





London-based design practice Gallery HBA has delivered a wholly impressive airport hotel at Schiphol in the Netherlands. The hotel stands within an iconic cubic building designed by Mecanoo architecten – at its heart, an atrium that soars 42m upwards to the glazed sky roof. The interiors are every bit a match for the structure, working with the articulation of the building while also bringing human scale to the experience.

## Hilton Schiphol Airport, Netherlands

Images © Hufton + Crow, Will Pryce

The Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has Dutch soul, as harmoniously bold and playful, irreverent and coherent, organised and comfortable as the national character. Guests staying for the night or just visiting for a meeting, can be in no doubt that they are in the Netherlands.

The designers' aim was to create a home away from home, a temporary refuge from a location that is all about moving on.

Furniture, lighting, fabrics and floorcoverings were carefully selected to evoke a sense of home and the narrative of lace embroidery and crochet – traditional art forms in domestic Dutch life – thread through the design, from carpet detail and leather stitching to laser cut panels in the meetings rooms and doilies printed onto bedroom coffee tables.

Furnishings also reflect the eclectic design vernaculars of the Netherlands today with Marcel Wanders' one-armed chairs, plush sofas from Linteloo, coffee tables by Roderick Vos, vibrant upholstery from Kvadrat and funky embroidery from Hella Jongerius.

The Gallery HBA has enriched the level of comfort in the atrium by creating islands, each providing a distinct experience within the Axis Lobby: reception, lounge library, tech lounge and cocktail bar. Each area is defined by a carpet with a design inspired by the sediment-laden islands and waterways between coastal dunes on the southern coast of the Netherlands.

Warm, honey-toned leather armchairs create bold punches of colour, and laser-cut screens, modelled after the maps of the canal systems, further help to punctuate the space and achieve cosy areas. In between the islands, the sand-coloured limestone of the floor becomes pathways flowing like waterways through the space.

The Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol is the first to feature Hilton's brand new lobby concept where each area supports a different function within an open-plan setting.

The library with its double-sided work desk, features bespoke orange mesh and resin task lights by Frandsen Project, which created all the public area lighting in collaboration with The Gallery HBA. Signature Tulipani chairs from Dutch brand, Linteloo, make a joyful addition to another communal meeting table nearby.

A perforated steel wall that charts the course of the entire ground floor is both functional and a piece of art. It weaves through quiet and busy areas, helping to define spaces and provide degrees of privacy.

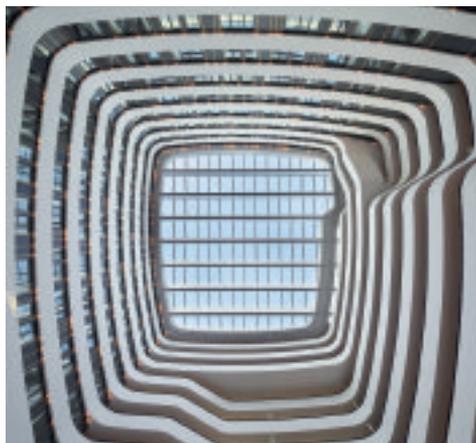
Its fluid shape is inspired by the maps that trace the trade routes of ships whose global journeys began and finished in Amsterdam. The wall creates a flowing patina and a narrative of travel, while its inky black tones recall the palette of the Dutch School of painters.

The Bowery Restaurant is located on the ground floor along the façade, drawing passers-by inside with its upbeat yet elegant design. Here, depictions of travel include cheerful illustrations of holiday travel on painted tiles specially commissioned from the Delft-based artist, Israel Páez, and three lively cooking stations feature full-height murals in a modern take on traditional Delft ceramics.



Quirky furniture, such as tables shaped like giant chess pieces and banquette backs fashioned like the much-loved Dutch Speculaas cookies, catch the eye and raise a smile.

Fluid patterning and a sea-based palette are both relaxing and a gentle reminder of Holland's symbiosis with the water. Floor-to-ceiling black metal and textured glass panels break up the space and are designed to screen parts of the restaurant during quiet times in the day.



In the busy hotel hub that is the Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, the designers have emphasised the contrasting exclusivity of private dining room, the Vine Room, by way of a discreetly disguised entrance – a floor-to-ceiling mirrored panel within an entirely mirror-clad wall.

Modern Dutch chandeliers by Moooi, an original Armando masterpiece from Schiphol Group's art collection and a bespoke wine display wall, help to make this room a truly exceptional example of an airport hospitality space.

The Hilton conference centre comprises 23 boardrooms and meeting rooms located over the first and second floors of the hotel. Travellers coming from the airport terminal can access the conference centre directly via the Traverse – the covered walkway which connects airport and hotel.

The concept for the areas was founded on making connections. The boardrooms, in particular, are distinguished by floor-to-ceiling windows looking over the atrium, which provide a sense of connection with the buzz of the lobby below. Copper pendant lights hanging in clusters above the conference tables create a dramatic impression.



The larger meeting rooms, which vary in size from 84-220m<sup>2</sup>, look out towards the airport and are flooded with natural light, diffused by sheer curtains, and benefit from movable partitions that allow flexible configurations. Acoustics are softened by plush orange and grey upholstered furnishings and wool carpets with patterns that reflect the building's diamond-shaped windows. All break-out spaces are connected to the atrium.

The hotel also includes a ballroom. Here, delightful stylised needlework motifs feature in the custom-designed carpet while, overhead, tiny bulbs twinkle, tucked into small bas-relief sculptures within the ceiling. Next door, the pre-function area glows under a vast array of contemporary glass pendants, warmly welcoming people as they arrive via the Traverse.

Three floors of executive bedrooms crown the hotel with a large Executive Lounge on the 10th level offering panoramic views of the airport and the city of Amsterdam beyond. Its interior is an elegant balance of the contemporary and classical.

A marble buffet counter serves as the place for a quick meeting, a library area with high-backed leather armchairs offers a retreat, and numerous comfortable seating arrangements provide options for conversation and working.

With a concept inspired by Schiphol Airport's position four metres below sea level, eforea spa, located on the first floor of the hotel, is designed to evoke a feeling of pure relaxation and a sense of underwater tranquillity.

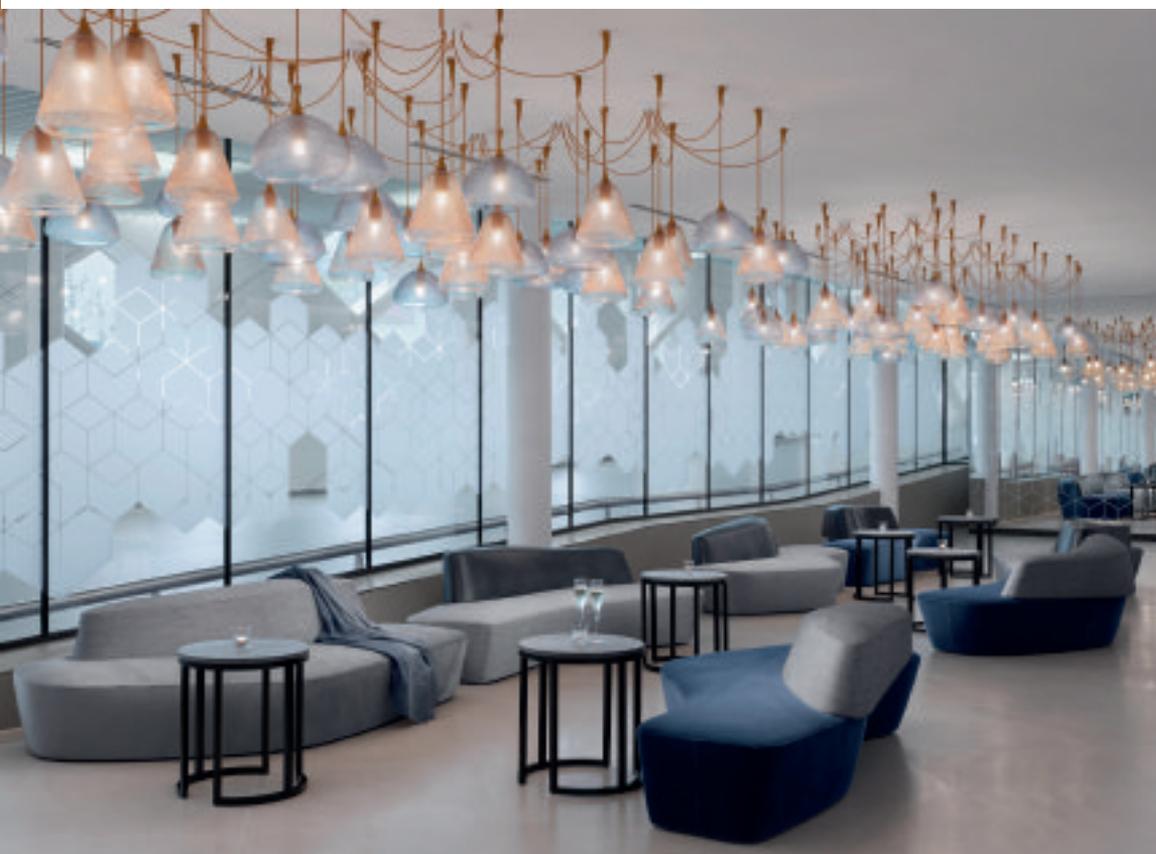
In reception, faceted glass chandeliers cast an ethereal glow – wrapped and suspended from rope, they give a nod to the maritime history of the country.

The spa journey then takes guests to the changing areas and, from there, along a corridor



guided by a procession of delicate leaves of papers, to the treatment rooms. Here, white walls textured like rippling water, soft lighting and whitewashed oak floors create a haven that is far removed from the stresses of the outside world.

The wet areas take guests further into the underwater depths with their darkly clad walls, metallic tile mosaics and shimmering clusters of bespoke wire pendants.



All 433 rooms are contemporary in style and elegantly streamlined.

Both the Guest Rooms, with a view over the atrium, and the Deluxe Rooms, with airport views through the signature diamond-shaped windows, have been designed with a crisp white and grey backdrop to highlight the golden tones of the abstract, diamond-patterned headboards, the lace-inspired carpet design, and the soft turquoise lounge chair and ottoman.

The artwork above the headboards, depicting the skylines of the Netherlands from south to north, was created in collaboration with Isreal Páez. Collections of wall-mounted prints and playful accessories are an evocative expression of the Dutch character as well as a homely touch.

Bathrooms offer either a bathtub and shower or a generously sized walk-in shower. Luxurious yet simple, the soft sculptural lines of the vanity counter, white tiles and gold rippled glass panels bring a dash of glamour.

The Diamond Suite on the top, 11th floor of the hotel combines bedroom, lounge, dining room and kitchen and can be connected to the adjacent room. There is a striking M C Escher-style polygon woodcut floor in both the living and dining rooms, fabrics are rich and tactile, and chic contemporary furniture is combined with idiosyncratic pieces to take the design to the next level of luxury.

Dark timber panelling and playful influences in the accessories and artwork infuse the spaces with a sense of authentic soul. The rooms take in one curve of the building and through the large windows the ever-moving theatre of airport and motorway is a dramatic vista comfortably observed from the exclusive retreat of the Diamond Suite.



Original contemporary Dutch masterpieces are located throughout the hotel. Loaned by Schiphol Group, the airport operator, the collection includes work by such internationally renowned painters as Corneille, Anton Heyboer, Armando, Ger can Elk, Jan Cremer and Rene Daniels.

The Gallery HBA worked with lighting consultancy, DPA Lighting. The resulting scheme utilises 95% LED technology while maintaining a cosy ambiance. All lighting is dimmable, transitioning through day and night by way of a control system that employs an astronomical time clock tracking sunrise and sunset as they change through the year.

“The Hilton Amsterdam Airport Schiphol is set to challenge traditional expectations of airport hotels. From its dramatic architectural form through to its numerous, locally sourced accessories, old and new, the design has a major part to play,” says Constantina Tsoutsikou, associate at The Gallery HBA and lead designer on the project.

“I think the team’s achievement has been to combine visionary design with human scale. This is a very large business hotel that also feels as if it’s designed for fun and relaxation, and it balances international polish with local character in a way that will engage international guests and attract people living and working nearby.”

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