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Audiovisual Experiences Bring Hospitality Designs to Life

Integrated audiovisual experiences are reinvigorating the hospitality industry. They're not add-ons or afterthoughts, but the result of carefully combined content, space and technology solutions, designed to engage guests.

"The influence of a digitally-mediated culture on an emerging generation of guests will result in vastly different expectations about their relationships with the brands they love," says David Kepron, Vice President of Global Design Strategies at Marriott International.

Hospitality brands that embrace audiovisual experiences are helping reimagine travel. They become destinations themselves, attracting guests to the excitement of open areas and the intimacy of personalized spaces. They transform the guest/brand relationship and connect guests' personal journeys to authentic, local experiences through dynamic, digital content.

Bring the Hotel to Life

When guests arrive at the Renaissance New York Midtown Hotel, they look up to see a four-story LED clock with imagery that changes every second —eclectic shapes and colors that bring the hotel to life. Inside, they interact with digital artwork projected along the walls of a corridor spanning a city block. The display doesn't change on its own — it responds to guests' movements.

A few steps later, they enter the hotel's Discovery Portal. A large display comes to life when people step on circles projected onto the floor, triggering a living search engine for local cuisine, live music, theater, shopping and other hyper-local activities. As guests point to their desired interests, gesture-recognition software triggers more in-depth information.

And they haven't even entered the lobby yet.

"Architecture, design, materials, finishes and furniture make up the physical environment," Kepron says. "Digital pieces and the audiovisual overlay must be integrated into the overall design thinking. It's an intricate dance between a brand's expression in the physical environment and how interactive digital media plays a role in enhancing experiences.... Providing digitally immersive audiovisual environments can engage and empower guests, making hotel stays more relevant and memorable."

'Welcome' to the Sofitel Paris Baltimore

The Sofitel Paris Baltimore is a 19th-century townhouse hotel not far from the Eiffel Tower. During a recent renovation, management decided to retain the historic charm of the building, but introduce a spectacular new audiovisual experience: a 100-square-foot, interactive video wall. The hotel's "Welcome Wall" is entertaining, informative, and intuitively interactive.

“The owners wanted to create something new and exciting that would make a statement every time a guest returns,” says Alexandre Simionescu, Managing Partner and Creative Director of Float4, designers of the Welcome Wall. “It is not something subtle. It’s meant to draw your attention and initiate interaction in a way that is not invasive.”

The wall displays playful artwork that attracts guests and responds to their movements. It features a virtual photo booth and digital concierge, through which people can explore Paris. The size of the wall wows guests; the interactivity keeps them involved.

Float4 has created large, interactive walls for a variety of clients, but hospitality is a perfect fit. The company recently completed another Welcome Wall for the Mere Hotel in Winnipeg.

“I’ve seen touchscreens in hotels that are basically kiosks,” Simionescu says. “To date, I haven’t seen anything with this size and level of refinement, in terms of the content and interactivity. It’s a creative way to blend information entertainment into a unique brand-building experience.”

Make Each Stay a Personalized Experience

Hyatt Hotels is also refining the in-room experience. “Our guests want to connect their devices,” says Mari Balestrazzi, Hyatt Hotels Vice President of Design. “We want all the televisions and sound systems in our rooms to facilitate people’s personalized spaces.”



Hyatt is even experimenting with tunable LED lighting, to add more personalization to the in-room experience. Adjusting the temperature – and thus the color and quality – of white light can help guests wake up, be productive, and wind down.

“It’s part of our focus on wellness,” Balestrazzi explains. “We’re learning more about how light affects jet lag and circadian rhythm. It can make guests feel different and better.”

In fact, Hyatt is exploring the use of smart-light technology in public spaces, too. “We found that customers really like the ability to change the color of light in large ballrooms and meeting spaces because they can customize the experience with colors that are on-brand,” Balestrazzi says. “Our business objective is to provide the most appealing experience to our guests, and smart lighting will help.”

High Expectations

In general, as consumers become more sophisticated about technology, they expect more from hotels, resorts, and restaurants. For example, a 2015 survey found that travelers were 63 percent more likely to choose a hotel with a tech-enabled lobby.

Savvy brands are responding to tech love by integrating audiovisual experiences, thereby improving guest satisfaction and making hotels more inviting to younger travelers, who see technology as an essential part of their lives.

“Hospitality is about the very human trait of empathy, and businesses need to remember that humans should remain front and center to create incredible experiences, helped – but in no way supplanted – by modern technology,” says Jason Clampet, Co-Founder of Skift, a travel intelligence organization. “The hospitality industry can be a huge beneficiary of where the world is culturally right now.”

AVIXA™, the Audiovisual and Integrated Experience Association, is helping hospitality designers create a more successful future through the integration of compelling audiovisual experiences. AVIXA represents the \$178 billion global commercial AV industry and produces InfoComm trade shows around the world. For more information, visit www.avixa.org/hospitalityAV.



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MARCH 2018
VOLUME 14 | ISSUE 2



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Los Angeles designer Gulla Jónsdóttir throws some curves into the sensory interiors she's shaped from Macau to her birthplace, Reykjavík, and her adopted home in LA. Here she details how she balances organic influences and art to forge destinations that are heating up design maps worldwide.

EAT.PLAY.LIVE | 34

In the midst of LA's development boom, there's a street-level design revolution calling for hospitality projects that embrace the less-angelic aspects of the city, from rough edges to tough competition. Just ask the trendsetting designers behind some of the city's latest under-the-radar hotspots: Poppy nightclub in West Hollywood, Dialogue restaurant in Santa Monica and Hotel: Kim Sing in Chinatown.

PLAYING THE ANGLES | 46

Talk about a positive slant. LAVA and Wenzel+Wenzel's vision for the Sports Youth Hostel in Bayreuth, Germany, caters to Gen Y (and Z) travelers with an inventive Y-shaped layout and high-energy color palette designed to ramp up guest interaction.

BDWEST PREVIEW: WOW FACTORY | 58

Boutique Design's West Coast trade fair and conference puts the hospitality community at the heart of the action in the ultimate global hotbed for hotel and restaurant development: LA. Max out your conceptual creativity and business performance with a playground of products and a roster of educational sessions at the industry's buzziest event, set for April 4-5 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

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ON THE COVER

Gulla Jónsdóttir, Gulla Jónsdóttir
Architecture + Design
Photo: Erez Sabag



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A SPEC-TACULAR TIME

LIKE VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING else in the business world, the trade fair is undergoing a radical rethink. So it is with Boutique Design West (BDwest), our Los Angeles-based event that's now in its sixth year.

One of the show's primary goals is to connect people from all sectors of the hospitality design world and offer them experiences, information, inspiration and networking opportunities that aren't available anywhere else. We also want to make sure attendees, speakers and exhibitors have fun in the process. To both those ends, a planning team led by Boutique Design Group, ST Media Group senior vice president and Hospitality Media Group (HMG) president Michelle Finn, NEWH executive director Shelia Lohmiller and Studio Elements principal Pamela Parsons has come up with a pretty good hook this time around: a series of Smart-Specs Interiors™ educational sessions.

These seminars will feature expert panelists in five product categories who will outline the technical requirements and detailed descriptions for writing clear, supplier-ready specs for hospitality design projects. Demand for such training is coming from both designers and manufacturers, notes Mary Scoviak, *BD's* executive editor and conference director for HMG. This is more than just a nice skill to have: Imprecise specs can lead to redos, cost overruns and delays. In addition, owners are getting much tougher about approving overruns if the designer makes a mistake or leaves an oversight in a spec. So, taking part in these sessions can be a real win-win for avoiding such problems.

Also new at this year's BDwest is a real show-stopper—a conversation with five legends of hospitality design who played seminal roles in creating the industry as we know it today. I'm not going to drop the names here—that's done in the BDwest Preview that starts on page 58. Trust me: when you check out this

all-star roster, you'll be wowed—and will absolutely want to be there for this session. But the preview also details several other reasons BDwest is a don't-miss event, including gleaned best practices from more than 100 industry leaders speaking in 30-plus conference sessions; getting inspo from the four immersive Designed Spaces on the trade fair floor; perusing the latest in FF&E offered by more than 300 exhibitors; and the chance to meet the on-the-rise designers chosen as the 2018 Boutique 18 and this year's Up-and-Coming Hotelier honorees.

While we want you at BDwest and its associated networking events, outside of those times, we think it's a good idea for you to explore how fertile a design destination LA has become. We give you three doses of that in this issue. First, in *The Buzz* (pages 14 and 16), we offer a look at the must-see destinations there that will make a splash in design circles, social media and elsewhere. And in the feature that starts on page 34, we offer insights into a trio of under-the-radar venues that are setting the pace when it comes to creating innovative, experiential hospitality spaces in the city. And finally, there's our Q+A with cover subject Gulla Jónsdóttir, a dynamic designer whose impact on LA continues to intensify—including her work on two current high-profile projects there: the Kimpton La Peer Hotel and The Mayfair Hotel.

Clearly, we love LA, and hope you do, too. See you at BDwest, April 4 and 5 at the Los Angeles Convention Center!



Matthew Hall
EDITOR

BOUTIQUE design

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor

Mary Scoviak
mary.scoviak@stmediagroup.com

Editor

Matthew Hall
matthew.hall@stmediagroup.com

Art Director

Kelly Farrar
kelly.farrar@stmediagroup.com

Senior Editor

Christina Green
christina.green@stmediagroup.com

Assistant Editor

Sarah Chaplin
sarah.chaplin@stmediagroup.com

Contributing Editor

Oriana Lerner
oriana.lerner@stmediagroup.com

Editorial Intern

Elizabeth Duccilli
liz.duccilli@stmediagroup.com

SALES

Associate Publisher/ Business Development Manager, Midwest/West

Melani Beattie
melani.beattie@stmediagroup.com
(312) 218-5691

Business Development Manager, Northeast

Michael Schneider
michael.schneider@stmediagroup.com
(212) 404-6936

Business Development Manager, Southeast

Scott Rickles
scott.rickles@stmediagroup.com
(770) 664-4567

CORPORATE

President

Tedd Stormstedt

Senior VP, Boutique Design Group, ST Media Group

President, Hospitality Media Group

Michelle Finn
michelle.finn@stmediagroup.com
(312) 961-2772

Audience Development Director

Christine Baloga

Book Division Director

Mark Kissling

Production Coordinator

Linda Volz

Reprint Information

(717) 632-3535, ext. 8065

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

P.O. Box 1060
Skokie, IL 60076
(847) 504-8166
fax: (847) 763-9030
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■ IN THIS ISSUE



D.B. KIM
DESIGN DIRECTOR | GENSLER

IN THE PAST DECADE, D.B. Kim has accomplished more than many hospitality designers do in a lifetime. During his nearly three years as vice president at Wanda Hotel Design Institute (Wanda HDI), the in-house studio of Chinese real-estate giant Dalian Wanda Group, Kim completed more than 30 hotel projects. That work helped earn the firm six Gold Key Awards for Excellence in Hospitality Design in 2016. “After my contract was over, I was happy to come back [home to New York] knowing that I’d be resting and enjoying my normal routine,” he says. “But I’m a fast thinker and doer, so I quickly started seeking out projects and opportunities.” After two years of recharging, designing products and weighing his options, Kim recently joined Gensler’s Shanghai office as design director. For more on why he took that role, flip to page 18.



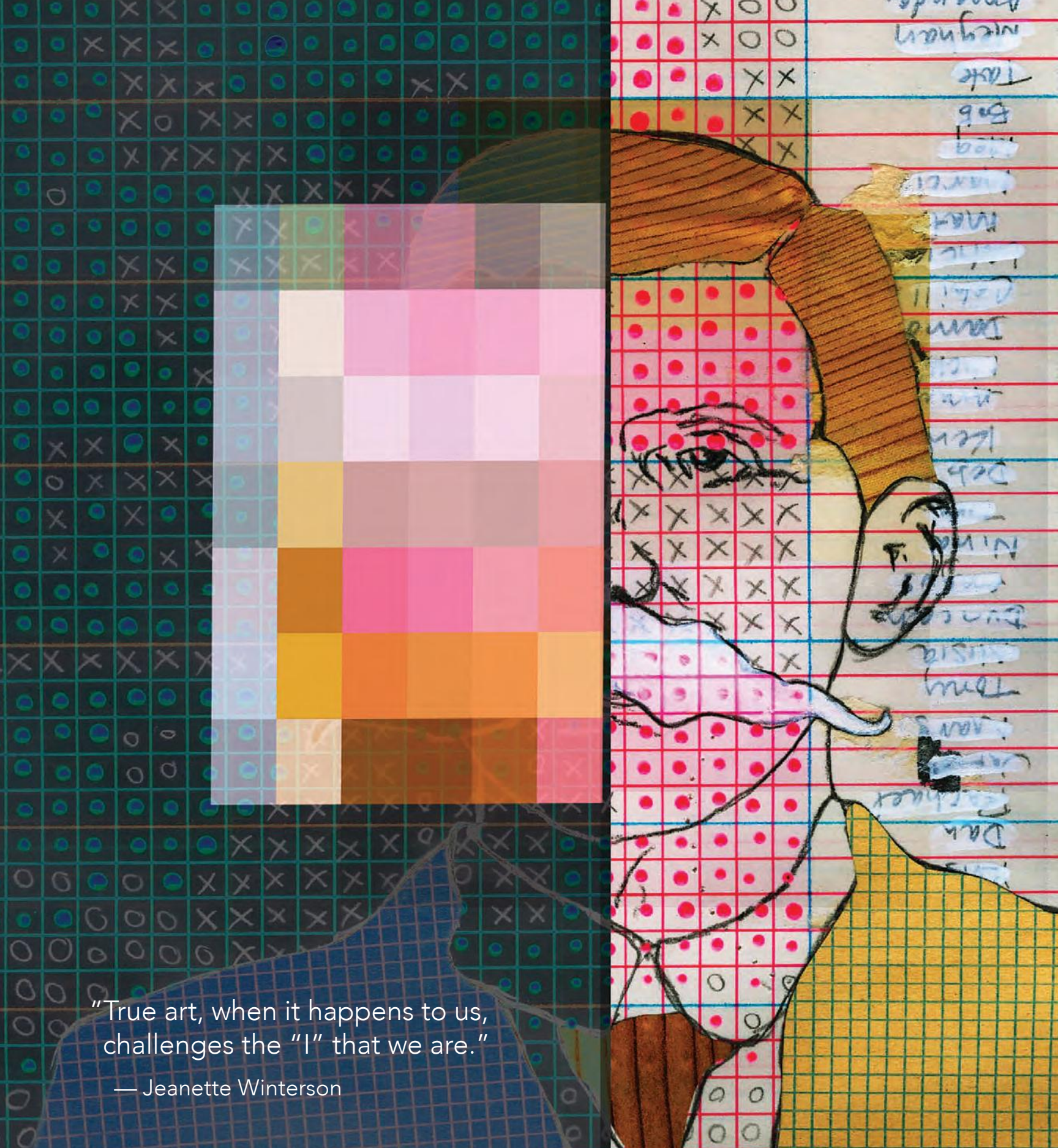
SALLY BREER
FOUNDING PRINCIPAL | ETC.ETERA

VARIETY IS THE SPICE of Breer’s career. The largely self-taught designer has worked with celebrities such as Zoëy Deschanel on residential projects; designed the quirky, tiny Hotel Covell in Los Angeles’ Los Feliz neighborhood (for which she was profiled in the March 2016 issue of *Boutique Design*); and created scenester hotspot Cafe Birdie, also in L.A. For more on how the designer and her recently launched firm made magic for the cameras—with design help from Katy Perry—in a theater-turned-hotel in L.A.’s Chinatown, turn to “EAT.PLAY.LIVE” on page 34.



TOBIAS WALLISSER
DIRECTOR | LAVA

WALLISSER’S FIRM has a decidedly forward-thinking *modus operandi*, combining a digital workflow, nature’s structural principles and the latest fabrication technologies to build what it describes as “more with less: more (architecture) with less (material/energy/time/cost).” Wallisser, who co-founded LAVA (Laboratory for Visionary Architecture) with Chris Bosse and Alexander Rieck in 2007 and runs its Berlin studio, used those principles to spearhead the firm’s design of a highly interactive Sports Youth Hostel in Germany that’s profiled on page 46. In addition to two decades’-plus experience in architecture at such firms as UN-Studio in Amsterdam, Asymptote Architecture in New York and KTP in Germany, Wallisser carries a noteworthy academic credential: He’s professor of innovative construction and spatial concepts at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart.



"True art, when it happens to us,
challenges the "I" that we are."

— Jeanette Winterson

"Future Mirror" by Hannah Stewart © Kalisher

check out

BOUTIQUEDESIGN.COM



THE STORY: PAINT IT BLACK

Amsterdam's concrete tunes into British influences from classic punk to glam rock to create a series of moody spaces within The Perception bar and cocktail lounge at W London-Leicester Square.



THE SOURCES

Bask in the glow of some brilliant new FF&E such as Stickbulb's geometric Diamond chandelier. Need something specific? Browse by category online to find the piece that best suits your project's style.



THE SCOOP

HVMG's Mary Beth Cutshall, who was profiled in *BD's* January + February issue, talks shop on relevant trends, hot markets and diversity challenges within the industry in this web-exclusive Q+A.

THE SCENE

Boutique Design's Sarah Chaplin traveled with Tile of Spain to Cevisama, the International Fair for Ceramic Tiles and Bathroom Furnishings, held Feb. 5-9 at the Feria Valencia center. A total of 506 exhibitors showcased their products to more than 83,000 industry professionals from 65 countries. Chaplin will explore Spanish tile trends she spotted during that event in an upcoming blog.



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STAR MAKER JOINS SH GROUP

BY MARY SCOVIAK

Arash Azarbarzin has earned a reputation for having two of the hottest hands and one of the coolest heads in the luxury lifestyle hotel sector. His knack for achieving performance targets without “interrupting” the guest experience helped him ace opportunities from property-level managerial posts at leading 5-star chains and independents to a key role on (then Starwood Hotels and Resorts chairman) Barry Sternlicht’s team working on the launch and development of the groundbreaking W Hotel brand. More recently, he proved his brand-building prowess as co-founder and president of sbe Entertainment’s Hotel Group, delivering 20-plus hotels in 12 years for sbe chairman Sam Nazarian. His latest job was helping the growth of Proper Hotels, the brainchild of Brad Korzen, Brian De Lowe and Alex Samek (named among Boutique Design’s 2018 Up-and-Coming Hoteliers).

Late last year, a phone call changed all that. It came from Sternlicht. In “about 14 minutes,” Azarbarzin recalls, they set up a time to meet in San Francisco. Azarbarzin says he and his mentor talked “for about two-and-a-half hours and shook hands.” The 52-year-old hotelier accepted the job as president of SH Group, overseeing operations for the nature-inspired 1 Hotels brand as well as the ultra-luxury Baccarat Hotel New York. Here’s his view from one of the most-watched corner offices in the hospitality business.

The new brand standards: Design is important. But what’s included in “design” has changed. It goes beyond just the look and feel of interiors; it’s about the sounds and scents, as well. And it’s not just visual. For 1 Hotels and its guests, sustainability is central to operations and to the choice of FF&E and layouts. Every decision is filtered through the

question of whether it will be better for the environment to do X or Y. That’s 1 Hotels’ differentiator; it’s what’s been missing in the marketplace. It’s also something that resonates worldwide, which will benefit us as we grow. Eco-friendliness is not a New York mission or a corporate mission; it’s universal.

What’s next for design: COMFORT. The acid test for a great interior will be whether that space makes the guest comfortable. Is the seat cushion the right width and depth to make a guest want to linger? Is the lighting program both flattering and functional? What’s the perfect height for a table? Design can’t dictate comfort; comfort dictates design. A really talented designer can create an environment that’s both welcoming and aesthetically pleasing. We’re not into minimalism. We’re about nature, and the natural world is beautiful. For Baccarat, we have endless possibilities. We can play with visual themes reflecting all of the different crystals the company has used. And, just for the record, no, Baccarat was no more expensive to build than most luxury hotels. In fact, it was less than some because of our negotiating power and operations experience.

Why restaurant design needs to be flexible (according to this Culinary Institute of America alum): People’s tastes change and hoteliers have to be open to re-evaluating their restaurants. Profits are made every day, not just quarterly. The signature dining venue at the 1 Hotel South Beach was open just two years before we decided to reimagine it as Habitat. We’re looking at refreshing Jams at New York’s 1 Hotel Central Park. For designers, that means prioritizing lighting that can survive different iterations; tables, chairs and booths that can be repurposed; and an effort to limit built-ins or any element that can’t be

changed without major reconstruction. Generally, you need a good mix of deuces and four tops. You don’t want your team to spend half of Valentine’s Day night trying to rearrange a lot of large tables.

What’s in SH’s pipeline: Near term, we have the 1 Hotel Haitang Bay in Sanya, China, and the conversion of West Hollywood’s The Jeremy to a 1 Hotel coming online, followed by the 1 Hotel in Sunnyvale, California, and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. All of these properties will open in 2019. We’re actively seeking deals in Austin, Texas, Chicago, Nashville, Portland, Oregon, Salt Lake City and San Francisco, as well as London and Paris for future 1 Hotels. We’re looking at 20 1 Hotels and 10 Baccarat properties in the next 10 years, but knowing Barry, it could be twice that.

Who gets the job: I’ve worked with giants such as Philippe Starck, Rockwell Group and Yabu Pushelberg and next-generation leaders such as DesignAgency, Meyer Davis and INC Architecture & Design. I’m open to collaborating with different firms because I don’t want to limit our ability to learn. For international work in certain cities, we probably will prioritize a local firm that knows the market and culture. But local doesn’t always mean better. Some firms have too many blinders about their home cities to get the big picture.

Why he travels 250,000 air miles a year: I like to be in the trenches—I’m not a micro-manager, but I like to be part of the team and spending time on property puts me in touch with our associates.

What it’s like working for a legend: Barry’s the visionary. I’m the executor and the numbers guy. To be successful, you have to be profitable. But you can’t let that impact the guest experience.

For more on what Azarbarzin sees ahead, visit boutiquedesign.com



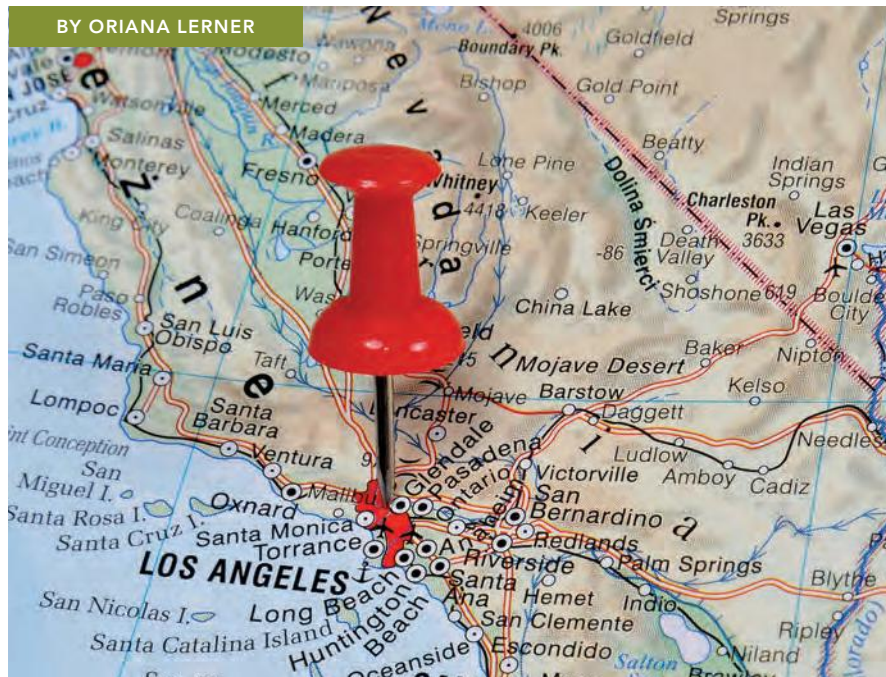
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MAP APP: UPCOMING LA HOTELS

Here's the rundown on the hottest confirmed hotel openings in the LA pipeline.



BY ORIANA LERNER

CULVER CITY

- Palihotel Culver City

KOREATOWN

- Hampton Inn & Suites Koreatown

DTLA

- The Bricks, a Trademark Collection Hotel
- citizenM
- The Hoxton Los Angeles
- Downtown L.A. Proper Hotel
- Mondrian and SLS Hotels at Angels Landing
- Park Hyatt Los Angeles at Oceanwide Plaza
- Soho Warehouse

SANTA MONICA

- Santa Monica Proper Hotel

WEST HOLLYWOOD

- 1 Hotel West Hollywood (currently The Jeremy)
- EDITION West Hollywood

WESTSIDE

- Palihotel Westwood

HOLLYWOOD

- citizenM Hollywood

HOT OFF THE LA PRESS

A NEW LEAF: HISTORIC HOTEL FIGUEROA REOPENS

One of LA's most-anticipated renovations, the historic 263-key former YWCA that's operated as a hotel since the 1950s, unveiled its new face after a years-long renovation. Locally based design firm Studio Collective's partners Adam Goldstein, Leslie Kale and Christian Schulz dug beneath the property's previous Moroccan style (a product of a prior redo) to reveal an understated Mediterranean feel closer to the building's 1920s origins. "Being such a young city, LA rarely holds any significant historic value, so having such a special pre-war building to work with was a no-brainer for us to celebrate its original Spanish Colonial architecture," says Schulz. "That being said, we had to keep the renovation fresh and updated in order to appeal to a larger audience (young and old) and bring it forward through contemporary artworks, artist collaborations and contemporary furnishings."

Studio Collective and the ownership team, a joint venture between GreenOak Real Estate and Urban Lifestyle Hotel Group (Bradley Hall



ADAM GOLDSTEIN, LESLIE KALE AND CHRISTIAN SCHULZ
STUDIO COLLECTIVE



HOTEL FIGUEROA

of Capital Hall Partners and brothers, Jack and Mark van Hartesvelt), wanted to keep the original structure as much as the ambience. "Our plan with ownership was to try to retain and highlight as much of the original Spanish architecture as possible; anything new that was added would have more of a contemporary aesthetic," says Goldstein. "In our opinion, what makes this strategy work for today's hotel guests is the overlapping of contemporary design elements juxtaposed against original architectural details."

That wasn't always doable. For example, old plaster walls had to be replaced with stud walls. But the team did use the character and some inherent obstacles of those spaces to shape their vision. Still, there were elements that turned necessity into creativity.

"We inherited an array of small bathroom types and knew we wanted to do a take on the classic fig leaf," says Kale. "As we were developing the custom pattern, we found it more powerful to go large-scale for drama. By doing this it makes the bathrooms appear much bigger." A perfectly cinematic trick for LA!

MATTHEW MENDENHALL (FIGUEROA); JESSICA SAMPLE (GOLDSTEIN, KALE AND SCHULZ)

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MY WAY.

*Timothy
Goodman*

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MAKEOVER MASTERS: CREATING DTLA'S NEW FACE

What does it really take to transform historic (or just plain old) buildings into some of Los Angeles' hottest new and upcoming hotels and restaurants? Design answers run the gamut.

The Kor Group, parent company of Proper Hospitality (whose co-founders Brian De Lowe, Brad Korzen and Alex Samek are among Boutique Design's Up-and-Coming Hoteliers for 2018 being honored at Boutique Design West (BDwest) April 4 and 5 in Los Angeles) wants to celebrate the glam in their upcoming Kelly Wearstler-designed, 148-key Proper Hotel on South Broadway (locally based Omgivning Architects will spearhead the structural renovation).

"We're particularly excited about the historic, double-height spaces which we are reimagining as one-of-a-kind suites and public areas," says De Lowe. "Most notable among these will be the fourth floor library with original ceiling frescos; the historic basketball court turned Hollywood screening room suite; and the indoor swimming pool suite."

Other projects, such as Freehand Los Angeles and the upcoming The Hoxton Los Angeles, take more of an old-meets-new approach. But Tarrah Beebe, senior associate, KFA Architecture—the LA-based

firm behind the above-mentioned Freehand, The Ace Hotel Los Angeles and upcoming projects Soho Warehouse and The Hotel at Ivy Station (in collaboration with Studio Collective), among many others—points out that reuse projects demand flexible conceiving.

"It's a luxury to have the existing building drawings, and we very rarely do," adds Beebe. "That means architects and designers need to be problem solvers on the fly. With new construction, we have control over the building structure and envelope, but in adaptive reuse projects the conditions we uncover create a multitude of challenges with our building systems and architectural design. For example, at the Freehand, we uncovered an historic storefront dating back to 1935. It was not necessarily built to last 100 years, but we reinforced the storefront and integrated it into The Exchange Restaurant entrance."

Designers also need to be aware of the architectural issues associated with creating back-of-house spaces in these older buildings. Beebe points out that all electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems need to be replaced.

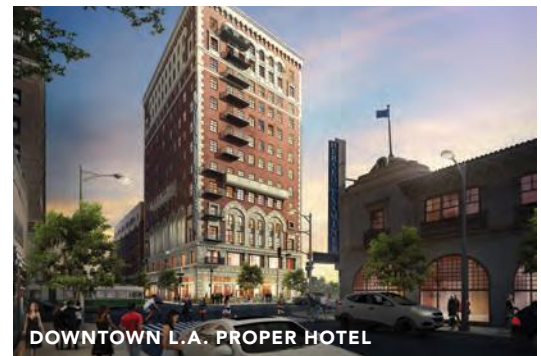
Are these projects tough? Yes—but so worth it.



BRIAN DE LOWE
PROPER HOSPITALITY



TARRAH BEEBE
KFA ARCHITECTURE



DOWNTOWN L.A. PROPER HOTEL

To learn more about these projects, plan to attend Boutique Design West (BDwest), April 4 and 5 at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

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NEXT CHAPTERS

INTERVIEWS BY CHRISTINA GREEN



D.B. KIM

FROM: vice president, Wanda Hotel Design Institute (Wanda HDI), Beijing

TO: design director, Gensler, Shanghai

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING IN A LARGE, LAYERED ORGANIZATION SUCH AS GENSLER?

It is big, but it still has the characteristics of a family unit. It works as small groups, like an atelier within the larger entity. So it's not like

other conventional large firms, where there's this idea of climbing up the ladder or a pyramid form of organization. It's what we call within Gensler "a constellation of stars," meaning all the talents are united to create a project, dream or goal.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT WANDA HDI.

Money couldn't buy that experience. I was under contract. I did a tremendous amount of work and met amazing young designers. Being able to work like that, I don't think anybody has done it or that I can even replicate it.

AFTER THAT CONTRACT WAS OVER IN 2016, WHAT DID YOU DO?

Well, it was a very aggressive time, mentally and physically. So I needed a break. Two-and-a-half-years was like being there for 10 years or more. So it was really nice to return [to New York] to a fresher air.

Before I joined Gensler, I designed a wood paneling system that just launched, as well as a new furniture collection that will debut early next year.

YOU'VE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME WORKING IN CHINA, WHERE HOTELIERS ARE KNOWN FOR FAST TRACKING DEVELOPMENT TIMELINES. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

Yes, they move fast. It's painful in a way. But no pain, no gain. During my two-and-a-half years in Beijing, my team [at Wanda HDI] opened 31 hotels. We were able to do that because we had a definitive decision process and check-offs. Of course, there were a lot of people moving about. I was leading more than 200 staff members. But I think the major difference is that there were fewer chefs in the kitchen. We had a streamlined process of going through to the next phase. The management was clear about who was to be accountable and who was to be consulted.

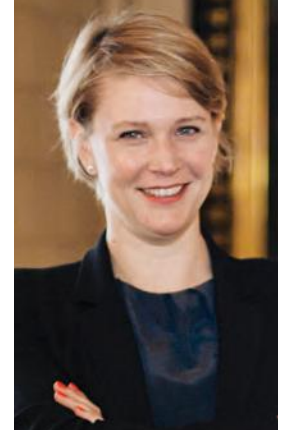
HOW CAN DESIGNERS STAY RELEVANT WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S EVOLVING SO RAPIDLY?

A designer should have a singular focus on a concept and be flexible on the details. Technology's becoming a design element like finishes and materials. We're always aware of new fabrics, wallpapers, paint colors and lighting. Why not new technology? It's the same with sustainable design. It needs to be part of our education, information gathering and process.

MONIKA MOSER

FROM: managing director, Paris, Wilson Associates

TO: regional managing director, Europe, Wilson Associates



AS PART OF THE FIRM'S NEW ALLIANCE WITH ARCLPLUS AND ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS, YOU TOOK THE REINS AT WILSON ASSOCIATES' NEW LONDON STUDIO (HOUSED WITHIN THE OFFICES OF ZAHA HADID) IN ADDITION TO LEADING THE PARIS TEAM. WHAT'S THE CULTURE AND DESIGN LIKE AT THE TWO STUDIOS?

The Wilson Associates London office is still a new structure and we're excited to combine our expertise in a common location. Besides some cultural variations and different working laws, both studios—London and Paris—operate in a similar way.

If we compare our business with fashion, the Paris atelier corresponds to *haute couture*. We target upscale and high-end design with Tristan Auer as principal. The office in London will concentrate on *prêt-à-porter* with newly appointed design director Juan Carlos Rodriguez Artigas.

YOU SPENT MORE THAN 20 YEARS WORKING IN HOTEL OPERATIONS. HOW DOES THAT EXPERIENCE INFORM YOUR APPROACH TO DESIGN? WHAT DO INTERIOR DESIGNERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FUNCTIONALITY?

I participated in three hotel openings in three different management positions within the rooms division. During the rush of the last months of the opening phase and the last steps of the construction work, we experienced what we thought were design errors that didn't match our standards/practices from an operational point of view.

Having worked with designers for nearly three years, I've come to realize that the hotel management and operations staff were brought into the renovation process too late. If, as hoteliers, we'd been part of the full design process, we'd have understood that designers are creative problem solvers, and that we should try to find ways to change our way of working to facilitate their ideas.

That being said, I encourage designers to experience as many hotels as possible to understand the challenges of the service industry. Some designers have actually worked in the hospitality sector. It really helps them grasp the reality of the business.

WHEN IT COMES TO HOSPITALITY, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD DESIGN AND GREAT DESIGN?

Great design is not made for designers but for the client of a hotel or a restaurant.

When you have this in mind, design becomes subjective. The client doesn't directly remember great design. Great design doesn't distract you from the purpose and the story of the place. Great design will enhance this positive experience.

For more from Kim and Moser, visit BoutiqueDesign.com.



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WHO'S MAKING WHAT, AND WHERE?

Highlights from the American Society of Interior Designers' (ASID's) "2018 Interior Design Outlook and State of the Industry" report.

BY CHRISTINA GREEN

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OR

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designers' jobs

*other segments listed included architectural, engineering and related services; furniture stores; residential building construction; and furniture/home furnishing wholesalers

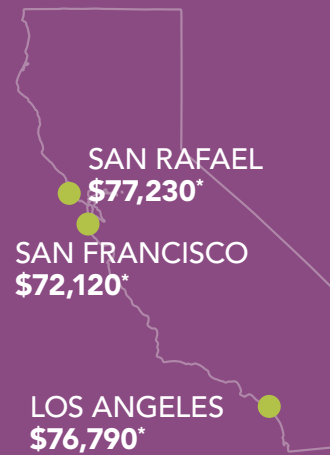


\$56,220
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PER HOUR

mean wage for interior designers in 2016 (most recently released data)

THREE OF THE TOP 10 HIGHEST PAYING METRO AREAS ARE IN CALIFORNIA



*annual mean wage



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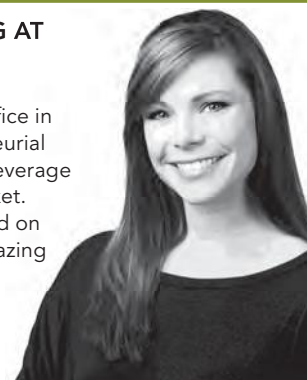


NEW GIGS

WHAT SHE LIKES ABOUT WORKING AT IA INTERIOR ARCHITECTS

“It’s an honor to help establish IA’s office in Austin. IA was founded with an entrepreneurial spirit—each location has the freedom to leverage firm resources to best serve the local market. To me this is really empowering, and based on this vision we’ve been able to build an amazing team of local designers. I can’t think of anywhere else I’d rather be.”

—Stephanie Long, managing director, Austin, IA Interior Architects



WHY HE JOINED ROCKWELL GROUP

“What struck me most about Rockwell is the level of talent in the office and how we work as design studios. The focus is on creating the best design solution and experience for each project. Personally, I’m excited about the level of diversity in the office. From design voices to project types, it’s an incredibly dynamic environment.”

—Bradley Barnett, senior architect, Rockwell Group, New York



KOREY HOWELL PHOTOGRAPHY (LONG); BRADLEY BARNETT (BARNETT)



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SPANISH ACCENTS

Craving a little change of scenery and some fresh inspiration? Here's a new lexicon of ideas from *Boutique Design's* recent trip to Valencia and Barcelona with Tile of Spain.

BY SARAH CHAPLIN

1. DIMENSION SHIFT

The architectural ceramic sculptures featured this year at the Cevisama trade fair in Valencia prove that tile design doesn't have to be exclusively two-dimensional. Elena Oleaza and Louis Sicard, winners of this year's Trans-Hitos competition, stacked ceramic pieces end-on-end to create Celosía (or Lattice) (shown). Trade fair exhibitor Natucer followed suit with Dynamic, a collection of 3D wall tiles that features shapes such as blocks, cubes and arches that play with light and cast shadows.

2. BOLD STROKES

Liven up your exteriors. When it comes to color, Spanish architecture often celebrates maximalism, showcasing intricate patterns and a variety of bright colors. The exterior of Casa Vicens (shown), a 19th century home in Barcelona designed by famed Modernist architect Antoni Gaudí, is lined with a checkerboard of hand-painted floral tiles featuring vibrant shades of green and ochre. These hues are further accented by areas of deep red exposed brick.

3. OCEAN MOTION

Developing a cohesive flow is crucial. Restaurante Submarino in Valencia takes this point quite literally. Part of Oceanogràfic, the largest aquarium in Europe, this Mediterranean restaurant is surrounded by a floor-to-ceiling tank of swirling schools of fish. A massive jellyfish-inspired lighting installation (shown) anchors the venue's center.

4. ORGANIC INFLUENCES

Embrace new silhouettes. Santiago Calatrava's and Félix Candela's designs for the buildings of the City of Arts and Sciences (shown) are influenced by skeletons, featuring angular white bone-like structures. Part of the Jardines del Turia winding riverbed park that stretches nearly the length of Valencia, this complex is one of the most visually recognizable (and Instagrammable) parts of the city.

5. FORM AND FUNCTION

Function-driven design never goes out of style. Created by Barcelona-based architect Juli Capella, Hotel Omm's distinctive limestone façade (shown) peels back to form angled windows and guest room balconies that provide both privacy and plenty of direct sunlight. Originally opened in 2003, this 91-key luxury hotel has become a staple of Barcelona's Passeig de Gràcia. Elements such as Roca Moo, the hotel's ever-evolving restaurant by Grupo Tragaluz's Rosa Maria Esteva, keeps this space feeling fresh today. ●

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Q+A

STYLE SETTER

Icelandic native Gulla Jónsdóttir forges force-of-nature interiors that are rocketing her sensual, immersive hotels, restaurants and nightclubs to the top of global hot lists.

INTERVIEW BY MATTHEW HALL



GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR
GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN

EREZ SABAG (JÓNSDÓTTIR); LAURE JOLIET (KIMPTON LA PEER HOTEL)





KIMPTON LA PEER HOTEL, WEST HOLLYWOOD



CHOCOLATE LOUNGE, SAN DIEGO

WITH A PENCHANT FOR CREATING highly inventive, nature-inspired designs that incorporate sensual curves and voluptuous forms, Jónsdóttir has become a go-to designer for hospitality spaces in some of the world's buzziest markets. Since founding Gulla Jónsdóttir Architecture + Design in 2009, she's worked on numerous high-profile projects around the globe, including Le Grand Restaurant/Jean François Piège in Paris, the Macau Roosevelt Hotel in China, the Hotel Thingholt in her birthplace of Reykjavík and the Lilium lounge at the W hotel in Union Square, New York, to name a few. In and around her adopted hometown of Los Angeles, her work includes the Red O Restaurant on Melrose Avenue, the Hyde Lounge in Hollywood and two of the most hotly anticipated hotel openings in recent memory: the new Kimpton La Peer Hotel in West Hollywood and the renovation of The Mayfair Hotel in DTLA.

Drawing on a career that includes stints at three world-renowned design organizations before striking out on her own, Jónsdóttir has clearly become a

name to know in her own right—not only as a designer but as a trendsetter, creating custom furniture, rugs and jewelry. Here she details her background and dishes on what ignites her creative process.

YOU GREW UP IN ICELAND; HOW DID YOUR TIME THERE IMPACT YOUR VIEW OF DESIGN?

It was a humble upbringing, surrounded by very kind, down to earth people. But serving as a backdrop to that was a dramatic landscape with juxtaposed colors of black lava, white glaciers and red volcanoes. That spectacular nature has always impacted my design, either consciously or unconsciously.

WHEN AND WHY DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO BE A DESIGNER?

In Florence, Italy, when I was 12 years old. I used to travel there with my mother every summer and I remember being mesmerized by the sheer beauty of this city and its arts. When I came back home, I started looking at the local buildings and found myself wanting to fix them.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO THE U.S., AND SPECIFICALLY TO LA?

When I graduated junior college with a degree in mathematics and biology, I wanted to study architecture, but they didn't teach that subject in Iceland at the time. So, I researched schools in Italy and elsewhere. The Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-ARC) in LA wound up being my first choice. Even though I'd never been to America, I decided to apply and give it a chance. I got in, moved to the city and started my studies here.

BEFORE STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS, YOU WORKED FOR A TRIO OF HIGH-PROFILE FIRMS—RICHARD MEIER & PARTNERS ARCHITECTS, WALT DISNEY IMAGINEERING AND DODD MITCHELL DESIGN. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT, AND HOW DID THOSE EXPERIENCES SHAPE YOUR DESIGN PHILOSOPHY?

Upon graduation, the government gave foreign students like me one-year work visas to stay in the U.S. I decided to take advantage of this opportunity and applied for two jobs: with Richard Meier and Frank Gehry.



THE MAYFAIR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES

COURTESY OF GULLA JÓNSDÓTTIR ARCHITECTURE + DESIGN (CHOCOLATE LOUNGE); JESUS BAÑUELOS (THE MAYFAIR HOTEL)

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CAMAL, LOS CABOS, MEXICO

I was offered jobs by both, but the Richard Meier position came first and I was very grateful to land employment right out of architecture school at his office working on the Getty Center museum, which was then the largest project of its type in the country.

I learned many things from Richard and his team, and I still appreciate his work. There's an element of elegant geometry in all of his designs, and since I majored in mathematics before studying architecture, this really appealed to me. I stayed at his office for four years and then a colleague of mine introduced me to Walt Disney Imagineering, which was my next career move and something so completely different and fun. I was a set designer working on a large project in Tokyo called Tokyo Disney Seas. I traveled back and forth to that city for a few years, and fell in love with Japan and its culture. I also worked at Euro Disney in France.

I met Dodd Mitchell through a mutual friend. That was a journey I will always appreciate. When Dodd hired me, he had a few people in his office and was about to get his first hotel project. Two months after I started, we began creating the hottest restaurants and bars in LA, as well as very successful hotel projects, including the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood and Thompson Beverly Hills. Dodd and I are still friends, and it was a magical time working with him, growing the team and creating memorable projects.

WHY LEAVE THAT BEHIND AND START YOUR OWN FIRM?

I was about to turn 40 years old. I'd been the design director and vice president for Dodd Mitchell Design for nine years. I thought it was time. It was a "now or never" moment in my mind. In November 2009, I started my own journey.

HOW BIG WAS THE FIRM AT FIRST, AND WHAT IS ITS SIZE AND SCOPE TODAY?

I started on my living room floor and I hired three people with whom I worked closely after that. I then rented a lovely studio at 633 N. La Peer Drive (which is now the home of one of my latest commissions, the Kimpton La Peer Hotel) and the studio grew to 10-12 people over the years. We've intentionally remained a small studio so that we can all be heavily involved in all our projects. Our ongoing obsession in creating one-of-a-kind spaces, using unique



CASA ROOSEVELT, MACAU

ART GRAY (COMAL); KELLY PULEIO (CASA ROOSEVELT)





KIMPTON LA PEER HOTEL, WEST HOLLYWOOD

materials and styles that are site specific, works better for me in a small and tightly knit team.

YOU'VE RECENTLY BEEN WORKING ON TWO HIGH-PROFILE PROPERTIES WITHIN THE LA HOTEL SCENE: KIMPTON LA PEER HOTEL AND THE RENOVATION OF THE MAYFAIR HOTEL. SHARE SOME BEHIND-THE-SCENES STORIES ABOUT THEM.

For The Mayfair Hotel, I wanted to infuse a sleek contemporary design with nods to the historical context of the property, which boasts austere Roaring Twenties architecture. I was immediately inspired by the hotel's lobby—whose renovation is set to be complete later this spring—with its double-height ceiling, skylights and stately columns. I wanted to bring this space back to life.

Looking over some of the original drawings, I reimagined the building's unique details in contemporary fixtures that echo the past. For example, the cage chandeliers in the lobby reflect a pattern originally found on the ceiling before a fire destroyed them. So the shadows of the past will dance on the ceiling.

The building housing the Kimpton La Peer Hotel, which as I mentioned was the home of my first studio, has become the first hotel in the Design District of West Hollywood. I imagined a space where art, music, fashion, poetry, film and architecture intertwined into a cacophony of spatial harmony. I think the result is both chic and comforting, thanks to its earth tones and abundant natural materials.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE RECENT F&B COMMISSIONS?

My favorite new restaurant projects include COMAL, the signature restaurant at Chileno Bay Resort & Residences in Los Cabos, Mexico, an Auberge Resorts

Collection property. It's an al fresco restaurant on three levels with fabulous views of the Sea of Cortez. This is mostly an open-air space, with chairs hanging from the 15-ft. ceiling, white stone walls, natural wood floors, a river stone mosaic, a brushed metal sculpture fireplace and a floating tequila display. The result is a very welcoming, Mexican-style atmosphere.

I'm also very fond of Casa Roosevelt at the Macau Roosevelt Hotel in China, where we incorporated the Portuguese style of historic Macau through such touches as the eclectic flooring materials and metal screens. I describe this restaurant as an all-day playground, with its multicurved concrete ceiling that resembles an ocean wave, laser cut metal screens and curved bronze columns.

WHAT'S ON YOUR FIRM'S BOARDS?

Theatre Box, a multiplex theater and restaurant project in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter that will include the Chocolate Lounge; a new restaurant at the Westfield Century City mall; a private residence in Beverly Hills; a moveable museum with a New York artist; and last but not least, the opening of my new atelier back in the building that now houses the Kimpton La Peer Hotel.

YOUR FIRM EMPHASIZES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DESIGN. HOW DOES THAT MANIFEST ITSELF IN YOUR PROJECTS?

I've always been interested in creating bespoke spaces that are beautiful and inspiring to all six senses. I believe in a unified, overall design that is site specific. Everything needs to work seamlessly and beautifully, and have a soulful energy to it. I want the spaces to feel as good as they look. ●

For more from Jónsdóttir, go to BoutiqueDesign.com



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1 More is just so more in Poppy. Layering florals, woods, art and plants unites the cool and the just-plain-weird in one heady experience.

EAT. PLAY. LIVE.

Three under-the-radar projects are in the vanguard of the street-level design revolution that's disrupting Los Angeles' hospitality sector.

BY ORIANA LERNER

THE LA DEVELOPMENT boom has already yielded a bumper crop of marquee openings. Even casual travelers can tick off the hot hotel openings: Freehand Los Angeles, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, NoMad Los Angeles and the Waldorf Astoria Beverly Hills.

But, that's just the view from the Hollywood sign. The city's indie hits take conceptual risks and embrace the rough side of LA, whether that's in its geography or in its brutally competitive after-hours scene where superstar owners and operators have seen their A-list clubs close in a matter of months.

Meet the innovators behind some of the city's latest iconoclastic hotspots: Poppy, a surrealist fantasy nightclub hybrid that's housed in the former STK Restaurant in West Hollywood; Dialogue, a world-class, 21-course tasting menu restaurant hidden behind the scratched doors of a Santa Monica food court; and Hotel: Kim Sing, a three-bedroom hotel in a historic theater in the city's still-gentrifying Chinatown. Read on to find out how designers are radically rethinking layouts, materiality and other elements to make those risks pay off.

ELIZABETH DANIELS PHOTOGRAPHY



2 Unexpected cladding materials and space dividers up the ante on escapism. Here, fabric flowers and curtains swath guests in ambiance.



JOHN SOFIO
BUILT INC.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

CLIENT

The h.wood Group

DESIGN FIRM/ARCHITECT/
GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Built Inc: John Sofio, founder

AUDIO/VISUAL
FYXX Entertainment

FABRICS
Luxury Fabrics

LIGHTING
Elegant Lighting
JM Empire Design
Trans Globe

WALLCOVERINGS
Mahogany

POPPY

WEST HOLLYWOOD

In the City of Angels' crowded dining and nightclub scene, it's hard to seduce guests into suspending disbelief. From emo-alien darkness to street art edginess to hard-to-find-by-design speakeasies, this group of influencers has seen, done and drank it all. Selling them on a surreal fantasy, as The h.wood Group ceo John Terzian wanted to do with Poppy (the nightclub that took over the former STK restaurant digs in WeHo) means design that relies on enchantment throughout the evening, not just one-and-done shock and awe.

John Sofio, founder, Built Inc., pulls every possible surface into that elaborate narrative. This is maximalism on a baroque scale—and it needs to shout just that loudly to overpower the siren call of the smartphone, contends Sofio. He wants guests to unplug, except for the occasional souvenir pic, natch. "In the library, for example, the room surrounds and overwhelms the millennial's sense of reality compared to their cyber world environment. They are encouraged to disconnect and lose themselves in the surreal fantasy of the dreamscape."

Drawing guests through, not just into, the space helps create a cinematic spell to counter the allure of the app world. Sofio uses layering of texture and pattern as his tools of choice for maintaining that immersive environment. It starts at the top—STK's foot-traffic circulation patterns were less than ideal, so Sofio added new curves to the top of the interior space, offering guests visual wayfinding, along with a private room that's topped off with an upholstered ceiling.

Moving down to the walls, Sofio contends that designers need to be more creative than just installing a great art collection—Poppy has 600 pieces—or dramatic wallpaper, even though the club has that, too. It's texture that really makes an impression.

Case in point: the riot of blooms on the patio wall, inspired by Gucci designer Alessandro Michele's florals. It's not a living wall or preserved flowers.



3 Birds of a feather don't flock together here. Instead, controversial taxidermy specimens remain in cages, flanking the space.

Instead, it's an abundance of fabric cut and arranged to form a vertical poppy field saturated with color. "The challenge with the flowers was that they required a huge volume of material that had to hang on the wall in order to make it look as full and dynamic as possible, while still maintaining a feeling of being organic," says Sofio, adding that it took a large number of team members double-checking during installation to find the perfect balance for it.

Projects like this show off a new maturity in the Los Angeles scene—it's ready for more complex ideas that invite a cerebral, as well as visual, appreciation. Concepting is evolving, but so is execution. Think of it as a delightful cocktail that affords a smooth blend of decadent textures and arresting forms.

ELIZABETH DANIELS PHOTOGRAPHY
(POPPY, SOFIO)

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4 Simple white walls emphasize the table settings. A lime-based plaster paint adds texture.

DIALOGUE

SANTA MONICA

LA is a foodie's, not a diner's, paradise. Great eats are available at food trucks, in malls and in out-of-the-way breakfast and lunch spots, as well as fine dining destinations. All those concepts, though, center firmly on the plate rather than the decor. Santa Monica's Dialogue, helmed by Alinea Restaurant Group alum executive chef Dave Beran (now also a co-owner and partner in Dialogue), is the poster child for the evolution of that approach. Meet the new dinner theater, Angeleno-style. Beran is the star of the show; his cuisine takes on a co-starring role and the design provides the backdrop.

The plot twist? The restaurant serves only a 21-course tasting menu. That leaves the design doing the heavy lifting of not only making guests feel comfortable over a couple of hours, but also keeping their attention riveted on Beran, his brigade and the seasonal cuisine.

Staging that experience in an 800-sq.-ft. space in a converted Santa Monica food court whose only "windows" look into the space's center made that an even more demanding task. (While Beran was confident the space would work, Berkin Restaurants Inc. co-owner Michael Simkin was concerned it would feel claustrophobic.) To help overcome that concern, Steve Rugo, principal, Rugo/Raff Architects, says everything had to be thought of as furniture and be part of the design.

A scattering of tables was out of the question for the 18-seat restaurant. To



MICHAEL SIMKIN
BERKIN RESTAURANTS INC.



STEVE RUGO
RUGO/RAFF ARCHITECTS



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maximize space, Rugo designed a seating mix that takes advantage of every possible square foot. Most of the seating is at the bar, giving guests the chance to watch Beran and his team work and get the inside info on the food (hence the restaurant's name). Tucking a single banquette against the opposite wall clears floor space for two four-top tables and one deuce. Each table has chairs on one side, which also ensures room for ADA-compliant seating, and either have the bar or banquette on the opposite side.

The layout supplies the contrasts: formal/fun and intimate/communal define the experience, Simkin says. But the unpretentious contemporary atmosphere is only half the design equation. For a lengthy evening, physical comfort is just as important as ambience. Seating has to be aah-inducing for guests. "Normally, we'd have done custom seating, but on a \$300,000 budget and 60-day buildout, that wasn't possible. So we found a Brazilian company that made a chair in the three heights we needed," says Rugo. After testing them out, the team added a support to the cushion and settled on a leather-look upholstery that stands up to wear and tear from jeans

studs and bleeding fabrics without succumbing to snagging guests' more delicate textiles.

The finishing touches are equally practical—with a few exceptions. Open storage above the banquette is filled with jars of flavor essences, misos and vinegars used in the various courses. The range hood doubles as a gleaming accent piece. Two small artworks, however, were specially created by an artist Beran admires.

"I used to always complain that LA didn't have the notable restaurants of a New York or San Francisco or Chicago, but then I realized it wasn't an issue of the talent not being there, but more an issue of the idea—which I think was false—that Los Angeles wouldn't accept a certain type of experiential restaurant/dining concept such as a tasting menu restaurant," says Simkin.

While Dialogue might only be at this address for a few years (and another restaurant from Rugo and Simkin is in the works in LA's Arts District), projects like this show that the city is ready for next-level cuisine. Do eschew the white linen, though—it's still California, not exactly the land of suits and ties.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

CLIENT

Berkin Restaurants Inc.

DESIGN FIRM

Rugo/Raff Architects: Steve Rugo, principal; Lindsay Graham, project architect and designer

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Deacon Construction

ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS

Chateau Domingue

CARPETS

Shaw Hospitality

FABRICS

Holly Hunt
Valley Forge Fabrics

FLOORING

Dal-Tile

FURNITURE

Sossego Modern Brazilian Design

LIGHTING

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PAINT

Benjamin Moore

SURFACING

Setology



5 Warm wood tables focus guest attention—their simplicity highlights the anything-but-simple food.

usona





6

HOTEL: KIM SING

CHINATOWN

A 1920s vaudeville theater is a dark horse candidate for LA's coolest micro-hotel. That didn't stop Ash Pathi, founder, Indra & Co., and design firm ETC.-etera founding principal Sally Breer—with superstar Katy Perry's help—from transforming an apartment formerly occupied by Willard Ford (that's Harrison's son) into a three-bedroom hideaway.

Even without the celebrity connections, projects like this—especially in film-centric LA—have to be designed for a new target audience: video. “I think our biggest challenge was designing for the camera. Most of the folks seeing Kim Sing Theatre for Katy's project (the singer livestreamed three days of her life from there to promote her album “Witness” in 2017) were going to be doing so through their computer/phone/TV—which is not typically how spaces we design are experienced. Lighting, color and placement of furniture all had to be considered with the cameras in mind,” says Breer. Figuring out how to make the design work from 41 different perspectives—the number of cameras on the Perry project—requires a different mindset for designers than creating a single selfie spot.



7

6 Calm down, now. The meditation lounge originally constructed for Katy Perry's visit remains as a quiet spot in the hotel.

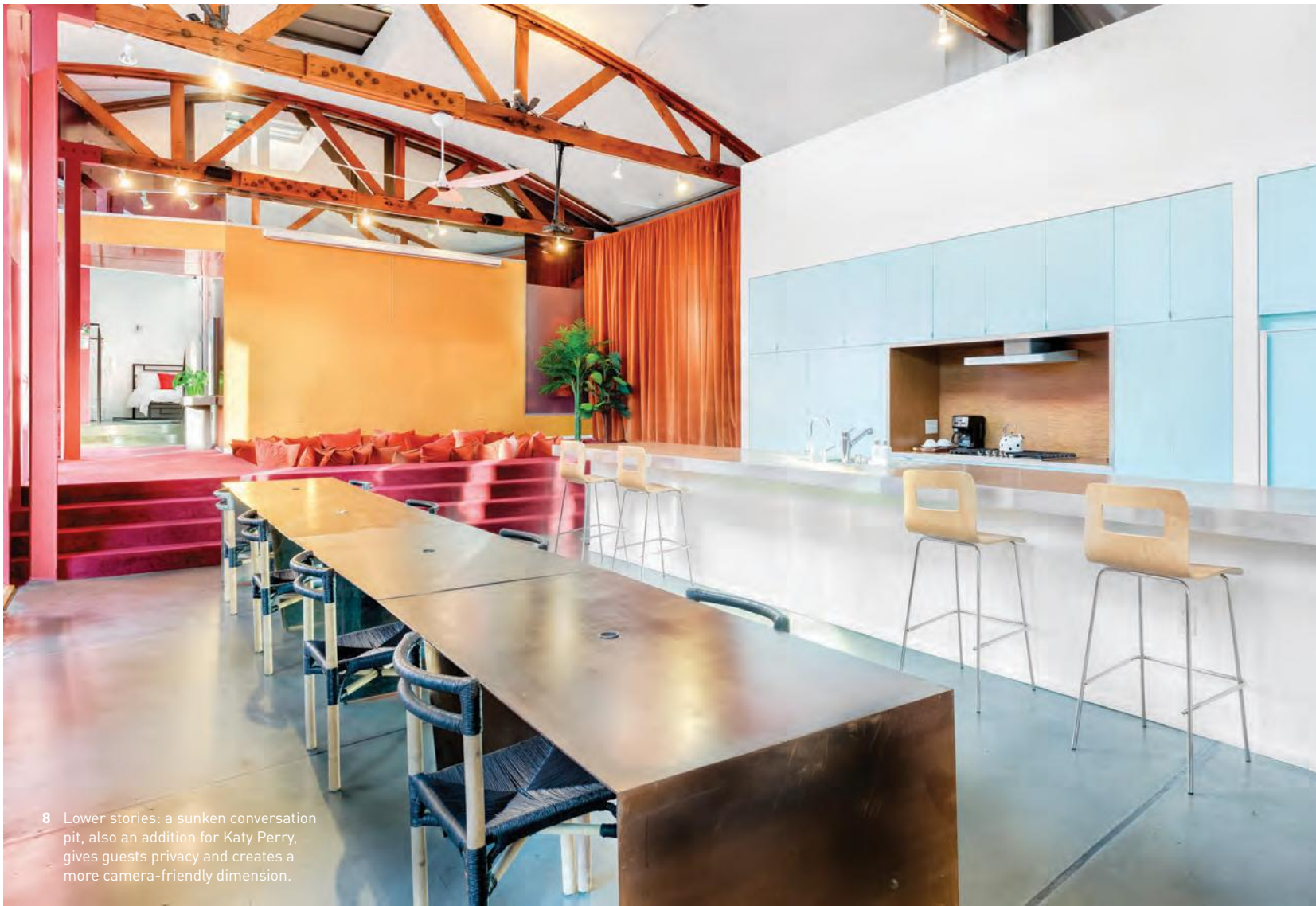
7 Seeing red? Bright lipstick shades get a balance from equally vivid blue hues.

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8 Lower stories: a sunken conversation pit, also an addition for Katy Perry, gives guests privacy and creates a more camera-friendly dimension.

Ford left Breer and her team with an airy, open-plan venue. While that might sound ideal for a modern layout, she knew she'd have to take a firm director's hand to guide guests to the hotel's Instagram-and YouTube-ready destinations. It helps that she's not one to buy into the residential craze sweeping hospitality.

"The whole point is that it is NOT your home. It should take you somewhere else, somewhere grander, somewhere bolder, because you don't have to live with it every day," says Breer. So, she and her team went for a few very focused showstoppers.

A sunken conversation pit draws guests in for longer chats or more relaxed evenings. An all-white meditation lounge, partially covered by a geodesic dome-like installation, magnetizes anyone in search of a calmer zone. Omitting an abundance of seating options from the living area helps focus traffic at the bar and table. In addition, it encourages people to socialize; they can't go all cocoon-y and hunker down with their smartphones in a corner.

Keeping that careful curation is key in high-traffic projects like this. Intriguing wallpaper patterns, bright colors (including the blue accents around the kitchen, a leftover from the space's previous incarnation) and tapestries keep the focus on the walls, allowing Breer to choose more durable materials for furniture, carpets and linens. After all, interior design doesn't often get airbrushed in film.

For more on these projects, join us at *Boutique Design West (BDwest)*, April 4 and 5 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. Beran, Pathi, Simkin, Sofio and Rugo will share their insights on panel discussions. ●

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

CLIENT
Indra & Co.

DESIGN FIRM
ETC.etera: Sally Breer and Jake Rodehuth-Harrison, founding principals

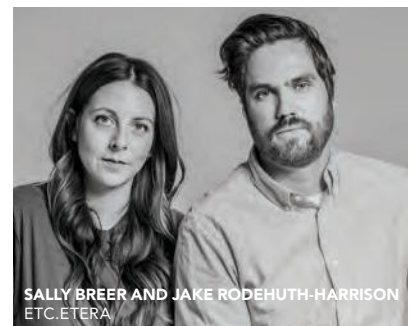
PURCHASING COMPANY
Fly on the Wall Productions

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Level 42 Construction

DESIGN CONSULTANTS
Alex Israel (art); Kim Swift creative director



ASH PATHI
INDRA & CO.



SALLY BREER AND JAKE RODEHUTH-HARRISON
ETC.ETERA

COURTESY OF INDRA & CO. (PATHI); JUWAN LI (HOTEL); KIM SING; HAMISH ROBERTSON (BREER AND RODEHUTH-HARRISON)



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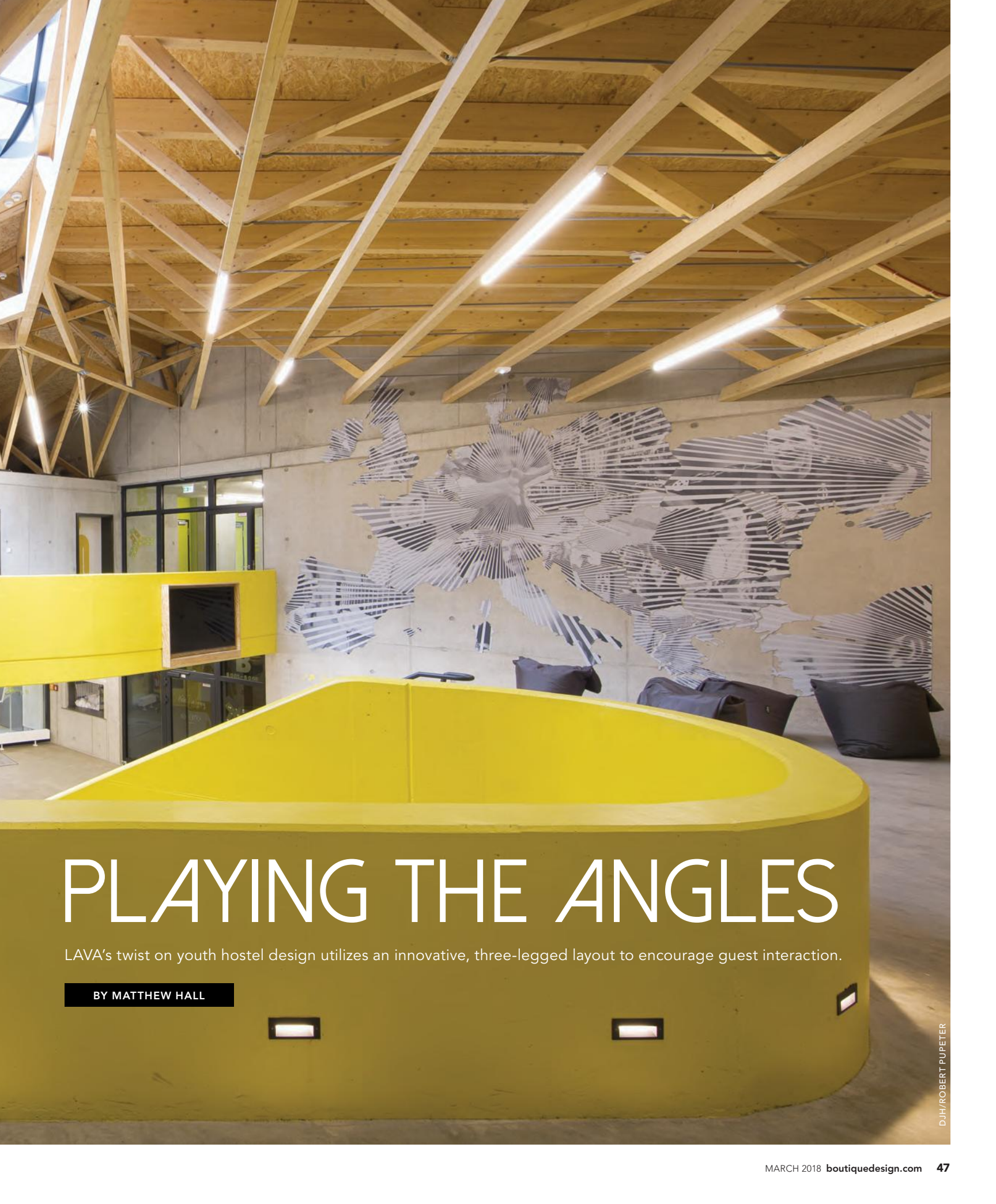
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DEFINING PUBLIC SPACES



1 A vivid sports graphic on the wall, a painted yellow riser and an intricate truss system overhead visually energize the hostel's atrium.



PLAYING THE ANGLES

LAVA's twist on youth hostel design utilizes an innovative, three-legged layout to encourage guest interaction.

BY MATTHEW HALL

DJH/ROBERT PUPETER



APPEAL TO GEN Y travelers with a Y-shaped building? Why, of course!

While upscale hostel concepts such as Generator and Freehand continue to proliferate, properties incorporating an evolved take on the sector's original just-the-basics approach have also emerged. Case in point: The Y-shaped Sports Youth Hostel in Bayreuth, Germany, which the Berlin office of LAVA (Laboratory for Visionary Architecture) designed in conjunction with Wenzel+Wenzel of Karlsruhe, Germany, for the Bavarian Chapter of the German Youth Hostel Assn.

As its name makes clear, the Bayreuth property has a specific target audience: physically active, sports-minded travelers. To appeal to such guests, LAVA took advantage of a multiacre site near the University of Bayreuth to create a two-story, tri-legged building that encourages athletics-oriented interaction.

"We chose the Y configuration because its geometry creates a building shape that interweaves the interior and exterior spaces," says Tobias Wallisser, director of the Berlin studio of LAVA, which also has offices in Stuttgart, Germany, and Sydney, Australia. "It offers views to three directions, creates natural openings at the end of its wings to the surrounding sport fields, terraces and gardens, and creates a central communal space."

That layout is the result of several years' research by LAVA. "We were commissioned by the association to hold a series of consumer workshops on the future of youth hostels," Wallisser notes. "That research showed that the success of design-led hotels is their combination of clearly defined concepts, quality materials and furniture with spaces that stimulate activity, group interaction and a sense of community. The originality of the environment, together with the uniqueness of the experience, creates an authentic concept. And so we applied this to our work on the hostel."

Wallisser describes the foundation of the ground-hugging hostel's design as intelligent organization: "There's a focus on solidity and functionality, rather than on the latest technologies. It's easy to find things, get in contact with other guests, spend time together, and connect indoor and outdoor activities."



TOBIAS WALLISSER
LAVA

2 A lattice-work wall and circular LED light fixtures add visual interest to the hostel's dining area.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

CLIENT

Bavarian Chapter of the German Youth Hostel Assn.

DESIGN FIRMS

LAVA (Laboratory for Visionary Architecture): Tobias Wallisser, Alexander Rieck, Chris Bosse, directors; Julian Fahrenkamp, Angelika Hermann, Jan Kozerski, Mikolay Scibisz, Nicola Schunter, Paula Gonzalez, Güley Alagöz, Elise Elsacker, Myung Lee, Yuan Ma, design team; Sebastian Schott, Stephan Albrecht, Stefanie Pesel, competition team

Wenzel+Wenzel: Matias Wenzel, Sven Becker, Thilo von Wintzingerode, Erik Muth, design team

DESIGN CONSULTANTS

IBT.PAN (building services); Bau.art (fire protection); b.o.b (kitchen planning); Engelsmann Peters, Stuttgart (structural planning); Space Agency (wayfinding)

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- 3** Two of the hostel's prominent features—a plentiful use of concrete and a high degree of accessibility—are reflected in the façade wall for its public restrooms.
- 4** A ball pit provides a multicolored accent (and fun place to hang out) in one of the hostel's common areas.
- 5** The hostel's guest rooms incorporate modular walls, built-in storage and partially rotatable beds, allowing for a variety of configurations.

The heart of the 41,000-sq.-ft. structure is a bi-level atrium at the intersection of its three 100-ft.-long wings. The centerpiece of that space is a concrete riser that's painted bright yellow. "The riser serves as a visual magnet that connects all the hostel's public and private spaces," says Wallisser.

The atrium's prominent role in and connection to the rest of the building is reinforced by an exposed overhead wooden truss system. "The upper beams of the truss follow the curves of the roof, while the lower ones follow the straight spacing of the rooms," Wallisser explains. "That results in a dynamic, 3D installation that reinforces the energetic vibe of the rest of the building."

The hostel ticks the necessary sustainable boxes demanded by its target audience of mostly younger travelers, thanks to elements such as abundant natural lighting (including a large skylight in the atrium). Unpainted wood and concrete dominate the materials palette. "They create an industrial robustness within the space—wood is wood, concrete is concrete—that's counterbalanced with bright infills of yellow and green paint on the ceilings and floors and black-and-white neutral areas with strong wall graphics," says Wallisser.

Another essential element of the 180-bed hostel's design DNA is accessibility. "This is a barrier-free building, suitable for guests of all abilities, including sports teams with disabilities, such as wheelchair basketball teams," he explains. "All the rooms are accessible by lift or ramps, and two-thirds of the rooms on the ground floor have bathrooms with wheelchair access."

The rooms also feature flexible, modular designs that include what LAVA describes as a "smart" wall system. "The partitions between the individual rooms are modular. They house custom built-in furniture—niches for the beds, as well as toilets and showers," says Wallisser. "This allows for individual room configurations through the use of partially rotatable beds. Different types of modules can be combined to create various room typologies—two, four and six bedrooms—creating efficient and space-saving room types."

Taking a longer view for the property, Wallisser notes that the hostel's flexible interior structure means it could be suitable for one of several different uses in the future. "The modular wall partitions make the room wings easily dividable, which means a reuse/change in use is very possible. One day, for example, the hostel could become a school or a retirement home."

But for the foreseeable future, Wallisser is confident the Sports Youth Hostel can compete with its more luxe competitors, as well as its traditional rivals. "The days of the daggy dorm room are gone, replaced by the designer age of the 21st century in which young travelers and backpackers want a special identity, community and unique experience—not just a clean bed and shower—and all those requirements are fulfilled by the Sports Youth Hostel," he says. ●





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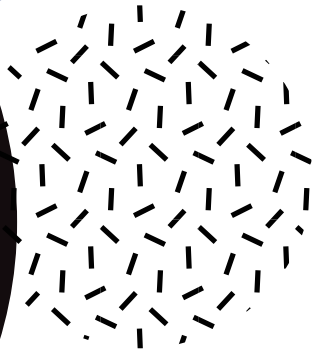
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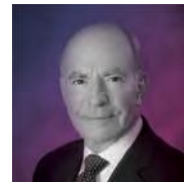
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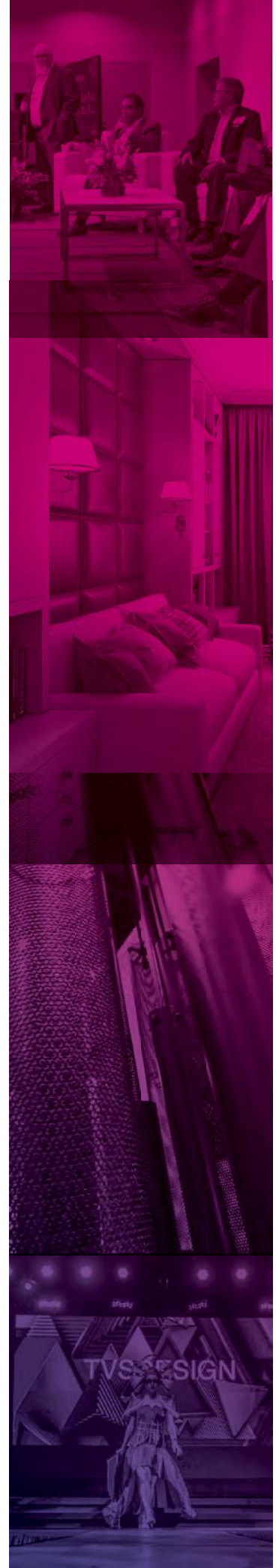
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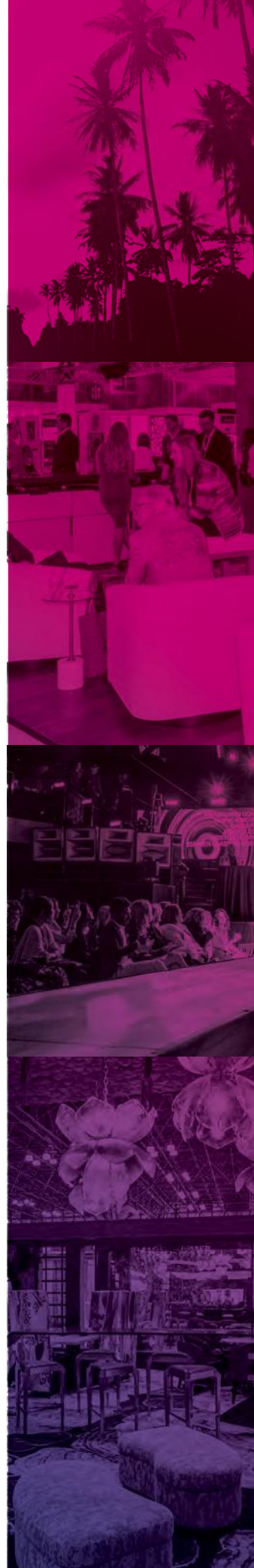
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Now in its sixth year, Boutique Design's (BD's) annual West Coast event connects designers, architects, owners, operators, developers, purchasing agents and suppliers in a two-day intensive on what's new, who's news and what the next gotta-have-'em products are. Like its sister fair, Boutique Design New York (BDNY), BDwest provides the tools the design community needs to maximize conceptual creativity as well as business performance—whether that means learning best practices from over 100 industry leaders speaking in more than 30 conference sessions, getting inspired by the four immersive Designed Spaces on the trade fair floor, or discovering the cutting-edge FF&E offered by more than 300 exhibitors.

BDwest's focus on innovation continues this year with the launch of the groundbreaking Smart-Specs Interiors™ educational sessions. Created by BD and NEWH in answer to demand from designers and manufacturers, these master classes will feature expert panelists in each of five product categories—carpet, guest room casegoods, upholstered seating, guest room lighting and fabrics. The speakers will outline the technical requirements and detailed descriptions for writing clear, supplier-ready specs for hospitality design projects.

Presenters for the CEU-accredited Smart-Specs Interiors™ sessions include designers, purchasing agents and product manufacturers from such companies as Applied Textiles, Benjamin West, Bray Whaler, Carver & Associates, CF Kent, Chapman Hospitality Lighting, Creative Resource Associates, Fabricut Contract and S. Harris, Flick-Mars, ForrestPerkins, JLF Collections, Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), Lexmark Carpet, The Light Annex, MTS Seating, Neil Locke & Associates, Ramsey & Associates, Royal Thai, Studio Partnership and Vaughan Benz.



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Patterns: **Anthem / Sync**

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Among the moderators will be: Ted Brumleve, senior director, strategic development, Wyndham Worldwide; Becka Chester, president, Hospitality Design Specialist; Steve Rice, president and founder, Rice Consulting; and Jeanne Varney, lecturer, Cornell University.

Designers can also take their tech smarts to the next level by attending the lunch and learn being presented by AVIXA, the Audio-visual and Integrated Experience Assn. Continuing a dialogue that began at BDNY 2017, hospitality industry thought leaders will offer insights on how digital and audiovisual technologies are being leveraged by leading designers, architects, and brands to create immersive, stimulating, and brand-defining spaces. Interactive video walls, projection mapping, positional audio and more are the design materials of tomorrow. Panelists will explain how hospitality designers can integrate these sophisticated systems into hotel projects in ways that generate greater customer engagement, increase brand loyalty and better business performance. Moderated by David Labuskes, ceo of AVIXA, the roundtable includes leaders in hospitality design from Caesars Entertainment, Gensler, Hard Rock Intl., IHG, Stonehill Taylor and Two Roads Hotels.

Another highlight of BDwest 2018 will be the fair's first Hospitality Legends panel. This special session will put attendees up close with the icons who played starring roles in shaping this industry: Michael Bedner, cofounder, Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA); Wing T. Chao, global advisor, Wing T. Chao Global Advisors and former executive vice president for master planning, architecture & design at Walt Disney Imagineering; Kay Lang, president and ceo, Kay Lang + Associates; Barbara Lazaroff, president, Imaginings Interior Design Inc. and co-founder/partner, Wolfgang Puck Brand-Worldwide, Fine Dining, Catering, WP Licensed Products; and Horst Schulze, chairman emeritus, Capella Hotel Group.

Thought-provoking conversations will continue with powerful voices ranging from the rising stars named to this year's Boutique 18 class to the influential brand builders honored as 2018's Up-and-Coming Hoteliers and the thought-leading Women Leaders who are charting change from C-suites across all sectors of the industry.

Fairgoers will also get the drill down on how to improve their projects and processes. Visionary owners and operators representing hard and soft brands and disruptive alternative hospitality options will map out their next-generation requirements for design. Listen in as these executives zero in on what it takes to create a standout hotel, restaurant or treehouse. They'll also talk about macro and micro issues, as well some personal prognostications, at the Owners' Grill. Get the inside view of what it takes to develop, build and craft interiors for hotels coming online in Los Angeles.

For further inspiration, check out panels on the best new openings in LA; the latest trends in luxury; ideas for fired-up dining; ways to rev up even the most complex renovation; and how to craft immersive environments. Or, see blue-sky thinking in 3D in the Designed Spaces. It's all here—from cap ex to biophilia.

BDwest is all about interactivity. Get your 15 minutes of fame on the BD Black Carpet Live! or put your game face on during the Industry Feud sessions. Build a wish-list product or sketch out your dream design. For more details, visit boutiquedesignwest.com ●



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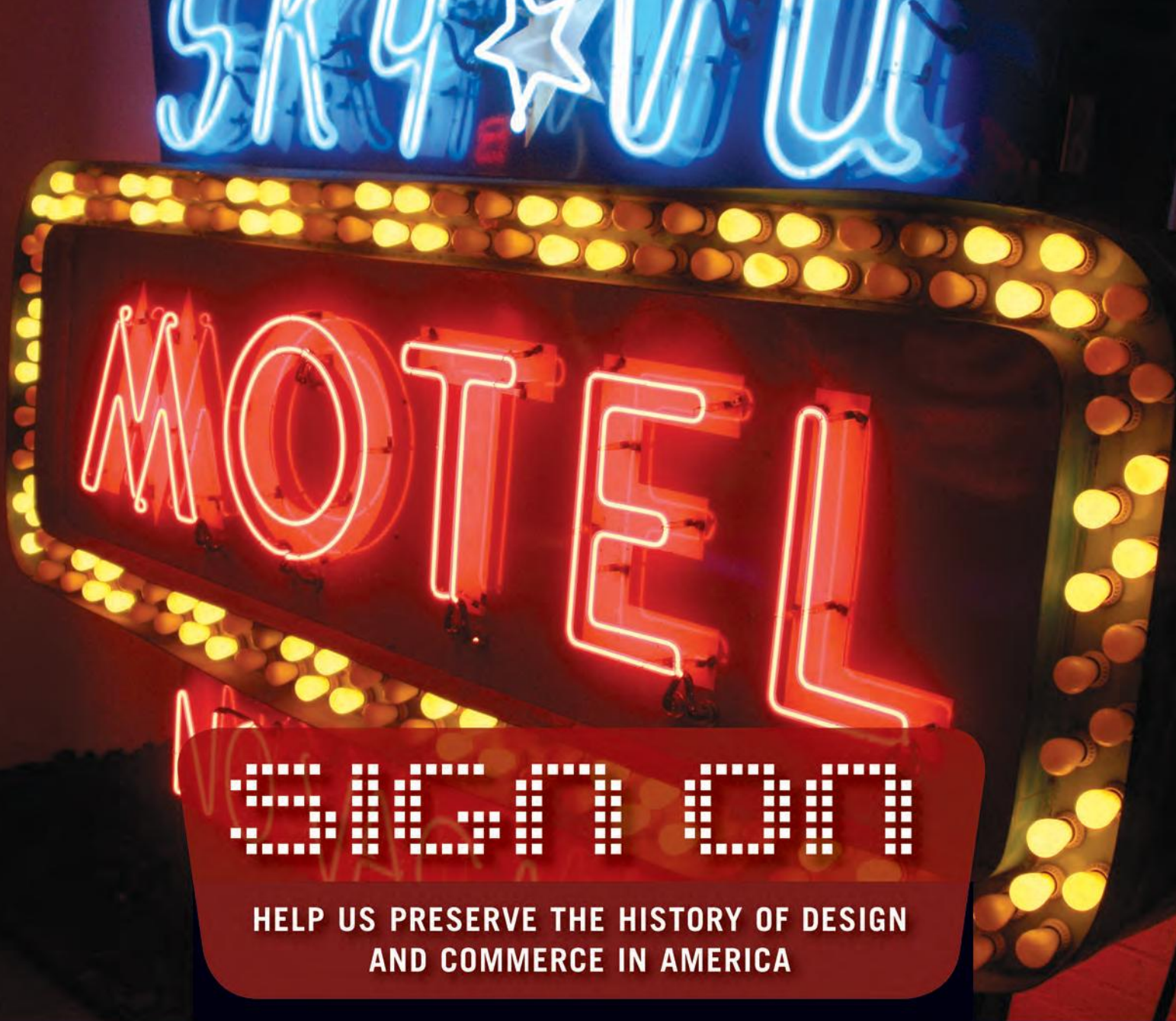


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Shape up. Bold colors, striking textures and relaxed-yet-tailored forms inject energy into this all-star roster of high-performance textiles.

BY SARAH CHAPLIN

CARNEGIE

carnegiefabrics.com

PFRM draws inspiration from the strength and durability of modern athletic apparel. The seven-pattern upholstery collection was created in collaboration with Genster principal Lee Pasteris, who is based in Los Angeles. The designs are offered in colorways ranging from bright hues to monochromes.

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100% of the proceeds benefit NEWH scholarship and education initiatives.

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senior director of
design & development
Two Roads Hospitality

MICHAEL FUERSTMAN

co-founder & creative director
Pendry Hotels

DANIEL HYDE

vice president of design,
development & construction
Pacifica Hotel Company

SWATI PATEL

developer
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1 REID WITLIN LTD.

rwltd.com

The Muse collection features 19 patterns, such as Deadhead in the rose quartz colorway (shown). The textile line consists of both solids and mid-scale designs printed on a range of materials, including texturals and vinyls.

2 FABRIC & STEEL

fabricandsteel.com

Company founder Michele Dopp designed the Forms collection in her studio in the Dumbo neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. Screen printed by hand in Rhode Island on Belgian linen, the textile line consists of four patterns: Surface (shown), Grid, Beam and Thread.

3 HBF TEXTILES

hbftextiles.com

Created by Los Angeles-based textile designer Barbara Barry, Color Block consists of five patterns: Dry Run, Crosstweed, Wrap Around, Paintbox and Lava Rock (shown). The line is composed of 52% recycled polyester with an oil- and water-repellant finish.

4 IN2GREEN

in2green.com

Inspired by traditional dip dyes, the Digital Ombre collection is made from recycled materials and features 13 colorways. The throws come in a standard size of 48-by-60 in. and are also available in custom measurements.

5 ESKAYEL

eskayel.com

Jamaa Series One is a geometric interpretation of a Marrakesh landscape with a palette drawn from that Moroccan city and the desert. Available fabric grounds include oyster and heavyweight linen, organic denim and a 50/50 linen-cotton blend.

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Travel Weekly Asia

As of 1 February 2018

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www.AOCAP.org



6 ROBERT ALLEN CONTRACT

robertalendesign.com

Made from 100% solution-dyed acrylic fabrics, Memento is suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. The upholstery collection is bleach cleanable and UV, mildew and bacteria resistant.

7 LISA FONTANAROSA COLLECTION

lisafontanarosa.com

London-based textile designer Bonita Ahuja's handwoven and hand-dyed curtain fabrics feature intricate layered designs. The Havana collection is made of silk and cashmere with inlaid vintage lace.

8 MAHARAM

maharam.com

Flutter's sketch-like motifs suggest the twisting and turning of cascading feathers. Created by Dutch industrial designer Hella Jongerius, this fabric line is available in four colorways.

9 ARCHITEX

architex-ljh.com

The Here, There and Everywhere collection is composed of 100% polyester and is suitable for upholstery, drapery, panels or top of bed. Available patterns include Biarritz, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Champagne and Toronto.



APRIL 4-5, 2018

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10 DURALEE CONTRACT

durablee.com

The Crypton X collection is inspired by gemstones and crystals and includes 16 designs ranging from multicolor geometrics to soft watercolor ombrés. All fabrics are made with a breathable moisture barrier that is stain, odor and bacteria resistant.

11 CONCERTEX

concertex.com

Made with 100% polyurethane layered over a polyester foam back, Divergent showcases a shifting arrow motif. Measuring 52 in. wide, the quilted faux leather exceeds 100,000 double rubs.

12 O.W. LEE

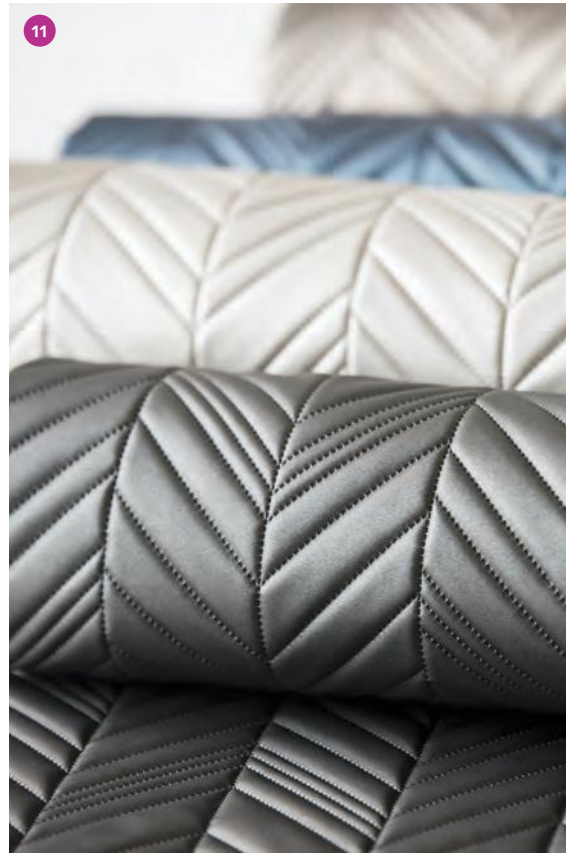
owlee.com

Pendleton includes five designs made with Sunbrella solution-dyed acrylic. The outdoor fabric line is available for use with a selection of the company's wrought iron and aluminum furniture.

13 CREATIVE TOUCH

creativetouchrugs.com

Polyester velvet fabric is digitally printed with three distinct designs by Dallas-based artist Carol Benson-Cobb to create her namesake collection. The line is available in a standard 53-in. width.





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14 VALLEY FORGE FABRICS

valleyforge.com

The reflective Lucaya collection is made from 100% polyester and is available in five colorways. The woven drapery line measures 118 in. wide with 15.35-by-40.16 in. repeats.

15 SAMELSON-CHATELANE

csamelson.com

Fusion 17 textured upholstery is made from 100% polyester with an acrylic backing and a stain-repellant finish. The textile line features a muted color palette of pastels and neutrals.

16 POLLACK

pollackassociates.com

Reminiscent of distressed, gilded Venetian plaster, Venice offers a silk-like look in a satin weave drapery. The Hospitality Spring 2018 collection also includes two upholsteries and five additional window fabrics, all made from polyester and viscose.

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17 STUDIO TWIST

studiotwist.net

Part of the Light Sources collection, Night Study is a microfiber chenille polyester blend that is recyclable, lightweight, bleach resistant, washable and inherently flame retardant. The celestial-inspired collection includes designs such as Falling Stars, Eclipse, Baily's Beads, Orion and Aurora Borealis.

18 KNOLLTEXTILES

knolltextiles.com

Named after the French post-Impressionist painter Georges-Pierre Seurat, this collection evokes the artist's Pointillist aesthetic. This tri-colored textural upholstery is available in eight colorways and features a mix of thick and thin novelty yarn with 95,000 double rubs.

19 LUUM TEXTILES

luumtextiles.com

Created by New York-based textile designer Suzanne Tick, Ideation features coordinating shades inspired by classic building materials such as brick and concrete. The fabric line includes four patterns: Modulus, Seismic Shift (shown), Digi Tweed and Heather Tech. ●

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH NEWH



Learn best practices for writing clear, supplier-ready specs while taking part in these in-depth sessions with leading hospitality designers, purchasing agents and manufacturers. Product categories include:

FABRIC

APRIL 4 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM

Learn which fabrics work best in which applications, how to navigate the seemingly endless choices available today and specify for durability within budgets ranging from select service to luxury. Learn the latest trends in design, and enhancements to durability and stain resistance. **Moderator: Becka Chester, Hospitality Design Specialist**

With presenters from **Fabricut, Neil Locke & Associates, Applied Textiles** and **Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA)**

GUEST ROOM CASEGOODS

APRIL 4 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Learn the important basics of casegood materials and construction, critical lead times and budget ranges for typical guest room casegoods at various hotel categories from select service to ultra luxury and what is included in an efficient line-drawing for each. **Moderator: Ted Brumleve, Wyndham Hotel Group**

With presenters from **Benjamin West, CF Kent, ForrestPerkins** and **Vaughan Benz**

CARPET

APRIL 4 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Learn types of construction, current lead times and budget ranges for each type of carpet typically used in hospitality, as well as the latest trends seen in guest rooms and public spaces. **Moderator: Michelle Finn, Hospitality Media Group**

With presenters from **Flick•Mars, Lexmark Carpet, Ramsey & Associates** and **Royal Thai**

UPHOLSTERED SEATING

APRIL 5 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Learn what makes a lounge, desk, etc., chair comfortable or not; long-lasting; how to navigate the lead times for design and testing; how to stay within budgets for various categories of hotels as well as insights into the latest trends. **Moderator: Jeanne Varney, Cornell University**

With presenters from **Carver & Associates, InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG®), JLF Collections, MTS Seating** and **Studio Partnership**

GUEST ROOM LIGHTING

APRIL 5 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Learn how to effectively describe your design intent, specify switching, ADA compliance, sockets and who (or what!) Kelvin is. Learn how to specify lamping for optimal design and operational performance. **Moderator: Steve Rice, Rice Consulting**

With presenters from **Bray Whaler, Chapman Hospitality Lighting, Creative Resource Associates** and **The Light Annex**

Each Session = 0.1 CEU IDCEC or 1 AIA LU

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Nothing comes close to the golden coast, and that includes creative products for hospitality interiors. From indigo-dyed wallcoverings to solid brass bath fixtures, California manufacturers offer up a mother lode of inspiration.

BY SARAH CHAPLIN

NEWPORT BRASS

newportbrass.com

Made from solid brass, the Chesterfield exposed bath set includes an integrated diverter and a hand shower. The wall-mounted tub filler is available in 27 finish options.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2018 CREATIVE CLASS



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associate
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FRANK HARKER
associate
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PATRICK HO
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1 D'STYLE BY KIMBALL HOSPITALITY

dstyleinc.com

Dee Dee is composed of intersecting powdercoated mirror chrome cubes that frame a central sphere. The suspended ceiling fixture measures 48 in. in diameter. Custom sizes and finishes are also available.



2 ASTEK WALLCOVERING INC.

astekwallcovering.com

Natsukashii is inspired by a traditional Japanese method of resist dyeing called *shibori*, by which cloth is bound, stitched, folded, twisted and compressed. Each of the 15 wallcovering designs were handcrafted in-house using a production system that fuses modern and conventional techniques.



3 AVIVA STANOFF DESIGN

avivastanoff.com

Real objects such as flowers, coral and feathers are hand pressed into fabric to create the Signature Velvet collection. Dyes are mixed in small batches so that no two individual pillows are alike. Sizes include: 12-by-20 in., 20-by-20 in. and 24-by-24 in.



4 ENVEL DESIGN

enveldesign.com

Crystal Rift, the company's newest Envel texture, is made from acrylic and cast resin. Available in clear or custom colors, the reflective space divider is semi-opaque and features an irregular wave-like surface.



5 JL FURNISHINGS

jlfurnishings.com

Emil is made from solid oak with a light ceruse finish and features a polished stainless steel band and grommet. The asymmetrical coffee table includes a hole for wiring access and a thin groove underneath to conceal cords. The piece measures 43.75-by-18-by-18 in.

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JUN. 24-26 2018
Austin, TX

summer forum
A BOUTIQUE DESIGN EVENT

JUL. 25-27 2018
Napa, CA

fall forum
A BOUTIQUE DESIGN EVENT

OCT. 1-3 2018
Asheville, NC

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SEPT. TBD
NYC & Washington DC

BD | NY
A BOUTIQUE DESIGN TRADE FAIR

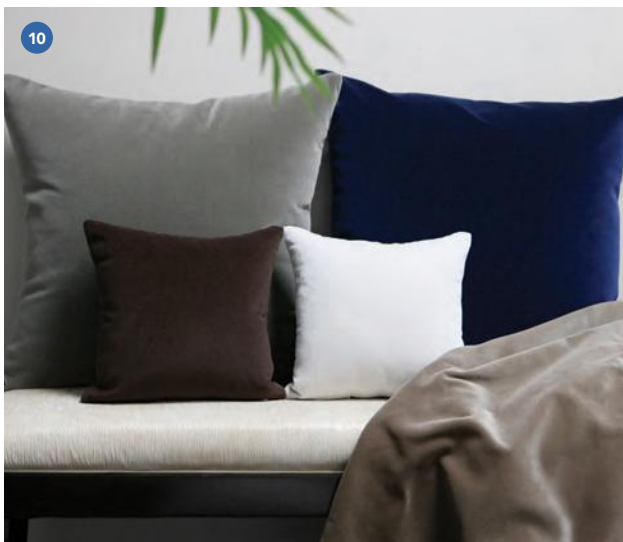
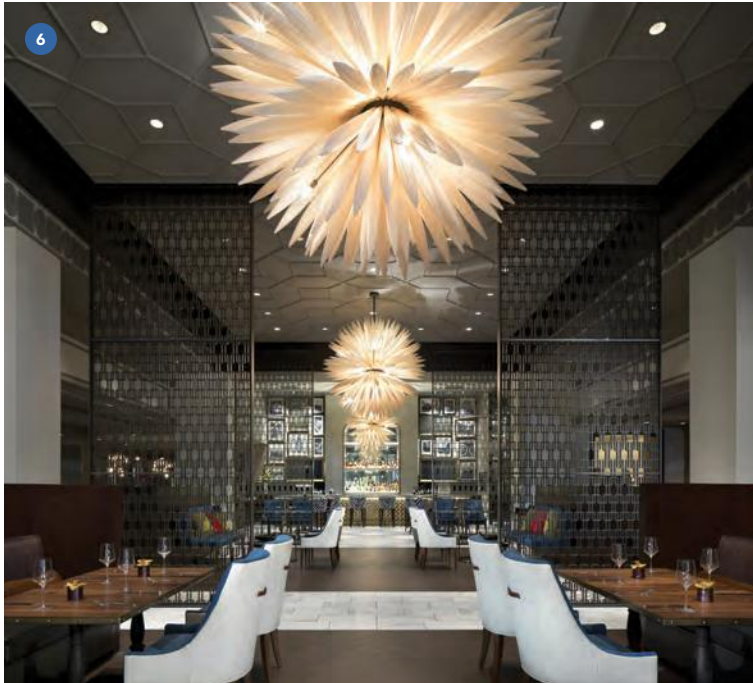
NOV. 11-12 2018
New York City

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EXPERIENCE
Rooms to Restaurants

NOV. 11-12 2018
New York City

GOLD KEY AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN HOSPITALITY DESIGN

NOV. 12 2018
New York City



6 IWORKS

iworksus.com

Custom made in Los Angeles, Notch8 chandeliers were created by the Novato, California-based interior architecture and design firm EDG for the Notch8 Restaurant & Bar at Hotel Vancouver. The fixture's vintage-inspired starbursts are comprised of spun fiberglass petals, which feature an opal finish.

8 ENDURATEX

enduratex.com

LeatherPlus is created from upcycling leather from landfills and transforming shavings, trimmings and processing waste into refined material fiber. The sustainable manufacturing process delivers a 96 percent yield. The upholstery collection is available in 15 SKUs.

7 MÓZ DESIGNS

mozdesigns.com

Part of the Blendz Patina collection, Blackened Steel offers the look and durability of its namesake material in lightweight 0.40-in. aluminum sheets. Suitable for walls, columns and façades, the line is available in two standard sizes: 4-by-8 ft. and 4-by-10. ft.

9 SUNSET DESIGNS

sunsetdesignscustomlighting.com

The Silver Leaf custom fixture is 10 ft. in diameter and was designed for the San Manuel Casino in San Bernardino, California. The light features a powdercoated steel frame and frosted acrylic diffuser panels with a hand-laid silver leaf pattern. The piece is suspended from six points using aircraft cable.

10 HEVN 2 HOME

hevn2home.com

California-based designer Faviola Ramirez's new outdoor collection consists of velvet pillows and terrycloth throws made of 100 percent solution-dyed acrylic. All products are machine washable and bleach cleanable. ●

AD index

BOUTIQUE DESIGN (ISSN 2573-1904)
Vol. 14, Issue 2, is published monthly (except Jan/Feb, July/Aug) by ST Media Group International, Inc., 11262 Cornell Park Dr., Cincinnati OH, 45242-1812. www.stmediagroupintl.com. No charge for subscriptions to qualified individuals. Annual rate for subscriptions to non-qualified individuals in the U.S.A. \$46 USD; in Canada \$77 USD; all other countries \$101 USD. Printed in the U.S.A. Copyright 2017, by ST Media Group Int'l. All rights reserved. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the consent of the publisher. The publisher is not responsible for product claims and representations. Periodicals Postage paid at Cincinnati, Ohio and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Boutique Design, PO Box 3060, Northbrook, IL 60065-3060. For single copies, back issues, or subscriptions: bd@omeda.com, Fax: (847) 763-9030, Phone: (847) 504-8166, New Subscriptions: www.boutiquedesign.com/subscribe. For reprints / content services: Marcus Glover, Content Sales Specialist, marcus.glover@sheridan.com, (800) 635-7181 Ext. 8065.

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HOSPITALITY REINVENTED

Boutique Design's content is tailored to the design principles that define the boutique and lifestyle approach—and to the visionaries driving the future of hospitality.

In every issue you'll find unique, forward-looking hotel and leisure projects that inspire trends and set edgier standards for guest spaces worldwide.

BoutiqueDesign.com/subscribe



EXIT Interview

TALENT GUIDE

Lookinglass Architecture & Design partner Emil Mertzel shares real-world insights with the next generation of interior creatives in his role as a professor at Southern California's Art Center College of Design.

INTERVIEW BY CHRISTINA GREEN



EMIL MERTZEL HASN'T FORGOTTEN what it's like to learn. Having launched Lookinglass Architecture & Design with business partner Nick Gillock in Los Angeles during the dot-com era, Mertzel has a clear affinity for independent ingenuity, a skill he now helps his students fine-tune as a professor in the environmental design department at the Art Center College of Design (ACCD) in Pasadena, California.

"I've always loved making things—and still do," says Mertzel. "There's something magical and fulfilling about bringing things to life. I'm also a bit of a geek, so design attracted me because it was something I thought would let me be creative, but also learn a lot of new things all the time. It hasn't disappointed."

Exploring new strategies has become more relevant than ever, especially in the classroom, where students are readying themselves for a growing scope of work and new economic challenges. Read on for Mertzel's thoughts on what skills future designers will need to master to make their mark in this rapidly evolving industry. And to see the fine dining and boutique hotel concepts his pupils have been creating this year, stop by the ACCD exhibit at Boutique Design West (BDwest), April 4-5 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. (The school's environmental design students are also building the backdrop for the BD Black Carpet Live! lounge.)

THE SCOPE OF DESIGN WORK IS EXPANDING, AND SO ARE THE NUMBER OF SKILLS JOB SEEKERS NEED TO HONE. HOW ARE PROFESSORS PREPARING FUTURE DESIGNERS FOR PROJECTS THAT COULD INCLUDE ANYTHING FROM 3D MODELING TO BRANDING?

One thing we've found effective is to integrate skillsets across courses—so a design studio will have several classes as co-requisites, and the students are working on the same project in all the classes as much as possible. This way the subject matter in each class has immediate application to a problem at hand, and the students can see in real time how all the skills and subject mastery enhance the design solution.

MANY DESIGN STUDENTS SEEM TO HAVE THE TECH TOOLS AND FRESH OUTLOOK TO CREATE BLUE-SKY CONCEPTS. DO THEY UNDERSTAND

BUDGETING—OR IS THAT SOMETHING THEY HAVE TO LEARN ON THE JOB?

Budget is discussed in broad terms in the classroom, often as part of making sure that a project suits a particular hypothetical client. So if the project involves a luxury brand, maybe blue-sky could be appropriate. But if the project is smaller scale or for a non-profit or NGO, the designer might be expected to do more with less. Our students also have to specify fixtures, furnishings and materials as part of their coursework, so they get to see first-hand what these things cost, and it can be eye-opening.

Precise budget analysis is a bit too fine-grained for the classroom, and to do it properly in the professional world designers will engage a cost estimator or work directly with a contractor for feedback.

ARE TODAY'S DESIGN STUDENTS FINDING JOBS WHEN THEY GRADUATE? WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE STARTING OUT IN THE FIELD?

The design market in Southern California is pretty strong right now; our graduates are finding work. We also have a strong study-abroad and exchange program, and we exhibit student projects internationally, so our graduates often find work outside the region.

It's never easy to take risks with your career, but it only gets more difficult as time goes on—so be open to taking advantage of opportunities. Also, it's really helpful to figure out how to talk about what you do in a way that potential clients can understand. Make sure you know who your audience is.

WHAT DO YOU WISH PRINCIPALS UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AND FEARS NEW DESIGNERS FACE AFTER GRADUATION?

I think empathy is the main thing. It's easy to forget after you've been in the industry for a while that the cost of living and student loans aren't what they were back when we were in college (they've increased much faster than inflation and faster than wages) and that we didn't graduate knowing everything about professional practice that we do now. The design fields were founded on an apprenticeship model, from which we've all benefitted. It takes time to learn.

For more from Mertzel, visit BoutiqueDesign.com. ●



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