

# sleepers

HOTEL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & ARCHITECTURE

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## 098. INGE MOORE

Inge Moore worked on numerous hotel and casino projects for South African hotel group Sun International, before moving to the UK where she now heads up the London office of Hirsch Bedner Associates, one of the world largest hotel design firms. In this issue we review one of her studio's latest projects, The Europe Hotel & Resort in Killarney, Ireland.

**RENAISSANCE MAN**  
JORDAN MOZER & ASSOCIATES  
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ROBERT DE NIRO'S TRIBECA  
TRIUMPH OPENS ITS DOORS

**STEPHEN ALDEN**  
ON THE LATEST AT CLARIDGES  
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WORDS BY MATT TURNER PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPH KOESTER / OLAF LUMMER

# THE EUROPE HOTEL & RESORT

## KILLARNEY



Hirsch Bedner Associates' London studio has completed a redesign of The Europe Hotel, creating a contemporary spa resort overlooking Loch Lein in Killarney, County Kerry.

**C**lose to the picturesque village of Killarney in the heart of County Kerry, overlooking Loch Lein, against the backdrop of the McGillicuddy Reeks mountains, The Europe Hotel & Resort makes the most of its stunning surroundings. In November 2006, The Gallery – London-based studio of Hirsch Bedner Associates – began a comprehensive renovation project which has since transformed the resort's various areas including the Crystal Bar, Brasserie, spa and café, suites and guestrooms.

According to HBA designer Shoko Nichimura, the space was completely gutted. The late-1960s-style, mid-century modern building contained especially

spacious rooms that allowed panoramic views of Loch Lein. HBA suggested removal of some of the façade, replacing it with clear glazing to further accentuate the views. Contrasting the large areas, the hotel contains several intimate spaces including a library and a champagne bar.

According to Inge Moore, HBA's London Director, the design team has taken its inspiration from the hotel's surroundings, bringing natural elements into the property and incorporating them as key interior design elements: "The ancient Celtic past and the recent tradition of crystal-making provided us with a rich palette from which to source ideas and inspiration," she says.

"These are evident throughout, in the form of a nature-inspired rug pattern, Celtic carved medallions in the spa, a vibrant green colour scheme in the lounge and glass and crystal elements in the bar." Guestrooms feature a neutral palette of greys, blues and greens. "Wooden tree trunks were collected and fashioned into artwork," says Moore. "All the colours that you see in nature are used as accents in each room, and each is totally different to the others." "Conversely," she continues, "the lobby, the restaurant, and the massive spa feature unique patterns and vivid colours, tempered by cozy fireplaces and intimate spaces for conversation or relaxation. The whole project is very quirky and much more colourful than

many of HBA's previous projects." The firm's priority was to create a comfortable yet luxurious environment. Massive three-sided fireplaces in the two-storey lobby lounge are boldly fashioned in rich, chocolate limestone. Walls are finished in cream Venetian plaster with simple banding details. Monolithic reception desks have textured-metal finishes. Timber disks are arranged as focal artworks over one wall, enhancing the concept of nature and complementing the neutral colour. Deep burnt-red seating arrangements add an eclectic twist. The Crystal Bar features warm, elegant oak-plank flooring, engraved mirror tiles on the walls, and columns that reflect lights from the shimmering

crystal chandeliers hung above the bar. This glamorous space is spiked with eye-catching colour combinations of greys and vivid oranges. In contrast, the Brasserie has an airy and calm atmosphere. Antiqued mirrors adorn the panelled walls above putty-coloured, deep button-tufted banquettes. In the library, a central double-sided fireplace sits below whimsical art pieces. Custom-designed, dark burnt-oak bookcases with black and nickel accents flank the roaring fire. Inside, each shelf has a bright-blue fringe trim with "nail-head" detailing. A large rug, its design inspired by the splashes of water from Loch Lein, introduces a brilliant blue contrast to the wood flooring.

Prompted perhaps by the success of nearby Aghadoe Heights, the renovation of The Europe has also seen the introduction of an ESPA-managed spa. According to HBA designer Constantina Tsoutsikou guests are greeted in the spa lobby by "an impressive art installation of carved monolithic timber blocks spread along the floor, echoing design features from the hotel lobby." During the day, an eleven-metre-tall glass-enclosed atrium staircase floods the entry area with warm daylight. The wall flanking the staircase is composed of dark water, and in the grey afternoon hours, a central glass chandelier casts warm spirals of light from above the stair. Other features include a centuries-old Irish pattern,

OPPOSITE PAGE (LEFT): The hotel's double height lobby lounge features contemporary fireplaces in rich, chocolate limestone with cream Venetian plaster walls OPPOSITE PAGE (RIGHT) AND THIS PAGE (RIGHT): Guestrooms bring the natural colours of the views outside into the hotel THIS PAGE (LEFT): The library features dark burnt oak bookcases with black and nickel accents



ABOVE: HBA's renovation of The Europe has seen the introduction of an ESPA spa incorporating a plunge pool, heat experience areas, various treatment rooms, and a private terraced suite

cut out from paper-thin bronze sheets suspended from the ceiling. Spa amenities are comprised on two separate levels. The first, or 'active', level contains a state-of-the-art fitness, kinesis and Tai Chi studio. This level features "opalescent silk wall coverings and jewel-like creamish grey accents that contrast with the dark and opulent relaxation areas." Here, the hardness of the black stonewall, dappled with niches for candlelight, is complemented and softened by velvet throws and soft pillows, while custom-designed bespoke relaxation beds surrounded by slat sail-like screens offer privacy and comfort. The second floor is more of a sanctuary, offering treatment rooms arranged around a peaceful internal

courtyard that is designed as a contemporary topiary garden. The tone here is sleek and sophisticated, with silver ash timber flooring, warm greys and lacquered surfaces. Bespoke-patterned metal panels, original B&B Italia armchairs upholstered in soft, opulent charcoal velvet, and mercury silver art provide the setting for decadent pampering and treatments. This level also features a private terraced suite, complete with a wenge-wood sauna overlooking the lake, sizable rain showers, and a stone-clad tub with water jets for two.

"From here," says Moore, "one can marvel at the view and enjoy the exclusivity of a spa designed to appeal to all the senses."

#### EXPRESS CHECKOUT

The Europe Hotel & Resort,  
Kiljooney, Co. Kerry,  
Ireland  
Tel: +353 64 71300  
www.theeurope.com

- 193 guestrooms & suites
- The Brasserie, Panorama
- Crystal Bar
- ESPA Spa
- The Library