

The FORM Questionnaire: Talking to Glen Coben

Wednesday, May 14, 2014

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*For architect Glen Coben, of Glen & Company, romance is a timeless constant in design. At Carbone, a Manhattan restaurant, he and his team capture it perfectly. Image courtesy Glen & Company. This spring and summer, **Glen & Company** will see four of its hotel projects open (not to mention three more scheduled for next winter). With so much happening, we figured founder Glen Coben would be a perfect person to chat with about the state of architecture and design in one of our occasional q-and-a sessions. Here, the award-winning architect, and designer of hotspots Del Posto and Carbone, to name a few, shares his thoughts on architecture, design, family and the return of elegance.*

What direction do you see the profession heading? Our client's expectations are rising as [are those of] the people who dine out or sleep out. We have to be better storytellers and continue to surprise and delight the guests. Specifically, I see a trend towards more luxury and a little more formality. Hopefully a return to elegance.

What buildings inspire you? The ones that seem to break the rules. The Christian de Portzamparc building on 28th Street and Park Avenue South in New York City is extraordinary in how it is so sculptural. I walk around and am inspired more and more these days!

Where else do you find inspiration? My daughter continues to bring me inspiration. It used to be that when she was something for the first time, I would try to see it the same way. Now it is in the trying to understand the how and the why. My team continues to inspire me . . . they are so passionate and committed to excellence. I am blessed to work with such talented people. Lastly, our clients are very inspirational. Chefs who put themselves out there blow me away!

What are your three favorite objects?

- The golf ball that commemorates the first time I broke 80.
- A photo of my wife and daughter taken the night of my wife's 40th birthday. It was a hot night in the city and they look so happy!
- A painting by NYC based artist Marco. I designed his shop and it was how he paid me!

What do you collect (furniture, records, t-shirts, etc.)? Memories.

Who are some of your favorite young designers? Right now, we have a bunch of new, young designers on our team. They are my favorites! I'm not really paying too much attention to others, but I have interviewed some very talented people recently.

If you could live anywhere, where it would it be (a location or specific structure)? Paris or Napa Valley.

A decade from now, what trends will be cringeworthy? Thankfully, molecular gastronomy seems to have ended. It might be nice to never hear the term “urban oasis” again.

What current trends will stand the test of time? Elegance, Romance. A place to cuddle. A place to watch. That’s why Hitchcock movies never get boring!

What are you reading? *The Boys in the Boat*

What are you wearing? Jeans and a t-shirt.



Coben's work extends to hotel design, including TRYP by Wyndham Times Square South. Image courtesy Glen & Company.

What are you eating? I made an awesome shrimp with garlic last night and quinoa cakes.

Do you listen to music while you're working? Pandora is always on. We start with Beethoven or Mozart in the morning and then switch to livelier stations in the afternoon and evening.

Are you a sketcher or a computer person? Sketching! I have tons of Moleskins.

Social media—yes or no? Yes . . . how else would I keep up on what my daughter is doing?