not know, however, is that he's been giving something back the entire time.

Beneath the manly exterior, rugged good looks and general "cool" factor that are Dodd Mitchell, beats the heart of a deeply spiritual individual. He may be one of the few whose philosophy on design mirrors his ideals about life and, lucky for us, the karma is good.

At 39, Mitchell's design résumé includes some of the most exclusive addresses in town — hotspots such as Dolce, Katanata, The Lodge, Sushi Roku, 217, Teddy's and the redesign of Hollywood's Roosevelt Hotel, to name a few. His spots are known for being, well, let's face it, somewhat pretentious, star-studded and quite often nearly impossible to get into. There's a method to the madness, though. A secret, if you will, hidden deep within the walls of every place he designs. It's the story of one man's personal challenge to bring a little nature and goodness to an otherwise spiritually starved Hollywood community. And you never even knew you were being dosed.

To unlock the mystery, let's play a game: Pretend for a moment that you are Hollywood royalty, a movie producer, supermodel, actor or maybe a self-proclaimed rock star. You have a dinner reservation at The Lodge in Beverly Hills. Arriving early, you locate the bar and order a Grey Goose on the rocks. Feeling very sexy and confident, you sip your cocktail, knowing others are watching. As you lower your glass, it makes contact with a strategically placed ridge in the bar's surface. Panic strikes as the vodka spills all over you as well as the person next to you. People are grabbing napkins and you're apologizing. In a moment, you realize you aren't smooth, you aren't cool; underneath it all, you're just a regular Joe — Dodd Mitchell has just succeeded in bringing you back to reality.

Obviously, the Hollywood attitude often lacks humility. Creation by creation, Mitchell is giving it back and the joke's on us. Not only did he leave the naturally occurring ridges in the bar at The Lodge to hearten spills, but there are hidden pitfalls at his other well-to-do locations. The stones along the entry at Sushi Roku have been laid unevenly with the idea that patrons may trip a little on the way in, humbling them before crossing the threshold. The tables at Teddy's are very low and difficult to maneuver around, causing many to stumble on the way to their exclusive V.I.P. seating. This is Mitchell's intent. "You are coming into my atmosphere the way I try to live my life," he explains. "It can be too much see-and-be-seen and a little too pretentious."

Mitchell wants to bring people back to earth, but he also wants to bring the earth back to the people. He does this by using materials born only in nature. The custom paint colors he uses are inspired by flowers and leaves. The walls, floors and furniture are all crafted from earthy elements. His reason for doing so is to create balance. "People come here to take. 'I'm going to be an actress, I'm going to be a model.' The energy they put off is so bad ... you have to have a certain kind of a shield up to feel comfortable here, and I hate that feeling ... it's such a taking, sucking environment," Mitchell says. His solution? "I try to use natural elements to counteract that, to balance it. I believe there is energy that comes from wood, stone and water. A lot of people are workaholics and can't get away, so by surrounding them with natural materials it gives [them] the feeling of Mother Nature, of being on vocation."

Mitchell's latest endeavor, the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino, is Reno's newest development. Rivaling the many casinos across the Strip, it promises to give Vegas a run for its money. The \$1.8 billion luxury hotel is a virtual city in itself, boasting 145 acres of nonstop entertainment. The all-encompassing getaway hotspot includes a 200,000-square-foot convention center; a 107,000-square-foot casino; 2,000 guestrooms; a

5-acre outdoor grass amphitheater; a four-level, cabana-style golf driving range; an indoor water park; 10 restaurants; nightclubs; upscale retail stores; and to top off this vacationer's extravaganza, 824 private luxury condominiums. If that's not enough, the in-house shuttle service will gladly whisk guests away to the nearby ski and bike areas to enjoy outdoor activities on and around Lake Tahoe.

The entertainment on-deck is equally inviting. Dolce, made famous in LA for exceptional cuisine and hip investors such as Ashton Kutcher, will be opening a new location within the resort. After dinner, check out the hugely successful production of Beacher's Madhouse, an R-rated adult variety show that's been running strong at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. Its crazy lineup includes scantily clad dancers, contortionists, animals, comedians and wild stunts. Celebrities not only come to check out the show, they participate as well. Paris Hilton, Jessica Simpson, Britney Spears, Vince Vaughn, Jennifer Lopez, Tommy Lee, Usher, Quentin Tarantino, Anna Nicole Smith and Dennis Rodman are a few of the famed faces to have made it onstage to join the fun. The show has received rave reviews from publications as widely varied as *Time* and *Us Weekly*. It promises to deliver the unexpected and take each audience member on a wild ride.

After the show, hit the Beacher's Madhouse Bar, which is being introduced as the first of its kind. The bar will encourage an "anything goes" atmosphere, according to Mitchell, and each





night will be different, with plans to incorporate both dancers and acts from the stage show. Keeping with the Madhouse motif, the atmosphere will exude the unexpected.

On the business side, Grand Sierra Resort Corp. has brought Michael Carsch onboard, best known for his management of the Ritz-Carlton. He has been named president of the venture and promises to deliver the utmost in quality and service. The properties under Carsch's care have received several awards for excellence, and his participation in the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino will take it to the highest levels of resort standards.

The Grand Sierra Resort & Casino aims to be the perfect balance of what one might dream of in a full-service resort property. With Mitchell bringing the relaxed atmosphere of each room to calm nerves and relax the soul, plenty of wild and crazy entertainment to deliver an unforgettable night, and the hospitality expertise of management heavyweights like Carsch, it's going to be a vacation metropolis unparalleled. However, don't forget to keep an eye out for a few tricks Mitchell may have up his sleeve; his sense of humor will likely shine through to remind patrons that he's behind the curtain, pulling the strings.

We all could use a little Dodd Mitchell in our lives. His message is clear and humbling: Life, like the art he creates, is meant to be enjoyed, not taken too seriously. With a variety of stylish locations, Mitchell provides a setting that relaxes, allowing guests to enjoy each others' company whether eating or playing. He brings the vacation to those who can't take one and positive energy to places otherwise devoid of spirituality. Innovatively, this busy and brilliant designer urges people to laugh at themselves when they get a little too self-consumed or preoccupied — it's a welcome concept.

