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By Design | At Christie's, the Legacy of a '70s Decorator Hits the Auction Block

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Illustration by Konstantin Kakanias

As the estate of a favorite client of the '70s American decorator Michael Taylor comes up for auction, a former protégée recalls her boss.

Michael's most fantastic finds went to his preferred clients, like Diana Dollar Knowles, whose estate is being auctioned in two weeks. The San Francisco house he did for her was traditional, filled with antiques, while the one in Lake Tahoe embodied the "California Look" he created — striking rooms that incorporated natural elements and his signature overscaled, extremely comfortable furniture. He filled her homes with pieces from legendary auctions and the best dealers: **Luttrellstown Castle**, the **Wrightsmen Collection**, **Alberto Di Castro** in Rome, **Frederick Victoria** in New York. But Michael's real brilliance was his ability to pull together an amalgamation of disparate elements — modern art alongside antiquities, organic materials with 18th-century furniture and his own oversize designs — and, above all, his innate understanding of scale and proportion.

"Michael Taylor and the Alchemy of Design: The Diana Dollar Knowles Collection," at Christie's New York, Oct. 22.