



Cowboy Style

Your Guide to Craftsmen, the Arts and Traditions of the Western Lifestyle

● WESTERN INTERIORS

A Golden Opportunity

When Golden Gaming remodeled their executive suite, they relied on Las Vegas, Nevada, designer Leslie Parraguirre to blend the Old West with today's vibrant lifestyle. >

Story and photography by KATE BRADLEY



Colorado artist, Carrie Fell's brightly colored paintings inspired designer Leslie Parraguirre to find artisans who could unite the Old West and the New West. Leslie and Loren Skyhorse, of Skyhorse Saddle Co. in Durango, Colorado carved the chair backs for the dining table, and the Native American-inspired chandeliers were acquired from Originals 22, a manufacturer of lighting fixtures in Camarillo, California.

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Above: The suite's entrance is flanked by a cowboy and horse. The Skyhorses detailed the reins with .45-caliber Colt cartridge casings. "The bullet casings are actual Colt .45 rounds installed in a safe way [in the reins]," Loren Skyhorse says. **Below:** Created by Loren and Lisa Skyhorse, this saddle incorporates Thomas Singer's silver conchas. "The title of the saddle is *We Are All Related*," says Loren Skyhorse. "To us, that is a statement about all living beings getting along and being together. All the little animals, fetish animals, are from Native American lore."

A NATIVE NEVADAN AND BOARD MEMBER of the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Leslie Parraguirre is knowledgeable about Western artisans—from leather and silver craftsmen, to painters and sculptors. Parraguirre, president of Colours, Inc., a Las Vegas-based design firm, found her perfect assignment when Blake Sartini, owner of Golden Gaming in Las Vegas, approached her to redesign the Gold Bar executive suite at his headquarters.

"This is so near and dear to my heart, because to live in the West and not really understand the history of the cowboy and the lifestyle is such a shame," says Parraguirre. "Through the Folklife Center, I was aware of some of the art that was still alive and well, featuring techniques that are from our forefathers."

That knowledge helped Parraguirre bring her concept for the room to fruition. Her base was an art collection Sartini had acquired that featured brightly colored Western scenes by Colorado artist Carrie Fell.

"[Carrie] has a pop-art approach to contemporary cowboy art," Parraguirre points out. "We looked at that and thought, how do we marry this and the contemporary West with the Old West? That was our mission."

In her mind, Parraguirre had only one place to turn in Nevada to

connect with the Old West—the craftsmen at the legendary J.M. Capriola Co. in Elko.

"Golden Gaming is a Nevada-owned property. Capriola's was our No. 1 choice to use, because I knew them from my own history here," explains Parraguirre. "We started with them and everything started to unfold."

While leather artist Andy Stevens of Andy Stevens Saddlery, who at the time worked for Capriola's, was carving leather inserts for the sofa, bar face and custom billiards table, and creating woven-leather placemats, Parraguirre was looking for other craftsmen to bring on board. Enter husband-and-wife saddle makers Loren and Lisa Skyhorse.

"Mr. Sartini fell in love with their work, and the more he got to know them, the more he wanted to engage their services," says Parraguirre.

The Skyhorses, who own and operate Skyhorse Saddle Co. in Durango, Colorado, were commissioned to create the panels that embellish the entrance, and a saddle that hangs on the chimney. The saddle is a replica of one from their private collection and features Thomas Singer silver.

"It was the largest-scale project we had done in many ways," says Loren Skyhorse. "We spent two weeks in design, three months in the workshop building all the leatherwork, and about a week in installation at the site. The truth is, [Sartini] gave us almost 100 percent *carte blanche* on design, and he just let us do our art."

While designing the room, Parraguirre found it hard to obtain traditionally engraved Native American items. She says this is because the art is getting lost through the generations.

"We wanted a representation of that, so





Designer Leslie Parraguirre accepted the task of creating the ultimate Western executive suite. Andy Stevens and J.M. Capriola Co. created the leather-tooled panels to embellish the bar.

Singer did all the silver conchas in traditional Navajo engraving,” she says.

In keeping with Fell’s colorful paintings, the turquoise incorporated on the saddle added vibrancy to the leather.

“We brought in patent leather crocodile and metallic cowhide for pillows,” says Parraguirre.

Colors most cowboys could not name, like eggplant, were used to create depth in the room.

An executive suite needs a grand entrance, and the Skyhorses delivered one. The entrance panels took on a life of their own with the depth and intricate details they put into the cowboy and horse designs.

“They’re so impressive; there are so many dimensions to them,” says Parraguirre. “When they brought in [the panels], I never dreamed they would be so dimensional. They literally jump off the wall.”

A tribute to Nevada’s mining history, lantern-like light fixtures were installed in the room. Other touches, including onyx embellishments on the bar and burl-wood chargers with inlaid turquoise place settings, continue Parraguirre’s vision of blending the Old West with the New West.

“We were constantly saying, ‘We don’t want the Old West to die. We just want to move it forward and honor it,’” recalls Parraguirre.

The Gold Bar does just that—honoring the craftsmanship that built the Western way of life. The Native American influence, mining roots and Old West all mingle in one room in Las Vegas. 🍷

For more information on the artisans featured in this story, visit capriolas.com, carriefell.com, kyhorse.com and andystevenssaddlery.com