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Found a Niche in
Hotel Development**

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THREE DESIGNERS REFRESH HOTELS THE WORLD OVER

Three properties are undertaking major updates to elevate their status.

By C. Elliott Mest



THE RITZ-CARLTON San Francisco is nearing the completion of a full overhaul, looking to breathe new life into its interior design. The hotel's traditional meeting rooms and grand ballroom received bright new color choices of red and green, and designer Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA) sought to create a modern ambiance to match the hotel's architecture.

"The building was constructed in 1924 and has great bones, but was tired and dated inside," says Kathleen Dauber, partner at HBA. "The hotel wanted a new, eclectic aesthetic to appeal to a younger generation and a broader base."

The hotel's guestrooms and suites, which had not seen a significant update in 20 years, were the focal point of the renovation. The primary goal in designing the guestrooms was to open up more space by combining furniture into single designs, such as connecting the dresser, desk and TV stand.

The guestrooms differed from the public areas through a fog palette of grays and blues, and HBA scaled back the layers of drapery found on guestroom windows to take advantage of natural light and draw attention to the building's molding and architecture. Additionally, the overall

number of wallcoverings used in each room were increased to accent the building's natural designs, specifically in each guestroom's entry foyer and around the beds' headboard.

HBA had to be creative with furniture layouts in the guestrooms, as the property has as many as 40 different room types; and the higher the room, the smaller the footprint.

"The age of the building and atypical room conditions meant that we needed to be flexible," Dauber says. "The feel of the hotel didn't change, while the new design responded to the property's architecture. It's a credit to the building's bones."

SOCIAL UPDATE

When it came time to update the public areas and food & beverage space at the Montage



Kapalua Bay resort in Hawaii, the team turned to Wilson Associates to design the restaurant in its main building. Wilson was also tasked with transforming the building’s check-in area and security desk into a location with a social atmosphere, as well as a three-meal dining venue.

The resort was originally built as a resident condominium, and Wilson worked to give the structure a fresh architectural perspective while maintaining the building’s original theme of “from the mountains to the sea.”

“Since the building was previously a Ritz-Carlton residence, the ‘lobby’ was a simple check-in desk, and the public space had sparse furniture and simple design,” says Michael Crosby, design director & principal at Wilson Associates. “We had fantastic architecture to work with and incorporated it easily into our design aesthetic. The goal was to create movement and draw people into the main building for community and connectivity.”

The lobby-restaurants’ interior architecture resembles a Hawaiian canoe house, and wooden scrollwork, woven textures and floral designs act as callbacks to traditional Hawaiian culture.

Wilson Associates’ plans for the outdoor component of the hotel originally called for a back-of-house tunnel that traveled beneath an existing koi pond at the resort’s pool grille, a plan that had to be scrapped due to logistical problems with the concept as well as costs. Instead, Wilson scaled the design back and ►

PHOTOGRAPHY: London Marriott

Facing page:
The London Marriott Park Lane.
Above, left to right:
A London Marriott guest room;
The interior has historically accurate moldings.



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RENOVATIONS



carved a discreet service path out of an existing area.

“We also had to create and plan an entire kitchen in what was previously a storage space,” says Liz Dauwe, senior designer at Wilson Associates. “That was a fun challenge!”

The open-air plan of the update was also used to take advantage of the hotel’s view of a nearby island. “We made it the focal point of our architecture and design influences,” Dauwe says.

RESPECT FOR THE MEMORY

The London Marriott Park Lane is currently redesigning its lobby, meeting

rooms, executive lounge and 152 guestrooms in an update that is scheduled to finish by June 2015. RPW Design, who is overseeing the update, is drawing from the property’s location near Hyde Park and its history as a private residence to give the hotel a classic feel while modernizing it.

According to Nicholas Kipper, GM of the London Marriott Hotel Park Lane, the new guestrooms will include entrance lobbies with a

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color palette of white, dove grey and lavender. Elsewhere in the hotel, the property's lighting was updated, hand-tufted carpets were installed and historically accurate moldings were used for the interior architecture, often based on other historical locations. According to Kipper, the design of the hotel's lobby was even based off the nearby & Commonwealth Office in London.

Kipper says the hotel chose RPW for the update due to the company's past work with historical properties and sense of history. "It was very important to keep the identity of the hotel and continue to represent the grandeur of the building and its location on Park Lane," Kipper says. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: Ritz-Carlton San Francisco

Facing page:
The hotel's muted greys are framed by bright blues.
Above:
A Ritz-Carlton San Francisco guestroom.

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INTERLAM
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Left:
Montage Kapalua's transformed check-in area.

"Our designs aim to bring out the English Heritage of the Francis Verity-designed historic building extending its intimate feel and residential character into the hotel's interior," Jan Wilson, nabbing director at RPW Design, adds.

This experience was necessary, as the hotel is a Grade II-listed building, a status reserved for buildings that must be maintained in keeping with their design heritage. According to Kipper, this could introduce unforeseen difficulties when it came time to make structural changes. Every stage of the renovation had to be carefully planned and executed.

"Italian book-matched marble is used throughout the bathrooms and had to be cut in such large sections that this alone was a momentous task, logistically," Kipper says. "Adding to the challenge was the weather in Italy, as torrential rain caused delays in moving the precious stone a thousand meters down the mountain [where it was procured]." **HD**

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