

A HOTELWORLD NETWORK PUBLICATION

DECEMBER 2010

Hotel Design

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Finding Design

Hotel executives weigh in on what owners look for in design firms



Suite bathrooms come of age

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Hotel executives discuss design during panel at Boutique Design at the Javits Center in New York

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Gift of Friendship

As we all know, business in this industry—and all industries, for that matter—is based on relationships and friendships. This holiday, I am thankful for the gift of the hotel industry friendships.

I was reminded of this when our company hosted a table at the AH&LA Inaugural Dinner that was held during the IHMR show, in New York, on November 14. I know many of the hoteliers who read our magazine are probably already members of AH&LA (American Hotel & Lodging Association), but I encourage our vendors, our designers and purchasing company executives to also join this fantastic organization.



Mary Malloy

Publisher
mmalloy@questex.com

For years, I have reaped the benefits of being involved and attending events, such as the inaugural dinner. I have also participated in the annual AH&LA golf outings. As a result of participating in the golf events, I have established prosperous relationships and signed new business. Many of our current advertisers I met at the AH&LA events. Likewise, I also have met many of our loyal readers at the events. AH&LA is the only national organization dedicated to serving the interests of hoteliers on the front line, behind the scenes and on Capitol Hill. Members are empowered with exclusive bottom-line savings, educational resources and networking opportunities with an expansive network of top-level industry professionals.

If you are not already receiving the e-mails from AH&LA, I encourage you to subscribe to these. They deliver valuable information about industry tips and trends!



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David Eisen
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“A majority of new hotel projects are happening overseas. Broaden your reach now and make a play for international work.”

What's In A Name?

A new year brings change (or resolutions we try to keep!). The excitement here is the change to a new name for our magazine. As many of you are aware now, the new name of the publication is *Hospitality Architecture+Design*, a handle we believe better encompasses where we are taking the magazine. We still will be bringing you all the coverage you need on hotels, but appending it with features on restaurant, nightclub and senior living design.

It's exciting times (kind of like when a hotel reflags!). In November, the International Hotel, Motel+Restaurant Show at Javits Center, in New York, gave us our first chance to show off the new name and look of the magazine to designers and suppliers. The responses and feedback have been overwhelmingly encouraging. From the sleek new design, to new editorial content, we think we have a real winner on our hands. Get ready for January, when you'll see the first newly designed magazine. It'll be a keeper!

While the IHMRS show, which ran concurrently with Boutique Design, was a chance to showcase our new look, it was also a chance to gauge the industry and hear what designers and suppliers are saying.

One particular panel discussion that piqued my interest dealt with international design opportunities and advice on how to land a contract. There's no question that in the hotel industry, most of the upcoming projects are overseas, as domestic projects have slowed to a crawl. That's why it's so important to broaden your reach now and make a play for international work.

Need suggestions on where to look? Alejandro Lillo, a partner at Graft, said to target such countries as Brazil, Mexico and Morocco. On the other hand, Margaret McMahon, managing director of Wilson Associates, said, “We are all chasing Latin America, Egypt and Turkey.” Take your pick. Shelley Reiner of WATG said over half of their firm's work is in Asia.

This also means designers will have to log some serious travel time to keep in touch with clients (if they aren't lucky enough to have an office near the project). “Have pencil, will travel” is a popular refrain at WATG, Reiner said. After all, designing hotels is a tactile business: it's tough to run your hands over a piece of fabric via teleconference.

Happy New Year!

Hotel Design

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Hotel Design mission statement

Hotel Design celebrates the design excellence of hotels, resorts, lodges and destination spas. Vivid photography, creative layouts and descriptive writing help present to the reader a broad focus on the new styles and fashion trends emerging in furniture, fixtures and the lodging spaces that provide a foundation for creativity. Hotel Design aims to be the source of inspiration for the individuals who help make it happen.



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FABRICUT
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meet & greet

On November 14, New York's Marriott Marquis hosted the AH&LA Inaugural Gala, which honored incoming Chair John Campbell, general manager of La Jolla Beach & Tennis Club. This year's gala marked AH&LA's 100-year anniversary. Here are some images from the night.



1



2



3

1) AH&LA President & CEO Joe McInerney (far left) with *Hotel Design's* Mary Malloy, AH&LA VP of Business Development Brad Aldrich and AH&LA COO Pam Inman 2) Incoming Chair John Campbell (third from right) with instructor Patty LeCompte and students from the Monroe Career and Technical Institute in Bartonsville, PA 3) Robert F. Mueller, president of Samata Management Inc., Ramesh Gokal, president and COO of Advantis Hospitality Alliance, his daughter Mina Gokal and Pragna Patel-Mueller, principal, Samata Management Inc. 4) AH&LA Chair David Kong, Louise Kong, Pam Martin and AH&LA Immediate Past Chair Joe Martin 5) Kong with Texas Hotel & Lodging Association CEO Scott Joslove 6) Tom Ruff, senior vice president of guest operations for The Biltmore Estate, far right, with friend, Kay Ray, and AH&LA Secretary/Treasurer Nancy Johnson.



4



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6

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product showcase

For 95 years, IHMRS has served as a pivotal place for vendors to showcase the latest and greatest, offering designers (and editors) fantastic fodder for upcoming projects and savvy stories. This year, with the debut of Boutique Design New York, *Hotel Design* discovered even more unique product offerings. We've rounded up 10 of our favorite finds from the two shows.



1. Kenneth Cobonpue
2. Bock Lighting
3. Prospetto Light
4. Vaughan Benz
5. Novo Arts Inc.
6. Séura
7. Nolen Niu
8. Pataviumart
9. Asian Art Imports
10. Shimna



Photos by Katie Tandy



"The Journey
of a thousand miles
begins with one step"

- Lao Tzu

*carpet shown: stix - midnight
upholstery shown: spritzer - dark n' stormy*



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Finding Design

What do owners want? Hotel executives weigh in on what they look for in design firms.

BY DAVID EISEN

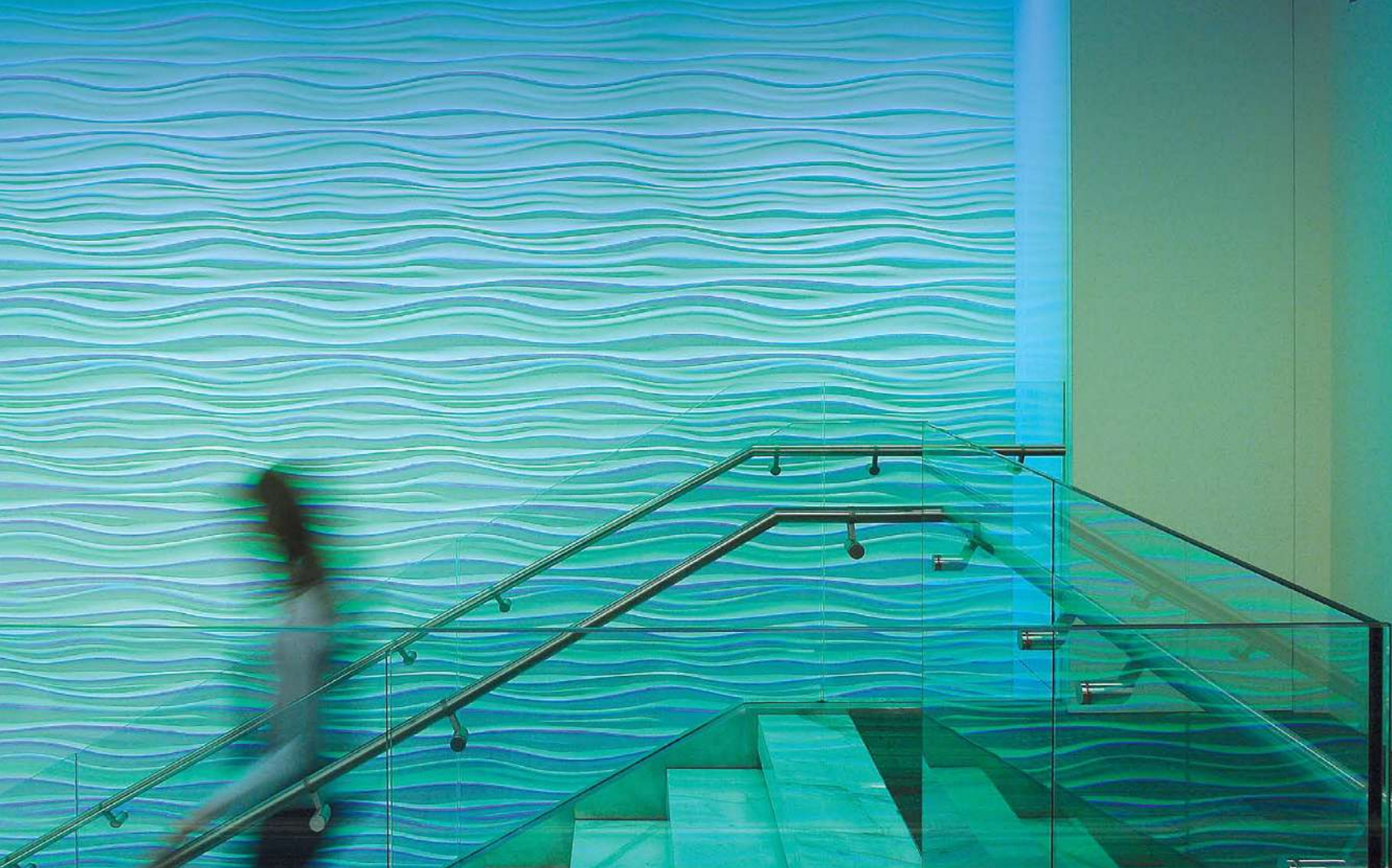
THE PANEL: From left are Brendan McNamara of Vikram Chatwal Hotels, Carlos Couturier of Grupo Habita, Stephen Brandman of Thompson Hotels and Arthur Adler of Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels.

Hotel owners, by nature, are multi-taskers. They have to be. When developing or renovating a hotel, the balance between finance and aesthetic is constant. When it comes time to select a design firm to work with, all variables are taken into account.

This and other topics were discussed amongst a panel of hotel executives at Boutique Design in New York. The panelists: Arthur Adler, managing

director and CEO of Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels; the co-owner of Thompson Hotels, Stephen Brandman, whom, along with his partner, Jason Pomeranc, Hotel Design featured as its October cover story; Carlos Couturier, creative director of Grupo Habita; and Brendan McNamara, brand director of Vikram Chatwal Hotels.

Each hotelier has his own take on design trends. Thompson's Brandman, on one hand, said that



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cover story

design should not be of the moment, because “the moment passes.” When he meets with designers, his message is about designing for a period of time. For Belgraves in London, Thompson’s next hotel, the company tapped designer Tara Bernerd of Target Living, whom Brandman said embraces their vision.

While aesthetic looms large for Grupo Habita, a Mexico-based boutique hotel company, which is currently developing a hotel in New York’s Chelsea neighborhood, economic feasibility also plays an integral role. “A design must make sense financially,” Couturier said. “The hotel has to age correctly and live through a long period of time.” Brandman was quick to agree. “Business needs to have a strong presence in any design firm,” he said. “At the end of the day, if a project turns out to be unaffordable, then it becomes an ugly marriage. What a firm says it can deliver has to be delivered at budget.”

Finances aside, owners look for designers who understand their brand concept. “Designers need to look at the ilk of a brand,” said Chatwal’s McNamara. Vikram



Chatwal Hotels is known for its imaginative and experiential hotels, from Dream and Night hotels in New York to Dream Bangkok. “What is the brand’s ethos?” he asked.

For instance, Marriott hotels are known for their consistency. But that’s their market and it works: a Marriott traveler knows what to expect in the hotel, regardless if he or she is in Buenos Aires or Shanghai.

The hotels represented by the panelists are decidedly more individualistic in their design. While each hotel needs its own design voice, the design also needs to be

functional. McNamara’s hotels cater to an artsy and, oftentimes, convivial clientele. “Our rooms can sometimes get trashed,” he bluntly said. “How do they stand up from that? The design needs to have in mind the housekeeper who needs to clean up the room after it is trashed. Can the room be bulletproof and edgy at the same time? These rooms need to operate in perpetuity without renovations for maybe six years.”

Differentiation is also key, said Brandman. “No longer is ‘free HBO’ used as a decision to stay at a hotel,” he said. “Everyone has it and it’s being shown on HD flat-screen TVs. The hotels have similar ingredients, but it’s important to make sure all the ingredients are mixed correctly.”

Couturier is a big believer in knowing the design trends—so he doesn’t follow them. “You have to create your own trends; you go wrong when you follow others,” he said. Thompson Hotels makes sure to cater not only to guests, but to the local community and the drive market. “On average,” Brandman said, “only about 17 percent of our hotels guests use the hotel restaurant.”

When it comes to designing guest rooms, the panelists appealed for simplicity. What does

Couturier like? “A comfy bed, great water pressure in the shower, a silent air-conditioner and sound-proofing,” he said. “It’s not all about technology. Keep it simple.”

Some of it, however, is about technology. Travelers love their gadgetry, like to bring it with them on the road and expect the technology in their hotel room to match or exceed what they have at home. Just ensure it’s accessible. “Make sure your design includes outlets next to the bed that are easy to reach,” said Brandman, who added that while people consider Thompson Hotels to be on the cutting edge of cool, its average guest age is over 44.

McNamara was quick to point out that technology has to hold and be relevant for five years. “It also can’t be offsetting to the guest,” he said. “You can’t guess psychographs.” Designers also need to be aware that the Sunday through Thursday guest is different than the weekend guest.

The panel almost got through the entire conversation without a mention of the moribund economy and its influence on the hotel industry. Until there is a rebound, there won’t be too many new projects in the pipeline. Lamented Brandman, “We are still waiting for the capital markets to open.” ■

EYE FOR STYLE: Poolside at Grupo Habita’s Hotel Habita in Mexico City (above) and a guest room at Vikram Chatwal Hotels’ Dream New York (below).

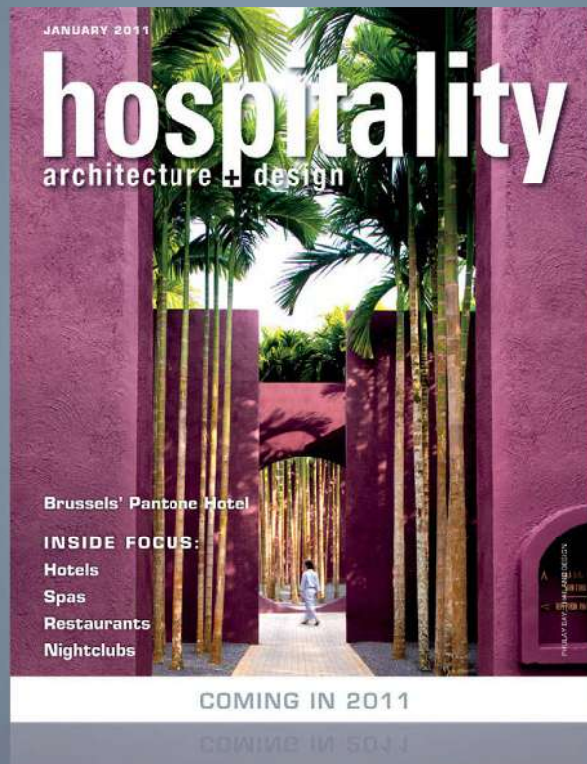


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TV Technology Downsizes for the Better

When it comes to TVs, bigger is not always better. Today, they are lighter, thinner and cheaper than ever before. New sleek, flat-screen TVs have allowed designers to move TVs out of bulky cupboards or wall units and integrate them into non-traditional areas. This flexibility allows suppliers an unprecedented level of intricacy in how their products are integrated into guest rooms.

Luxury TV designer Séura is making waves with their new line of slim LCD TV mirrors that add a twist to traditional bathroom design. With the press of a button, a Séura screen will appear in a mirror, and totally disappear when turned off. This vanishing effect is notable because it allows a guest the freedom to use the technology without affecting overall guest room design.

“TV mirrors are a creative way to provide access to media without compromising the design of a space,” says Gretchen Gilberson, co-founder and vice president of Séura. “They allow you to preserve

the original design intent of the room as opposed to sacrificing aesthetic appeal to accommodate distracting electronics. Ambiance, after all, is as important as the most sought-after electronic gizmo.”

TV mirrors also allow designers to implement complex styling at will; mirror glass can be etched or illuminated to add an artful impression to any mirror and, when combined with a vanishing TV, can create a totally unique image. At The Chatwal in New York, Séura vanishing TVs were integrated into every guest room bathroom to accentuate the hotel’s high-tech renovation.

Going Three-Dimensional

When it comes to making an unforgettable impact on guests, 3D HDTV is the new frontier for the hospitality industry. LG’s new commercial passive 3D HDTV uses polarized lenses to create a theater-quality 3D effect for view-



ful,” says Richard Lewis, senior vice president of Research and Technology at Zenith Electronics.

LG has also released more traditional flat-screen LCD TVs with their proprietary Pro:Centric technology, which allows hotels to push content to guests and enables guests to run applications

on their in-room TV without any bulky additional boxes and components.

“The transition from analog to digital has opened up the opportunity to bring computing power into the TV,” says Lewis of the Pro:Centric system’s capability to run applications. Global content providers such as LodgeNet and Acentic have already signed on to support Pro:Centric, and the TVs can run content designed in Java and Flash.

“It’s become a worldwide platform,” says Lewis. “If you’re a large multinational brand, you can have consistency of experience across the world.”

—Andrew Sheivachman

ers without the heavy, expensive glasses consumers are used to. Purchased in bulk, 3D glasses for LG’s passive 3D HDTV cost about \$1 a pair.

The TVs are capable of producing crisp 2D HDTV images as well, and have a slim form-factor with low energy-consumption similar to other flat panel LCDs installed in guest rooms.

LG’s 3D HDTV is a boon to designers too: it offers next-generation fidelity without requiring more space or energy than most modern TVs. “The good news for designers is that form factors are much more aesthetically pleasing and functionally much more help-



VISUALLY ARRESTING

Séura TV mirrors at the Hotel Beauv Arts in Miami (left) and The Chatwal in New York (here); a LG 3D HDTV (above).

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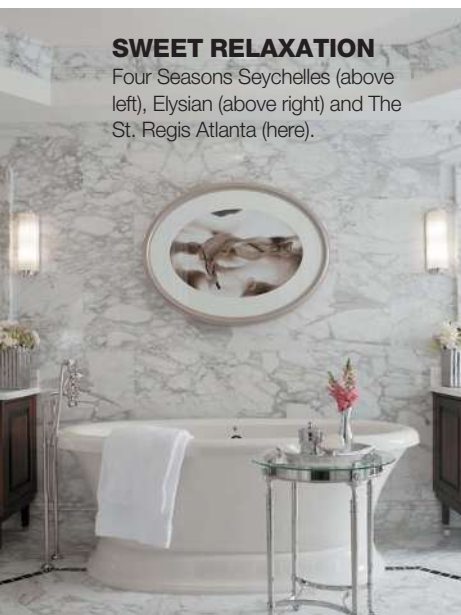


Suite Bathrooms Take Center Stage

Over the past five or six years, bathrooms have slowly shifted from a stark, sleek necessity—touting the typical tub, sink and toilet—and have transformed into a highlight of a hotel, offering high-style, cutting-edge technology and, still, an elegant bathing experience.

SWEET RELAXATION

Four Seasons Seychelles (above left), Elysian (above right) and The St. Regis Atlanta (here).



As bathroom designs grow larger, the restrictions on designers grow smaller, allowing for unprecedented creativity in everything from furnishings and lighting to amenities and artwork. “The bathroom is like a destination within the room,” says Lisa Simeone of Simeone Deary Design Group. “There is something to be said about warmth and texture in a bathroom space. Now you can put furniture in there. How wonderful to find a chaise lounge or a beautifully upholstered bench for a more tactile experience.”

Although the current trend celebrates a more textured aesthetic, the color palette has remained decidedly muted and soothing, creating a design that is at once timeless and tranquil.

“It’s always going to be neutral colors,” says Stina Funch, senior project designer for Hirsch Bedner Associates. “You just traveled across the country, you don’t want bold, bright colors in the bathroom when you want to relax. The trend is always going to be some-

what sleek and modern but not ultra sleek—it’s about a soft use of gentle colors in rich materials.”

For the Elysian Hotel in Chicago, Simeone looked to the 1925 Paris Exhibition for her “timeless” appeal, crafting the hotel’s look into that of a black and white photograph, dramatically reducing both color and pattern. “The guestroom has to be a refuge and a respite,” says Simeone. “For the bathroom we softened up the palette from the public spaces to smudgy grays and creams and whites. We looked at the light fixtures as our jewelry here. Overhead, the fixture refracts glittering light all over the walls. It has a really glamorous feel.”

One of the trickier elements of designing high-end bathrooms is maintaining a sense of glamour without sacrificing equally high levels of technological savvy that have become ubiquitous for travelers; designers must deftly straddle aesthetics and amenities.

“We don’t do bathrooms anymore without TV mirrors,” says

Funch. “It’s shifted from a trend to a norm. And it’s not enough to have a bathroom with a tub. You have to have something with all the bells and whistles—an aroma therapy tub or a soaking tub—if you want to attract the savvy travelers.”

Simeone echoed these sentiments, explaining that she and partner Gina Deary were adamantly opposed to sourcing a TV on an arm on the wall for the Elysian’s suite bathrooms. “We always want the latest and greatest in technology, but we don’t want to look at it,” she says.

Simeone also believes that executive and presidential suites may soon feature clean-burning fireplaces as well. Currently, the model room for the Elysian’s residences features an EcoSmart fireplace design that runs on ethanol and requires no ventilation whatsoever.

“Travelers set the trend,” says Funch. “And the bathroom is becoming a centerpiece.”

—Katie Tandy

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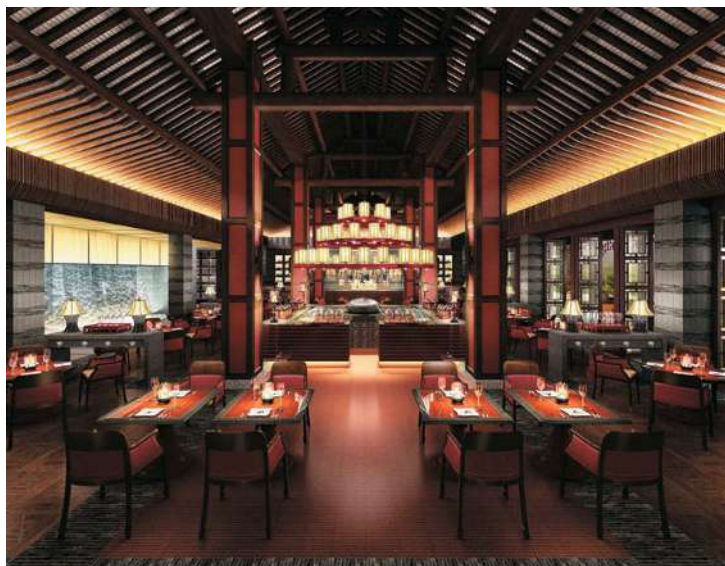
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Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou at West Lake



▲ **A PREMIER ROOM WITH TERRACE (TOP); A DELUXE ROOM (ABOVE)**

THE HOTEL'S SIGNATURE RESTAURANT, JIN SHA ▶

The two month-old Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou in China is a neo-palace. We say it is fit for a modern-day emperor.

Set on the shores of historic West Lake, the new property celebrates the Jiang Nan style of the region, characterized by landscaped water gardens and pagoda-esque pavilions. The hotel features interior design work

by Bilkey Llinas Design.

■ The overall look evokes the Sung Dynasty palace, highlighted by an understated luxury coupled with rich finishes and simple detailing.

■ The biggest challenge of the project was using traditional building materials to achieve

a high-end look. Bilkey Llinas settled upon a palette of light stone with contrasting inlays, rich woods and cut glass to honor the aesthetic and architectural history, while simultaneously echoing the grandeur of a bygone era.

■ The hotel features 71 guest rooms, five suites and three

residential-style villas overlooking lily ponds, a bamboo forest, secluded glades, gardens and the willow-veiled West Lake.

■ Offering contemporary interpretations of authentic Shanghainese and Cantonese dishes is Jin Sha—meaning “golden sands”—helmed by celebrity chef Tony Lu and set amid burgundies, browns and reds. Featuring 11 private dining rooms, an outdoor terrace and a showcase kitchen, the sharp design work was done by SPIN Design Studio of Tokyo.

■ Created by Bensley Design Studios and Concept Saphyr, the spa boasts an exclusive line of treatments created especially for Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou at West Lake. The spa's four seasonal rituals are inspired by the famous book of illustrations, *The Emperor's Seasonal Pursuit of Pleasures in the Course of the Seasons*, commissioned by Emperor Qianlong in 1738.

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Chairman Song Weiping
(www.greentownchina.com)

Hotel Architect

Lu Hao
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Design Firms

Bilkey Llinas Design
(www.bilkeyllinas.com)

Bensley Design Studios
(www.bensley.com)

Concept Saphyr
(www.concept-saphyr.com)

SPIN Design Studio
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Stanley Tang

PRINCIPAL, BLT ARCHITECTS

IN DEVELOPING HOTEL PROJECTS, I DRAW INSPIRATION FROM:

The site context. I design hotels that are aware of, understand, and hopefully take advantage of, an inherent "sense of place."

THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT(S) IN CONVERTING A BUILDING INTO A NEW HOTEL IS:

Integration. The challenge I often face is to integrate, in the most seamless manner possible, the existing building's physical fabric with contemporary needs and requirements.

THIS ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IS OVERDONE: Anything that is gratuitously ersatz. Stylistic diversity, like bio-diversity, tends to enrich and strengthen the environment. But the use of style as an approach to the built environment requires informed skill and keen judgment.

ARCHITECTURALLY, THIS BUILDING/SPACE IS MY FAVORITE:

The monastery Sainte Marie de La Tourette in Lyon, France. It achieves functional configuration and spirituality, and outwardly, it connects to the sloped wooded terrain of its site. ■

THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE OF THIS IN HOTEL ARCHITECTURE:

A focus on sense of place. Every locale has its distinct setting and character. The challenge is to embrace those positive qualities.

RENOVATING VERSUS A NEW BUILD IS A DIFFERENT CHALLENGE BECAUSE:

Often the single biggest challenge in a hotel renovation is to keep the facility in operation during the time of construction activity.

HOW DO ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN CO-EXIST?

It is preferable that the hotel architect and interior designer work together with a shared vision and purpose, one that is based on the needs of the project rather than individual egos.

OTHER THAN MY OWN WORK, I ADMIRE THIS ARCHITECT (PAST OR PRESENT):

Alvar Aalto, for his mastery of space, materials, and the interaction of people and place. ■

HOTEL ARCHITECTURE IN THE FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE:

I hope that it will evolve into an aesthetically distinctive "type" that matches and reflects its inherent functional and operational singularity. It will have its own particular iconic imagery tied to a hotel's role as a social setting, similar to what churches and civic buildings had in earlier eras.



This musician or music helps me with my work:

■ J.S. Bach.

His incredible depth and breadth of theme and variation all within the discipline and coherence of music are at once both immediately accessible and sublime.

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