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If Donald Trump Made the Big Move

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AFP/Getty Images

If Donald Trump, who says he is considering a run for U.S. president and even produced [a hospital document](#) to prove he was born on American soil, was elected and had to reside at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, just how might he transform this world-famous dwelling?

"I can't imagine how the [White House](#) would look once he got his hands on it, but we should all invest in gold futures, because I predict a whoooooole lot of leafing going on," says [interior designer Elaine Griffin](#), who adds about the third Mrs. Trump: "I'd love to see Melania turn the West Wing into her shoe closet. Fab! U! Lous!"

One of three designers who in November helped critique our 44th President's decorating skills in ["Obama's Oval Office,"](#) Griffin weighs in again with the others to speculate how Trump, this "perhaps greatest American marketer since P.T. Barnum, surely won't let a square inch of presidential

opportunity go to waste."

But before we whip out the swatches and sledgehammers, can you really envision this [real estate](#) mogul as a tenant rather than an owner? Maybe this [Forbes-ranked](#) 153rd wealthiest man in America should purchase the [White House](#), after all it has dropped in value nearly \$80 million to \$253.1 million since the [peak of the housing boom](#), as [we previously reported in "White House Value Drops."](#) Lord knows "The Donald" could afford it given the [business glossy](#) estimates his net worth as \$2.7 billion, and he counters he's worth at least \$6 billion. Trump's ownership of the [White House](#) (perhaps soon thereafter to be known as "the Gold House," says our [color expert Amy Wax](#)) would be a win-win: It would open up a world of [remodeling](#) possibilities, and help continue President Barack Obama's plan to [cut the deficit by selling off 14,000 "underutilized" federal properties](#) to private parties.

Think Big: Make It Happen

Speaking of parties, the *Apprentice* boss, who [has criticized the Obama administration for erecting tents](#) on the White House lawn to entertain foreign dignitaries (how ghetto!), would throw extraordinarily lavish events of colossal proportion.

"I imagine he will decorate the home of the president of the United States as if its sole purpose is to entertain in high style," says Wax, owner of [Your Color Source Studios Inc.](#) "I do believe he would respect the home and its historical significance, but I also expect he would 'crank it up a bit' in terms of opulence and gilded design elements. Every mirror above a bathroom sink would be in a 200-year-old antique gold frame; every bedpost would be hand-rubbed polished and would come from the far corners of the globe. The place settings will be exact replicas of what our forefathers ate off of -- gilded of course."



Trump even told [Rush Limbaugh](#) listeners in [late February](#): "I will build the White House a ballroom, so when the head of India comes to town, we can give him a five-star dinner in a magnificent ballroom befitting of this country and the White House."

The shameless self-promoter continued: "I have probably the greatest ballroom, probably in the world ... at the [Mar-a-Lago Club](#), (pictured left) and



Jeff Lichtenstein, Illustrated Properties

I see that at the White House when a dignitary comes in from India, from anywhere, they open up a tent. They have a tent, a tent – a lousy-looking tent, an old rotten tent that frankly, they probably

rented..." (Listen to his rant.)

But wait! Didn't Trump just brag last month to Fox News that in 2009 he rented a large parcel of Bedford, NY land to Muammar Gaddafi and other middle eastern officials so that they could pitch Bedouin-style tents there after residents of Englewood, NJ, wouldn't let the loathed dictator do so on the grounds of the Libyan Embassy? Even an ABC News helicopter at the time caught on film a large tent replete with rugs and patterned wall hangings sprawled across a portion of the 113-acre Seven Springs estate that Trump owns in upscale Westchester County. But hey, since Trump said he reneged on the deal, and didn't return Gadaffi's money, I guess this is just how he'd treat America's foes, not its allies.

The 64-year-old, Queens-born media ham says he already has offered to build, at no cost to taxpayers, a \$50 million to \$100 million ballroom with all the bells and whistles for the current administration to use, but that the offer fell on deaf ears when he proposed it to a top official.

The Art of the Deal

Trump's idea of bells and whistles is quite evident when you see the ornately carved figurines on the enamel tiled fireplace in our gallery of Mar-a-Lago photos taken by Palm Beach, Fla. Realtor Jeff Lichtenstein, Illustrated Properties.

"Trump brings the best of the old-school, new-money, more-is-more aesthetic that says everything about money and very little about taste," says Griffin, author of *Design Rules: The Insider's Guide to Becoming Your Own Decorator*. "Vive la baroque and le rococo and loads of Louis XIV and XV. It's a shiny, marble-clad, mirror-lined, gold-leafed style that [is] not unlike Las Vegas."

Gallery: See Photos of Trump's Mar-A-Lago Estate in Palm Beach



Originally built by Marjorie Merriweather Post, of Post cereals, and her husband at the time, E. F. Hutton, the 17-acre Spanish/Moroccan-inspired mansion became Trump's personal residence after he purchased it in 1985 for \$10 million. He restored it, then 10 years later turned it into a private country club. (Lichtenstein, who also markets Admirals Cove real estate in Jupiter, Florida, has more analysis of Donald Trump's Palm Beach Home at his site.)

The 110,000-square-foot Mar-a-Lago, with 126 rooms, 58 bedrooms, 33 bathrooms, 12 fireplaces, and three bomb shelters, dwarfs the place we've called home to our nation's Chief Executives since John Adams. Although the White House has 132 rooms, 16 bedrooms and 35 bathrooms it "only" has 55,000 square feet.

"While the scale of the Oval Office is liable to feel a tad cramped to him, if he wants to expand the sense of space and add some of his customary glitz, an over-sized mirror placed directly across from the revered presidential desk would be ideal -- and useful for freshening that 'do on his head,'" says Interior Designer S.A. "Sam" Jernigan of Renaissance Design Consultations.



Jeff Lichtenstein, Illustrated Properties

Gallery: See Photos of Trump's California Estate for Sale for \$12M



"If he runs amok (as in his New York City [apartment](#)) and insists that gold encrust all surfaces in the Oval Office, it only seems considerate that visitors be supplied sunglasses to shield their eyes from the collective brilliance," she says. (Consumed as Trump is with branding, would these sunglasses [sport](#) the venerable presidential seal or would his own name trump even that global icon?)

Thinking Like a Champion

"Of course there would be a full-size portrait of himself in a prominent location," says Wax, who is president of the [International Association of Color Consultants of North America](#). "It might even have him wearing a red velvet fur-lined cape."



Jeff Lichtenstein, Illustrated Properties

When it comes to furnishing the Oval Office, Trump will look no farther than his own [Mar-a-Lago-inspired collection of furniture](#), complete with gold-tipping, rich leather, and scrolled metal from the Trump Home collection, says Jernigan. [The Trump Home Collection](#) offers lighting, mattresses, accessories, and soon, home fragrance, bath and crystal.

"Some of the more subdued and classic pieces from his Mar-a-Lago collection will actually be more suitable than the odd choices made by our current President's designer," she said.

Mrs. Obama prevailed upon California tastemaker Michael S. Smith to add updated style with a traditional flair, points out New York-based Griffin, while Jackie Kennedy called upon legendary decorators Stéphane Boudin and Sister Parish to add sophistication and chic. "Melania will e-mail the Trump [Organization's in-house](#) design team and have them whip up something a little zippier for the White House."

Although it seems the experts agree that under Trump the White House will be all about the glitter, the glitz, the glamor and the gold, (although in all fairness [his Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., home for sale](#) is quite elegant) there's one thing a President Trump should keep in place, says Griffin: "Sasha and Malia can leave their White House jungle gym for little Barron, who will be 6 in 2012."



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