

# LUXURY HOME

*quarterly*

## THE KITCHEN & BATH ISSUE

SLEEK NEW BATHROOM FIXTURES  
— *and the creative minds behind them*

**+** A PEEK INSIDE THE KITCHENS  
& BATHS OF DESIGN-SAVVY PROS

# New York *Style*

INTERIOR MANAGEMENT, INC.  
RENOVATES MANHATTAN'S  
HIGH-END HOMES FROM  
THE GROUND UP

BY ZACH BALIVA





**960 PARK AVENUE**  
Combining an elegant marble floor with detailed plaster over-door details and paneled mahogany doors, IMI was able to create the warm glow of a sophisticated art gallery inside this stately Park Avenue apartment.

**A**lthough he is the president of a company that works with some of Manhattan's most distinguished homeowners, Mark Martinez remembers long days spent pushing brooms and peeling wallpaper. His company, Interior Management, Inc. (IMI) was started by his father in 1985, and Martinez spent his early years performing menial jobs. He began his career at the company's bottom rung while working his way through college, but now he is at the top of the high-end interior-renovation company.

Martinez, who took over in 2002, says his varied experience helps him run a successful business. "I've participated in work at all levels and all stages of the company and can't remember a time when I wasn't around expert craftsmen, watching them and asking them questions every day," he says. IMI serves only the highest of high-end residential clients. As president, Martinez is a bridge between customers and craftsmen. His unique background facilitates communication between both groups. Martinez studied at the New York School of Interior Design, but it was the craftsmen, architects, and designers who provided his real-world industry education.

Martinez says. "When you have a small business, nothing is more important than reputation. You must exceed expectations every time, so whenever your name comes up, it is only accompanied by great words."

Now IMI's portfolio includes projects on Park Avenue, Fifth Avenue, and Central Park West. Providing general-construction and construction-management services to such affluent customers presents unique challenges. "Our high-end clients are looking for their home to be a representation of themselves," Martinez says. "They don't want a home that looks like their neighbor's." IMI creates original and custom elements for each home without repeating previous designs—everything is done from scratch. Most projects include exclusive elements like home-automation systems and the use of exotic materials. All of this custom work is often done at summer-only residences—meaning all work must be completed during the summer months. Such restrictions are nothing new to IMI, though, as the company has always prided itself on

Martinez's father built a home for IMI in the ultra-high-end niche after meeting an architect and designer who needed a sophisticated general contractor to manage top-level jobs. IMI stepped in to fill the void, and soon found increasing success as early clients referred the company to their friends and neighbors. Soon, IMI's reputation as Manhattan's leading luxury-home designer and renovator was created. "We set out to make every project perfect,"

**WEST 13<sup>TH</sup> STREET**

For a young and growing family in New York's Greenwich Village, IMI combined three adjacent apartments to create this expansive 6,000-square-foot space that the clients now proudly call home. Highlights of the dining room include two custom-made, stainless-steel built-ins, which were first handcrafted by a millworker and then clad in stainless steel by a highly skilled metal fabricator.

MANHATTAN APARTMENT

Perched over Central Park in one of New York's premiere Upper West Side buildings, IMI converted a plain white box into an open and airy home for a young family. As transplants from the West Coast of the country to the west side of New York, the clients felt that the design aesthetics of their new home should reflect their native roots. Bleached zebrawood floors and Venetian plaster walls helped lay the groundwork for this high-end, no-fuss apartment.



the ability to finish projects on-time, within budget, and beyond expectations.

While Interior Management occasionally performs new construction, 90 percent of its work is renovation of Manhattan properties, while the remainder of the company's projects are weekend homes in Greenwich, New Jersey, and the Hamptons. Whether old or new, New York or New Jersey, Martinez and his staff always aim to create unique spaces working with top architects, tradesmen, and vendors. "We collaborate with all disciplines and clients to figure out how to best use the space of a renovation project," Martinez says, adding that signature design features include architectural millwork, elegant lighting designs, and use of scale; by shrinking or raising the scale of an item by the smallest percentage, Martinez can dramatically change a room's atmosphere. "Small details such as subtle lighting design or small adjustments in scale might not be noticed individually, but collectively they enhance a space tremendously," he says. "There are thousands of tiny details that go into each project, but each contributes a great deal to a home's overall beauty."

Furthermore, almost every aspect of each project is customizable. Martinez and his team hand-select all wood, which is laid out by hand and colored with custom-mixed stains. Every detail is painstakingly monitored so that each piece will be right for the individual client and the individual space.

With 40 employees, including 10 project managers, IMI simultaneously handles 10 large projects that range in size from 3,000 to 10,000 square feet. Additionally, the company retains a client-service department to provide touch-ups in perpetuity. "Our service department allows us to surpass expectations and requests from busy and affluent customers," Martinez explains, adding that the practice has existed since the company's first year.

When Martinez was a young man growing up in his father's company, he learned that customer service and reputation are the biggest factors to a general contractor's success. His father may have retired in 2002, but his ideas and principles live on at Interior Management, Inc. ■



BRIDGEHAMPTON HOME

The family wanted the kitchen to be the heart of the home, which required it have a few essential characteristics: it had to serve as a gathering place where all the family members could sit comfortably, it had to feel warm and inviting despite its size, and it had to function as an entertaining kitchen for larger events. All of this was achieved by installing custom-made rift-cut oak cabinets with two oversized islands, and enough counter space to satisfy even the most demanding caterers.