



## **HBA UNVEILS ITS DESIGN FOR RAFFLES ISTANBUL**

*World's Top Design Firm Pools Talent from its Global Offices to Create 'The Dream of Istanbul'*

**(October, 2014)** – HBA (Hirsch Bedner Associates), the global leader in hospitality interior design, has completed the new Raffles Istanbul hotel at the Zorlu Center, creating 'The Dream of Istanbul'. Four HBA offices were involved in the process, including designers from HBA Atlanta and The Gallery HBA (London), in addition to partner companies Canvas and Illuminate, which developed the hotel's art collection and custom lighting strategy.

The 181-room hotel, perched atop one of the seven hills of Istanbul, overlooks the Bosphorus on the European side, features two swimming pools (one a magnificent sixth-floor pool with sweeping views of the city), a signature Raffles spa, a restaurant by Spanish Michelin-starred chef Sergi Arola, a 24-hour butler service, and a full collection of original artwork.

At the heart of the Zorlu Center, a next-generation bazaar, where fashion, performance, and art converge – Raffles Istanbul is the perfect embodiment of the 'new' face of Istanbul. Present day Istanbul is a fashion-forward European capital, and as such, various shapes and patterns in the design originate with motifs and detailing from the couture fashion world.

Lead Designer Sandra Cortner, a Principal with HBA Atlanta, comments: "During the Byzantine era, it was common law that all free men were permitted to wear gold, but only the Emperor and Empress could wear precious jewels. These jewel tones are referenced throughout the hotel as details in the palette and selected artworks. Mosaic tiles, a popular decorative element used extensively in Byzantium, are also used as details throughout the hotel."

As guests arrive at Raffles Istanbul, one of the first things they see is a magnificent commissioned work by internationally-recognized French hyper-photo realist Jean-Francois Rauzier. Rauzier describes his work as a "long-forgotten dream come to life", and here the image of Dolmabahce Palace, an iconic Istanbul landmark, takes Raffles' guests on what he hopes will be a "fascinating journey".

Another important art piece in the entry area is a 16 x 5 metre abstract bronze sculpture by artist Martin Dawe, inspired by a Turkish poem and titled 'Lavinia', located beside the entrance to the Lobby Lounge dining venue of the same name.

Matthew Whitaker, Director of Canvas (USA), states: "The art collection in the public areas is a thoughtful blend of international and locally commissioned artwork - a third of the artists featured are from Turkey - meant to appeal to the twenty-first century traveler who is increasingly more art savvy. Moreover, many of the works at Raffles Istanbul have been specially created. Curated for the overarching interior design concept – 'The Dream of Istanbul', there are direct references to Turkey's history and Istanbul's iconic landmarks, using Byzantine era mosaics and jewels, fashion, and referencing whirling motions associated with the Dervishes."

The Gallery HBA's design for the Raffles Spa draws upon Istanbul's richly layered history and the waters of the Bosphorus - the lifeblood and soul of the city that weaves together the Occidental and Oriental

worlds. Throughout the space the concept of flowing water creates a harmonious ambience: whether it's a chandelier made from swirls of glass that emulate the currents of the Bosphorus; pendant "bubble" lights hung from the ceiling like droplets of water; or a water sculpture featuring lotus plants as a link to the lotus flower, the Raffles Spa icon, each one is a symbol of calm in the serenity of the spa.

There are four distinct dining venues, including *Rocca*, signature restaurant *Arola* by the Michelin-starred chef Sergi Arola, complete with a private Champagne Room, and Raffles' staples *The Long Bar*, and *Writers Bar*.

With *Rocca* that serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, Simon Berry, Partner with Illuminate, explains how lighting helps keep the space feeling fresh at different times of the day: "Rocca serves all day, so we needed to create a feel of change - not huge change, just subtle. Throughout the day we utilized a dynamic range of light, mimicking the natural transition of daylight, from an invigorating white, which is crisper and cleaner for a high energy daytime feel, through to a warm 2000k amber tone – like a candle light, for an intimate feeling in the evenings. In this space, we have played with a chandelier placed by our interior design colleagues, pulling light through the crystal, before warming it up again at the table with a punch of longer, richer, and deeper colours - creating pockets of light where diners sit."

Meanwhile, The Gallery HBA's design concept for *Arola* and its Champagne Room has been imagined as a "feast of discovery", with finishes and furnishings selected to build an ambience of anticipation and mystery. In the entry vestibule, walls clad entirely in sparkling mirrors provide a glamorous debut as diners embark upon their culinary voyage. The colour palette of the 74-seat dining area mixes the dark lustre of Turkish black salt and a seductive selection of lighter colours with deep lacquered navy blue, brass and red accents. Natural textures are juxtaposed with those that are more refined; for example, weathered timber has been laid herringbone-style on the floors and, on the walls, is used as wide horizontal planks between narrow strips of brushed brass. Nested amongst the tables is an oval column clad with stone mosaics in an undulating pattern, while on the ceiling, stylised cut-outs inspired by kilim tapestry patterns have been backlit to cast layered shadows across the tables. And as a nod to the restaurant's Spanish influence, the Arabic style diamond patterns of the curved upholstered feature walls in both the main and private dining rooms are reminiscent of those seen at the Alhambra.

Inge Moore, Principal and Creative Director of The Gallery HBA, elaborates: "Our aim when designing *Arola*, as well as the spa, was to reflect the energetic new vibe of Istanbul – avant-garde, cosmopolitan and full of optimism. Modern interpretations of ancient artistry and rituals create fresh and welcoming spaces that are in tune with today's forward-looking guests".

Just off the main dining area is the Champagne Room, a glistening, opulent space where an extended bar seats eight guests within the room and then continues through the wall into the neighbouring Long Bar. Here, mirrors at each end of a 7.5 metre long counter make it appear to extend from the adjacent Champagne Room.

Berry adds: "The Long Bar is an interesting space. There is a very big, dramatic chandelier hanging over the counter area. In here it's about playing with layers. Running from a calmer atmosphere where guests sit, to a more energetic feel on approach to the bar. At one end, where champagne is stored and displayed, we have used integrated lighting to light up each of the champagne bottles, which has created a visual statement in its own right, pulling your attention to where the Champagne Room is located the other side of the wall. Then ceiling lighting makes the crystal of the chandelier sparkle and it

suddenly becomes the highlight, like the fizz of bubbles coming up out of the bottles. It's like a celebratory space really."

By contrast, The Writer's Bar is a warm, cognac coloured space, steeped in wood and timber. Indirect lighting, behind art installation and inside book cases creates a soft wash. The library shelves are populated with ceramic books by Turkish artist Ismail Oklugil, while the bar's back wall features a custom cast glass installation of fiery yellow and orange tiles that give the lounge its warm glow.

The epitome of the guest experience is realized inside the guestroom, where *"The Dream of Istanbul"* culminates in a custom mural depicting the "dream" derived from a composite of iconic landmarks like Hagia Sofia and the Blue Mosque. Ethereal blues and greens anchor the dreamy palette, and hand-woven Turkish carpets adorn the hardwood floors. Every room has a huge balcony, for wonderful panoramic views of the city and the Prince Islands.

Business activities take place in the Grand Ballroom, which features an impressive ceiling strewn with 2,316 crystal stars, to resemble the night's sky. Fashion motifs appear here too, in the guise of pleated, upholstered walls, while just outside there are three cast glass and woven metal mesh Kaftans by Turkish artist Yasemin Aslan Bakiri.

HBA Atlanta designed the hotel's guestrooms and suites, lobby, lobby lounge Lavinia, Rocca, pastry shop, Long Bar, Writers Bar, ballroom, meeting rooms, all prefunction, circulation areas, public restrooms.

The Gallery HBA in London designed the Raffles Istanbul Spa, Arola restaurant, and the Champagne Room.

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### **About HBA**

World-renowned as the "Number 1 Hospitality Design Firm" and honored in 2013 by the Gold Key Awards, Hospitality Design Awards, Perspective Awards, the Boutique Design Awards and the European Hotel Design Awards; HBA/Hirsch Bedner Associates, unveils the world's most anticipated hotels, resorts, casinos and spas. Leading the hotel design industry since 1965, HBA remains keenly attuned to the pulse of changing industry trends governed by today's sophisticated traveler. The company's international presence, depth of experience, and detailed industry knowledge enables them to identify interior design trends at their source, make definitive predictions about new directions and innovations, and influence design standards at a global level. HBA's ultimate objective is to add value, raise standards and enhance the brand of a project's owner and operator.

HBA creates the signature looks of today's luxury brands, independent contemporary boutique hotels, urban resorts spas, world-class residences, restaurants, and casinos. From continent to continent, each HBA interior is the result of a unique and sensitive response to location, architecture, and client vision. With 1,566 designers around the globe in 17 offices and a recent expansion in several locations in Asia, HBA is a true global company with more than 85% of its employees now outside the United States. HBA's international presence, combined with its extensive knowledge of the interior design industry, has facilitated the ability to rewrite the language of design with each new project.

For HBA in Atlanta, Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, London, Los Angeles,

Manila, Melbourne, Moscow, New Delhi, San Francisco, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo, visit [www.hba.com](http://www.hba.com).

### **About Canvas**

**Canvas** offers museum-quality consultation services to the global luxury-design market. Collecting art and accessories for sophisticated, brand-defining spaces requires more than good taste and interesting objects. Canvas designers, collectors and artists further your design goals by breathing the vibrancy of well-conceived and fully realized art programs into your space. From offices in Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Singapore, we are connected to an unparalleled network of galleries, collections, artisans, and craftspeople working in every conceivable medium and scale. Every Canvas art program is a significant art program.

### **About Illuminate**

**Illuminate** is a lighting design consultancy providing services for HBA projects and beyond. Illuminate works with architects, interior designers, landscape architects and end clients across Asia, Middle East, Europe and America on a wide range of commercial and residential projects.

### **About The Gallery HBA**

The Gallery HBA is dedicated to high-concept, original design for the hospitality and residential sectors. Based in West London, the practice works around the world creating memorable and beautiful hotels and homes. The Gallery's award-winning work is unmistakable for its vision and spirit. The team also instinctively understands and elevates the experience of contemporary lifestyles, recognizing the many ways in which people sense luxury and absorbing these into its design schemes from the initial spatial plan through to the smallest, crafted detail.

### **Raffles Istanbul** (opened 1 September 2014)

offers a new perspective on a timeless city, at the heart of the new Zorlu Center, a next-generation bazaar where high fashion, performance, fine food and the arts converge. On the European side of Istanbul, the hotel has sweeping views over the Bosphorus and the Prince Islands. The 181 rooms and suites - some of the largest in the city - all have floor to ceiling windows and private balconies. The sleek modern interiors are embellished with a large collection of contemporary art, much of it specially-commissioned from local artists. The authentic Raffles touch is personified by the legendary Raffles Butler Service, which currently extends from Singapore to the company's 11 hotels around the world. The extensive Raffles Spa offers signature treatments by Organic Pharmacy and the rooftop pool has unforgettable views over the Istanbul skyline. The hotel has two fabulous restaurants - Arola by Michelin starred chef Sergi Arola and Rocca with Mediterranean dishes and a Turkish influence - and three glamorous bars - the Writers Bar, the Champagne Room and a new take on the Long Bar, an Istanbul twist on its Singapore original, the place to be seen. This is a new destination overlooking this ancient metropolis, above the Bosphorus, where modern luxury sits alongside heritage and culture. A modern oasis welcoming the well-travelled to the most timeless of cities. [www.raffles.com/istanbul](http://www.raffles.com/istanbul)