

EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

LEAF REVIEW

No.01 • 2018

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HOSPITALITY

BY THE UNIT

Developers embrace modular construction

KNOW ONE'S PLACE

Adam Tihany on connecting to local cultures

PLUS

Conran and Partners

Jean-Michel Wilmotte

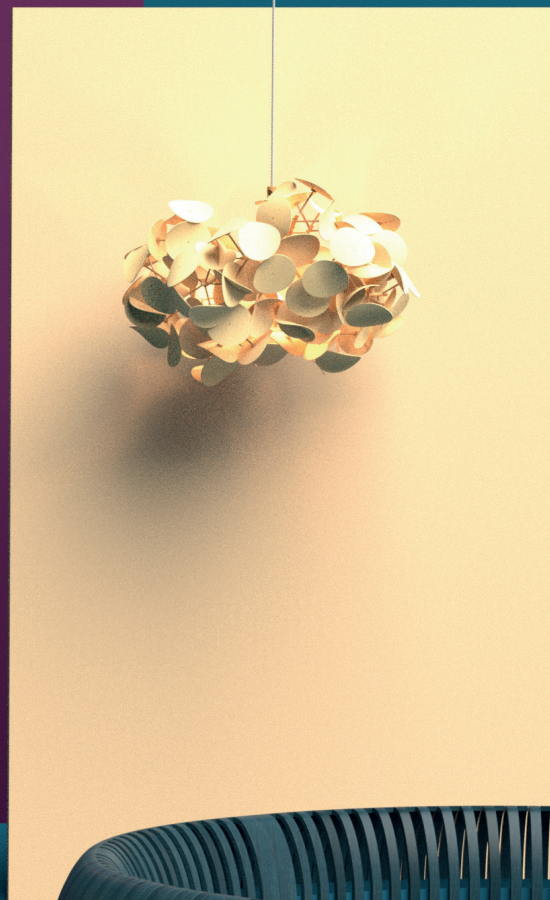
Illuminationworks



A picture of health

Integrating wellness into hotel design

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Green Furniture Concept

Design in detail

A heady mixture of art and design, science and sociology, engineering, economics and ecology, the sphere of influence and influences encompassed within the architectural discipline can seem daunting. This creates unique challenges in terms of how one chooses to cover it. What, for example, are the precise responsibilities of the architect? What defines successful architecture? How do we gauge and define failure?

During the decade and change since the establishment of *LEAF Review*, we have come no closer to any kind of consensus when it comes to tackling such fundamental questions, even if the context within which they sit, and the range of responses we now receive, have changed tremendously over that time. Can one point to a dominant architectural movement or school in 2018? Even within specific fields of practise, the variety and competing priorities on display can be staggering.

Recognition of this fact goes a long way towards explaining our decision to launch our new title. While *LEAF Review* will continue to confront and question the macro trends, and profile its leading protagonists across the architectural milieu as a whole, we also felt

there was space for creating a forum that could drill down into specific sectors making specific demands of the architecture and design community. From offices to airports, and civic centres to retail complexes, each issue will take a single field and investigate the factors driving and challenging its design development.

For our debut edition, we take a deep dive into hospitality, an industry that has also undergone unprecedented levels of change over the past decade. Amid shrinking margins, increased competition and an ever-more globalised customer base, what role can architecture play in controlling costs and enticing guests?

To answer these questions and more, we look at an array of architectural responses, including the latest in wellness design, the shifting aesthetics of the business hotel, and the role modular construction is playing across various market segments; as well as profiling some of hospitality design's leading lights, such as Adam Tihany, Chad Rains and Jean-Michel Wilmotte.

I hope you enjoy this debut edition and, as always, greatly look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Phin Foster, editor

Cover image: Allia Wuzhen, China, by GOA.



No. 01 • 2018

Welcome to *LEAF Review: Excellence in Design*

LEAF Review is a biannual publication that blends in-depth articles, case studies, interviews and industry profiles, to create an intelligent forum for the best ideas and developments in the architectural industry. *Excellence in Design* showcases the latest trends and innovations within sectors such as hospitality, commercial, aviation and many more. For further comment, news and information, visit our website: www.leading-architects.eu.

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Crowne Plaza has unveiled a fresh visual identity that challenges the accepted aesthetics of business hotels. Eleanor Wilson talks to Tom Lloyd of PearsonLloyd; Simon Kincaid, director at Conran and Partners; and Dan Radley, head of strategy at NB Studio, about finding a new creative direction and responding to the travel needs of today's professionals.

25 Building a legacy

As one of the most in-demand designers and architects, Adam Tihany boasts a portfolio that includes the Four Seasons Dubai, Beverly Hills Hotel, Mandarin Oriental Geneva and many collaborations with top chefs.

He meets Sarah Williams to look back over an illustrious career and outlines a design philosophy devoted to the careful observation of human experience.

30 Light up the world

Over the past few decades, specialist lighting designers have steadily grown in stature, becoming a fundamental part of the design process. Andrea Valentino talks to Chad Rains, founder and creative director of Illuminationworks, about his studio's extensive work within the international hospitality scene.

Project focus

36 Renaissance of an icon

Architect and designer Jean-Michel Wilmotte was always

aware of the Hôtel Lutetia's glamorous history as he oversaw its recent, extensive restoration. Grace Allen speaks with Wilmotte to find out what it was like to work on this most beautiful and Parisian of grande dames.

40 The beauty of history

Having closed for a €200-million renovation more than four years ago, Paris's legendary Hôtel de Crillon, under Rosewood's management, is once again open for business. Aline d'Amman, founder of Culture in Architecture and the project's artistic director, and Affine Design's Richard Martinet discuss the delicate act of introducing 21st-century elements while respecting the property's history.



Visionary designs

LEAF Review: Excellence in Design picks some of the most interesting recent and upcoming hotel openings across the world.

InterContinental Shanghai Wonderland

Shanghai, China

JADE+QA; Atkins

A quarry is a rather unlikely destination for a luxury hotel, which might explain why Atkins won the international design competition for this project all the way back in 2006. Finally opening later this year, the 336-room project covers 18 storeys, 16 of which are below ground level, and is inspired by the stunning location and surrounding environment of rocky cliffs, waterfalls and rolling hills.



Shipwreck Lodge

Skeleton Coast National Park, Namibia

Nina Maritz Architects

The harsh and desolately beautiful Skeleton Coast National Park, Namibia, is the setting for this 20-bed luxury lodge. The design was inspired by the numerous shipwrecks evident along the region's shoreline. The brief called for minimal environmental impact, as well as offering the possibility for complete removal upon the expiration of the agreed 25-year concession period.



The Jaffa Hotel

Tel Aviv, Israel

John Pawson; Ramy Gill

Under development since 2007, the architects of this project have restored and renovated the School of the Sisterhood of Saint Joseph convent, and its neighbouring 19th-century former French hospital, to create a unique boutique hotel in Tel Aviv's historic Jaffa neighbourhood. Furnishings include the work of Shiro Kuramata for Cappellini, and French designer Pierre Paulin, as well as pieces by Damien Hirst and Israeli photographer Tal Schochat.

Anadu Resort
Zhejiang, China
Studio8

A 30,000m² luxury resort located on the northern side of Huzhou's Mogan Mountains, the hotel's six rooms have been designed thematically around local natural diversity, each one riffing on an element of the landscape: the tea fields, the bamboo forest, water, the mountains or the sky. The building itself is composed of three stacked rectilinear volumes, the internal spaces of which have been arranged to offer different perspectives of the verdant locale.



Tierra Chiloe
San José, Chile
Mobil Arquitectos

Located on the hilly, pastoral main island of the Chiloe archipelago, this hotel was designed and built through what its architects call "a combination of the old Chiloe tradition with contemporary design tools". Boasting spectacular views across the sea and towards the Andes Mountains, the striking exterior of the building is clad in wooden shingles to reference to the island's historic wooden churches, which were built by Jesuits missionaries in the 1600s.



Paradiso Ibiza Art Hotel
Ibiza, Spain
Ilmiodesign

The bay of San Antonio welcomes the island's first self-proclaimed art hotel, promising "an alternative atmosphere, disco music, art galleries and a tattoo studio". Hosting a comprehensive arts programme and drawing heavy inspiration from the aesthetics of MiMo – Miami Modern – the property has its own gallery, hosting three exhibitions each high season, and an "Art Library" for guests to peruse throughout their stay.

The Retreat at Blue Lagoon
Grindavík, Iceland
Basalt Architects

This new spa building is located within the UNESCO Global Geopark, comprising a series of pools containing geothermal seawater rich in minerals like silica and sulphur. The building sits deep in the lava, allowing natural formations to form the perimeter of the lagoon and the interior walls of the spa. Two wings come together in the hotel lobby, which connects to the new spa and the existing Blue Lagoon buildings.



All's well that starts well

Wellness architecture is the process of designing buildings that make their inhabitants healthier and happier. Elly Earls meets architects **Veronica Schreibeis Smith** and **Julia Monk** to find out what this means in a hospitality context, and why wellness needs to be a part of design discussions from day one.

The lobby of the Long Island Marriott, with its wellness inspired 'green wall'.



In 2000, the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) introduced the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standard for energy and environmental design. By mid-2016, there were nearly 80,000 projects in 162 countries recognised as environmentally sound – based on a combination of their energy and water efficiency, sustainable use of resources and low waste generation – and the numbers continue to grow.

More recently, wellness has become a greater priority during the design stage of buildings in various sectors, whether that be through ensuring enough natural light can enter offices or softening the stark, clinical aesthetics traditionally associated with hospitals and health centres.

And it's no different in hospitality. With wellness vacationing growing twice as fast as global tourism and guests increasingly seeking transformational experiences while they are away from home, hotel operators are quickly realising that squeezing a gym into the basement or throwing a yoga mat into a room will not cut the mustard for today's guests.

Westin has responded with a promise that all guests will sleep well, eat well, move well, feel well, work well and play well at each of its hotels, while brands like Wyndham and Hilton have introduced specific fitness rooms with exercise equipment, and guided fitness and wellness routines.

Operators are also integrating greenery into the hotel experience, adding walking and running routes, improving air quality, and changing the narrative around fitness and wellness by recognising that it extends far beyond the four walls of the gym.

Good intentions

According to architect Veronica Schreibeis Smith, the CEO and founding principal of Vera Iconica

Architecture and chair of the Global Wellness Institute's Wellness Architecture Initiative, the next step is to focus on wellness much earlier in the design process and move beyond creating buildings that 'do less harm' to the environment to building hotels that 'do good' – not just for the planet, but also for their inhabitants.

As Schreibeis Smith explains, "Wellness architecture is the art and science of including life-enhancing design strategies in the built environment so as to really empower well-being. While health architecture is focused on physical health, which might include things like clean air and pure water, it leaves out some aspects of being human, such as joy, happiness and comfort."

Back to the well

In a hotel context, wellness architecture covers everything from the inclusion of biophilia to lighting, air quality, and electricity and sound pollution, right through to the proportions of the hallways and rooms, the balance of materials used and even cultural factors.

"When a guest arrives in the room, it should be uplifting and give them a sense of privacy, security, cleanliness and comfort," says Shreibeis Smith. "This can be achieved through balancing the materials, textures and colours used in a space, and also by paying attention to not only biophilic design, but also things like feng shui, which might be based on ancient wisdom or sacred geometry.

"Culture influences wellness architecture, too. For example, including colourful tiles and beautiful bricks that were made a mile away is really important when it comes to wellness architecture and cannot be overlooked. It gives a human connection to the local community, culture and landscape."

Although many of the elements surrounding emotional and spiritual happiness are difficult to define

or prove scientifically – "Some of it may seem religious or frou-frou, and this whole idea of wellness architecture is only just starting to be tested," Shreibeis Smith admits – the architecture industry is putting its best foot forward.

A benchmark for wellness

In 2014, after six years of research and development, the WELL Building Standard was launched, which shifts the focus from environmental to human sustainability, taking into account air, water, nourishment, fitness, comfort, light, the mind and innovation. The goal is to harness the built environment as a vehicle for supporting human health and well-being.

In the past four years, the standard has been embraced in 35 countries and a variety of building types, and some architecture studios are starting to incorporate it into their usual design practices.

HOK, for example, which was the first large architecture and design firm to form a global strategic partnership with the firm Delos, the founder of the standard, is undertaking a significant initiative to educate and professionally accredit its design teams so they can incorporate principles of health and wellness into all of their projects, whether or not their clients are pursuing WELL certification.

And while no hotels have yet done so, a handful of big hospitality players, including Marriott and Wyndham, have signed up to Delos's Stay Well programme – through which, they can have their existing hotel rooms upgraded over the course of three days with state-of-the-art wellness technologies designed to mitigate the countless variables that travelling introduces into a hotel guest's routine; and by doing so, positively impact their health, vitality, relaxation and well-being. >>



“Stay Well is the evolution of sustainability,” says Julia Monk, a director of HOK’s hospitality practice, based in Hong Kong. “From advanced air purification to dawn simulation, circadian rhythm lighting and a healthy mattress, the wellness features of Stay Well rooms are specifically designed to allow rejuvenating sleep, deliver purified air, provide specially filtered water, and protect guests against allergens and germs.

“They are the first of their kind to offer evidence-based health and wellness features in hotels to help travellers maintain their health and well-being while on the road.”

Energising the people

While Schreibeis Smith has been encouraged by initiatives like Stay Well and believes the hospitality industry is on the right track, she still thinks there is a long way to go.

“You can look at it as an X-Y grid,” she says. “The lower down you get, the more energy you’re consuming and the more energy it takes to recuperate from being in the environment, because it might be toxic or unhealthy or circadian rhythms might be off. But when you get higher up, the building is creating energy in the people and in the environment; it’s regenerative, it’s symbiotic with nature.

“Right now, we live in the lower-left-hand corner of that grid, and we’re too often creating unhealthy buildings that are depleting our natural resources and taking energy. And while sustainability should be a target, what’s even better, and what people should be reaching for, is to be able to use physical architecture to enhance the local ecology of a place and enhance wellness.”



The first step for a hotel

owner, Schreibeis Smith advises, must be a clear commitment to a wellness architecture approach. She continues, “It needs to be incorporated into the business plan and the ethics, just like a green project. With green projects, what people find is that when they go above and beyond what codes require, their buildings are healthier, people prefer them, and there is a payback in occupancy and rental rates that they can charge.

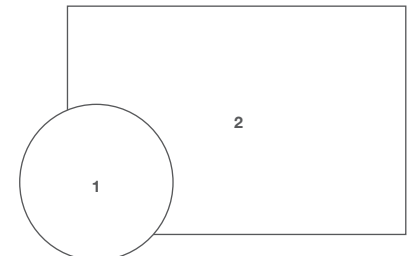
“The business model for wellness architecture needs to be similar but also expand on this and incorporate how they’re going to get their ROI out of it. It’s possible, but it takes a commitment, because there is always going to be an easier, cheaper, more harmful way to do things.”

The Stay Well initiative is a small-scale case in point. “We’ve seen

considerable premiums on Stay Well rooms; about 20–25% after a three-day installation process,” says Delos CEO and founder Paul Scialla. “The qualitative and quantitative feedback has been phenomenal, and the programme is growing by the day.”

Schreibeis Smith also suggests that at initial design discussions, a wellness architecture consultant should have a place at the table. “It’s not just about checking boxes,” she stresses. “To have a really successful project, you need passion and drive.”

Finally – and most crucially for Monk – it’s essential that, as with all hotel design, the process starts and ends with the guest. “Through time, as our awareness as guests, hotel operators, hotel owners, architects and designers becomes more sophisticated, the environments that we design also become more sophisticated,” she says.



1. A circadian remote, which are found in the Stay Well rooms of the Mirage, Las Vegas
2. A Stay Well King room at the Mirage, designed to aid rejuvenation and relaxation.

“Today, wellness is a priority in hospitality design. Guests are demanding it and willing to pay more for it. Hotel operators, in turn, will demand that their properties are built or adapted to meet the guest’s needs, or run the risk of lower occupancy or lower room rate, neither of which will be satisfactory to the hotel owners.

Monk concludes, “Just as accessibility, ergonomics and sustainability have become a right rather than just a movement, wellness is next.” ●

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Back to nature for a stress-free workplace

Bringing people closer to real nature in interior spaces is the vision of **Freund GmbH**, Berlin. With its moss walls and other natural wall coverings, the company creates uniquely comfortable places.

The moss walls, made in Germany by Freund GmbH, break through the contrasting urban architecture, which is characterised by glass, steel and concrete. The study 'Green spaces deliver lasting mental health benefits' shows that looking at green natural elements in spaces measurably reduces stress symptoms in humans.

This is exactly where Freund moss products come in. Its permanent greens provide a peaceful view, are a source of strength and stimulate the imagination. The large material surface also absorbs sound by up to 90%. This makes Freund moss walls particularly interesting for interiors designed as open-plan offices. They are also popular for hospitality facilities, wellness environments or catering concepts.

Maintenance-free, natural and of the highest quality

The individual pictures and walls made of 100% natural moss are especially designed for interiors and are completely handmade. Freund Moosmanufaktur only uses real mosses and plants for its production, and only individual moss areas are harvested – carefully and by hand, so that the natural growth is not affected. After this sustainable, resource-conserving harvest, cleaning and conservation, the moss is given its intense colour by

natural colourants. The special conservation process ensures a long life for the products, known as Evergreen (Iceland moss), Greenhill (cushion moss) and Greenwood (forest moss). These wall decorations do not require any care, fertilisation or light.

Fire protection tested according to EU standards

For custom-made products, moss is double fastened on MDF or special refractory panels. Should a project solution require it, such as moss installation at Munich or Frankfurt airports, a special refractory panel will be used at the customer's request. Also, Freund moss products has been awarded the fire protection certificate EN 13501 B-s1-d0. Convex and concave solutions are also possible with the flexible panels, which are made of HDF or glass fibre. For pools and swimming areas, special moisture-resistant boards are used as the base material.

Not least due to its many years of experience, Freund is the first choice as a manufacturer for architects, designers, planners and interior designers worldwide. Impressive projects have been created for well-known clients, such as WeWork, Spotify, Uber, Daimler, BMW and more.

The combination of moss with lights and lighting concepts is the



It has been shown that having natural green spaces in the workplace reduces stress.

innovative further development of carefree interior green areas, from a pure decorative material to a design object. The modern lamps are eye-catching in any room. They not only generate the desired basic lighting, but their additional accent lighting also enhances the high-quality character of the natural surfaces. Their acoustics also make them a design object, for example in hotels, restaurants, cafes, open-plan offices, medical practices, as part of creative shop and trade fair concepts or simply in a cosy living context.

Much more than just moss

Freund has existed for more than 35 years and has established

itself as a manufacturer and supplier of moss walls of the highest quality for more than a decade. Customer requirements for holistic project solutions are growing noticeably.

With impressive materials such as genuine Bark House poplar bark; wall panels with birch, cork or larch bark; and also leather tiles, burnt wood and many other innovative products, it is possible to create individual oases of well-being in tune with nature. ●

Further information
Freund GmbH
www.freundgmbh.com



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TOTAL SOLUTION

Conditioned for success

Daikin auto-cleaning ducts can be a huge help for hotels, saving time and money on air-conditioning units.

Air conditioning has become the norm in most new and refurbished hotels. Today's systems keep guests cool during summer and provide cost-efficient heating during winter. Daikin heat pumps use renewable energy to do this, cutting hotel operating costs. And there's also a positive impact on indoor aesthetics.

As a leading manufacturer of heat-pump systems, Daikin is at the very forefront of technological development. Far from concentrating solely on temperature control, its engineers and designers are constantly working to improve the 'total solutions' for key market sectors, such as the hotel industry, offering cooling, heating, hot water, ventilation and refrigeration with a single point of contact.

Daikin's most recent control innovation is the stylish Madoka, an intuitive touch-button controller that enables guests to adjust room temperatures for greater comfort. Its

Bluetooth connection gives maintenance staff access to all other system settings, and with a choice of white, black or silver housings, Madoka fits any hotel interior design.

Improving efficiency

Another recent innovation is the auto-cleaning duct, an accessory that attaches to a Daikin ducted unit – typically in a hotel bedroom ceiling – and automatically cleans the filter. This was a key component that prompted a high-end hotel in the Channel Islands to switch to the Daikin total solution when its old systems were due for replacement.

The Pomme d'Or Hotel, in Jersey, heads the hotel and leisure portfolio of Seymour Hotels in Jersey. The long-established, 143-bedroom art deco hotel has a prime location close to the island's main business district, and overlooking the port and marina. It enjoys year-round popularity among business and holiday visitors.



The Pomme d'Or Hotel in St Helier chose Daikin's air-conditioning solution.



Daikin's heat-pump systems use renewable energy, which cuts costs for hotels.

David Donoghue, group maintenance manager, says, "We chose the Daikin solution for heating and cooling because it included the auto-cleaning duct on the indoor units."

in each room, but it was disruptive and expensive. And as the engineer had to remove ceiling panels to access the filters each time, it inevitably led to decoration

“We chose Daikin's solution for heating and cooling because of the auto-cleaning duct.”

– David Donoghue, Seymour Hotels

The auto-cleaning duct avoids accumulation of dust on the filter, which would otherwise affect the efficiency of the unit and increase operating costs. In fact, the accessory is calculated to cut operating costs by 20%. The attachment thoroughly cleans the filter periodically and stores the dust in a dust box, which can be emptied by housekeeping staff quickly with a vacuum cleaner.

Donoghue continues, "This is the big selling point that tipped it for us. We used to spend a lot of time cleaning the filters by hand every two or three months. It was only about 30 minutes

issues, such as damaged panels and dirty ceilings."

Donoghue concludes "The big benefits are that we get greater efficiency from the systems and we can deploy our maintenance team more resourcefully."

The Pomme d'Or Hotel's system is ultimately controlled by a Daikin Intelligent Touch Manager mini-BMS, which gives a central view of the entire system. ●

Further information

Daikin
www.daikin.eu/en_us/solutions/hotel.html

Piecing *it* together

Modular construction techniques offer novel ways for hotel developers and operators to not only minimise costs but to innovate in the use of room space. Greg Noone talks to Concrete's **Rob Wagemans**; **Jason Brown**, formerly chief development officer of Yotel; and Hilton Worldwide's **Patrick Fitzgibbon** about how off-site manufacturing is fast becoming a trend.



When the designers at Concrete were asked to consider the experiences they've had at luxury hotels, the mood at the company darkened. "We felt we'd be better off at a youth hostel, because that's where we find the social connection between guests is most interesting," explains Rob Wagemans, founder of the Amsterdam-based architecture and design agency. "If you go to a five-star hotel today, you have to pay a lot of money; you have to place your signature everywhere. If you want to order a beer, you need to fill in three forms."

In 2007, Concrete found a partner to right these perceived wrongs: citizenM, an experimental new hotel group that aimed to offer, in its own words, "affordable luxury for the people". The first result of that collaboration was the group's eponymous property at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

"We started with the idea, 'how can we make luxury affordable?'" recalls Wagemans. From there, the architect and his team would radically reconsider what was actually required inside the room. "We imagined having a typical five-star bedroom and a sharp knife, and we started to cut out everything we did not need. Then, at a certain moment, we came to the conclusion that we could go as small as 15m² in area, while still retaining a great bed, shower and toilet; and a small desk."

When it came to answering the question of how this vision could be efficiently put together, Concrete turned to modular construction. To expedite the logistics of transporting the rooms, Wagemans decided to confine his design to the dimensions of a shipping container. "Then we felt we had something that was easy to build anywhere in the world – we can ship it anywhere we like, put it on a truck, build it anywhere, crane it in and we're done."

Ultimately, Wagemans and his colleagues believe the design they've conceived with citizenM has contributed to a new paradigm in room

design, where luxury can be attained without recourse to surplus space. "If you go to a city, all of your hotels are too expensive or shitty," he says. "Why can you not make an affordable hotel that has the luxury you need without all the bullshit you don't?"

Absolutely prefab

CitizenM is just one of many hotel groups that has chosen to design new builds with modular construction techniques in mind. In the US, work has commenced on a Hyatt Place in Oklahoma City that sees most of its rooms assembled in Boise, Idaho. Meanwhile, in the UK, Hilton Worldwide partnered with Chinese shipping container manufacturer CIMC to build a new Hampton by Hilton, at Bristol Airport. In keeping with Hilton Worldwide's leasehold business model, CIMC is also owner and developer of the Bristol site. Put simply, the Chinese manufacturer offered the hotel group a turnkey solution it had been seeking to implement for years.

"Across many of our hotels over the years, you'd find the bathroom component was modular," says Patrick Fitzgibbon, Hilton's senior vice-president for development in Europe and Africa. "So we've worked on and used the technique in our developments for a long time."

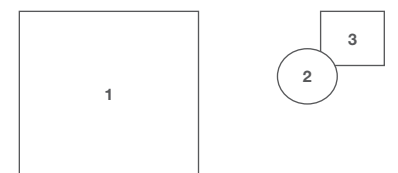
"But in terms of effectively building the whole hotel, other than the public areas, this is the first time we've ever gone down that route, certainly in markets outside of the US. I think one of the reasons is that we just hadn't found a solution that met all the criteria, particularly when it came to quality."



Nevertheless, the modular concept Hilton has devised with CIMC can only accommodate rooms up to a certain size, meaning that, at the moment, it's really only compatible with Hilton's

'focused service' brands: Hampton by Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn. "The room size in those hotels is such that you can easily transport the sections by road," says Fitzgibbon. "When you go to upscale or luxury hotels, the room size is such that it's likely this methodology won't pay. The roads, bluntly, aren't big enough."

However, as far as Fitzgibbon is concerned, the efficiencies to be found in modular construction constitute a major opportunity in Europe and Africa for its burgeoning economy-brand development pipeline – Hilton is also behind Africa's first modular hotel, the 280 room Hilton Garden Inn in the Ghanaian capital of Accra.



- 1&2. The distinctive purple tint of a Yotel room. The VIP suite (1) in New York looks out on the stunning skyline.
3. The unique, quirky interior of citezenM's La Défense, in Paris.

"A lot of people said it was quite a surprise to see it in Bristol, but it makes perfect sense," Fitzgibbon says of Hilton's debut modular property. "It's great because the construction is much quicker, so there are fewer vehicles at the site, which is good because – like any airport – it's already a busy area. Whereas, in a market like Africa, I think it resolves a lot of the challenges in terms of the availability of experienced, qualified labour, as well as the availability of materials."

Ultimately, however, Fitzgibbon is less inclined to regard modular construction as an influence on Hilton's brands; his interpretation is more literal. "Our guests won't know the hotel is modular – and they don't need to know," he says. >>



The bar at citizenM Schiphol Airport – the site was the company's first collaboration with architecture and design agency Concrete.

"It's just a form of construction and, ultimately, what we need is for them to walk into one of our properties and go, 'Wow, what a great hotel'. How it was built is irrelevant. The relevance is really for the owner and the development community, to use modular construction as a tool to expedite growth."

Far from the modern crowd

While modular construction promises a turnkey solution for new builds, its most prominent successes have been in locations that may be regarded as peripheral. Although Concrete and citizenM have continued to collaborate on city centre projects in London, Glasgow, Paris, Rotterdam, Copenhagen and New York, elsewhere, the impact of modular hotel design in dense urban areas has been rather more limited; dropping prefabricated rooms into a steel framework becomes a much more expensive, impractical option

when an operator decides to move into a major city.

Arguably, no operator knows this better than Yotel. Founded in 2002 by British businessman Simon Woodroffe, the operator's trademark brand of purple-tinted cabin rooms were indirectly inspired by the smaller capsule hotels the entrepreneur encountered during his trips to Japan. While he didn't think the space on offer would be acceptable for guests in the West, Woodroffe nonetheless saw potential in building an affordable, boutique hotel brand able to incorporate 50% more rooms than its rivals.

The operator has come a long way since building its prototype structure in 2003. While that demonstration model saw 2.7×13m capsule rooms slotted into a steel frame, Yotel has pared back its initial enthusiasm in keeping almost every aspect of construction totally modular.

"When you go into many different regions around the world, modular is actually more expensive, unless you have a factory within striking distance of the site," says Jason Brown, who served as the company's chief development officer until 2017. "We were interested in it, but we didn't want it to hinder our ability to flex into those locations, because that's a real hindrance to scale."

Instead, Yotel has focused on delivering something closer to a modular experience, defined by what the operator calls the 'kit of parts'. "There are must-haves in the Yotel experience," says Brown. "That includes what we call 'mission control' and our check-in-kiosk experience. Then we have the cabin itself and a concept we call the 'club lounge', which is really a vibrant co-working space for people to relax and have a drink before they go to a premier restaurant, which may or may not be incorporated in the hotel. That

'kit of parts' delivers what we think is the ethos of the brand."

Blending in

Yet there are subtle compromises to be found in Yotel's new urban developments that do affect the sense of modular uniformity that the brand attempts to convey. The operator's signing in San Francisco's Grant Building, which was constructed in 1905 by the same father-and-son team that built the Brooklyn Bridge, is scheduled to open late in 2018. The operator mounted extensive consultations to not only preserve its 'kit of parts' design principle but also ensure the new hotel's successful integration into the local community. Similarly, in regard to Yotel's first property in Dubai, which is currently under construction, Brown is clear that the rooms, cabin and public spaces conform as much as possible to market conditions in the UAE.

"In some scenarios, you may end up making design decisions that seem more modular than we typically would do across the board, but that flexibility in deciding what's best for specific sites is key," he says. "It allows quick growth and ensures Yotel is not insular. You have to be open to developers and investment partners having great ideas, and trying them out."

It is these kinds of trade-offs that will serve to define the further spread of modular construction techniques throughout the hospitality sector. While resorting to prefabrication might lead to restrictions on the size of rooms and where hotels can be situated, it has also opened up new options for operators regardless of whether those methods can be used in the construction process. As Yotel and citizenM have demonstrated, guests don't perceive the luxury option simply as involving large rooms and bespoke service – smart technology and the efficient use of space also count. ●

High-standard facades to the core

Aluminium composite panels (ACPs) give designers and architects a versatile and resilient facade solution, but care must be taken to ensure that high standards are applied. Angelos Zografos, technical sales engineer at **Elval Colour**, explains the quality considerations that go into the production of ACPs and why manufacturers should make the welfare of employees and the environment a priority.

Aluminium composite panels (ACPs) offer architects a supreme and versatile material for building facades. The panels demonstrate a rigidity that is often not available in solid metal surfaces, and this prevents the material from deforming due to local buckling, a result known as oil canning. This provides an extremely flat surface onto which high-specification liquid coil coatings can be applied, allowing the panels to resist oxidation and degradation even in extreme environments. At the same time, a limitless variety of colour coatings enables greater flexibility and freedom in aesthetic design, an important parameter for materials used in the hospitality sector. In addition, ACPs are lighter than alternative materials, such as solid aluminium; this makes them ideal for renovating existing facilities as it allows a visual and functional upgrade of the facade without requiring major modifications of the existing structure.

Furthermore, when produced with a core of special composition, it can also be fire-retardant or even incombustible. This attribute is of paramount importance in today's world, where fire safety becomes more important every day – particularly for facilities of high occupancy or visitation, such



Elval Colour facades balance aesthetic style with functionality.

as hotels, schools or hospitals. However, the complex process for the production of ACPs means that strict attention must be paid to ensure quality is maintained.

This is a key priority for the aluminium coil coater and ACP producer Elval Colour, which offers three varieties of ACPs: etalbond, etalbond FR (fire-retardant) and etalbond A2 (incombustible). Elval Colour opts for manufacturing at the highest possible level. "The most important factor is to be consistent through the whole year, with no deviations regarding our

production quality," emphasises Angelos Zografos. He adds that the company's practice in coil coating and producing ACPs is certified and rigorously audited by independent certification bodies and demonstrates a long record of reliability.

Quality production

ACPs are comprised of a lightweight organic core with mineral fillers and two coil-coated aluminium sheets, between which the core is sandwiched and bonded with adhesive. Aluminium oxidises, therefore it needs to be treated accordingly; the process of

rolling, which is the transformation of an aluminium slab into a coil, results in oxidation as well as contamination of the aluminium surface from the lubricants and other agents that are used to facilitate the procedure. Thus, it is a key step to clean the aluminium surface by chemically treating it with a combination of alkaline and acidic washing to remove the smut and any oxides from it. After that, a passivation layer is applied, which restricts future oxidation of the surface and is polarised enough to bond with the coating that is added next. This pretreatment is vital: if

Company insight

omitted or done incorrectly, it will allow reactivity of the surface, which leads to corrosion. “This kind of pretreatment is not done in some cases,” says Zografos. “This creates the basis for the future oxidation of the aluminium substrate.”

Finally, the coating is applied; it is typically a polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) coating that provides protection against the elements and gives the aesthetic qualities of ACPs. However, the quality of this coating can vary. The normal composition is 70% PVDF and 30% acrylic, but as Zografos adds, “If the PVDF content goes lower, the quality and the cost drop dramatically.” The coatings used by Elval Colour have an 80% PVDF content and contain no hazardous substances, such as lead, chrome or isophorone.

Additionally, as hospitality establishments can often be located in areas with conditions that are aggressive for coatings – such as next to the sea or in an area with increased UV radiation – a more advanced coating solution might have to be applied to the

ACPs, which could mean more layers or even different technology. The details of that coating solution have to be agreed along with the client as they will support the warranty that will accompany the material, and it will protect the image and the value of the facility in the long run. Badly defined warranties and unsuitable coating solutions can undermine the quality and value of the project.

This commitment to quality extends to the behaviour of ACPs against fire. Elval Colour’s etalbond A2 is classified as A2-s1,d0 according to the European standard EN 13501-1 and will not contribute to a fire, making it an ideal facade solution for tall buildings and high-occupancy facilities, such as hotels or convention centres. In addition, the panels will not emit toxic chemicals when exposed to the fire, which could harm occupants.

Furthermore, hydroxides found in the core give it fire-retardant properties by evaporating when heated, causing an endothermic reaction and a reduction in temperature. “You have a similar performance as the solid material, which cannot catch fire,” Zografos states. “The industry saw that there was a need for improvement, to move forward and advance from the standard that was available several years ago with the plastic core.”

Sustainable and safe

Elval Colour is strongly committed to sustainability. “You might have really beautiful and useful products, but, as an architect, you should not only see what lies in front of you, but you should also care about what is happening backstage,” Zografos explains. “The production of building materials is strongly connected

Elval Colour can produce facades that are fire-retardant or incombustible.



to the environment, so we have to be careful what we release and how.” Elval Colour uses an afterburner and thermal oxidisers in its coating process, which burn all the solvents that evaporate from the coating. This process not only prevents harmful volatile organic compounds from being released into the atmosphere but also redirects the generated heat back in the furnace, which cures the coatings, therefore saving energy and making the liquid coating process even more environmentally friendly. Water used in the process is entirely reused, and the product – etalbond ACP – is fully recyclable.

Zografos also stresses that a good working environment plays a key role in ensuring a high-quality product. “A safe working environment will add to the quality of the product because people are a crucial factor in the whole production chain,” he says. The focus on this principle is evident from Elval Colour’s OHSAS 18001 certification for occupational health and safety.

All these factors lead to the creation of a product that fulfils the highest specifications and is also suitable for a wide range of environments and architectural needs. Continuous and close collaboration with architects and designers throughout the years allows Elval Colour to maintain a profound understanding of market needs and thus, if the need arises, be able to produce tailor-made solutions with a high level of customisation.

In Tenerife, Spain, the facade of the Hard Rock Cafe Hotel consists of 16,000m² of etalbond acp in 16 different colours, specially customised to withstand the harsh environmental effects, such as salt water and rain, resulting from the buildings proximity to the sea. Zografos concludes that, “The hospitality sector can benefit from the versatility of the personalised solutions that we offer and the value we add to their services through products of quality, like etalbond.” ●

Further information

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Perks of recreation

Crowne Plaza has unveiled a fresh visual identity that challenges the accepted aesthetics of business hotels. Eleanor Wilson talks to **Tom Lloyd** of PearsonLloyd; **Simon Kincaid**, director at Conran and Partners; and **Dan Radley**, head of strategy at NB Studio, about finding a new creative direction and responding to the travel needs of today's professionals.



“Eight hours’ work, eight hours’ recreation, eight hours’ rest,” went the slogan of Robert Owen, a 19th-century English campaigner for social change. The notion of a work-life balance with clearly defined boundaries has persisted ever since. However, the ideas that worked during the Industrial Revolution need an update for this era, when digital advances have made it possible to get the job done anywhere, anytime. Rising numbers of freelancers are changing the definition of ‘workplace’ to include coffee shops, co-working spaces and living-room couches; for offices, beige cubicles are out and on-site yoga is in. People want to take a more flexible, personalised approach to where and when they work, and, as a result,

today’s mixture is becoming more of a blend.

This isn’t always reflected in business hotels, though. Research by OnePoll for InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG)’s Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts found that 40% of UK business travellers looked forward to work trips as a chance to get out of the office. Yet, they often found themselves heading into an environment in which the

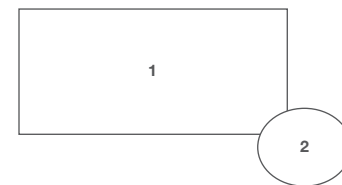
focus remained on working around the clock. Business hotels tend to take their design cues from offices – they are deliberately unobtrusive to minimise distraction, with perhaps some leather armchairs for a premium feel. Until recently, the Crowne Plaza brand belonged to this school of thought, with a neutral colour palette occasionally accented with dark wood and liberal use of its understated, plum-coloured logo.

IHG began thinking about this in 2011, when it first engaged product and furniture-design studio PearsonLloyd to come up with the WorkLife guest room for Crowne Plaza. The concept, which was rolled out in 2016, was meant to blur the lines between relaxation, sleep and work, creating a space with a fresh aesthetic that welcomed all three. WorkLife rooms are now standard across the brand’s US footprint and, after the successful launch, IHG decided to take the concept further.

Taking care of business travellers

Many of PearsonLloyd’s assignments had involved the new breed of co-working spaces, which did a lot to inform the final project. Providers such as WeWork have been doing their best to redefine how work is done, but the basic requirements of business travellers haven’t changed; they need a good night’s sleep, a chance to unwind and an environment that promotes focus and collaboration.

“We started doing lots of work around how to reimagine the hotel room from the perspective of a business traveller,” says PearsonLloyd co-founder Tom



1. The new design concept from Crowne Plaza, in association with Conran and Partners
2. A Crowne Plaza WorkSpace, a communal hub for co-working.

Lloyd. “In order to perform well as a business person, you need to be well looked after in terms of your human and emotional needs.”

PearsonLloyd became the developer of a new global design philosophy and aesthetic for Crowne Plaza, collaborating with NB Studio, which revamped the brand in partnership with advertising agency Ogilvy New York and brand consultancy EatBigFish. The updated look is fresh, young and modern, with a warm and confident tone in the branding materials to appeal to business travellers looking for a touch of humanity.

“NB’s work was informed by Crowne Plaza’s research into the modern business traveller,” says Dan Radley, brand strategist at NB Studio. “In essence, it said business people have changed. The things that were once considered important – status, money, power and hierarchy – have been replaced with new values: empathy, collaboration, flexibility and creativity.”

The US roll-out began in 2017, but it was decided that the European launch needed a few tweaks. IHG engaged London-based designers Conran and Partners to put a different spin on the interior template for European Crowne Plaza properties. The results will be rolled out at the end of 2018 at the brand’s London Heathrow, Paris République and Hamburg City Alster properties, but attendees and owners at the International Hotel Investment Forum in Berlin in early March were able to

preview the new look in a virtual-reality walkthrough.

"We did respect and acknowledge, and then evolve, some of the hallmarks that were within the US brand division," says Simon Kincaid, director of Conran and Partners. "In the guest room, there is an angle to the bed, which creates a particular type of environment and a more social, dynamic space."

According to Lloyd, the angled bed creates an ergonomic "magic triangle" that gives the guest a clear line to the TV screen from either the bed or the multifunctional sofa. The latter is L-shaped to give the occupant plenty of options for positioning, whether they're working on a laptop or relaxing with a book or movie.

The brief from IHG emphasised the need to increase wellness time in shared spaces and get away from "beige-ness and blandness". Each collaborating party had to re-examine their assumptions of what a business traveller truly needed.

"We challenged the desk a lot with the client. We said, 'we think you should take away the desk completely,' and there was a lot of shock," Lloyd recalls.

The desk ended up staying, but with a makeover: it now features better

lighting and mirrors to serve as a hair and make-up station, with plenty of space and electrical sockets so guests can leave their phones, tablets and laptops there to charge overnight.

A feminine touch

Conran and Partners also had some no-go design elements in mind; the distressed finishes and bare metal of the industrial 'shabby chic' aesthetic used by brands like Ace Hotels and Soho House.

"They already own that look, and we wanted to avoid that. We wanted it to look more upscale, integrated and refined – also a little more feminine," Kincaid says.

Business is leaning evermore towards a less male-dominated atmosphere, and making the hotel experience less overtly masculine was a goal for both design studios. PearsonLloyd focused on creating a more welcoming atmosphere for female travellers, with solo seats in common areas where women travelling on their own wouldn't feel singled out or pressured to interact. The European vision applied the idea to the overall feel of the interior. Kincaid and his team leaned towards copper finishes, desaturated oak and a few marble touches.

"We felt the design ought to have a fashionable edge to it – something premium," Kincaid explains. "What that did was avoid things being oversized. It gave things more of a refinement – just having things slimmer, more elegant, softer on the palette and perhaps more delicate in the material specification."

"The plaza is a place where people come together – they meet and relax or do business," he explains. "We used two different interpretations of that; one is more upscale – more like a retail gallery such as you may have in mainland Europe. Then there's a more casual plaza, which is a large open space for markets and people to gather."

Crowne Plaza properties span urban, transit and resort locations, so the aesthetic was built around 'hallmarks' – signature elements that each property could use in its own configuration while preserving a sense of place. The hallmark of the Plaza WorkSpace is a three-sided bar against one wall. Scattered around the rest of the space are a variety of seating options, some with built-in touchscreens, including a co-working-style sharing table; booths for six to eight people; huddles of chairs and two-seater sofas; 'nooks', low-top booths designed for one or two people; and solo workspaces along the wall. Its lines are clean and angular, but a palette of browns, light greys, dark teal and pops of coppery red add softness and warmth.

The design features two other signature spaces for meetings and collaborations. The Forum, with tiered 'Spanish steps' along one wall, can function as an informal hangout spot with couches and a pool table or can be booked as a venue for guest speakers and presentations. The Studio is similarly bookable and multifunctional, intended for workshops or private dining, with high-top seating as well as a huddle set-up.

"If you can find somewhere that you will feel comfortable, you'll spend more time, increase your productivity

and feel welcomed," says Kincaid. Tone and messaging had to evolve along with Crowne Plaza's look. NB Studio was called in to deliver a "refreshed visual identity" for the brand globally, including iconography, photography, illustrations and a new voice. There was one caveat: IHG wanted to keep the original logo, featuring three ribbons flying inside a horizontal oval in a signature plum colour.

Branding strip

The studio's response was to tone down some things and play up others. The ribbons became a repeated 'wave' motif in the background of brochures and served as a starting point for creating new icons, while the plum shade is used as an accent to create impact.


The language has become more playful; a notepad urges, "Make mistakes," while a poster declares, "If business travel turns you on, get a room." The photography in the branding materials has a candid, vulnerable feel to it. Well-groomed professionals have given way to pictures of guests just waking up.

"Business travel should be a getaway to something more restorative, more inspiring," says Radley, "Working away from home can be lonely and exhausting. Business people are just people; the first job of design is to bring humanity to the experience. Brand language is vital in establishing empathy in professional situations or surprising guests with warmth."

Doing away with the boundaries between work and leisure sometimes prompts fears that work will take over completely. In a business-hotel context, where work can feel impossible to escape, it's important to emphasise the need for downtime. It makes sure guests are functioning at their best in work hours, but it's also about something simpler, more integral to hospitality: whether the guest genuinely enjoyed their stay. ●

IHG's WorkLife rooms reflect the changing needs of business travel.





The Four Seasons Dubai was designed to be luxurious in style but modest in size.

Building a legacy

As one of the most in-demand designers and architects, **Adam Tihany** boasts a portfolio that includes the Four Seasons Dubai, Beverly Hills Hotel, Mandarin Oriental Geneva and many collaborations with top chefs. He meets Sarah Williams to look back over an illustrious career and outlines a design philosophy devoted to the careful observation of human experience.

“When you travel, you want to be ‘in’ places, you don’t want to be stepping on the same steps in the same places over and over again,” says Adam Tihany, and he should know. The globally renowned designer spends much of his time

travelling the world, from luxury project to luxury project. It’s a “professional affliction”, he says, but an enjoyable one.

“If you’re going to Paris, your hotel should be Parisian; when you go to Chicago, your hotel should embody the spirit of Chicago and not feel like a generic, canned luxury product,” he

continues. “We always create, in our projects, some connection to local culture, typically through the design, through art, through detail, through scents and looks. And, in most cases, it whispers, it doesn’t shout; it’s pretty subtle, and it’s a process of discovery.”

Tihany, too, speaks softly; a gentle lilt conjuring the local cultures he has known intimately: New York, where he lives, having established his studio in 1978; Milan, where he studied architecture and learned to design the true Italian way; and Jerusalem, where he spent his childhood in a Hungarian-speaking household.

It was in Milan, Tihany has previously said, that he was struck by how “generous and engaging the dialogue between architecture and interior design” can be, as he first looked upon the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. In designing for hospitality, that dialogue is first and foremost about the narrative of human experience.

“As a profession, we are creating stories, events, experiences. And experiences come in different packages, but I think our common goal is to do something that is memorable for people,” he says. “It could be something that evokes nostalgia, or creates suspense, or surprises you – but whatever it is, in order to be memorable, it has to move you somehow.

“There are a lot of buttons of human nature that we can push. But to me, it’s all about an experiential location more than anything else – we need to tell stories, to surprise and delight. The canvas is large, and it’s a lot of fun.”

Designing platforms

As far as experiential locations go, it is restaurants that Tihany knows arguably better than anyone. When he designed New York City’s first grand cafe, La Coupole, in 1981 (at a time when anything European was decidedly in vogue, he recalls), Tihany also helped carve out a new niche for his profession: restaurant designer.

Since then, he has worked time and again with the world’s leading chefs and restaurateurs, counting Daniel Boulud, Sirio Maccioni and Thomas Keller among his repeat clients.

Successful collaboration relies upon a mutual understanding of live and let live. “When we work with celebrity chefs, I think that sometimes the designer has to step back and check his ego, and let the ego of the chef shine through,” he says. “I see myself as a portrait artist or a customer’s tailor; it’s not about me, it’s about creating a space for somebody that has to perform, a place they can call their own.

“In order to do so, I have to put myself on the outside and look at it in a critical way. Obviously, it is my point of view, but the personality of the chef has to come through, and the collaboration in this particular case is to try and convince this person to sit still long enough that you can do his portrait.”

It doesn’t hurt that Tihany knows his way around the kitchen, having co-

owned Remi, his New York restaurant, for more than two decades. Chefs can treat Tihany as an experienced colleague, skipping the obvious practicalities to head straight to those meaningful details that, combined, make a restaurant.

Within hospitality, and specifically the luxury projects in which he specialises, it is Tihany’s direct experience as a consumer of that world, his enjoyable “professional affliction”, that allows him to deliver. Recent projects have included redesigning guest suites at the Breakers Resort, Palm Beach, which opened in November 2016, and a major renovation of the Oberoi in New Delhi, which was completed in early 2018.

“I’m critical about what I like and what I need, second only to my wife, who is even more critical,” he says. “So I always tell my client that if I can make my wife happy in this room, then anybody will be happy.

“It starts with a hairdryer and with the height of the outlets and all kinds

of things that, frankly, you have to know, because you’re dealing with discerning customers: people who have incredible homes, wonderful art collections, great cars and designer names.”

It’s insight that can be seen in his work on the Four Seasons Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC). At 106 rooms, it’s a “flea on the camel’s back” of everything else that’s going on in Dubai, Tihany comments. A project that was refreshing to work on because its owners, whom he describes as young and sophisticated, were not interested in chasing the city’s conventional superlatives of tallest, biggest or glitziest.

“We took that philosophy, combined with the excellence of the Four Seasons’ operational strength, and designed a product that is modest in scale but rich in style,” he says. “Years ago, a wonderful leather-goods company from Italy called Bottega Veneta had the slogan, ‘when your own initials are enough’, and I think that sums up the



quality of the project – something that doesn't scream anything, it just makes you feel comfortable, like a custom suit."

The immersion technique

Going into a project, Tihany takes steps to immerse himself in the environment in which it will breathe. For his newest field of work, cruise ship design, this has meant spending time on the waves and studying the way guests consume the product.

"I never do a project that I can't live a little before," Tihany explains, "Otherwise, it's just not going to come out right; I'm going to miss something."

Sometimes, life informs art in other ways. If Mamie Tihany, the design star's wife and business development director, helps him to appraise a project's luxury factor, the involvement of his son Bram, a New-York based artist, can provide what he refers to as a "little department of philosophy".

"Most people are very proud of their children, I hope, and I think that when somebody up high was dispensing talent, they dropped a little extra on his head," Tihany says, "He's an incredibly creative thinker, and we've worked together conceptualising projects in terms of philosophy and ideas, and taking it to the next level."

At the Four Seasons DIFC, this includes the younger Tihany's contemporary nod to 1950s automobile art in the hotel's diner, and a locale-inspired photo-essay series exploring Dubai's architecture.

As well as rooting a property in its location, the elder Tihany has also routinely displayed his adeptness in painting its history. Renovating the Beverly Hills Hotel for its centennial in 2014, Tihany looked closely into the property's past, discovering, for instance, that Elizabeth Taylor spent time there as a child because her father owned an art gallery in the hotel. Here, Tihany once again employs his skill as a portraitist.

"When you walk in there, I want you to feel the history of the place, to imagine Elizabeth Taylor is running



through the lobby as a three-year-old child. People that come to these places have some kind of an expectation or a fantasy, and you need to respond to that in a way that is not 'in your face', so it's a surprise – something that you make your own because you think you discovered it. Those are the best memories."

Asked about his own recollections, the projects that over time have most delighted him, Tihany introduces another word: longevity.

"We all dream of doing projects that will last forever, projects that become classics with time, gracefully," he says.

Tihany feels that timeless design can't be planned, but that it is achieved

when the right ideas, timing and collaboration come together. One of two projects that stand out for him in this way is Aureole Las Vegas (opened 1999), the restaurant he designed for Charlie Palmer. Supported by what he calls



1. The Four Seasons Dubai was designed to be luxurious in style but modest in size.

2. Tihany on board one of his newest designs, the luxury ship *Seabourn Encore*.



the city's "infinite possibilities", Tihany created his striking four-storey wine tower, where bottles ranked in columns of glass and steel are fetched by high-wire gliding assistants.

"Not only is Aureole still there, but it's as fresh and as relevant as it was the day it was built – and that's not easy," Tihany says. "It was really an accurate portrait of a chef, combined with an accurate assessment of what Las Vegas was all about at the time, and still is, and – I think – good contemporary architecture that doesn't age."

The second project Tihany mentions is an extremely personal one: Remi. Tihany and his then business partner Francesco Antonucci sold their stake several years ago, but – in a culinary scene as changeable as the weather – the restaurant is still open, with the original 1987 design.

"It was the most difficult thing for me to do, to allow myself to be portrayed by myself," Tihany says. "They always say that the shoemakers go without shoes, and, actually, I was petrified. But it was really the portrait of two young guys that were in love with the hospitality business and were willing to put their lives on the line to make something that people would appreciate."

From subject to teacher

Three decades after that first sitting, in the afterglow of a career designing for the stars of luxury hospitality, I ask what a portrait of the artist might look like today – and whether it's a task he would take on again. There's a long pause before Tihany answers: "I'm not sure that I would do it again at this point of my career; I would rather spend my time teaching the younger generation how to do it."

"And it's not because I'm old, or not ambitious – I just think that people who were instrumental or significant in any kind of profession have the responsibility to pass it on. So that will be my next chapter." ●

Individuality in design

Founded in 1983, **Studio Piet Boon** specialises in functional designs for homes, hotels and other commercial buildings, which deftly capture the personality of their owners. Its eponymous founder talks about the interdisciplinary approach his team uses to bring these designs to fruition.

An object that is tailor-made projects and adapts to the personality of its owner. In items that we wear or drive or program, these connections are at their most explicit. But what does that mean for a home?

“Our philosophy is based on a balance between functionality, aesthetics and individuality,” says Piet Boon, the founder of the eponymous Dutch design firm. Headquartered in Zaanstreek, just outside Amsterdam, the design studio has specialised in building sleek and unique modern private homes and hotels since 1983. Notable commissions at Piet Boon include private residences in South Korea, the Netherlands and the US; and the De Kas restaurant in Amsterdam. In 2015, the company’s work in converting a former military hospital in Antwerp into The Jane restaurant won three Domus Restaurant & Bar Design Awards: Best Overall, Best International and Best European

Its work in the hospitality industry has been extensive. Piet Boon’s signature philosophy can be seen from the design concepts of the Park Hyatt Hotel, in Hanoi, to Las Vegas’s Alon Hotel and the Fontenay Hotel, in Hamburg. “We make life more enjoyable for our clients by giving them the effortless environment they never knew they dreamt of,” says Boon. “We feel privileged to be able to design interiors for various high-end hospitality companies and hotel brands all over the world, from Antigua and Amsterdam, to Seoul and Hanoi.”



Piet Boon has been careful not to let the principles involved in designing an individual private commission slip away from their work in hospitality. “In some ways, those projects are similar to designing a private home,” explains Boon. “We delve into the values of the hotel brand and try to capture its identity in the design of the interior – in the same way a private home is the embodiment of its owner.”

Building relationships

All of this starts by talking to the client. “We ask a lot of questions, listen

carefully and try to read between the lines,” says Boon. “This takes a lot of time and effort, but we’ve managed to develop special antennae over the years. Like I said, we want to create something that you never knew you were dreaming of, but can no longer do without. Therefore, we never just realise a need or wish, we go much further, and push our boundaries to create something even better.”

Once the studio has a firm idea of what would suit the client, the hard work of draughting is passed onto

the studio’s team of specialists. As a multidisciplinary design studio, Piet Boon takes on every aspect of a commission, however small. “We are lucky to have so many talented professionals working here,” explains the designer. “Between them, our seasoned international team cover areas such as architecture, interior design, styling and decorating. Together, we form a highly skilled and motivated team.”

As a result, each one of the studio’s designs is unique. “Understanding

the client, and their wishes, requirements and lifestyle is central to the success of any project,” says Boon. “Each design starts with an extensive client intake, taking all important aspects into consideration – such as family composition, the way they spend their time and their own personal tastes – for a truly personalised design. This allows us to seamlessly blend our characteristic signature with the personality of the client.”

Functionality is the starting point for all of Piet Boon’s designs. Nothing the studio produces can be good, explains the designer, if it doesn’t serve its intended purpose. “I started out as a contractor a long time ago and, back then, I would have to realise designs,” he says. Many of the blueprints he encountered were badly conceived from their inception, something that would frustrate Boon intensely. “Eventually, I realised that I just had to design things myself in order to combine functionality, aesthetics and individuality. That’s how I came to found Studio Piet Boon in 1983.”

As for the most important factor in a design project, Boon is adamant,



The clean, beautiful interior of Hex restaurant, Oudewater, Netherlands.

“flexibility and being able to adapt” is especially important in hospitality, where the needs of the hotel operator and the guest have to be balanced carefully.

“This symbiosis fuels the ultimate design experience that exceeds expectations,” explains Boon. “Guests should be able to embark on an effortless journey, an intuitive discovery, regardless of the duration of their stay and whatever the destination might be. Having said that, we always seek to create a seamless environment for guests – catering to their needs every step of the way – so they can navigate and move intuitively throughout the hotel environment.”

Not that Boon leaves out surprises. “At the same time, we like to incorporate unexpected discoveries for guests to enjoy their visit,” he says.

If you want something done well...

Piet Boon’s expertise also extends to product design. “Each item in our collection was born out of a need we could not fulfil elsewhere,” explains the architect. “So, we would design it ourselves. We now have an extensive Piet Boon furniture collection, our own kitchen line, tableware, lighting, wallpaper, tiles, bath ware, hardware and flooring. Each year, we present our new furniture pieces at the Salone del Mobile in Milan.”

The studio’s clients span Europe and Asia, and Boon sees little difference in the design style being supplied to customers in either continent. “This is because they already have a preference for our design signature,” he explains. “Our signature can be found throughout all our product designs... these products complete the Studio Piet Boon experience of any project



The jaw-dropping design of The Jane restaurant in Antwerp won Piet Boon a handful of awards.

and, at the same time, when used individually, add a piece of our character to any interior design space. Because our product offering is quite extensive, we are able to provide clients with various solutions, from furniture to flooring and from hardware to lighting.”

Indeed, the deft way in which the studio balances functionality and attentiveness to the wishes of the client, with its unique and

compelling design sensibility, has transformed its fortunes. “Our studio has grown from a small practice into a globally operating design company,” says Boon. “To this day, we believe good design means creating beautiful solutions, in mastering mindful combinations of function and aesthetic.” ●

Further information
Studio Piet Boon
<https://pietboon.com>



Light up the world

Over the past few decades, specialist lighting designers have steadily grown in stature, becoming a fundamental part of the design process. Andrea Valentino talks to **Chad Rains**, founder and creative director of Illuminationworks, about his studio's extensive work within the international hospitality scene.

Light has always been a subtle part of stagecraft. In ancient times, coloured awnings were stretched across theatres to hide actors from the glare of the sun. By the Renaissance, scholars were writing detailed treatise on how to best light a space. In 1545, Sebastiano Serilo recommended placing candles and torches behind amber-coloured water, immersing the actors and crowd in delicate gold.

The invention of the light bulb pushed theatrical light further ahead. By the mid-20th century, it was as crucial to a performance as any soliloquy. But even as it shimmers down to us in theatres, for a long time, lighting was not seen as a specialist field of design in its own right.

Chad Rains recalls such times vividly. "When I was in school – between 1987 and 1992 – lighting design was still a new field," he says. "Back then, it was just New York and London, and even London was dwarfed by New York. I remember all through the 1990s, we still took people from interior design or architecture and then trained them to become lighting designers."

Into the spotlight

From this hesitant start, the profession has prospered, sitting confidently alongside architecture and interior design. Rains himself, founder and creative director of the London-based Illuminationworks, has found similar success. His work has won broad praise, notably at last year's Lighting Design Awards, where he and his team were anointed Lighting Design Practice of the Year.

Listen to Rains explain his design philosophy, and these achievements become easy to understand. "For me, the most important part of any project is 'integration'," he says. "This means making the light fittings as unobtrusive as possible, while still delivering a memorable atmosphere

that can be relaxing and exciting, depending on the use of the space." The purpose might have changed, but the subtlety of theatre lighting is still there for all to see.

No light-bulb moment

These ideas did not appear overnight. Rains first encountered lighting design as a student at Louisiana State University. Under the tutelage of Andrea Daugherty, an influential professor, he developed an appreciation of lighting as part of a broader set of architectural tools. "Andrea encouraged me by creating a one-on-one, independent study course and emphasising lighting design in my normal interior design classes," Rains explains. "By my senior year, I had a substantial lighting portfolio."

It helped that Rains was entering a relatively undeveloped field. "I could tell that some of the trigonometry formulas used for quantifying lighting really perplexed most of my classmates," he says. "I saw this as a clear advantage going into work, so I pursued lighting as a speciality focus in a time when there were no lighting design programmes."

This foresight paid off. After a stint in New York, Rains moved to London and worked under Arnold Chan, the force behind graceful lighting schemes at The Wolseley and the Hong Kong Landmark. "I continued working on high-profile projects around the world and further developed my hospitality lighting skills," Rains recalls.

In 2006, Rains founded Illuminationworks and has been there ever since. A parade of high-profile hospitality commissions followed, including London's Hospital Club, Hotel Café Royal and Beaumont Hotel.

Pushed to explain these triumphs, Rains remains diffident. "We have continued working on great projects worldwide," he says simply. But



not even he can hide his pride at Illuminationworks' success, something he ascribes to working closely with architects and interior designers throughout the design process. "One of the things that makes us unique is that we look at each individual project and prescribe a unique solution for it.

"We are brought in during the concept stage," Rains continues. "Usually, the architect or interior designer has already advanced their own concept design and done the space planning or initial layouts. We comment on their ideas, then we take it further and create our own lighting design concept package, with 3D sketches, and breakdown the different lighting ideas for a space."

Harmonising ideas with architects and interior designers never gets dull, Rains adds. "The projects that are dictated to you can be a bit boring, to be honest," he admits. "Those where you have complete free reign can be boring too. Lighting can be subjective, and if you don't have someone who has an opinion on the project, it can spiral out of control. I think the projects in the middle – where interior designers and architects are interested but not dictatorial about



1. Warm, stylish lighting at the bar of Lockbox restaurant at the 21c Museum Hotel.
2. A Marc by Marc Jacobs showroom, with lighting from Illuminationworks.

the process – are the most gratifying projects to work on."

Close cooperation with architects is also important for pragmatic reasons, especially in older buildings. Unlike new designs, historic properties have structural foibles that only become clear during renovation. As an example, Rains cites his work with 21c Museum Hotels, an American hospitality company specialising in conversions, which was recently acquired by Accor. "We've done seven renovations for 21c so far, and six of those have been adapted for use from existing buildings," he says. "One was previously a bank; the one in Nashville was an old warehouse.

"Each building is different. As builders go in there and start renovating – doing the fieldwork, tearing the walls down and the ceiling out to see what's really



Lighting plays a huge roll in creating the glamorous atmosphere of the Beaumont Hotel.

behind – they start to see hidden columns and structural beams. This forces you to adapt the lighting design. It's not just a case of doing the first few design phases and then leaving architects on their own. You have to see it through to the end."

Renovating hotels poses special difficulties in other ways, Rains adds. "Hotels are challenging because there is usually a wide variety of spatial types, each requiring a different approach," he says. "There is usually a destination restaurant that is as much for local residents as it is for hotel guests – we often spend more time designing the restaurant than any other single space in a hotel. Additionally, there is usually a bar, a lobby, a business centre and a spa. All of these areas have very specific requirements for lighting, but the lighting also needs to be used to bring continuity to the project.

Successful lighting designers cannot rely on versatility alone.

Light has the power to soften sober rooms and snap dreary ones to life, but it needs to be used carefully. Inexperienced designers do not always get the balance right, Rains says. One problem involves using harsh light when softer tones would do.

"Often, the colour temperature is inappropriate to a specific environment," he explains. "Adjacent back-of-house areas are not lit to the same level of sophistication as public spaces. These might include kitchen areas immediately adjacent to the dining room in a restaurant or storage rooms in a spa environment."

For its part, Illuminationworks includes every corner of a hotel in its plans, bringing Rains' theory of 'integration' to elegant fruition. "We always take adjacent back-of-house areas into our scope," he says. "This is to limit the possibility of someone opening a door and flooding the space with atmosphere-

killing cold, bright lighting." Using mellow light, with a lower Kelvin number, also helps. "In hospitality environments, we never use lights higher than 2,700K, with warm white colour temperatures," Rains adds. "In a space with no daylight, we might even venture lower to get a dimmed incandescent effect."

Rains also explains the importance of placing fittings carefully within a space, and is especially keen to underline his aversion to ceiling lamps (known as downlights). "We seek to envelop the guest in light from the perimeter as much as possible," he says. "This approach allows the limited use of downlights, which can feel glary if not carefully positioned. With more light coming from vertical surfaces, a space can feel lit without being overly bright; this adds to the sense of relaxation. We save the downlights for tables, for example, where you might have a flower display."

Reflecting on his two decades as a lighting designer, Rains concedes that better technology has helped him polish his art. "I have seen the industry go from halogen to LED," he explains. "These days, we use tunable white LED technology that mimics halogen dimming wherever possible. This is especially useful in rooms with daylight, where cooler temperatures look better in daytime, and can get gradually warmer as night falls."

Illuminating technology

A related development involves 'dolly dimming' whereby individual lights in a room can be controlled separately, allowing feven more versatility. "Let's say you're working on a corporate project, or a museum, where the walls might be reconfigured in future," Rains says. "At a museum, for example, you might have a temporary exhibition and need to change all the lights on the ceiling. This can be done easily with a dolly system. With the old voltage lighting systems, you would have to rewire all those fixtures. Overall, dolly dimming helps future-proof projects."

This flexibility is proving handy as Rains explores new markets. His team has several commissions in East Asia, including shopping centres in China and a cosmetics store in South Korea. All this poses special challenges; Rains smiles, "Unlike in Europe, clients in Asia prefer light to be brighter and more even," he says. "You have to light the floor and everything else in the space. There is also a tendency to light cooler."

Illuminationworks is also working on a number of hospitality projects in the UK. A country hotel is high on Rains' list of priorities. "It's good to have contacts in every region, because it's nice to have your work spread around the world," he says. "If one area starts to dive economically, it's good to have something else to rely on." None of this should be surprising: Rains is clearly comfortable shaping light into beauty, whatever the stage. ●

Creating beautiful and functional surfaces

Hanwha L&C Europe is expanding its market with a range of new products. Hanex is the perfect material for architects wanting to create unique and enduring designs.

Do you want to design spaces with breathtaking patterns and structures? Whether for exterior or interior applications, Hanex is the answer. Since 1995, Hanwha L&C Europe has developed into a front runner in the market for acrylic solid surfaces and is a leading global manufacturer of acrylic solid surfaces, quartz and deco sheets. Now, the company is in a position to expand its European market by interacting with its partners and rapidly catching the market trends. According to Namchu Woo, Hanex's managing director, "Innovation through beauty, design and flexibility," represents what the

company seeks to achieve. "Our goal is to provide customised solutions for any type of building. The only limitation is your imagination." Hanwha L&C Europe succeeds in offering its partners substantial value added with innovative, tailor-made products and solution. This is the result of its systematic focus on customer needs.

Facade requirement: to create diversity

Reflecting the combination between wild, unspoiled nature and urban environments, Hanex offers architects the unlimited possibility of creating unique, long-lasting designs based on the harmony of

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independent certification for its environmental performance, such as being Greenguard-certified. Through its great resistance and seamless installation, it eliminates any place for stains and bacteria to get into.

- Hanex is crafted from a unique blend of 100% acrylic resins and natural materials. Thanks to its non-porous features and inconspicuous seams, it can be easily formed into any shape and size that is required. Hanwha L&C Europe hopes this inexhaustible possibility spices up your world by creating a worthy space.



Hanex is the ideal material for creating unique, intricate designs.

Break the mould

Through a proactive approach, Hanwha L&C Europe consistently applies advanced technology to customers' needs. It has an extensive, growing product line, such as wide sheets for its decors – S-102 g-white and S-008 n-white will be available from the first quarter of 2019 from its new production site in Texas, in 1,350 or 1,520mm. These extensive surfaces, without visible joints, can seamlessly fit into any type of furniture and, of paramount importance, they can be simply cut out or combined together to fit a range of designs. ●

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Hanwha L&C Europe
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Transcending limits

SunSquare is celebrating its 25th anniversary of making custom-made shading solutions for the world.

SunSquare was established in Vienna 25 years ago. The first prototype of the SunSail was manufactured according to an idea had on a rooftop terrace by the designer Gerald Wurz. At that time, the company was based in Vienna and specialised in precision mechanics; but because of the great demand on space capacities, it soon moved to Lower Austria. Today, there are more than 50 worldwide partner companies designing and installing original SunSquare SunSails.

As SunSquare tells its customers, the construction consists of the drive with shaft, steering, sails, supports and fixtures. It needs four or six mounting points depending on the system used, and the shaft must be fixed by supports on the floor or on the wall. The two sail ends are attached to one or two points, as this is where the biggest loads occur, up to a maximum of 70kg of tension. The standard process is the attachment of at least two points



SunSquare built its largest system in Dubai – a 500m² terrace shading on the coast of the Palm Jumeirah.

on the structure and two points on floor supports. The shaft rotates an electric motor that is connected to a wind gauge and automatically turns the sail when wind speeds exceed 40km/h. Dynamic wind forces are started via a spring system. This is possible because the system is connected by rollers to the sail ends, which ensures that the sail remains taut but yields when the wind

blows. In addition, the sail is always easy to get out of the wind and the slope of the sail is designed to allow rainwater to run off.

SunSquare SunSails can shade roof gardens, terraces, children's playgrounds or car parking. The sail is made of coated acrylic or PVC mesh, which are available in several colours. Dyneema ropes are used for the cable pull and the brackets and poles are made of V4A grade 1.4571 stainless steel. All drives are additionally equipped with an emergency hand crank. Each SunSail is a custom-made shading solution, designed according to the individual needs of the client.

World's biggest installation

SunSquare constantly strives to push the boundaries of what is technically feasible and, together with local partners, finds innovative solutions for sun protection. This is currently the case in Dubai, where a 500m² terrace is shaded by the world's largest SunSquare system.

In early 2018, the system went into operation. The task was to shade the terrace – located on the coast of the Dubai Palm Jumeirah – with as few supports as possible. The solution was a SunSquare awning system of the type AX-II, with innovative supports that hover in mid-air. These hinged supports transmit the tensile forces to the few ground supports via thin steel cables. This achieves a uniform shadow area without interfering too much with the original architecture of the terrace.

A total of 14 solar sails are controlled centrally from one control module, which also makes it possible to control the individual sails. This allows the local operator to create different moods with the sails. The LED lighting also supports the night-time ambience, as the sails act as reflectors for indirect illumination. ●

Further information
SunSquare
www.sunsquare.com



SunSquare SunSails are an elegant solution for a range settings, from playgrounds to terraces.



© Mathieu Fiol

Renaissance of an icon

The history of the Hôtel Lutetia and the history of Paris are as closely entwined as the many lovers who walk the streets of the city of lights. Architect and designer **Jean-Michel Wilmotte** feels this keenly, and he was always aware of the hotel's glamorous history as he oversaw its recent, extensive restoration. Grace Allen speaks with Wilmotte to find out what it was like to work on this most beautiful and Parisian of grande dames.

In 1918, Pablo Picasso moved to live in the Hôtel Lutetia, situated on the bohemian Left Bank of Paris, accompanied by his new wife, ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova. It was here, working on a self-portrait, that he learned of the death of his friend and creative spur – the poet Guillaume Apollinaire.

The hotel hosted James Joyce 21 years later as he finished his masterpiece, *Ulysses*. Ernest Hemingway occasionally acted as his editor, and the writers were drinking – and brawling – companions: Joyce would provoke fights before pushing the brawnier Hemingway into the fray.

Just a few years later, the hotel played a role in the Nazi occupation of Paris as the headquarters of military intelligence, the *Abwehr*. After the liberation of the city, it became a repatriation centre for prisoners of war and concentration camp survivors. Juliette Gréco was one of many who returned to the hotel after the Liberation of Paris in search of her family.

The weight of history is heavy on Hôtel Lutetia – and this is even before considering its musical heritage, with

past regulars including Joséphine Baker and Serge Gainsbourg, or its role in the fashion of the overblown '80s, when Sonia Rykiel based a boutique in the hotel and redesigned the interior.

It's something that architect and designer Jean-Michel Wilmotte is acutely aware of; his firm, Wilmotte & Associés, undertook the Lutetia's restoration for hotel group The Set. "Our challenge was to rejuvenate a place while respecting its roots, its identity, its originality and its personality," he says.

"Our challenge was to rejuvenate a place while respecting its roots, its identity, its originality and its personality."

Echoes of history

Architecturally, too, the Lutetia is significant. The only grand palais on the Left Bank, it was built in 1910 by the Boucicaut family to accommodate out-of-town shoppers at their department store, Le Bon Marché. Designed by architects Louis-Charles Boileau and Henri Tausin, the hotel is often characterised as a witness to the stylistic transition from art nouveau to art deco.

Constructed in a period of experimentation following the relaxation of Hausmannian building regulations, the facade swells outwards from the pavement and is decorated with foliage and vines carved by sculptor Léon Binet. Nevertheless, these art nouveau features are far more restrained than the kickback curves of the style's heyday. The windows are neatly symmetrical, and Wilmotte points to the presence of a motif of overlapping circles, a signature art deco element that he has echoed in the design of the hotel's interior.

Respecting the hotel's original features has been at the core of the renovation. "We have cleaned up everything that was out of memory and highlighted everything that

conveyed some of it," Wilmotte explains, describing the discovery and restoration of a fresco hidden under layers of paint, and the highlighting of original friezes and bas-reliefs that had become lost to view.

The same cannot be said of the later interior furnishings, however: a palimpsest of history sold at the beginning of the restoration process, and famous rooms – such as the Arman suite – gone.

"Successive stages of refurbishment, and especially a stratification of initiatives by architects, interior designers and decorators, caused her to lose her personality," Wilmotte says.


The preservation of relics from the Lutetia has, seemingly, focused on the hotel's 1910 iteration, but a commitment to retaining a memory of the hotel's many-sided past does remain. "There is the full history of the place, built over more than a century. And then there is a second layer of history that overlaps the first one, from the '60s and '70s, when the hotel was the headquarters for artists, the place where they would spend the night – their second home. Artists and fashion designers alike. We are trying to resuscitate that," Wilmotte says.

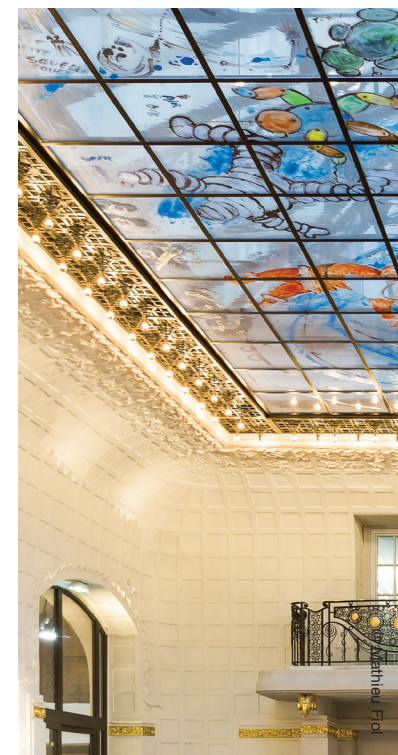
Wilmotte's intent has been to capture the Lutetia's true identity as

a grande dame with a place among Paris's most storied and luxurious hotels. The number of rooms has been reduced from 233 to 190, creating the space appropriate for a location that has hosted Charles de Gaulle and Peggy Guggenheim; the Brasserie's double-height ceiling has been restored; and Wilmotte has created a garden courtyard in the centre of the hotel because, "it was one of the only Paris grand hotels that didn't have one".

The great and the good

The alteration and renovation of the salons on the ground floor, where writers, artists and musicians congregated, is a central part of Wilmotte's endeavour to restore the glories of the Lutetia's past atmosphere. The open-air garden allows natural light to enter the spaces around it – the Orangerie, to be used as a breakfast or conference room; the Salon Saint-Germain, a glass-roofed

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1. The distinctive logo and art deco overlapping circles of Hôtel Lutetia.
 2. The Salon Saint-Germain, a breathtaking, glass-roofed lounge and restaurant in the Hôtel Lutetia.



Project focus > Hôtel Lutetia

lounge and restaurant in which art deco influence is particularly strong; and a comfortable library.

The rediscovered ceiling fresco is the highlight of Bar Joséphine, a tribute to dancer, Resistance hero and civil rights campaigner Joséphine Baker, which will offer canapés and cocktails. The Brasserie Lutetia's cuisine will be overseen by Gérard Passedat, whose restaurant in Marseille, Le Petit Nice, holds three Michelin stars.

Wilmotte hopes to bring the literary, bohemian inhabitants of the Left Bank back into the Lutetia's salons. "Typically, he or she would probably be a book publisher from the neighbourhood," he says, perhaps imagining a latter-day Sylvia Beach, the founder of bookshop and lending library Shakespeare and Company (originally located on Rue Dupuytren, a short walk from the Lutetia) and publisher of the controversial Ulysses.

The art nouveau and art deco origins of the hotel have been respected in an appreciation for fine materials and individual craft, a

hallmark of both artistic movements. Artists Jean Le Gac and Fabrice Hyber have been commissioned to produce original pieces for the hotel, "just like in the old days", Wilmotte says. All the new fixtures and fittings, from lighting to door handles, have been custom-designed; the same goes for the furniture. "We fought throughout the project to avoid ending up with standard furniture from a catalogue."

Wilmotte claims the inspiration for the furniture came from the early 20th century, "It feels like a dialogue is beginning between restored traces of the past, recreated new elements and these brand-new, 1910-style-inspired pieces of furniture." The unfussy, low-slung lines are also reminiscent of mid-century modern styles – a period in which the Lutetia was a centre for Parisian jazz.

This visual referencing of numerous points in the hotel's longer history is also found in the use of polished-wood panelling throughout the circulation spaces. "1910 was the time of the big transatlantic adventures. Our idea

was to draw in some of the atmosphere from those big old yachts," Wilmotte says. In addition to classic sailing yachts, polished panelling featured in the ocean going cruise liners of the '20s and '30s, which showcased French art deco design.

Light motif

The use of wooden panelling continues in the Lutetia's rooms, here tinted in shades of sand or navy blue and carved in ridges that create stripes, a design continued in the bathrooms with screen-printed glass. The other design motif is the overlapping circles identified in the building's facade and now repeated in wall sconces and in decorative elements in the bathrooms, furnished in white Calacatta marble; the two combine to produce a modern interpretation of the regular, pure lines of art deco.

The carefully realised design is further emphasised by the precise use of lighting, and particularly the interplay between natural and

artificial light – a feature of many Wilmotte & Associés projects. All the rooms have a window, and this combines with spotlights to highlight three-dimensional elements on walls, panelling and window casings. Recurring elements are played upon – some light fixtures project stripe shadows, others recall the overlapping circles found on the Lutetia's facade. "Lighting is a leading factor in the comfort of a place," Wilmotte says.

Natural light also illuminates the new swimming pool in the Akasha Holistic Wellbeing Centre, where a consistent decorative theme is played out in Calacatta marble with navy blue touches, and circular skylights and wall fittings.

Modern touches

The required standard of a palace hotel means that even as the Lutetia seeks to recall its past, it must also offer its guests the luxury of modernity. "Another critical side of the project was technology," Wilmotte states. Integrated technology in the rooms is managed from a dashboard, while soundproofing counters noise from the street and other rooms, and functions such as air conditioning have been improved.

All in all, Wilmotte hopes that the Lutetia's visitors, from the Left Bank and further afield, will find "an experience that no other Paris hotel will ever be able to offer". This hotel is more than a place to stay; it has a resonance that stretches far beyond Paris. In the Guggenheim in New York, you can find a 1911 study by Marcel Duchamp for his Portrait of Chess Players sketched on stationery marked 'Hôtel Lutetia'. This significance is understood by Wilmotte. "I believe that people from the neighbourhood will easily get accustomed to their favourite address again; tourists will discover something genuinely new; the dream of the Lutetia will start again." ●



The imperious facade of the Hôtel Lutetia.

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The beauty of history



Having closed for a €200-million renovation more than four years ago, Paris's legendary Hôtel de Crillon, under Rosewood's management, is once again open for business. **Aline d'Amman**, founder of Culture in Architecture and the project's artistic director, and Affine Design's **Richard Martinet** speak to Bradford Keen about the delicate act of preserving history while introducing the 21st-century elements expected in a luxury property.



The Suite Duc de Crillon, which once served as the private chapel of the Crillon family.

During its 259 years of existence, the Hôtel de Crillon has hosted royalty and dignitaries, world leaders, singers and writers. Marie Antoinette practised piano in one of the grand rooms and was beheaded outside. Madonna and Bill Clinton stayed at the hotel (not together) and, in a different era, Ernest Hemingway drank at the bar while soaking up inspiration for his novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

It has witnessed watershed moments in global politics. Benjamin Franklin signed the Franco-American treaty in 1778 in one of the antique salons that have earned the status of national historical monuments, while Winston Churchill and Woodrow Wilson put their names to the treaty that gave rise to the League of Nations in 1920.

Of course, the Hôtel de Crillon has not always been a hotel. It was originally built in 1758 under the orders of King Louis XV, according to French architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel's designs. Three decades later, the Duke of Crillon bought the building and temporarily lost it to the government of the French Revolution in 1791, just two years before the deaths of Antoinette and King Louis XVI. The property was eventually returned to the Crillon family, who lived there until 1906.

Finding a home for the hotel

The Société du Louvre opened the Hôtel de Crillon in 1909 after a significant rebuilding project under the watchful eye of architect Walter-André Destailleur. Starwood Capital took ownership in 2005 and sold it five years later to current owner Prince Mitab bin Abdullah bin Abdelaziz al-Saud for €250 million. Closing in 2013 for a four-year-long refurbishment project, the hotel opened for business in July 2017 under Rosewood's management.

"Working on such a beautiful project, you realise the responsibilities you have, especially as a foreigner," says Lebanese architect Aline d'Amman, who led the

creative direction at the hotel. However, the founder of Culture in Architecture feels qualified, having held France close to her heart since studying in the country, and falling in love with its style and attitude.

A challenge for d'Amman was merging the building's 18th-century structure and facade with its 19th and 20th-century layers to bring it into the 21st century. The designers and architects wanted to respect history and heritage, but also "create a scenario for the travellers of tomorrow by bringing comfort and the sensation of joy, discovery and emotional crescendo".

Longevity is important to d'Amman, and she knows it requires much more than simple decor to achieve. "It's about creating an emotion; and when it comes to a heritage building, the emotion is already there because it comes from the memory of the place."

Respecting history and considering the future

When refurbishing patrimonial projects, it is good practice to consider all the players involved. The original architect, while no longer around to see the adaptation of his or her work, should be remembered, the plans of subsequent designers and architects need to be implemented, and all the while various governmental and cultural bodies keep watch over the conservation of the building's history.

One such notable person gracing the halls of the Hôtel de Crillon during the renovation was project architect Richard Martinet, co-founder and director of Paris-based Affine Design. The core of his work involves restoring historical landmarks, which include the Four Seasons George V, the Hôtel de la Tremoille, the Peninsula Hotel Paris and the Shangri-La Paris. Projects such as these require balance between the contemporary and traditional, Martinet says, while finding new solutions that appeal to that dreaded hospitality buzz theme: timelessness. >>



The 18th-century frontage of the Hôtel de Crillon.

However, as Martinet notes, while the integrity of the 18th-century facade, and the architect and designers' work in 1909 need to be protected, the Hôtel de Crillon is a luxury property that should have a contemporary interior worthy of its status.

"The most important issue is the final profile of this hotel," says Martinet, which, in his eyes, can be divided into two main design concerns: scale and history. With only 124 keys – 81 rooms, 33 suites and ten signature suites – the Hôtel de Crillon is intimate, which is precisely the feeling that the architects and designers wanted to impress upon guests.

Shining a light on the problem

When Martinet and his team arrived on the scene, he found a confusing building. More than two centuries old, rebuilt over 100 years ago and renovated many times in between, they needed to clear the layout of the building, which in parts felt cramped and dim. Referring to design practices of those that came before, Martinet says, "We have to think how designers were using dark colours. Natural light was a sort of enemy and now it is completely the opposite." The contemporary team exploited the power and desirability of natural light in previously unlit spaces, and used it to connect the hotel's public areas.

When it comes to the second design concern, Martinet says he wanted to pay homage to bygone days "without being too bothered by history". Each design should promote

the idea that "everything has to be contemporary without compromise", which means Martinet does not try to redesign aspects of the building to appear historical.

"We have two options: restore the historical finishes or, if it cannot be restored, dismantle it and do something new with a straightforward contemporary design," he says. "We have a duty never to destroy decors if we can save them. I try my best not to break the links with history and, after that, take into consideration the renewable parts of the building to enhance it."

The Hôtel de Crillon lays claim to three reception rooms classified as national historical monuments: the Salon des Aigles, the Salon des Batailles and the Marie Antoinette music chamber. With 6m-high gilded ceilings, tinted halls, and deep tones of white and beige adding to their overall grandeur, d'Amman stresses it was essential to use clean lines "to create tension" between past and present.

"We want our buildings, whether hotels or residential, to feel comfortable and be liveable," she says, "so it means all of these parameters have to be taken into consideration, and coordination not only has to be subtle in order to preserve and conserve but also create a hive for today that lasts for tomorrow."

New features such as a spa and swimming pool required excavation of the hotel's basement. In bathing the area in natural light from a skylight in the second of two courtyards and cultivating an urban garden that

bends over swimmers in the pool, the designers have created modern and inviting spaces.

There are a lot of contemporary materials and ways of reinterpreting traditional construction methods when renovating a property. An example Martinet cites is how some of the walls have been covered in leather, which has been treated in the traditional way, but made to look lighter and more modern.

"Working on such a beautiful project, you realise the responsibilities you have."

– Aline d'Amman

In the historical salons that are to be used for events, d'Amman wanted to establish a permanent scenario able to transform them from a residential setting to a venue equipped to host runway shows or large dinners. Permanent furniture needed to be flexible and multifunctional. A large cabinet door, for instance, can be used as a stationary or dry bar, or when closed it is a block of mirrors, echoing the beautiful settings in the room. This required "micro architecture" within a large architectural space, d'Amman says, and relied on "clean lines and pure geometry with strong handcrafted materials". This can be seen in the wood carving on the door panels, turning them into timeless art, paying homage to 18th-century tapestry.

Being situated in the heart of Paris, which d'Amman calls "the city of life, passion and creativity", she wanted to celebrate the spirit of France and the vision of Versailles by gathering many talented people to work together, such as local designers Cyril Vergniol, Chahan Minassian and Tristan Auer.

However, it was d'Amman's deep desire to collaborate with a leading creative figure in Paris that led her to handwrite an invitation to Karl Lagerfeld, asking him if he'd be interested in designing a suite in the hotel.

The fashion designer, who shares d'Amman's love for calligraphy, called the number at the end of the note, but d'Amman had left her mobile phone out of reach. Returning to a voice message of Lagerfeld commending her elegant letter and suggesting she keep her phone in hand as he would be calling again in 30 minutes felt like "rollercoasters in my heart", d'Amman recounts. As the clock struck, the phone rang; he said yes.

Lagerfeld is responsible for designing the Grand Apartment suites on the fourth floor and, according to d'Amman, he is an icon befitting the stature of the Hôtel de Crillon.

Heritage projects can evoke strong public opinion that often splits between those fearing the loss of history and those willing the next iteration. However, Martinet says he has found opinion unanimously in favour of evolution. It was always going to be a job that required a deep appreciation for the past with finesse for the future. More importantly, at least to d'Amman, she let beauty be her guide.

"I really believe seeking beauty is a noble cause that's not about the decor or just doing your job, it's about elevating the soul and creating social behaviours to become a better person," she observes. By striving for beauty and evoking emotions as the higher vision to drive the whole process, d'Amman says it is easier to make sense of the technical and operational demands.

The Hôtel de Crillon has played host to the birth of political epochs, provided inspiration and liquor to great authors, and offered sanctuary to presidents and pop stars. The time has come for the next generations to make memories and mark moments within the iconic property, while beauty continues to lead them into the future. ●

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